



Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

Every child should have the opportunity to:

- 1 Discover wilderness — prairies, dunes, forests, savannas, and wetlands
- 2 Camp under the stars
- 3 Follow a trail
- 4 Catch and release fish, frogs, and insects
- 5 Climb a tree
- 6 Explore nature in neighborhoods and cities
- 7 Celebrate heritage
- 8 Plant a flower
- 9 Play in the mud or a stream
- 10 Learn to swim

Chicago
Wilderness



The Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside initiative promotes a culture in which children enjoy and are encouraged to be outside in nature, and as a result are healthier, have a sense of connection to their place, and become supporters and stewards of local nature. All Leave No Child Inside programs strive to nourish children's curiosity, growth, and creativity through unstructured play time outside in nature and other outdoor recreation activities.

A recent study found that 6-to-12-year-old American children spend, on average, 30 minutes per week in unstructured outdoor activities such as gardening, camping, picnicking, or hiking. This figure contrasts with the six hours per day that the average American child spends in front of a TV or computer screen.

Getting more kids outside and increasing the amount and quality of time that they spend there can help to address this imbalance. A recent American Medical Association publication concluded that outdoor activities, particularly in the form of unstructured play and exploration, contribute not only to children's physical development, but also to their psychological well being. Participation in outdoor activities in natural settings has been shown to increase self-esteem, decrease Attention-Deficit Disorder symptoms, and contribute to emotional growth in children across the U.S.

Outdoor play and exploration of the natural world can yield long-term benefits to the environment, as well as to the child. An increasing body of evidence shows that positive childhood experiences in the outdoors, coupled with the presence of an adult role-model, are important contributing factors to a lifelong concern with the health of the environment.

To find out how you can get involved with the movement to reconnect kids with nature, visit chicagowilderness.org, kidsoutside.info, or contact Emilian Geczi, the Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside Coordinator, at emilian.geczi@chicagowilderness.org.

