

JULY 2025

Implementation Plan

Nature Everywhere Louisville
2025-2028



Children
Nature
Network

NLC NATIONAL
LEAGUE
OF CITIES
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

KABOOM!

NATURE EVERYWHERE
COMMUNITIES

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Mission and Vision

“Spending time in nature is essential to children’s healthy development and children thrive when they have frequent access to outdoor spaces, experiences, and learning.”

Children & Nature Network

Mission

Our mission is to unite partners across Louisville to ensure every child and family can experience the benefits of nature in their own neighborhood—every day, everywhere.



Vision

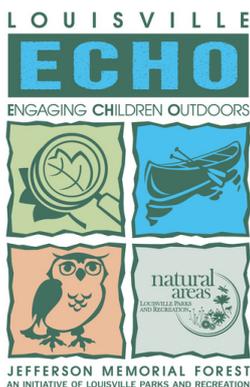
We envision a world where daily engagement with nature nurtures every child’s mind, body, and spirit—fostering creativity, resilience, and lifelong well-being.



About Nature Everywhere Louisville

Throughout the nation, cities are prioritizing nature connections in communities and across ages. In partnership with the Children & Nature Network and the National League of Cities, Louisville is expanding the ongoing work of connecting youth to nature. The Louisville Nature Everywhere Coalition is focusing on early childhood nature connections with a cross sector team of organizations.

Partner Organizations

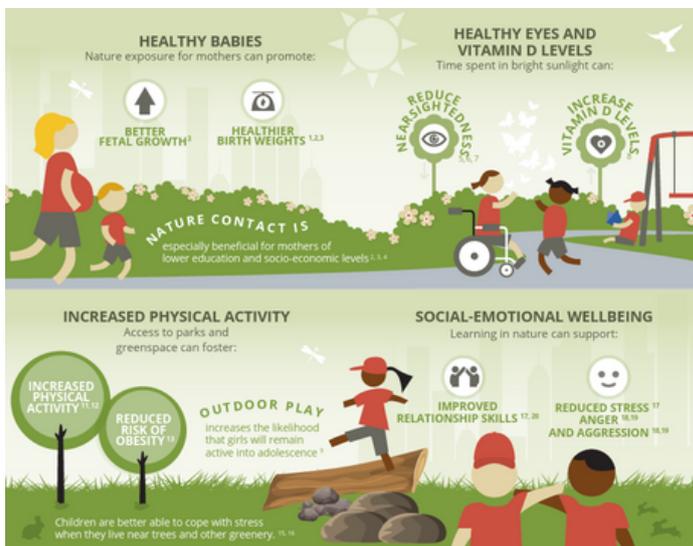


Benefits of Nature Play



A growing body of research confirms that spending time in nature and allowing children to explore makes them healthier, happier, and smarter. It also helps kids become life long stewards of the environment.

- Play and learning in natural environments tend to promote increased physical activity, improved motor skills and decreased sedentary time, which is beneficial for various health outcomes in childhood and beyond.
- Increasing children’s access to natural environments may help reduce health equity gaps.
- Engagement with nature is linked to reduced stress and anxiety in children and youth and may contribute to childhood and later life mental health.
- Nature-based interventions may promote the well-being of children with special needs, including reducing symptoms of ADHD.
- Nature-based instruction and outdoor learning support academic success and several functions important for learning. These include motivation and engagement; cognitive functions such as attention, working memory and self-regulation; emotional functions such as stress regulation, emotional regulation and well-being; and social functions such as prosocial behavior and cooperation.
- Childhood time outdoors in nature can foster connections to nature and offer a pathway to pro-environmental behavior in childhood and adulthood.



All Resources from Children & Nature Network

Strategy 1: Build a Collaborative Nature Everywhere Network

GOAL 1: DEVELOP AND ADOPT FORMAL DEFINITION AND PROCESS FOR COLLABORATORS AND INTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS.

- Objective 1: Develop partnership guidelines and implementation plans
- Objective 2: Develop the ask for partners
- Objective 3: Create communication and decision making protocols
- Objective 4: Create regular (annual) and consistent report outs
- Objective 5: Meet with key players (Thrive for 5, Mayor's office, ECE)

GOAL 2: INCREASE THE NATURE EVERYWHERE NETWORK TO INCLUDE AT LEAST TWELVE KEY PARTNERS.

- Objective 1: Understand and document existing resources
- Objective 2: Create flyer/website (location) for list of resources to live and how to connect
- Objective 3: Identify strategic potential partners to align activities and goals

GOAL 3: ENSURE THAT METRO LOUISVILLE'S EARLY CHILDHOOD GOALS AND NATURE EVERYWHERE LOUISVILLE'S PLANS FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO NATURE ALIGN THROUGH FUNDING SUPPORT AND INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANS.

- Provide information and resources for decision makers about the goals of the Nature Everywhere Network to ensure that nature connections are included in existing and future plans, not only for early childhood but across sectors.

Strategy 2: Expand Nature Play Sites and Accessibility

GOAL 1: INCREASE ACCESS TO NATURE PLAY SPACES FOR FAMILIES BY CREATING AT LEAST TWO NATURE PLAY DEMONSTRATION SITES THAT ARE LOCATED IN WEST LOUISVILLE

- Objective 1: Select two local green spaces near concentrated early childhood centers locations to install nature play demonstration sites
- Objective 2: Select child care centers to engage and the zip codes in which they will be located (40211 Sankofa)
- Objective 3: Get Community Input on desired elements at locations from focus groups & survey
- Objective 4: Design Nature Play spaces
- Objective 5: Secure Funding for demonstration site construction

GOAL 2: ENGAGE A PILOT GROUP OF EDUCATORS AT 20 LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS TO CREATE AND UTILIZE NATURE BASED LEARNING SPACES THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING.

- Objective 1: Work with pilot to assess current spaces to identify easily convertible spaces
- Objective 2: Provide training for educators in free play
- Objective 3: Pilot centers include hands on nature programming in curriculum
- Objective 4: Provide “nature play” handbook connected to curriculum

GOAL 3: PROVIDE PROGRAMMING, CURRICULUM AND SUPPLIES AT ECE CENTERS AND COMMUNITY SPACES FOR NATURE PLAY TO SUPPLEMENT LACK OF ACCESS.

- Objective 1: Provide ECHOmobile Programming at local ECE centers 3 days/week (rotating centers)
- Objective 2: Provide Nature Play “boxes” and supplies to 10 ECE centers

Strategy 3: Create Awareness and Education about Nature Play

GOAL 1: ENGAGE AND LEARN FROM FAMILIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT NATURE PLAY INITIATIVES THROUGH REGULAR PARENT/CAREGIVER GATHERINGS, TWO COMMUNITY SURVEYS AND A COMMUNITY REPORT.

- Objective 1: Plan & Develop bi-monthly parent/caregiver gatherings
- Objective 2: Develop survey to be distributed through NE partners to families, childcare providers, & communities
- Objective 3: Gather results from survey & create a report template
- Objective 4: Report out to community through NE partners

GOAL 2: PROVIDE FAMILIES WITH NATURE PLAY KITS TO ENGAGE IN THEIR OWN GREEN SPACES THAT ARE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PARTNERS.

- Objective 1: Develop Nature Play box activities
- Objective 2: Purchase & gather supplies for boxes
- Objective 3: Assemble 100-200 nature play boxes to be distributed through partner community events (first to be distributed at “Let’s Learn Together Outside” concluding event.)

GOAL 3: CREATE A SHARED POLICY AGENDA FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO NATURE PLAY AREAS IN LOUISVILLE

- Objective 1: Understand the policy landscape as it relates to nature play - what works, what is needed, and what is a barrier
- Objective 2: Develop process for creating a shared agenda
- Objective 3: Talk to people about the agenda
- Objective 4: Create an advocacy campaign

For more information, or to support this initiative, Contact us.

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