Growing Wellness: How Connecting to Nature Keeps Kids Healthy

Melissa Harding, Phipps Science Education Specialist
Tangible benefits of nature
What does biophilia look like in practice?
It looks like a moment of connection to each other...
...and the natural world.
Nature is good for us
And even better for our kids
Connected children are...
Empathetic

When you cut a tree plant a new one.

Save the earth!

Do not kill!

Stop the oil spills!
Self-disciplined
Risk takers and goal setters
Better at teamwork and resolving conflict
Better at school
Creative
Overall happier and more successful
Time in nature is important to child development
Kids are not connected to nature in the same way that we were.
We need to grow a new generation of scientists, artists and civically-engaged citizens.
Science Education programming: bringing plant science to life
Encouraging exploration, observation and imaginative play
Using nature as inspiration
Early childhood: sensory immersion and imaginative play
“The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil. Once the emotions have been aroused – a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of pity, admiration or love – then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response. Once found, it has meaning.”

- Rachel Carson
Creating a sense of wonder
Little Sprouts: Bringing families together in nature
Seasonal camps: Creating positive outdoor experiences
“The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not ‘Eureka’!, but ‘That’s Funny...’”

- Isaac Asimov
Field trips: Encouraging observation and asking good questions
“Science is a way of thinking more than it is a body of knowledge.”

- Carl Sagan
High school: Thinking deeply and critically about the world
Fairchild Challenge at Phipps
Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators

“The Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators unites, supports, and empowers a community of environmental educators throughout Pennsylvania”

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![IPLT Pennsylvania](image1)

![Project WET Pennsylvania](image2)

![EE Certification](image3)
Everyone has a responsibility to raise this generation in nature
What do you want this world to look like when you are no longer in charge of it?
“The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends in large measure on how our children grow up today.”
- Margaret Mead
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All photos taken by Science Education staff and interns