

## New Hampshire Children in Nature Coalition

The mission of the NH Children in Nature Coalition is to foster experiences in nature that:

- \* Improve physical and emotional health and well-being,
- \* Increase understanding of and care for the natural world, and
- \* Promote stronger connections to community and landscape,

and to provide a forum for continued collaboration by Coalition participants and others.

### **Problem Statements**

Children are more sedentary and spending less time in nature.

- Children are overweight.
  - New Hampshire has a high incidence of children with body mass index above the appropriate levels for age and gender for good health.
  - Compared to national average, New Hampshire has a higher average of obesity.
  - New Hampshire's number of children overweight has increased by x percentage.
- There is an increased rate of ADD and ADHD, and learning problems.
  - Increased incidence of ADD and ADHD and sensory perception problems
  - Increases in ADD-ADHD resulting in less pro-social behavior and academic performance
  - Percentage of children in NH diagnosed with ADD and ADHD
  - Reduced outdoor learning opportunities
- There is reduced stewardship of environment.
  - Children have less experience in nature resulting in less connection.
  - Children and their families have a fear of nature.
  - Reduced stewardship
  - Children and families are not having direct, tangible experience with nature.
  - Removal from nature decreases overall wellbeing of people.

**Goal 1.** More children, youth and families participate in outdoor learning experiences in and out of school time.

**Objective A.** By the year 2015, the amount of time children and youth spend in outdoor learning experiences increases 20% from 2009 baseline data.

— **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective** —

Activity 1. Mandate recess at schools and require it to be a certain amount of time.

Activity 2. Educate early childhood educators about the importance of children spending time outdoors.

Activity 3. Provide all formal educators with pre-service training about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 4. Provide training for after school providers about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 5. Provide professional development for current educators about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 6. Designate “nature based communities” to enable neighbors to communicate and work together.

Activity 7. Re-institute field trips to outdoor sites during school time, for example, trips to environmental education sites, local natural landmarks, etc.

Activity 8. Assess and build awareness about local sites for school and community field activities and trips.

Activity 9. Create a statewide website for the public to access places to go and things to do outside.

Activity 10. Create and utilize outdoor classrooms.

Activity 11. Provide training for health care providers about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 12. Provide training for youth serving agencies and organizations about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 13. Influence communities to add sidewalks in order for more children and youth to walk to school (using Walking School Bus and Safe Routes to School models).

Activity 14. Increase physical education requirement to include a percentage of physical education occur outdoors.

**Objective B.** By the year 2015, the number of children, youth and families participating in outdoor learning experiences increases by 5% over 2009 baseline data.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Designate “nature based communities” to enable neighbors to communicate and work together.

Activity 2. Mandate recess at schools and require it to be a certain amount of time.

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### NH Children in Nature Coalition – Mission, Goals, Objectives and Activities

Activity 3. Educate early childhood educators about the importance of children spending time outdoors.

Activity 4. Provide all formal educators with pre-service training about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 5. Provide training for afterschool providers about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 6. Provide professional development for current educators about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 7. Re-institute field trips to outdoor sites during school time, for example, trips to environmental education sites, local natural landmarks, etc.

Activity 8. Assess and build public awareness about local sites for school and community field activities and trips.

Activity 9. Create a statewide website for the public to access places to go and things to do outside.

Activity 10. Create and utilize outdoor classrooms.

Activity 11. Provide training for health care providers about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 12. Provide training for youth serving agencies and organizations about the importance of children and youth spending time outdoors.

Activity 13. Influence communities to add sidewalks in order for more children and youth to walk to school (using Walking School Bus and Safe Routes to School models).

Activity 14. Increase physical education requirement to include a recommended percentage of physical education occur outdoors.

**Objective C.** By the year 2015, the number of opportunities for outdoor learning experiences increases by 10% over 2009 baseline data.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Collaborate between agencies and organizations to provide a wide variety of outdoor learning opportunities.

Activity 2. Provide/acquire agencies and organizations adequate funding and support.

Activity 3. Encourage/support more organizations in providing outdoor learning opportunities.

Activity 4. Existing providers refocus programs to include more free time in the outdoors.

Activity 5. Communities increase amount of available local park space.

Activity 6. Support communities in identifying their level of accessibility and safety using a “nature-based community” designation.

Activity 7. Facilitate/support community watch programs for children, for example a neighborhood nature watch

Activity 8. Initiate a town warrant article initiative regarding children and youth spending more time outdoors and the importance of the connection to nature.

Activity 9. Provide every school district with a resident environmental education specialist to serve as liaison to school and community.

Activity 10. Connect state parks to schools and communities as places to go and to school curricula.

**Objective D.** By the year 2015, each outdoor learning experience provider will expand their experiential programming and increase participation by 5% over 2009 baseline data.

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**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. The NH Environmental Educators conduct a survey of amount of outdoor learning programming and numbers participating.

Activity 2. Increase the available funding for experiential programming.

Activity 3. Develop school-based habitat/garden and areas around schools for use by schools and communities.

Activity 4. Provide increased camperships for summer camps or subsidize childcare costs for when children attend camps.

Activity 5. Increase available infrastructure of programs such as interpretive programs in state parks.

Activity 6. Connect after school and out-of-school programs to camps.

Activity 7. Increase experiential programming events by generating funds for supporting the activities in process of conducting (community based groups working together).

**Goal 2.** More children, youth, and families get outside on a regular basis.

**Objective E.** By the year 2015, the number of children, youth and families spending time outside biweekly increases by 5% over 2009 baseline data.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Encourage participation in events such as the Great Park Pursuit.

Activity 2. Develop media campaign to help raise awareness about the importance of children, youth and families spending time outdoors.

Activity 3. Work with pediatricians and ob-gyn about the value of being together outside.

Activity 4. Create a mechanism to value unpaid work and childcare.

Activity 5. Connect senior citizen mentors with young children.

Activity 6. Establish business based volunteer programs to encourage employers to allow workers to serve as mentors and/or take work time to take children and youth outdoors.

Activity 7. Target under-represented audiences such as prisons, housing authority, and people who are receiving assistance.

Activity 8. Promote “TV Turn-off Week.”

Activity 9. Integrate outdoor learning ideas into English as a second language curriculum.

Activity 10. Organize families to adopt a portion of community trails and parks.

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Activity 11. Encourage community gardening programs and school and community gardening initiatives.

Activity 12. Develop community service projects focused on the outdoors including in parks, schoolyards, etc.

Activity 13. Support the “5, 2, 1, 0 program.”

Activity 14. Utilize infrastructure of UNH Cooperative Extension to help people learn what’s in their own backyards.

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**Objective F.** By the year 2015, all children, youth and families will spend one hour or more outdoors daily.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Encourage participation in events such as the Great Park Pursuit.

Activity 2. Develop media campaign to help raise awareness about the importance of children, youth and families spending time outdoors.

Activity 3. Work with pediatricians and ob-gyn about the value of being together outside.

Activity 4. Create a mechanism to value unpaid work and childcare.

Activity 5. Promote National Wildlife Federation’s Green Hour.

Activity 6. Promote the value of being outside just for the sake of being outside (the pure joy of it).

Activity 7. Promote a message of “Go outside -- its easy and safe.”

Activity 8. Provide more programs that teach the public how to look, feel, and use the outdoors on their own.

**Goal 3.** Every child has an opportunity to experience nature in a direct and tangible way in their local community.

**Objective G.** By 2015, the number of available outdoor spaces increases by 5% over 2009 baseline data.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Every town creates a public listing of town-owned lands and makes a map available to townspeople.

Activity 2. Establish support/legislations for towns to work toward setting aside 25% of land base as open space.

Activity 3. Link developers and architects with landscape practices that rely on native and diverse vegetation for neighborhood development projects.

Activity 4. Provide incentive to build cluster housing to maintain larger natural areas.

Activity 5. Encourage communities to assess how livable and walkable their community is (using the Livable-Walkable Community toolbox).

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Activity 6. Develop a certificate program for realtors, developers and architects for learning how planning can be done differently (Office of Energy and Planning) to include more outdoor spaces.

Activity 7. Participate in a variety of conferences to get the word out (such as realtors convention, Integrated Design/Integrated Development, etc.).

Activity 8. Work with local towns to include in Master Plan that they will support multiple use trails and people powered transportation.

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**Objective H.** By 2015, access to outdoor spaces increases by 5% over 2009 baseline data.

**Objective I.** By the year 2010, every community will inventory their outdoors spaces and promote their positive use by children, youth and families.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Encourage right of way / legal rights to open space.

Activity 2. Encourage development of “kids corridor” in towns.

Activity 3. Designate an adult to be present on a regular basis in an outdoor space so children can play on their own, but still have help available if needed.

Activity 4. Encourage communities to create and promote a map of places to go in the community, including information like level of difficulty, universal accessibility, parking, restrooms, with support from regional planning commission.

Activity 5. Work cooperatively with kinds of trail managers.

Activity 6. Reclaim “wasted spaces,” for example, small areas between buildings for gardens and superfund sites that have been capped, as “vest pocket parks.”

Activity 7. By 2010, every community will inventory their outdoor spaces and promote their positive use by children, youth and families.

**Goal 4.** Children have more time for free play in the outdoors.

**Objective J.** By the year 2015, all children in grades K - 8 have a minimum of ½ hour of outdoor recess per day.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. (Check above activities)

Activity 2. Encourage development of policy in local school boards.

**Objective K.** By the year 2015, all families set aside one weekday free from structured activities during after school hours.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. (Check above activities)

**Objective L.** By the year 2015, after school programs will increase the amount of time allotted for child selected outdoor activities.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Work with university interns to serve as mentors in afterschool programs.

Activity 2. Work on a policy change for afterschool programs that they should spend time in active play.

**Goal 5.** More people demonstrate appreciation and caring for nature and the outdoors through their involvement in activities and/or organizations.

**Objective M.** Organizations involved in caring for nature and the outdoors have an increase in volunteerism, membership and donors by 10% over 2009 baseline levels.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Involve more people in helping to create or maintain outdoor spaces.

Activity 2. Establish a Kids' Cabinet on the Outdoors.

Activity 3. Create a Governors Commission on Children and the Outdoors.

Activity 4. Establish a statewide volunteer action center for people to locate volunteer opportunities in the outdoors or working with children and youth in the outdoors.

**Objective N.** By 2015, youth choose more outdoor-oriented service projects by 25 % over 2009 baseline data levels. *(do schools keep track of senior project? - Newfound School)*

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Towns will designate money for student/youth-oriented service projects (green initiatives) in towns and on town lands.

Activity 2. Towns will communicate opportunities for Green service via the town report or local municipal center.

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Activity 3. High schools will develop a list of green service project and create “Green Service Book” to be housed at the high school so students can learn and do such projects.

Activity 4. NH CINC website will have a page highlighting green service projects around the state.

Activity 5. Organizations will sponsor green service projects as a collaborative opportunity between students and their agency to attain HS credit.

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**Goal 6.** NH children and youth will improve their health, fitness and well being as a result of increased outdoor experiences.

**Objective O.** By 2018, the number of children who are obese or overweight decreases to 20% from the 1/08 statistic of 26.1%. *(this current statistic came from Regina Flynn from student self-report data – source was Youth Risk Behavior Survey CDC survey of the Department of Education).*

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Sponsor a high visibility week of activities or “Get Out Week”

Activity 2. Raise funds so to defray or eliminate fees for summer camp.

Activity 3. Have new building projects incorporate “kids corridors” to increase places for kids to spend time outdoors or travel outdoors.

Activity 4. Reduce barriers to active, outdoor field trips for schools.

Activity 5. Develop a video game with an outdoor experience.

Activity 6. Reduce liability risks for public and private land owners who allow public access of their property using media and legislation.

Activity 7. Add a section to the NH CINC website with a monthly geocache challenge, which will encourage repeat active outings.

Activity 8. Organize an expo on the theme of getting kids outdoors.

Activity 9. Encourage existing children/youth programs to incorporate active, outdoor free time.

Activity 10. Connect families with information about the location of public lands and parks and provide information about access.

Activity 11. Work for legislation or advocate for DOT and town and regional planners to incorporate alternative travel routes into infrastructure projects.

Activity 12. Work with schools to incorporate Leave No Child Inside philosophy and mandates into their federally mandated wellness programs.

Activity 13. Create and publicize Junior Ranger type programs on a local or regional basis through out the state.

Activity 14. Encourage youth leaders, such as the Girl Scouts, to reconnect with the outdoor roots of their programming.

Activity 15. Educate parents and child guardians how to dress properly to enjoy outdoor experiences year around.

**Objective P.** By the year 2027, the number of youth diagnosed for depression and ADHD/ADD decreases by 30% from 2009 baseline data levels.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Increase the number of the state’s pediatricians who understand the brain development research about ADHD and ADD and who distribute this information to parents.

Activity 2. Educate child caretakers about the role of multi-sensory activities in brain development and the link with ADD and ADHD.

Activity 3. Bring back mandated outdoor recess for schools.

Activity 4. Engage agencies and schools who work on this behavioral issue to educate parents and teachers about the link to outdoor, multi-sensory activities and encourage use of such activities on a regular basis.

Activity 5. Develop a hand out for parents/guardians that would automatically be give out when children are diagnosed with ADD/ ADHD. Incorporate into physician’s medical record.

**Objective Q.** Pro-social behaviors will be tied to increased positive outdoor experiences. Decrease of reports of vandalism to parks and outdoor spaces will be observed by XX% from 2009 base line data. (*police log reports*)

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. (Check above activities)

**Goal 7.** Children and youth increase their understanding of the natural world.

**Objective R.** By 2015, students increase their assessment scores on life science standardized tests by 15% above 2009 baseline data levels.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Pre-service teachers are required to learn natural history and life science.

Activity 2. Certified teachers receive mandatory professional development in life science.

Activity 3. Youth serving agencies (including after school, day care, faith-based, etc.) have more professional development opportunities in life science, and have mandatory certification in life science (NAEYC, NIAC)

Activity 4. Professional development funding is increased so teachers and others can attend trainings.

Activity 5. Connect providers of natural history programs with day care and pre-service professionals.

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Activity 6. Provide more place-based education opportunities such as Project HOME for schoolyard habitat development.

Activity 7. 50% of schools and communities have resident naturalists/nature centers.

Activity 8. Increase professional training for naturalists (such as currently offered through state, regional and national professional organizations).

**Objective S.** — By the year 2015, 10% of 18 years olds will have the skills (map reading, preparedness, safety skills) to craft their own direct outdoor experiences.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. (Check above activities)

**Objective S1.** By the time a student is 18 years of age they will be able to identify a minimum of 10 native plants and animals.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Link activities to community mapping resources like GRANIT.

Activity 2. Increase participation in the Envirothon.

Activity 3. Include a family component in every natural history and life science program, for example, a newsletter, take home activity, etc.

**Objective T.** By 2015, 30% of children and youth have direct personal experience with natural features especially those in their local area. Measured through the school program experiences, maybe using field trip info as a quantifier.

#### **Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Expand funding opportunities for agencies and organizations that provide natural history programs.

Activity 2. Create a training program and certification for granting status to naturalists/environmental educators via NH Environmental Educators (NHEE), New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA), and/or the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE).

Activity 3. Establish a Natural Leaders program to train high school youth for careers in life sciences and/or as informed leaders in New Hampshire.

Activity 4. Provide funding, awards and/or grants for model programs (sustainable initiatives) to replicate them statewide.

Activity 5. Strengthen and expand existing volunteer programs so volunteers can work more specifically and directly with kids in nature. tap and cultivate current volunteers (such as Tree Stewards, Wonders of Wildlife, Coverts, etc.).

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Activity 6. Conduct a scavenger hunt (similar to Governor’s Easter Egg Hunt), through radio stations, as an Earth Day Hunt.

**Objective U.** By 2012, 50% of schools have a plan that includes outdoor learning experiences in their curriculum.

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**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. (Check above activities)

**Objective V.** By 2015, New Hampshire Legislature dedicates increased funding by 10% to natural resources and environmental agencies and land conservation agencies (agencies and LCHIP) funds to environmental and land projects.

**Range of Suggested Activities to Meet Objective**

Activity 1. Educate citizens and legislators about the importance of this issue and the long term benefits to environmental conservation and education.