



YOUTH OUTDOOR POLICY PLAYBOOK

Community benefits of youth outdoor policies:

Public health
and wellness

Education
and
workforce
development

Youth
development

Economic
development
and
conservation

POLICY FRAMEWORK



Outdoor Learning Opportunities and Environments

Green schoolyards, increased outdoor learning opportunities, and outdoor engagement through overall school health and wellness all help to get more kids outside more often.



Outdoor Access and Connectivity

Kids can't play and learn outside if they can't get outside. Grant programs and scholarships, increased awareness, parks passes, and transportation all support improved outdoor access.



Systemic Environmental Literacy and Education

Environmental education and literacy standards, plans, and programs, in addition to outdoor workforce growth and development programs, help ensure that kids will learn and care about the outdoors.

➔ Access the playbook: youthoutdoorpolicy.org



OUTDOOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS

- Protect schools from liability for after-school use of grounds (WI 895.523)
- Establish school gardens grant program (CA AB 1634 or OR HB 2579)
- Designate green schoolyard month (CA ACR 128)
- Support green gardens and schoolyards (WDC School Garden Program)
- Include outdoor learning environments in definitions of school grounds

- Require student engagement when redesigning public spaces

OUTDOOR LEARNING

- Every student can attend a week of residential outdoor school (OR SB 439)
- License outdoor early learning programs (WA SB 5357)
- Fund school district gear libraries
- Incentivize outdoor engagement at early childhood centers

SCHOOL WELLNESS

- Set a state standard for healthy

schools via nutrition and physical education requirements (WDC Official Code § 38-821.01)

- Provide funding for schools to purchase healthy, local food (OR HB 2579)
- Incentivize or require school to begin with outdoor movement
- Set standards for mandatory recess
- Provide funding for rain or winter gear so students can go outside year-round
- Support outdoor engagement as part of district-level school wellness plans



OUTDOOR ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Establish an Outdoor Equity Fund (NM SB 462)
- Support environmental education through natural and cultural resource programs (IA REAP program)
- Support parents with options for afterschool outdoor learning

PARKS PASSES

- Extend National Park Service’s Every Kid Outdoors free pass for fourth-graders to state/regional parks (NV AB 385, TX HB 1561)
- Offer free state parks passes for check out at public libraries
- Provide “free days” at local public outdoor spaces

TRANSPORTATION

- Assure federal funding for Safer Routes to Schools is well-administered by DOT (AZ, CA, NJ, IL)
- Improve policies and transport plans so bikes and pedestrians have safe routes to school
- Improve equitable access to nearby outdoor experiences
- Remove barriers or support costs associated with transportation to outdoor engagement

RAISE AWARENESS

- Establish programs that support free or low-cost outdoor recreation (UT Every Kid Outdoors)
- Establish a Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights

NATURE ACCESS FOR VETERANS

- Allow active military personnel to receive free year-round parks passes (MN Statutes section 85.053)
- Establish grant programs to support nature-based therapy programs for veterans



SYSTEMIC ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND EDUCATION

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Increase certified green schools and support environmental learning (MD SB 0662)
- Integrate systemic environmental literacy into K-12 (CA AB 1548)
- Support the Green Ribbons Schools program (MA Green Ribbon Schools, WI Green & Healthy Schools)
- Consider environmental education core subjects like math or reading

WORKFORCE GROWTH

- Support conservation corps or youth corps (Great Outdoors CO Youth Corps support)
- Funding or grant programs for career counselors trained in outdoor career options