





## PROMOTING OUTDOOR TIME FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Developed by the Children's Forest of Central Oregon

Spending time outdoors plays an important role in the health and wellness of children and families. As a health care provider, you have the opportunity to educate families about all of the benefits nature provides, and encourage families to take advantage of resources that are available in the community.

### 3 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE:

- Discuss and share information with children and families on the benefits of nature for our overall health and wellness.
- Refer children and their families to opportunities
  that connect them with nature and encourage
  them to access the outdoors. If getting outside is
  intimidating for families, help them identify an easy
  first step, like visiting a neighborhood park.
- Stay informed about and promote local upcoming events and programs that get kids outside. There are many free and affordable nature programs across Central Oregon, plus a great network of local parks and public lands. See the Central Oregon Outdoor Family Resource Guide or visit our website, www.childrensforestco.org to learn more.

#### WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

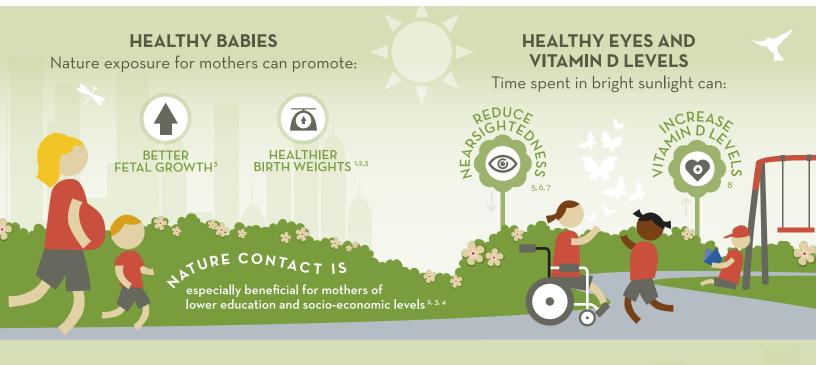
Studies show that spending time in nature improves emotional and physical well-being. Outdoor play reduces stress, increases ability to focus, strengthens the immune system, lowers blood pressure, and builds muscle mass.

# WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S FOREST?

The Children's Forest of Central Oregon is not a physical place, it's a partnership between local agencies to enhance the lives of kids by connecting them with nature. Our network of 20+ partners represents health, education, recreation, public lands, and conservation. We work together to ensure that all kids have opportunities to learn, play, and explore in nature, both during the school day, and through family experiences in nature.

## NATURE CAN IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Spending time in nature provides children with a wide range of health benefits.



## INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Access to parks and greenspace can foster:



OUTDOOR PLAV

increases the likelihood that girls will remain

active into adolescence 9

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Learning in nature can support:





REDUCED STRESS 17 ANGER 18,19 AND AGGRESSION 18,19





Children are better able to cope with stress when they live near trees and other greenery. 15, 16



ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON THE BENEFITS OF NATURE AVAILABLE AT childrenandnature.org/research

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