

## CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS (COBOR)

**STRATEGY:** The creation of a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBOR) illustrates what equitable access to nature should look like and establishes a common foundation and high aspirations for nature connection in a community.

### WHAT IS A COBOR?

- A list of outdoor experiences that every child has a right to experience.
- A public facing symbol of the overarching goals a city or state has for its children's outdoor experiences.
- A messaging tool that raises awareness of the importance of children's connection to nature.
- A Mayoral proclamation, a City Council resolution, a value statement, or a framework for a program.

**WHO IS ENGAGED:** families, children, youth, mayor, city council, city agencies, and partners

### KEY BENEFITS:

- Articulate a community's commitment to equitable access to nature for all children.
- Galvanize the community and city leaders in a shared vision for children's access to the outdoors.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of children's nature connection.

**RELATED CITY PRIORITIES:** Can reflect multiple city priorities such as equity & inclusion; family & community engagement; youth development; parks and green space access; children's health and well-being



### LESSONS LEARNED

- COBOR conversations provide an opportunity to launch or reinforce citywide collaboration. Efforts to develop a COBOR allow for partnerships between school districts, the county health department, federal partners, grassroots collaboratives, and others to create a citywide vision for children's access to nature.
- COBOR can serve as a platform to launch or promote a new initiative or program. Cities can use the launch of a COBOR as an opportunity to highlight another nature connection program such as green schoolyards or outdoor nature programs already in place.
- Develop COBOR with an eye towards equity. Use equity zone mapping to determine where children lack access to their outdoor rights and need further resources and programs, such as in [San Francisco](#) and [Austin](#).

# CASE STUDIES: HOW CITIES HAVE DEVELOPED & ACTIVATED COBORS

Several cities have created a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

- [San Francisco, CA](#) (2014) passed as a resolution
- [Austin, TX](#) (2017) passed as a resolution
- [Salt Lake City, UT](#) (2018) activated as a program
- [Baltimore, MD](#) (2019) introduced by the Mayor, passed as a resolution

Two examples:	GET STARTED <i>Overview of who developed rights and how</i>	MOVE FORWARD <i>Launching a COBOR</i>	ACTIVATE <i>How COBOR is activated across the City</i>
<p><b>SALT LAKE CITY, UT</b></p> 	<p>A group of environmental and youth organizations met for two years to plan and select thirteen rights.</p>	<p>The city launched the program in 2018 as an effort to engage children in physical activity, social and nature bonding, and ignite lifestyles rooted in nature.</p>	<p><a href="#">Salt Lake City Public Lands Division</a> uses the COBOR as a springboard for partners to create free activities for children with their families. The activities are free to low cost local outdoor opportunities for children that align with the COBOR rights. Children get a free journal to document their progress and earn prizes for the rights completed.</p> <p>In 2019, the City Public Lands Division partnered with Salt Lake City's Youth and Family Division to add outdoor activities to the city's youth afterschool programs in science, art, and music. In its second year, the city's afterschool programs reached 500 youth and 300 teens.</p>
<p><b>AUSTIN, TX</b></p> 	<p>An Austin City Council member championed COBOR as a City Council resolution. It was written jointly by staff from the <a href="#">Texas Children in Nature</a> Initiative and from the policy team within City Council.</p>	<p>Austin City Council unanimously voted to pass COBOR on January 26, 2017 with the support of more than 1,000 citizens, key partners such as Austin Independent School District, and Mayor Steve Adler.</p> <p>A celebration at City Hall included media and children from Barrington Elementary School, a location of a new green school park.</p> <p>Both Texas Children in Nature and Watershed Protection of City of Austin launched social media campaigns regarding COBOR. <a href="#">Austin</a> activates their</p>	<p>COBOR by promoting a different right each month. The CCCN Coordinator sends blurbs to partners each month, who in turn promote different locations to complete each right.</p> <p>The COBOR inspired Texas Children in Nature to create a Campus Campout Guide to encourage schools to rethink their school grounds as parks. Campus Campouts is featured in an issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. The Austin Independent School District incorporates the outdoor rights into nature goals within its <a href="#">Sustainability Plan</a>.</p> <p>City staff bring the COBOR poster to many events, and it is featured in all City recreation centers and Austin Independent School District schools.</p>

## PATH TO ACTIVATION: *Helping cities execute a COBOR*

	GET STARTED	MOVE FORWARD	ACTIVATION
<b>WHO</b> <i>Target Audience</i>	Families, youth committees, grassroot organizations, city agencies, partners, elected officials	City agencies, families, partners, elected officials, grassroot organizations	Families, youth, city agencies, partners, grassroots organization
<b>WHY</b>	<p>Raise awareness of nature connection.</p> <p>Bring together community stakeholders and city leadership in a shared vision for children's time outdoors</p>	<p>Announce children's nature connection as a priority for the City</p> <p>Promote COBOR to new stakeholders and families</p>	<p>Provide new opportunities for or bring awareness to children's nature access</p> <p>Reduce barriers to nature access with a lens towards equity</p>
<b>WHAT</b>	<p>Hold community meetings and surveys both in person and online, include translations in common languages</p> <p>Invite to specific community organizations</p>	<p>Create a COBOR poster</p> <p>Host a kickoff event with partners, mayors, elected officials, families, and children</p> <p>Pass as a resolution</p> <p>Launch a media campaign</p>	<p>Embed COBOR rights in existing city programs such as after school programs, school curriculum, and child care programs</p> <p>Promote green spaces and activities where children can fulfill their rights</p> <p>Gather data on how many children complete COBOR rights</p> <p>Create a committee to address equity barriers that limit children's access to their outdoor rights</p>

## HOW TO ENGAGE

### ACCESS RESOURCES

Explore the CCCN Resource Hub, [www.childrenandnature.org/cccn](http://www.childrenandnature.org/cccn) offering a Municipal Action Guide, planning materials, and strategy tools.

### GET CONNECTED

Sign up for the CCCN newsletter at [www.childrenandnature.org/cccn](http://www.childrenandnature.org/cccn) and follow [#citykids2nature](https://twitter.com/citykids2nature).

*Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) is an initiative of the National League of Cities and the Children & Nature Network, made possible with support from The JPB Foundation. CCCN helps city leaders and their partners ensure equitable opportunities for children to play, learn and grow in nature, from urban parks and community gardens to the great outdoors. Find more planning resources at the [CCCN Resource Hub](http://www.childrenandnature.org/cccn).*