



# Green Schoolyards

*for Better Health & Learning*

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# The state of schoolyards today:

## One word: ASPHALT



- Not enough play area to engage all children during recess and PE
- Not designed for hands-on learning outdoors
- Does not excite, motivate kids to want to come to school
- Lack of green space= increased temps outside & higher cooling costs inside the school
- Asphalt replacement and repair costs
- Increased costs for snow plowing
- Increased flooding & inability to use the space for periods of time



# The potential of green schoolyards



- Ample play area to engage more children during recess and PE for increased physical activity
- Outdoor classrooms areas for hands on learning help meet Environmental Literacy Plan goals
- Reduction in stress levels, enhanced mental health
- Improvements in academic performance
- Increase in enrollment
- Increased student attention and attendance
- Increase in family and community engagement
- Lower energy costs for cooling buildings
- Reduction in schoolyard and local area flooding
- Schoolyard is available for use throughout the year and in different weather conditions

# What are green schoolyards?

The Children & Nature Network defines green schoolyards as multi-functional school grounds *designed for and by* the entire school community.

Green schoolyards include places for students, teachers, parents and community members to play, learn, explore and grow.

Green Schoolyards can include:

- Outdoor classrooms
- Native and pollinator gardens
- Storm water capture
- Traditional play equipment
- Nature play areas
- Edible gardens
- Trails and walking paths
- Trees, shrubs and more



**During out of school time**, green schoolyards are ideally open for community use.



# What if all schoolyards were green schoolyards?



Vancouver, Canada



SPARK! Houston, TX



# How would you feel if this was your schoolyard?

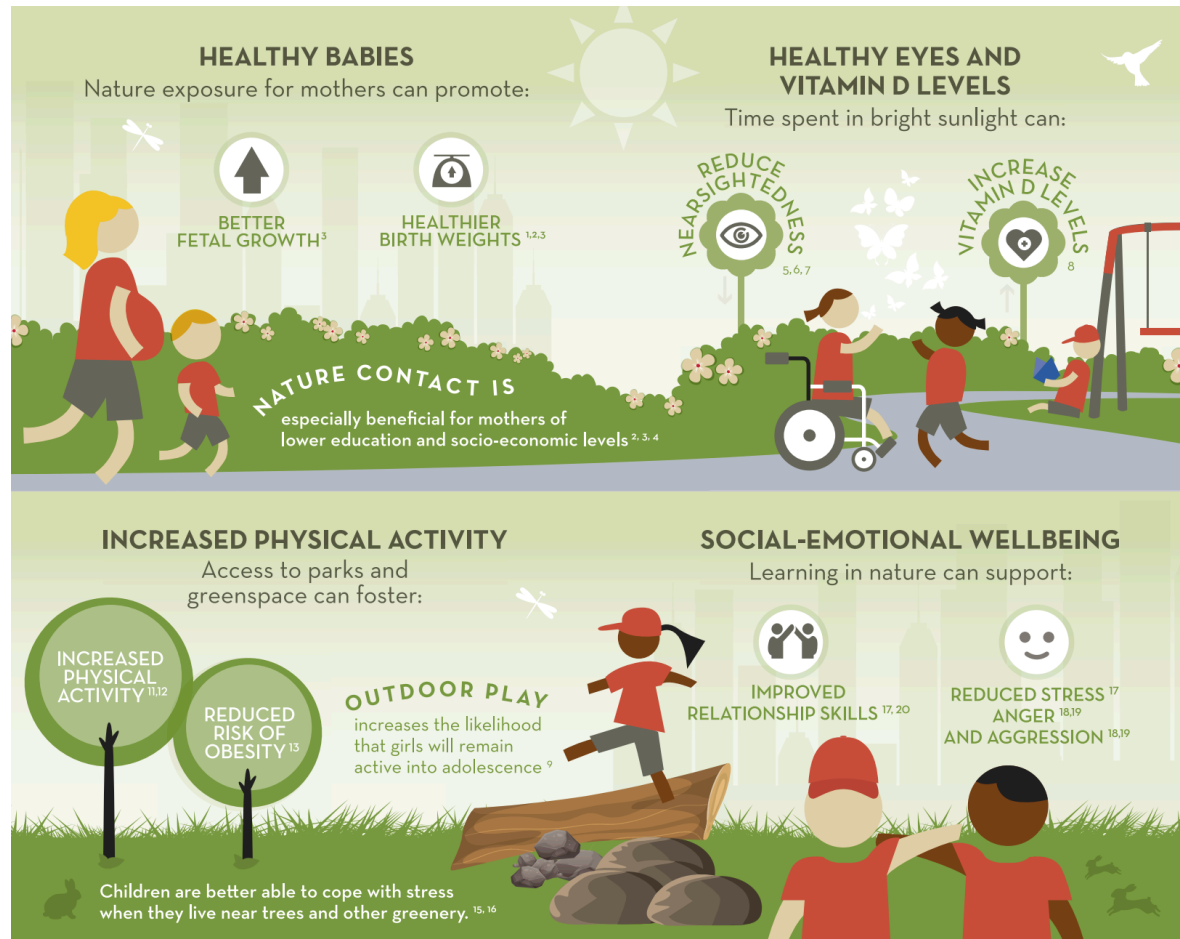


Grun Macht Schule, Berlin, Germany



Openlands, Chicago

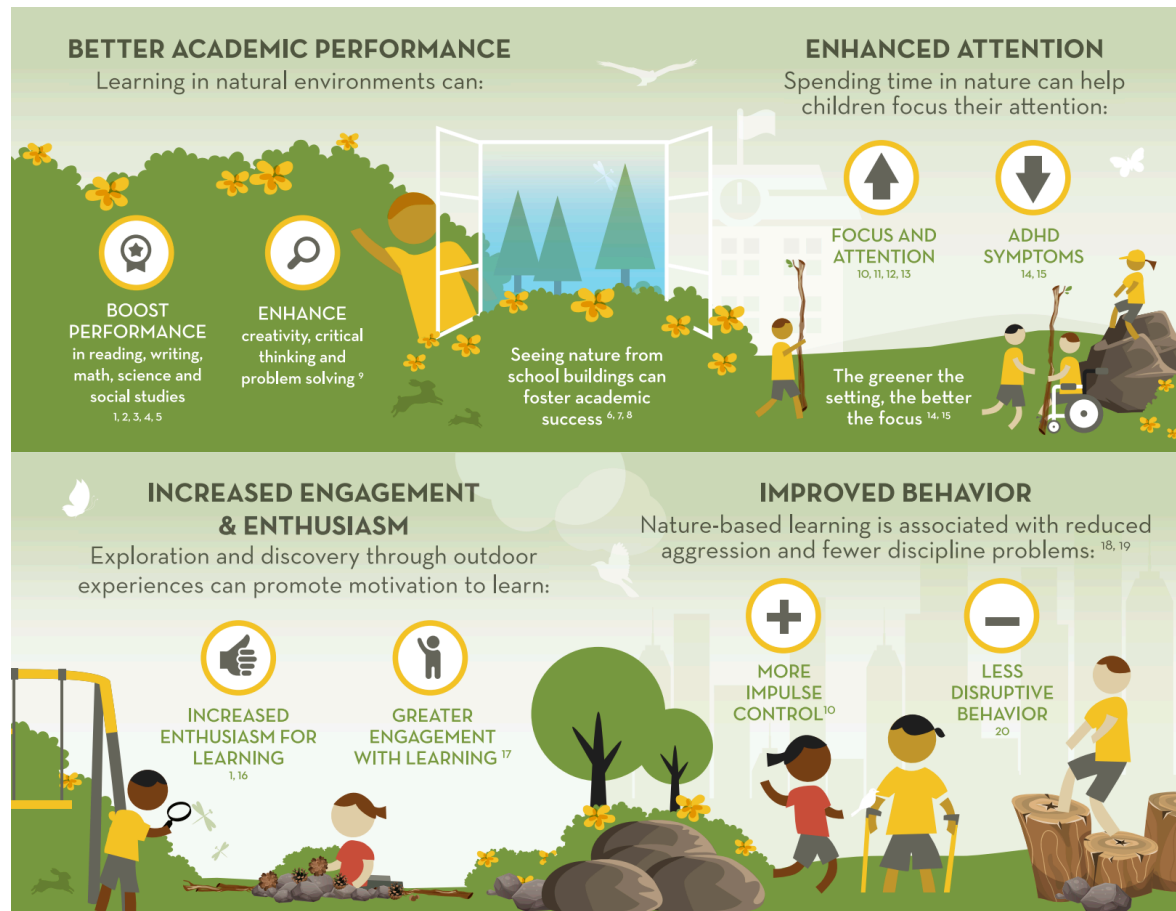
# Nature can improve health & wellbeing



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

Infographic available at [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)

# Nature can improve academic outcomes



Spending time in nature improves educational outcomes by enhancing academic performance, focus, behavior and love of learning.

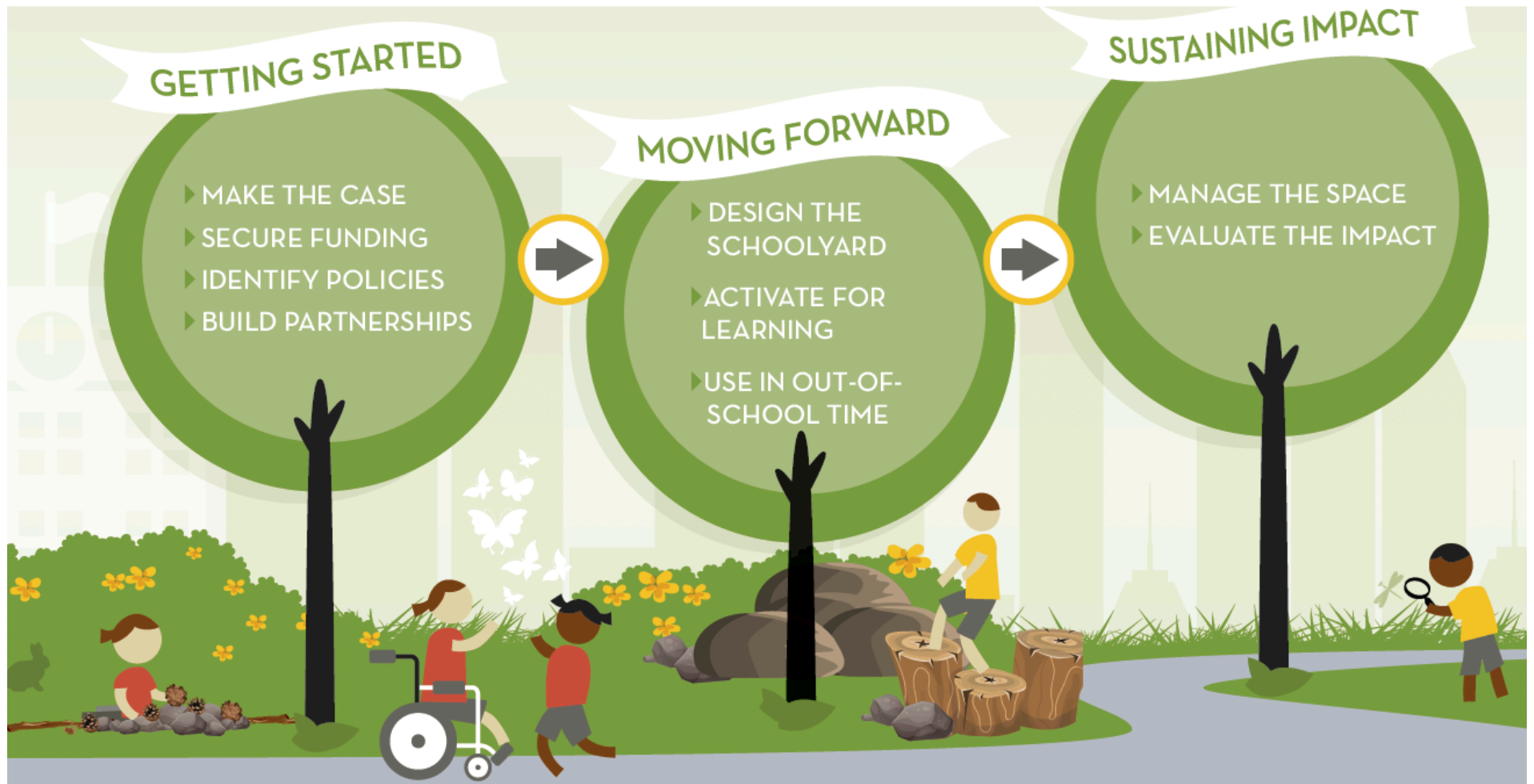
*Infographic available at [childrenandnature.org](http://childrenandnature.org)*



# Benefits of Green Schoolyards



# Building & sustaining green schoolyards



# Using green schoolyards as outdoor classrooms



OutTeach



Grun Macht Schule

With a few tools and some training, there is no limit to what can be taught outside...

Science

Math

Literature

Writing

Social  
Studies

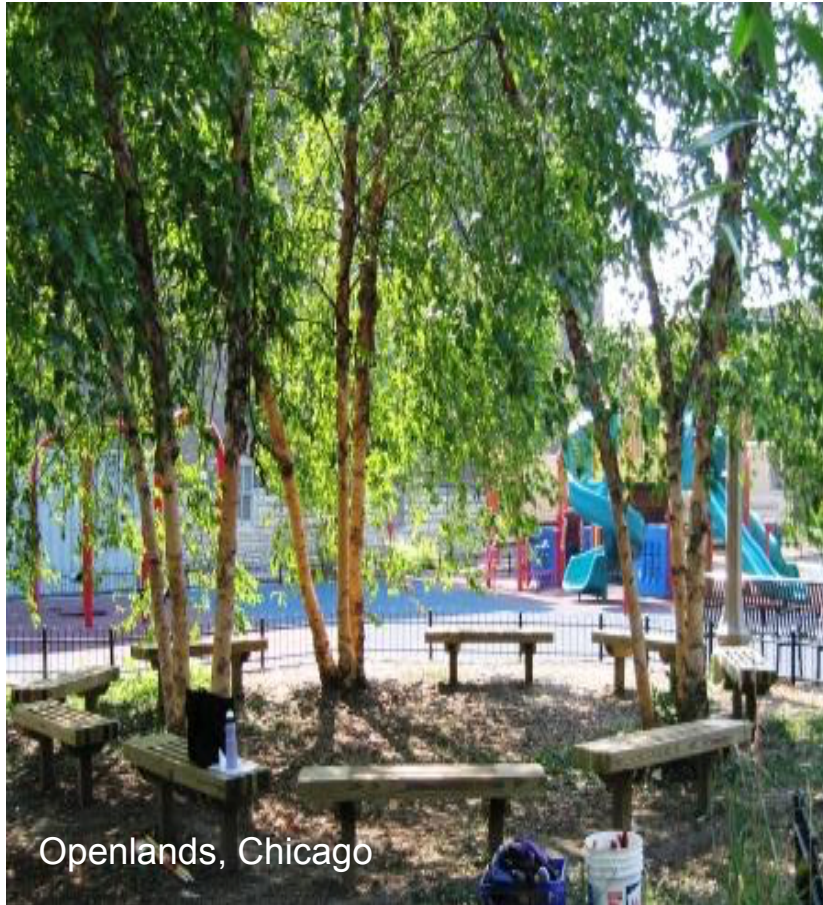
Art

Music

History



# Just about anything can be taught outside....



...and in doing so, green schoolyards:

- Improve mental health by enhancing mood and decreasing stress for better learning;
- Increase cognitive function and performance on standardized tests through improved focus, attention and executive function both during ***and after*** outdoor learning
- Enhance social-emotional functioning and pro-social and cooperative behaviors.



# Green schoolyard programs across the U.S.





# The #NYCPlaygroundsProgram



## *High Level Impacts:*

- 200 playgrounds across NYC's five boroughs
- 4 million New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk
- 18.5 Million gallons of storm water captured every year



Space to  
Grow  
transforms  
Chicago  
schoolyards  
into vibrant  
spaces to  
play, learn  
and be  
outside.



Health +  
Wellness



Outdoor  
Learning



Stormwater  
Management









We create students who:

- are excited by and engaged in DOING science
- have an enduring bond with the natural world



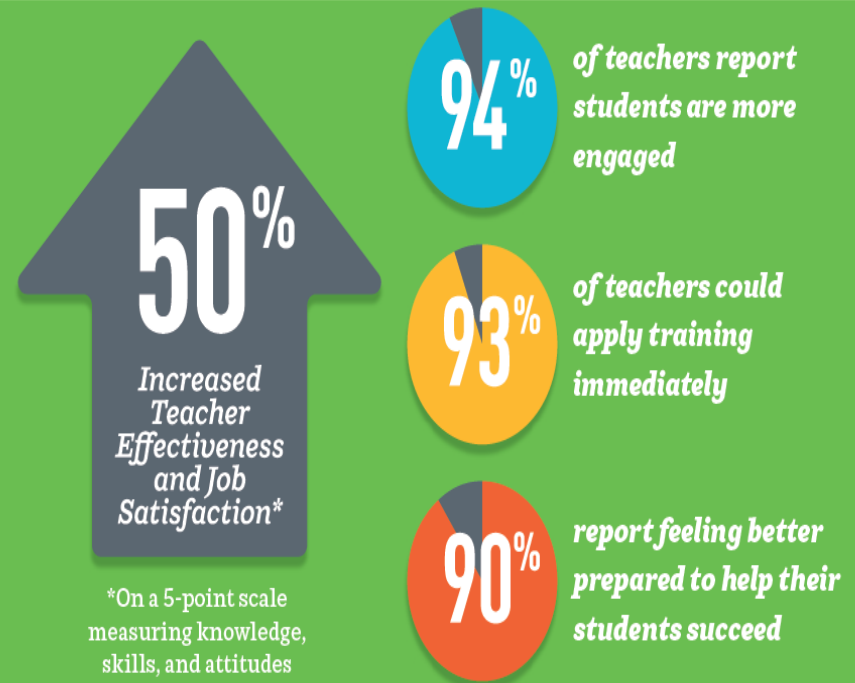




# Unlocking Student Performance



By combining our field-tested professional learning program with exciting outdoor learning labs, Out Teach equips elementary school teachers to go outside—beyond the classroom—to create transformational learning experiences and measurable results.



For more, visit [out-teach.org](http://out-teach.org) or email [info@out-teach.org](mailto:info@out-teach.org)



SPARK helps public schools develop  
their playgrounds into community  
parks.







Denver, CO





# More information

## Green Schoolyards Resource Hub



**EVENTS**



**RESEARCH**



**BLOG**



**NEWS**