

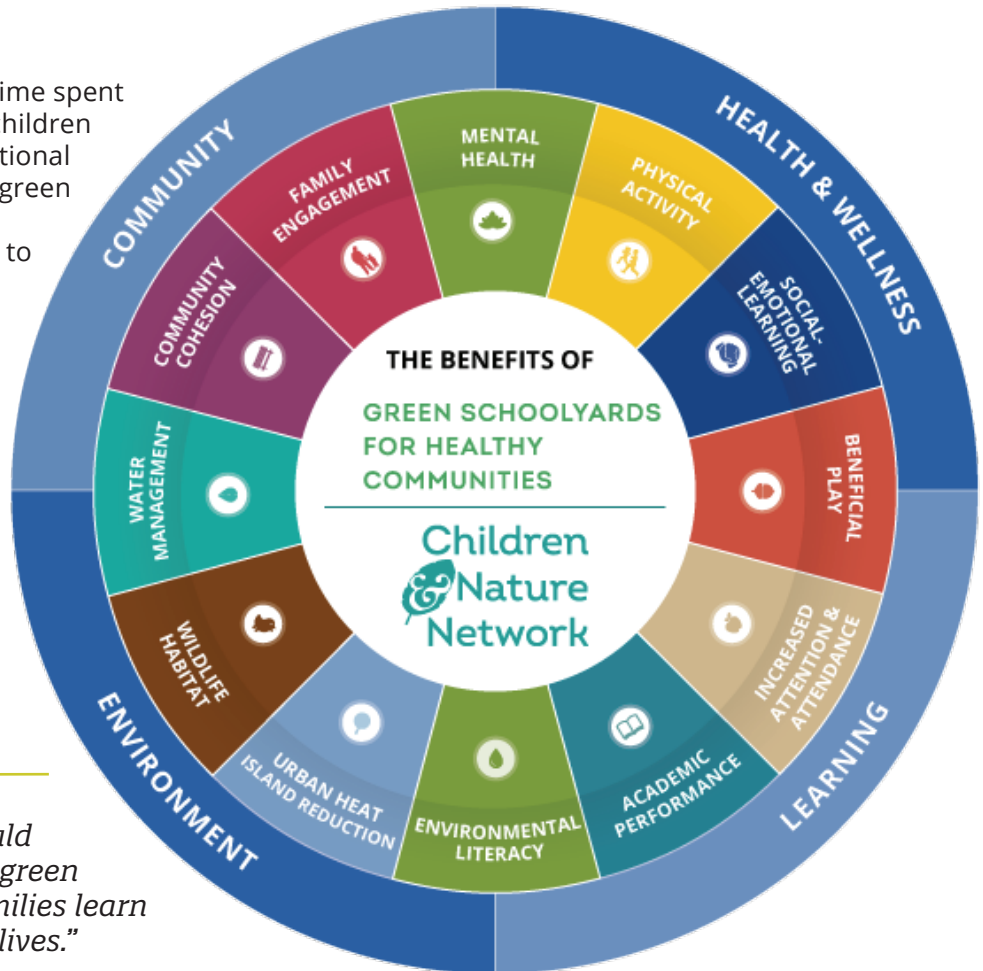
## WHY GREEN SCHOOLYARDS?

A growing body of evidence shows that time spent learning and playing in nature can help children reach their full academic and social-emotional potential. Regular access to high-quality green space improves mental and physical health—and inspires strong connections to the natural world.

While only a small percentage of U.S. schools currently offer nature-filled outdoor spaces, many communities are exploring green schoolyards as a strategy for increasing educational and health equity and enhancing the quality of life. The number of green schoolyards is growing as communities come together to transform asphalt and turf grass into enriching outdoor areas where children and families can learn, play and grow both during school hours and outside of school time.

*“Imagine how our communities would look and feel if all schoolyards were green schoolyards, where children and families learn and grow with nature in their daily lives.”*

—TERESA WEATHERALL NEAL, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MI



## WHAT ARE GREEN SCHOOLYARDS?

The Children & Nature Network defines green schoolyards as multi-functional school grounds designed for and by the entire school community that include places for students, teachers, parents and community members to play, learn, explore and grow. During out-of-school time, these schoolyards are ideally available for community use.



## Green schoolyards can include:

- >Outdoor classrooms
- >Native and pollinator gardens
- >Stormwater capture
- >Traditional play equipment
- >Nature play areas
- >Edible gardens
- >Trails and walking paths
- >Trees, shrubs and other plantings

## RESOURCES:

Visit the Children & Nature Network's **Green Schoolyards Resource Hub** to find tools for municipal leaders, administrators, school staff, parents and community members to develop successful citywide or school district-wide green schoolyard programs.