Evidence supporting the benefits of learning outside the classroom

**Education, Wellbeing, Health and Environment**

1. Natural England (2010) *Great Outdoors: How our natural health service can use green space to improve wellbeing*
   
   This paper argues that green space can play an important part in tackling a range of health and social problems - obesity, cardiovascular disease, mental ill-health, anti-social behaviour and health inequalities.

2. De Vries, S. (2001) "Nature And Health; The Importance Of Green Space In The Urban Living Environment"

3. Henwood K, (Feb 2001), *Exploring linkages between the environment and health: is there a role for environmental and countryside agencies in promoting benefits to health?*
   
   This report responds to increasing interest in the ‘health benefits’ of natural surroundings and the extent to which they contribute to the provision of public goods and services.

4. Peacock A, (Feb 2006) *Changing Minds, the lasting impacts of school trips*,
   
   A study of the long-term impact of sustained relationships between schools and the National Trust via the Guardianship scheme

   
   Literature review: Its scope covering youth and community work, education, youth social work and youth training, both in the UK and abroad.
   
   - What is the value to young people of adventure activities?
   - Can such activities contribute to young people’s development?
   - What constitutes an effective outdoor adventure?
   - How might the quality of young people’s experiences be improved?
   - What are the tools for effective evaluation?

   *Research now out of print - Reprint is due through the Institute of Outdoor Learning.

   
   Research showing the considerable health and well-being benefits of spending time in natural green spaces is growing.

   

   
   Major study involving over 5000 families from 80 youth camps..
   
   Report found significant growth in young people’s
   
   - Self-esteem
   - Peer relationships
   - Independence
   - Adventure and exploration
   - Leadership
• Environmental awareness
• Friendship skills
• Values and decisions
• Social comfort
• Spirituality

   Literature Review about the benefits of being outdoors.

   Examines the effects of adventure programmes on young people’s self concept and awareness, leadership skills, etc.

11. Ward Thompson C., Travlou P. & Roe J., Free range teenagers: The role of wild adventure space in young people’s lives,
    Undertaken on behalf of Natural England (formerly English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and Rural Development Service) to investigate how the “wild adventure space” can play an important role in meeting the developmental needs of young people (12-18yrs) across England. Evidence supports social development, physical health, educational development, community development etc.

12. Rees G. et al., Understanding Children’s Wellbeing: a national survey of young people’s well being, Children’s Society
   Research trying to determine what factors have the greatest impact on a child’s well-being. It looks at the components of well-being as: relationships; environments; self; freedom, choice and safety. “Young people who described themselves as having difficulties with learning were less happy with all aspects of their lives”

   Reviews the substantial evidence that supports the wide-ranging values and benefits arising from children's play in natural settings.

   This literature review examines existing research on health and the outdoors - highlighting the key ways in which researchers have, thus far, examined the links and reported causality and effects.

   A study commissioned for Playday, shows that 51 per cent of children aged seven to 12 years are not allowed to climb a tree without adult supervision. It also showed that children’s experiences of adventure are now confined to designated areas such as playgrounds, their homes or theme parks. Play Scotland, the body which works to promote the importance of play for all youngsters in Scotland, responded to the research by backing the call for a re-think of the risk-averse culture when it comes to children’s’ play.

   A statistical bulletin which presents a range of information on obesity, physical activity and diet, drawn together from a variety of sources. It shows how obesity and inactivity in young people is on the rise.


19. England Biodiversity Strategy group on Education and Public Understanding The Vision: A society in which people recognise, value and take action to maintain and enhance biodiversity as part of their everyday lives – in the same way that they might address health issues, the community in which they live, or their economic circumstances.

20. BTCV, Inspiring People, improving places: the positive impact and behavioural change achieve through environmental volunteering. Although this focuses on volunteering there is a link with learning outside the classroom and shows being outdoors has a direct impact on young people and societal targets including social cohesion, health, mental well being etc. ‘Nine out of 10 young volunteers said they learnt something new’. The report also Looks at social return on investment.

21. Environmental Socialization: Quantitative Tests of the Childhood Play Hypothesis. Environment and Behavior 34:795-818. Two studies with adolescent youth (N = 1,376, N = 450) help clarify the relationship between childhood play experiences in wild environments and later environmental preferences in the life domains of work, leisure, and school. Respondents reporting having played in wild environments had more positive perceptions of natural environments, outdoor recreation activities, and future indoor/outdoor occupational environments. No significant differences were found for preferences for environmental sciences activities conducted in schools. Results suggest that childhood play in wildland environments is related to environmental competencies and preferences but not necessarily an intellectual interest in environmental sciences or environmentalism.

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22. Parsons, G. (2007) Heading Out - Exploring the impact of outdoor experiences on foundation stage children, Learning through Landscapes. Explores the impact of outdoor opportunities upon the development of foundation stage (3-5 year old) children and in particular the provision provided by early years settings. It includes the findings from published research and the impact of positive intervention at two case study early years settings.


This report, commissioned by the RSPB, looks at the evidence linking wildlife-rich areas and green space with mental health. Past generations have intuitively understood this relationship, perhaps better than we do, yet the evidence needed to quantify the health value of the natural environment is still evolving.

Explores the link between well-being and the natural environment.

Research exploring the how physical activity and nature can affect wellbeing with evidence indicating that nature can contribute to health and reduce stress.

**Education & Culture**

Research investigating the impact on attainment of secondary-age pupils completing a piece of assessed work as a result of a museum visit.


Research to explore the impact of learning for schools and community groups across 12 projects. A large amount of evidence was collated. Contact with 29,701 school pupils and 503 teacher questionnaires were completed. The twelve projects worked towards social inclusion and community cohesion.

A report on the evaluation of the outcome and impact of learning as a result of the Education Programme Delivery Plans in 69 museums. 19% of the school visits in the study came from Super Output Areas (SOAs) classified as being amongst the 10% most deprived in England; 32% of visits were made by schools located in 20% most deprived SOAs.


35. Ofsted (2008), Learning outside the classroom - how far should you go? At a time when the government is actively promoting learning outside the classroom, this report evaluates the importance of such learning in primary and secondary schools and colleges.


Inclusion, alienation, social deprivation, youth crime, social mobility.

38. Sutton Trust (2010) The Mobility Manifesto, A report on cost-effective ways to achieve greater social mobility through education. The report assesses the relative cost benefit of a number of the Trust’s existing projects. Improving levels of social mobility for future generations in the UK would boost the economy by up to £140 billion a year by 2050 in today’s prices – or an additional 4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over and above any other growth. The Manifesto notes that summer camps that mix learning with fun: “have shown substantial improvements in participants’ reading scores … which disproportionately impacts on those from lower socio-economic groups”

39. Nunn, A., Johnson, S., Monron S., Bickerstaffe, T. & Kelsey, S. (2007) Factors influencing social mobility – a literature review. Department for Work and Pensions, Leeds ‘Education appears to be on of the most important factors influencing social mobility.’ Improvements in the education system/offer hasn’t improved social mobility. The report suggests this is due to the more well-off being able to capitalise on the educational offer.

40. Mannion G.(2003) Children's participation in school grounds developments: creating a place for education that promotes children's social inclusion, International Journal of Inclusive Education You need to be a subscriber to download this paper


42. Outdoor education teachers and adventure therapists have argued that a systematic approach to experiential learning through challenge can develop participants trust, social competence and group cohesion. Thereby, facilitating a real engagement with school and family. This study supports this claim, demonstrating significant gains in social competence for 22 Year 8 students participating in the three stage Adventure Based Learning Experience (ABLE) program as compared to the control groups.
44. School Grounds of the Future - DfES & LTL
   Evaluation of the 3year programme demonstrating how school grounds can be managed to benefit children's learning and development, and provide an asset for the whole community, through the use of devolved capital.


46. Chillman, B. Do school grounds have a value as an educational resource in the secondary sector? Sussex University and LTL
   Review of research relevant to secondary school grounds development.

47. Learning through Landscapes (2005), Early Childhood Education Outdoor Play Survey

   Identifies benefits of hands-on outdoor learning on student engagement, achievement, behaviour, health, safety and environmental awareness. It argues for greater institutional support of green school grounds.

   Comparison of children’s experiences and expectations whilst in the Foundation Stage and Year One. "The amount of time children in Year 1 spend sitting still and listening to the teacher should be reduced. Year 1 teachers should be encouraged to increase opportunities for active and independent learning and learning through play"

   The first national survey of state sector school grounds in Scotland sought evidence on the current attitudes toward and use of school grounds to inform national debate on how to target resources more effectively, support new initiatives and establish best practice in Scottish education.

   This report is the culmination of an extensive research programme on outdoor learning in Scotland supported by SNH and LTS to provide the background to allow key government agencies and their partners to stimulate appropriate outdoor learning development.

**Other reports, surveys, books and journals**


   The outcome of the Cambridge Primary Review – England’s biggest enquiry into primary education for over forty years. Fully independent of government, it was launched in 2006 to investigate the condition and future of primary education at a time of change and uncertainty and after two decades of almost uninterrupted reform. Ranging over ten broad themes and drawing on a vast array of evidence,
the Review published thirty-one interim reports, including twenty-eight surveys of published research, provoking media headlines and public debate, before presenting its final report and recommendations.

55. QCDA (2010) *The aims of the curriculum*


58. DCSF (2005) *Residential opportunities available for young people through schools*
   This research maps out the nature of residential opportunities available for young people aged 7 to 16 while at school. The survey was drawn from 100 schools from each of the nine government regions in England and Wales, making a total of 900 contributing schools.

59. DCSF (2009) *Attitudinal barriers to engaging young people in positive activities: literature and communications review*

60. Risk and Regulation Advisory Council (2009) *Response with responsibility: policy-making for public risk in the 21st century*

   Frank Furedi argues that the greater danger in our culture is the tendency to fear achievements representing a more constructive side of humanity.

   There is overwhelming evidence of the benefits of out-of-school learning. It is likely to be particularly important for disadvantaged students who have fewer material and cultural resources in the home to supplement their classroom work. However, despite the research evidence and political moves to promote out-of-school learning, it would appear that the provision of such activities is increasingly threatened by resource constraints, regulation and risk aversion. The research reported here set out to investigate how schools experience these and other difficulties and how they differentially affect the provision of and participation in out-of-school learning activities.

63. DCSF (2007) *Early years foundation stage: effective practice: outdoor learning*

64. House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee (2010) *Transforming education outside the classroom*