

## Want Healthier Kids? Let them Play Outdoors!

Science shows that children learn best through play. The need for unstructured play and hands-on experiences in nature are essential components of wholesome child development. Teachers involved in nature-based learning report more student motivation and note significant gains in social studies, science, language arts, math and environmental literacy. Free play in natural areas has been shown to reduce the effects of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder when these children have regular access to the outdoors; sometimes known as Green Therapy or Eco-therapy.

***Most importantly, 90% of children in a 2007 study on outdoor activity, report that adventurous play makes them feel happy!***

There are lots of ways that parents and professionals can right the balance of children and nature in their daily lives: Let the children play. If safety is a concern, go on nature play dates. Take the time; all of these benefits are good for adults too! Get informed about the physical, emotional and cognitive benefits of nature for children. Introduce a Green Hour to a child's day to give them a regular "dose" of unstructured, outdoor play for an hour a day.

If you can't participate yourself, motivate your child's school to take the students on an adventure trip at an environmental facility such as the **Ganaraska Forest Outdoor Education Centre**. There, children are given multiple opportunities for hands-on learning experiences, a chance to understand the interdependence of human beings and the environment, and the opportunity to be immersed in a whole other world for a day trip or a residential stay.

Consider enrolling your child in the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority's **Nature Nuts Summer Camp**. Children ages 6 – 14 participate in weekly, environmentally themed camps, to learn more about the natural world around them. New this year, is a four-day overnight trip at the amazing Great Outdoors Adventure Camp.

To find out more about how to give children the gift of nature call 905-885-8173 or visit our website at: [www.ganaraskaforestcentre.ca](http://www.ganaraskaforestcentre.ca)

