

Opportunities for Collaboration and Systems Change: *Increasing Access to the Outdoors in Santa Barbara County*

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Children & Nature Network

Our Mission

To increase equitable access to nature so that children—and the nature world—can thrive.

We support and mobilize leaders, educators, activists, practitioners and parents working to turn the trend of an indoor childhood back out to the benefits of nature—and to increase safe and equitable access to the natural world for all.

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Systems Change

Everyone has a Role - Even Youth!

Positive Change Is Possible



Many communities are searching for ways to bring nature's benefits to all children, *but* long-standing conditions (policies, power dynamics and perceptions) can make change difficult.

Achieving real and lasting change requires a community-based approach to dismantling systems of inequity, or in other words, a systems change approach.



***Anyone can inform elected officials
and public agencies!***

Engaging Youth, Families, and Communities

- Discussing issues with elected officials and public agencies
- Adding civic engagement to existing programming
- Adding a youth component to an existing public policy effort
- Creating a youth advisory board
- Joining or building a coalition



Types of Issues

- Funding for programs
- Improved parks and green spaces
- Climate and sustainability planning
- Green schoolyards
- Environmental education
- Joining statewide efforts





Public Policy Efforts

Examples from Around the Country

Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

- A COBOR is a list of rights for children's access to nature that are adopted by a legislative body or executive offices.
- COBOR can be used to create and align programming across organizations. It can also serve as a checklist of activities for youth to engage in annually.
- Youth and communities shape and design a COBOR.



Green Schoolyards



Pittsburgh, PA

- Green schoolyards as nature-filled outdoor spaces that offer students, teachers, and community members places to play, learn, and explore.
- Can support learning, mental health, and other infrastructure needs of the school such as stormwater and extreme heat management.

Park and Outdoor Access

- Creating programming at, safety strategies for, or the redevelopment of parks and green spaces.
- Great place-based and tangible idea that can be led by youth and communities.
- Engagement could include advocacy, design, ongoing advisory role



Thornton, CO



Breakout!

What role could your program or agency play in systems change?

What support would you need to work at a systems level?

What barriers might make this work difficult?

What are some needs from the public sector for your work?

What role can Children & Nature Network play?

Thank you!

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