

# Sowing the seeds: Reconnecting London's children with nature <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

Excerpts from the introduction:

This report was commissioned by the London Sustainable Development Commission to explore how children in London can be reconnected with nature, and the benefits that may be experienced as a result. The report focuses on children under the age of 12 and on nature that has the potential to be experienced as part of children's everyday lives (rather than in one-off residential trips or adventure activities).

Most children have a natural affinity with nature. Surveys consistently show that they would like to get outdoors more, and that they value the chance to have contact with nature; views that are also held by their parents. Two thirds of London's area is made up of green spaces or water, and ten per cent is designated as Metropolitan Open Land, yet children's experiences of natural places in the capital have been in long-term decline, as a result of societal changes that have been unfolding for many years. Statistics suggest that one third of London's families visit natural places only every two months or less frequently. One in seven had not made a single visit over the course of a year.

The decline is steeper for children in poorer families and some Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Children in London face additional barriers compared to those in many other parts of the UK, as a result of high population densities, pressure on green space, deficiencies in green space in many areas and poorer access to private gardens.

Some of London's children depend for their experiences of nature on the work of a range of organisations. Research found initiatives taking place in schools, early years and childcare settings, parks and green spaces, woodlands, nature reserves, adventure playgrounds and city farms. They vary widely in scope, reach and cost. However, the fieldwork confirmed that collectively they reach only a small proportion of the capital's 1.1 million children under the age of 12: potentially as low as 4 per cent.

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This report puts forward 12 recommendations to address these issues, and to make contact with nature a part of everyday life for more of London's children. The first, fundamental recommendation is to establish a shared vision. Recommendations 2 - 6 focus on policy and strategy developments to achieve this vision. Recommendations 7 - 12 suggest ways of supporting practice and delivery. These recommendations are designed to prompt action that can be started now, but with the timeframe of a generation or more in mind.

**Related link:** Children growing up 'disconnected from the natural world' <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Europe <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** curricula and pedagogy <sup>[5]</sup>

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