

# NATURE'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH



HOW  
TO  
HELP!

## DID YOU KNOW

➔ **BEING IN NATURE IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH.** It reduces stress, anxiety, rumination, and depression. Just 20 minutes connecting with nature can relieve stress.<sup>1</sup>

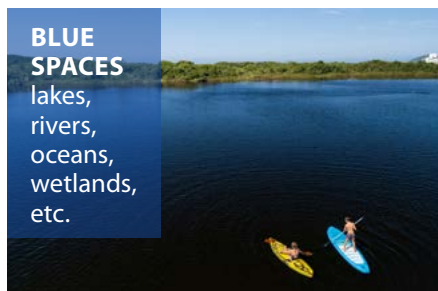
➔ **GREEN SCHOOLYARDS IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR KIDS.** Schools surrounded with green elements like grassy areas, trees, and flowering plants, and playgrounds designed with natural elements and limited asphalt are linked to many benefits, including better student mental health.<sup>2,3</sup>

➔ **BLUE SPACES HAVE A SPECIAL IMPACT.** Childhood exposure to water is linked to long-term positive impacts on brain health and adult well-being.<sup>4</sup>

➔ **PLAYING OUTDOORS IS FOUNDATIONAL TO KIDS' HEALTH.** Natural light, fresh air, and outdoor play helps to calm a child's brain. This reset improves focus, cognition, and memory.<sup>5</sup> Unstructured outdoor play also builds social skills and peer connections.



**GREEN SPACES**  
parks,  
yards,  
forests,  
gardens,  
etc.



**BLUE SPACES**  
lakes,  
rivers,  
oceans,  
wetlands,  
etc.

### GIVE KIDS A NATURE SNACK!

Aim for a minimum of 20 minutes a day, regardless of the weather. Giving multiple short outdoor breaks throughout the day is effective. Never withhold recess or outdoor time as a punishment.<sup>6</sup>

### WRITE A PARK PRESCRIPTION!

Doctors and therapists can recommend low-cost remedies by writing [prescriptions](#) for "nature pills" that prescribe time in green or blue spaces.

### PRIORITIZE PLAY!

Scheduling and protecting time outdoors for kids of all ages to play, whether during recess or summer camps or family time, is essential to their well-being.

### PLANT TREES!

More tree canopy supports long-term brain health, purifies the air, lowers the temperature, and can enhance social cohesion.<sup>7,8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frontiers in Psychology (2019), doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00722](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00722)

<sup>2</sup> International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (2021), doi: [10.3390/ijerph18020535](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020535)

<sup>3</sup> Children & Nature Network. [Green Schoolyards for Health Communities](#).

<sup>4</sup> Journal of Environmental Psychology (2022), doi: [10.1016/j.jenvp.2022.101876](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2022.101876)

<sup>5</sup> Landscape and Urban Planning (2015), doi: [10.1016/j.landurbplan.2015.02.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2015.02.005)

<sup>6</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics (2026), [The Crucial Role of Recess in School](#).

<sup>7</sup> Environment International (2020), doi: [10.1016/j.envint.2020.106102](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2020.106102)

<sup>8</sup> International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (2019), doi: [10.3390/ijerph16030452](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16030452)



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JUNE 2026