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Studies show that exposure to plants and nature improves learning and helps kids in many important ways.

Playing in natural settings helps develop creativity and imagination. It promotes problem solving, supports intellectual development, and enhances children's ability to concentrate and to gain and retain new information.

In particular, nature-based experiences support academic gains in social studies, science, language arts and math.¹

Plants Make Life Better

Plants help kids learn.

Being around plants also helps build positive social relationships and cooperation. Green settings enhance peace and promote self-control and self-discipline with inner-city youth, especially girls.

Besides the obvious benefits of active physical play, just being in nature has been found to reduce the symptoms of attention deficit disorder (ADD), so outdoor activities can effectively supplement medicinal and behavioral treatments.^{2,3}

By Elizabeth Petersen

Photo by Matthew Rainwater/www.realschoolgardens.org

SOURCES:

¹Benefits of connecting children with nature: Why naturalize outdoor learning environments (The Natural Learning Institute, 2012).

²Hall, Charles R., & Dickson, M. W. (2011). Economic, environmental, and health/well-being benefits associated with green industry products and services: A review. *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* 29(2): 96-103.

³Green Cities, Good Health. Retrieved from <http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/>.

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