

From muddy hands and dirty faces... to higher grades and happy places



Why schools need to champion outdoor play (and learning) for the sake of the planet, the health of our children and because it's plain common sense.



Cath Prisk

Director, Outdoor People
Global Partnerships Director, Outdoor Classroom Day



**'HAPPY HEARTS AND HAPPY FACES
HAPPY PLAY IN GRASSY PLACES -
THAT WAS HOW, IN ANCIENT AGES,
CHILDREN GREW TO KINGS AND SAGES.'**

Robert Louis Stevenson, A Child's Garden of Verses, 1888



MUDDY HANDS, HAPPY FACES.... WHY PLAY AND LEARNING OUTDOORS

OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM
DAY

- 1) Outdoor play, playful learning and learning outdoors....
- 2) Outdoor Classroom Day – a global campaign
- 3) The state of outdoor play and outdoor learning worldwide
 - Why is play and learning important at school?
 - What stops children getting outdoors?
- 4) Why schools are key influencers
- 5) Impact of Outdoor Classroom Day so far....



**"THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR,
COMPELLING AND ROBUST.**

PLAY IS NOT JUST A 'NICE TO HAVE'.

**IT IS NOT A 'A SHAME' CHILDREN
DON'T PLAY OUTDOORS AS MUCH AS
THEY USED TO.**

IT'S A TICKING TIME BOMB."

#MUDDYHANDS



CHILDREN SPEND LESS TIME OUTDOORS THAN PRISONERS....



'Dirt is Good' is the core 'purpose' of our funder, Persil, and this statistic encouraged them to invest in taking the campaign global from 2016

CHILDREN NOW SPEND LESS TIME OUTDOORS THAN A PRISON INMATE FREE THE KIDS #DirtIsGood



OUTDOOR PLAY, PLAYFUL LEARNING AND LEARNING OUTDOORS....



GETTING OUTDOORS AT SCHOOL...



Outdoor learning refers to any adult-directed lessons that are held outdoors.

Play is directed by the child, is not constrained or directed by the adult and is a process engaged in for its own purpose.

Playful learning is learning directed by an adult, but where the child controls their own engagement – the intention is that it should be fun, playful and experiential.

Outward Bound is training and adult supported adventurous activities outdoors usually offsite, and usually a dedicated residential stay rather than weekly

Forest school is a pedagogy that started in Europe and can be summarised as a play-based, child-led and playful way of enabling a learning experience outdoors, usually for children between 2 and 6 years-old

Playtime refers to all break times throughout the school day.



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN



WHY TARGET SCHOOLS?



*90% of all children
worldwide are in school...*
Unicef

That's where the children are!

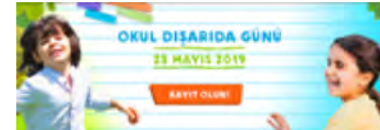
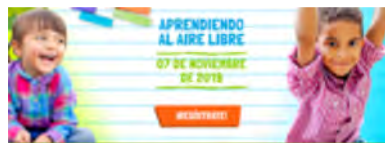
Outdoor Classroom Day

is a global campaign...

Celebrating outdoor learning and play at school.

Inspiring schools everywhere to make outdoor learning and play part of **every school day**.

Reaching parents, communities and policy makers worldwide, to make **real play** part of **every single day**.



CHANGES WE ARE CALLING FOR

Outdoor learning is part of every school day for every child

Every child has great recess/playtime at school every day for at least 60 minutes, with the longer-term aim of 90 minutes

Schools act as advocates for more time outdoors, so that outdoor play becomes part of every child's everyday life.

#OutdoorClassroomDay

#MuddyHands



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY - A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN



Since 2012

> **130** countries

> **50,000** Schools

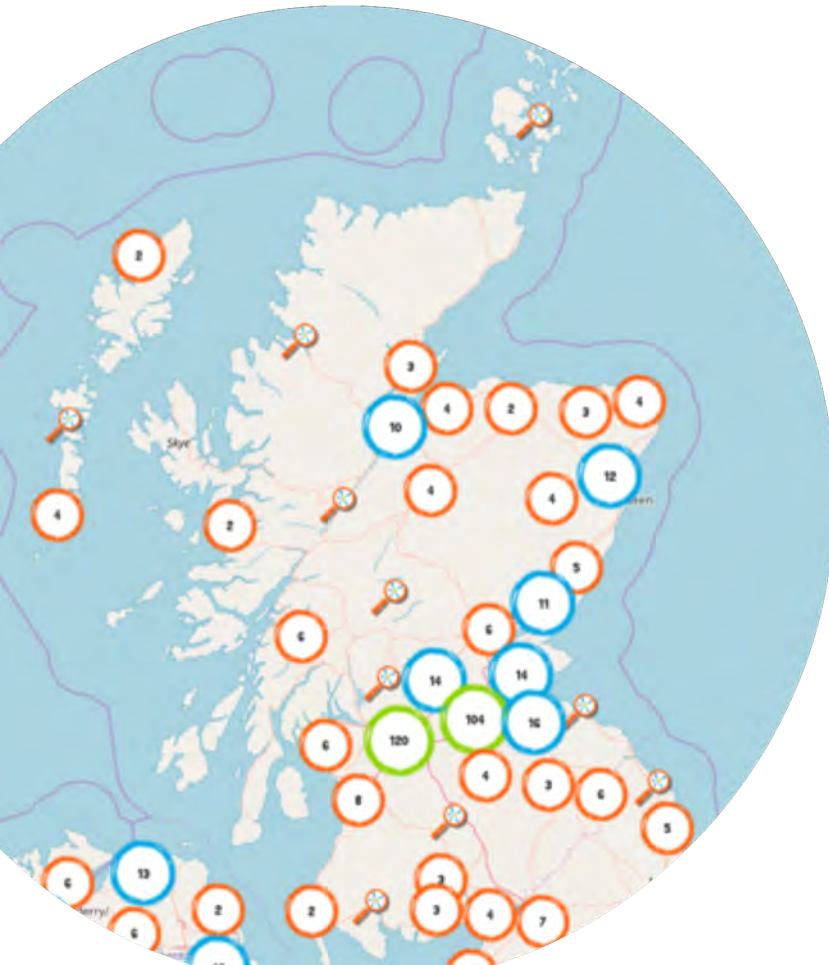
> **3 million** Adult
volunteers

> **6 million** Children

> **18 million hours**
outdoors...



**25% OF ALL THE
SCHOOLS ACROSS
SCOTLAND SIGNED
UP TO SAY THEY
BELIEVE IN
OUTDOOR LEARNING
AND PLAY IN 2018**



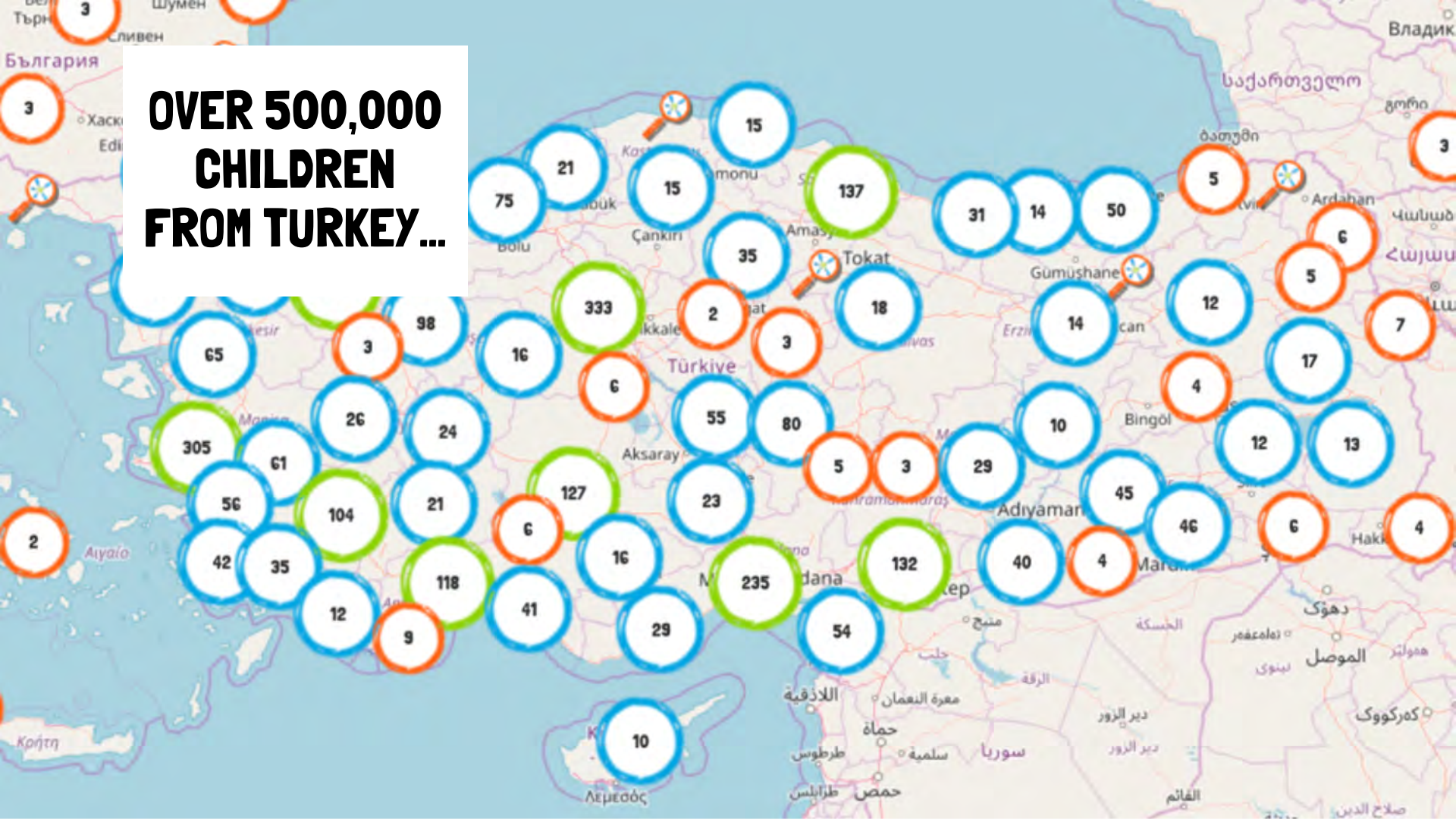


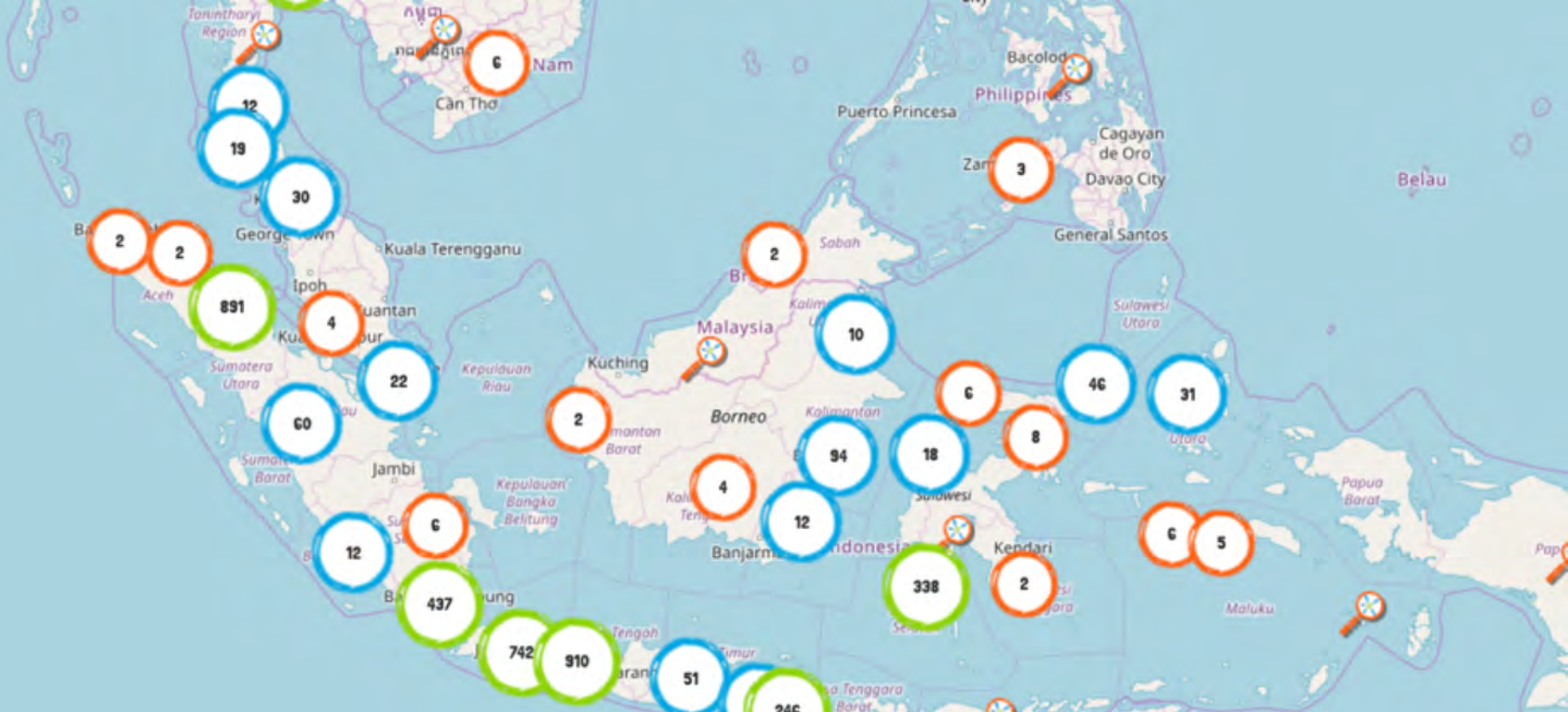
**>30% OF AUSTRALIAN
SCHOOLS JOINED IN
2018**



**ALMOST 500,000
CHILDREN FROM
NORTH AMERICA**

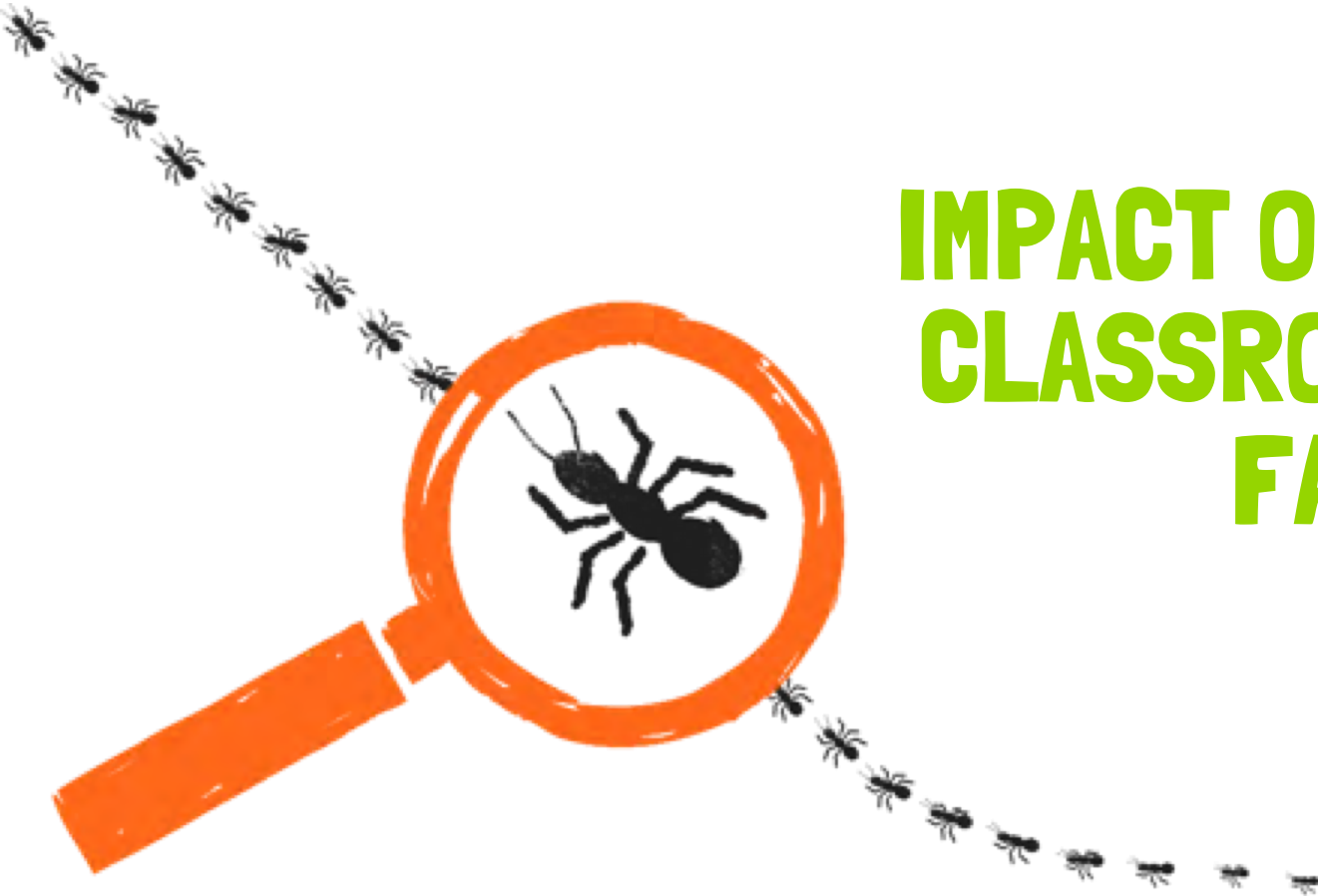
**OVER 500,000
CHILDREN
FROM TURKEY...**





AND ALMOST 1 MILLION CHILDREN FROM ACROSS INDONESIA

IMPACT OF OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY SO FAR....



WHY DOES THIS CAMPAIGN WORK?

- Getting involved in Outdoor Classroom Day is a non-threatening introduction to the power of outdoor learning and – importantly – the importance of playtime
- It introduces schools to experts (like Scotland's own Juliet Robertson who wrote the campaign's guide to outdoor learning), so they know how to get started
- It builds COMMUNITY
- But most of all it makes it a NORMAL part of every day, simply common sense

#MUDDYHANDS
#OUTDOORCLASSROOMDAY



GROWING EXPONENTIALLY

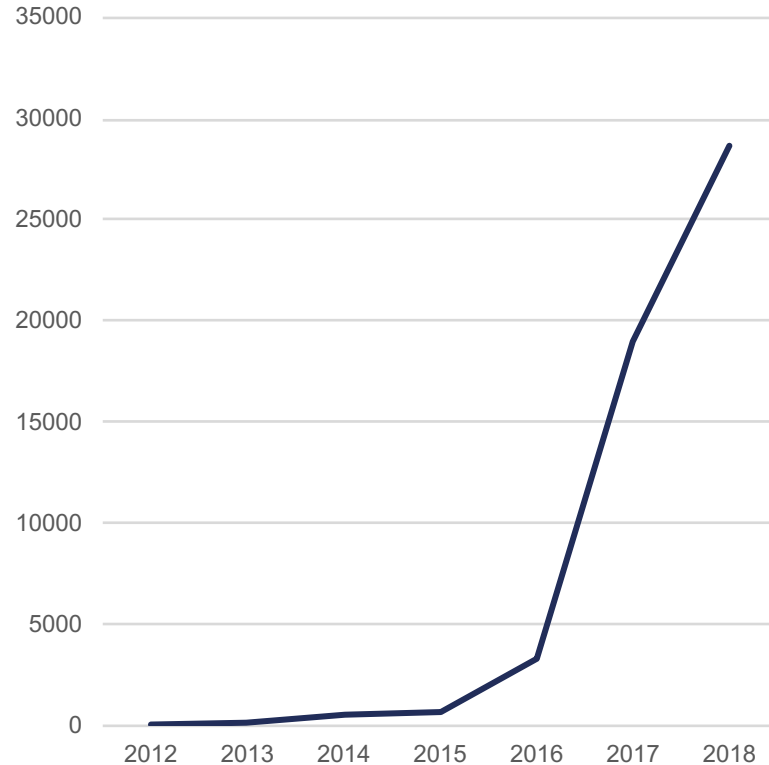
2016

51 Countries
3,354 Schools
481,261 Children
? adults

2018

113 Countries
28,681 Schools
3,538,338 Children
10,349 Parents

Number of Schools



OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM
DAY



PROJECT
DIRT



SCHOOLS LOVE IT... AND SO DO CHILDREN!



"We loved this initiative and now are planning all activities keeping in mind the need to go outdoors. We understand that lessons conducted outdoors provide children with opportunities to learn in ways that may not be possible in a traditional indoor classroom."
Dubai

"This was a great way to get me thinking about getting them outside. It was almost like having *permission* to make it happen because it was a *global event, which administrators and others can get behind!*"
USA

"Sometimes parents complain about the dirty clothes. Some teachers think it is a waste of time.
The Kids love It."
- Teacher from school in Brazil



Barbara Dagg
@MsDaggsClass



Following

@OutdoorClassDay Definitely the moment when one kid threw her arms around me and said "this has been the best day ever!" 😊 #outdoorsisbest



'At first, parents here did not appear to understand and appreciate the value in outdoor learning.

However, once they began to see changes in their children such as eating and sleeping better, eager to get to school and sharing stories of the day's events, parents were on board.'

Teacher from Australia



Since getting involved in
Outdoor Classroom Day...

**44% of schools told
us they increased
outdoor learning**

#MuddyHands

Source: Muddy Hands Report 2019



Since getting involved in Outdoor Classroom Day...

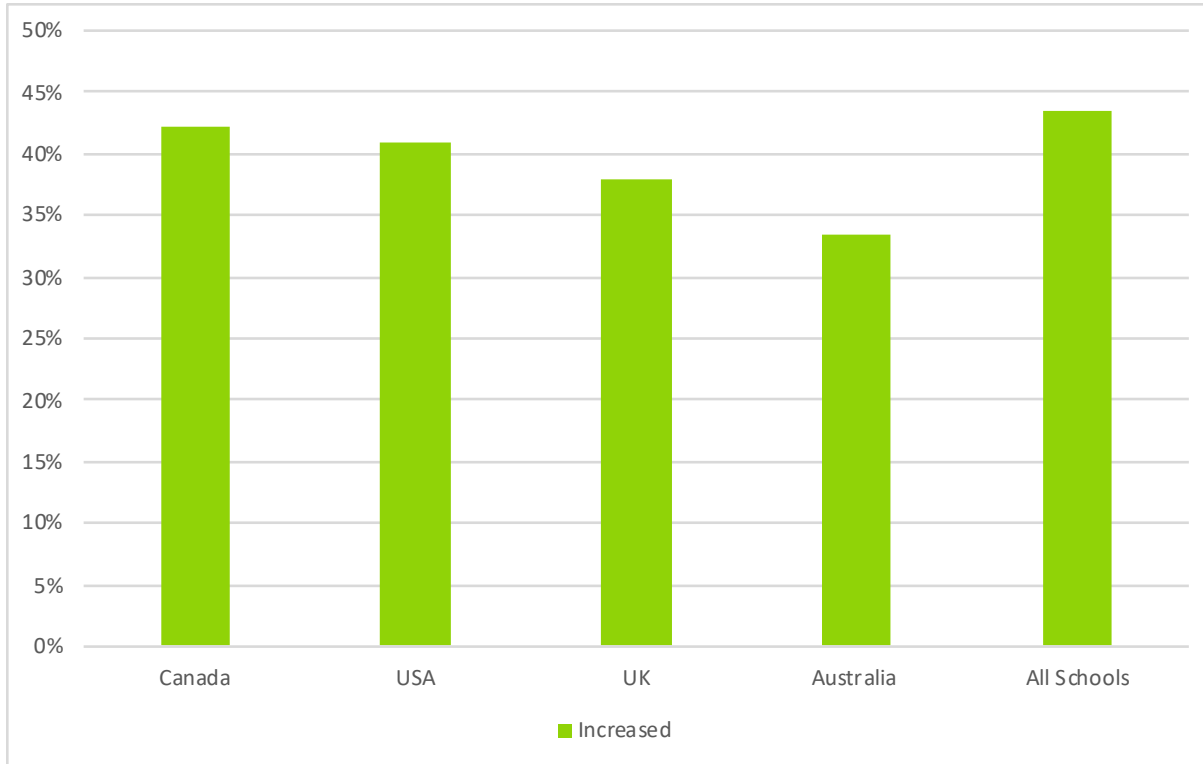
22% of schools told us they increased playtime!

#MuddyHands

Source: Muddy Hands Report 2019



44% INCREASED OUTDOOR LEARNING

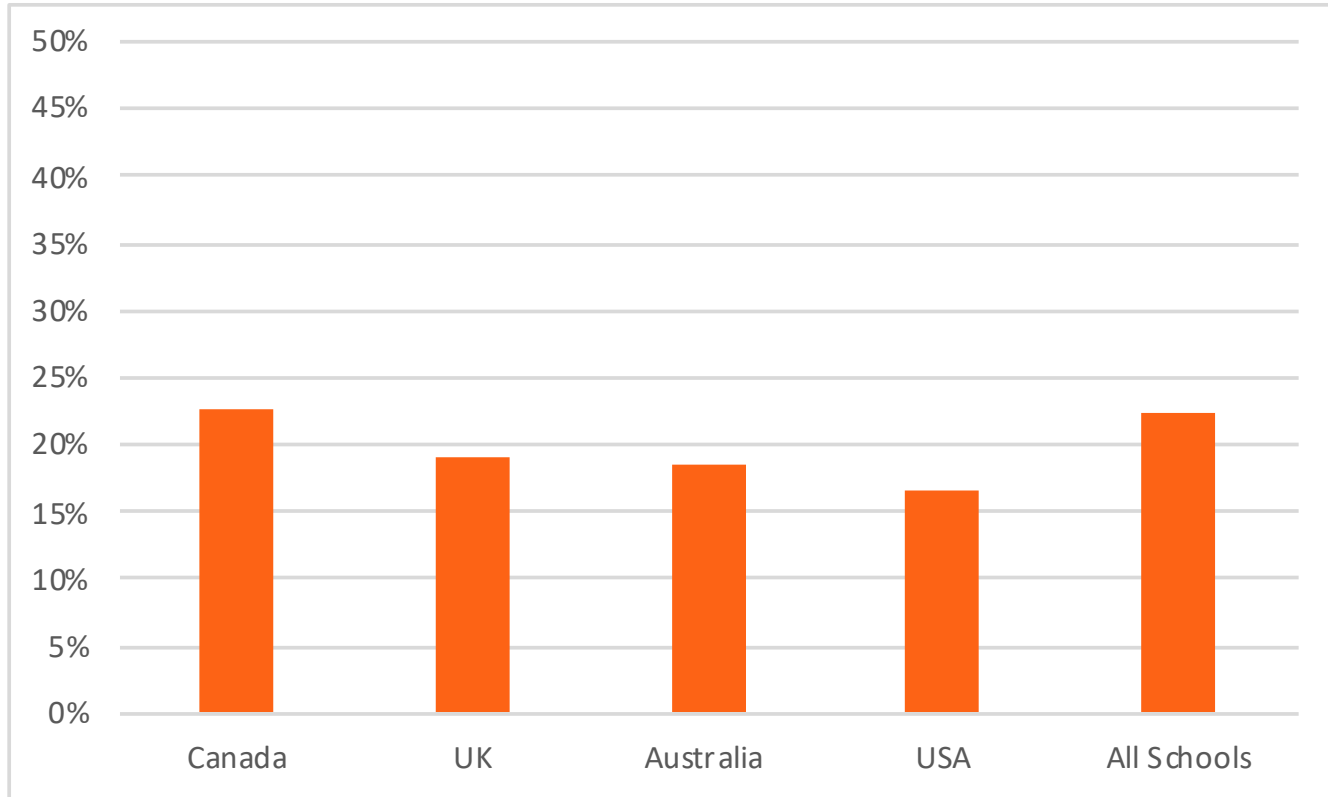


44% worldwide increase in Outdoor Learning since getting involved in Outdoor Classroom Day

This can offer an easy entry point...



22% INCREASED OUTDOOR PLAY



22% increase in outdoor play world wide since getting involved in outdoor classroom day...

Early indications suggest this is increasing in 2018



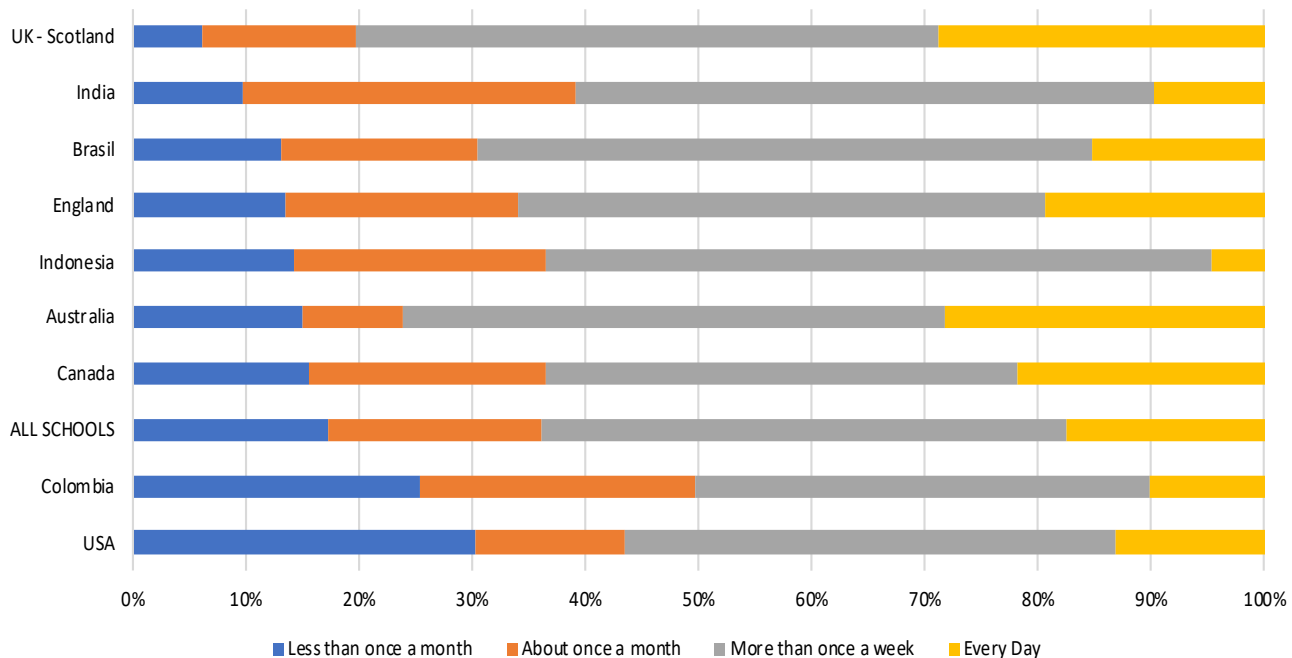
THE STATE OF PLAY AND OUTDOOR LEARNING AROUND THE WORLD (OR WHY OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY IS IMPORTANT...)



FREQUENCY OF LEARNING OUTDOORS



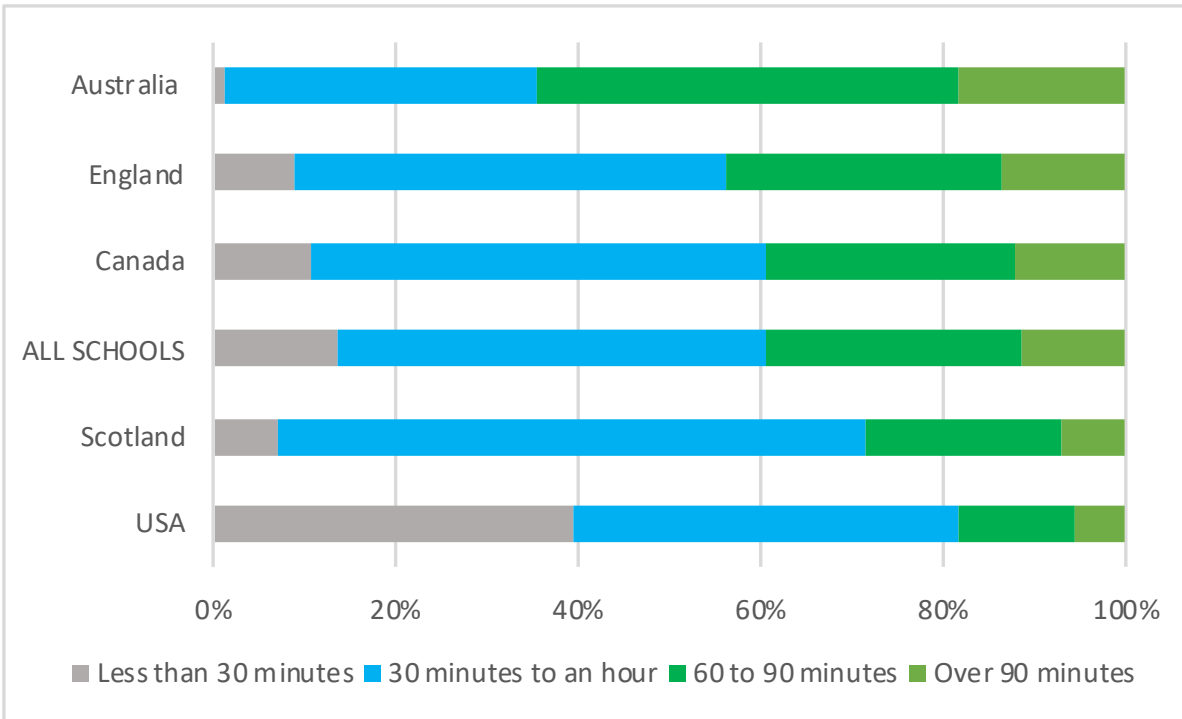
Frequency of Outdoor Learning (all schools)



Countries	Less than once a month
UK - Scotland	6%
India	10%
Brasil	13%
England	13%
Indonesia	14%
Australia	15%
Canada	16%
ALL SCHOOLS	17%
Colombia	25%
USA	30%



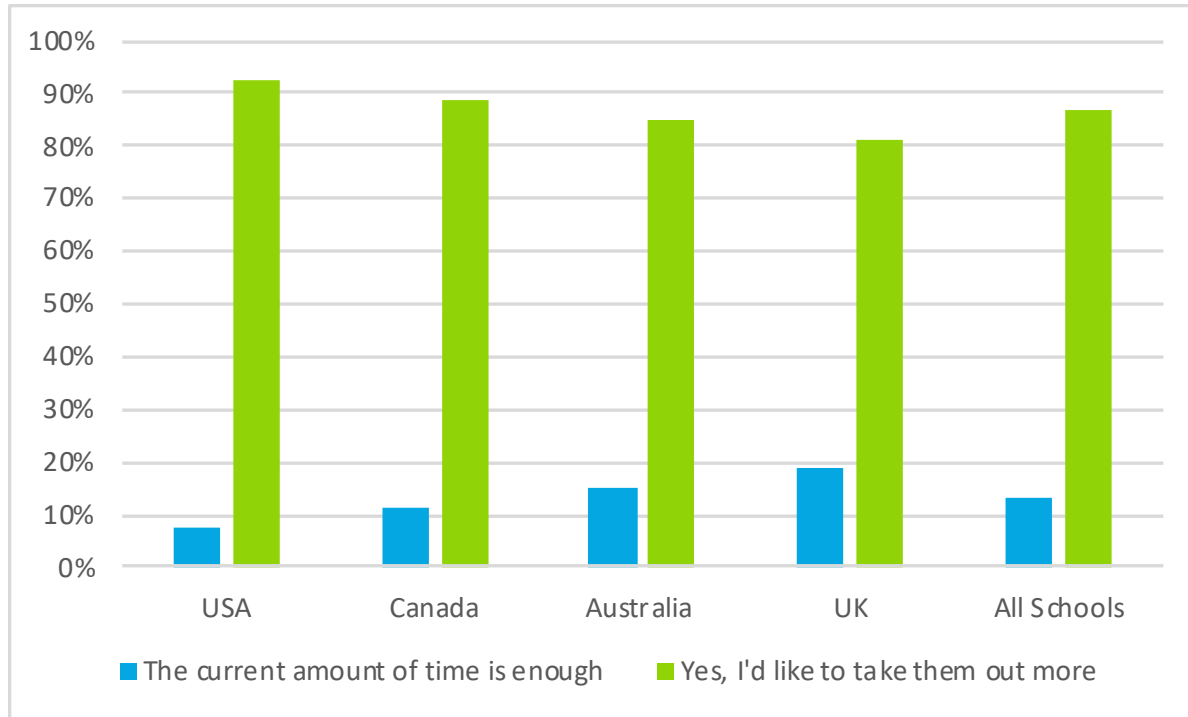
FREQUENCY OF PLAYTIME



Countries	Over 60 Mins Playtime
Australia	64%
England	44%
Canada	39%
ALL SCHOOLS	39%
Scotland	29%
USA	18%



WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE YOUR PUPILS OUTSIDE MORE OFTEN?



4 out of 5 teachers worldwide want to take pupils outside more often



WHY IS PLAY AND LEARNING IMPORTANT AT SCHOOL AND BEYOND?



'97% of teachers worldwide believe that time to play outdoors throughout the school day is critical for children to reach their full potential.'

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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**OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM
DAY**



PARENTS BELIEVE PLAY INFLUENCES CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT



Creative thinking and expression of ideas



92%

Social skills and empathy for others



91%

Fine motor skills and coordination



90%

Problem solving skills



90%

Sharing and taking turns



90%

Strength and Endurance



88%

Memory and concentration



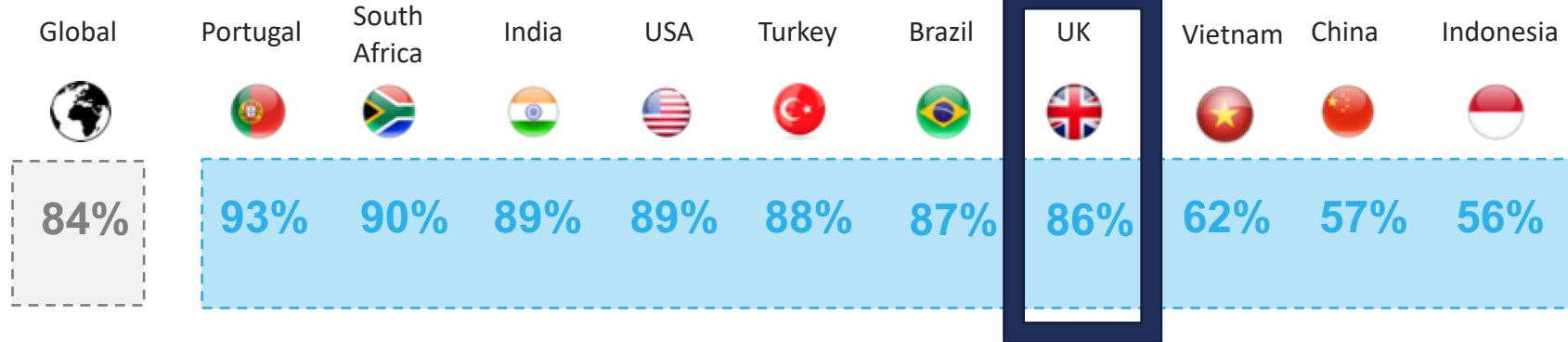
89%

Q12. On the scale below, please indicate how much influence you believe play has on developing the following areas for children (Net strong influencer: 7,8,9,10 on a 10 point scale) Total base: 12,170



BUT MANY PARENTS BELIEVE THEIR CHILDREN DON'T GET TO PLAY AS MUCH AS THEY SHOULD

Children do not get to play as much as they should



Q14. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Q20. Which of the following skills do you think it is important for your child to learn? Total base: 12,170

CONNECTING TO PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT



'86% of teachers worldwide say that playing outdoors gives children a better understanding of the environment.'

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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**'NO-ONE WILL PROTECT
WHAT THEY DON'T CARE
ABOUT AND NO-ONE
WILL CARE ABOUT WHAT
THEY HAVE NEVER
EXPERIENCED**

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH



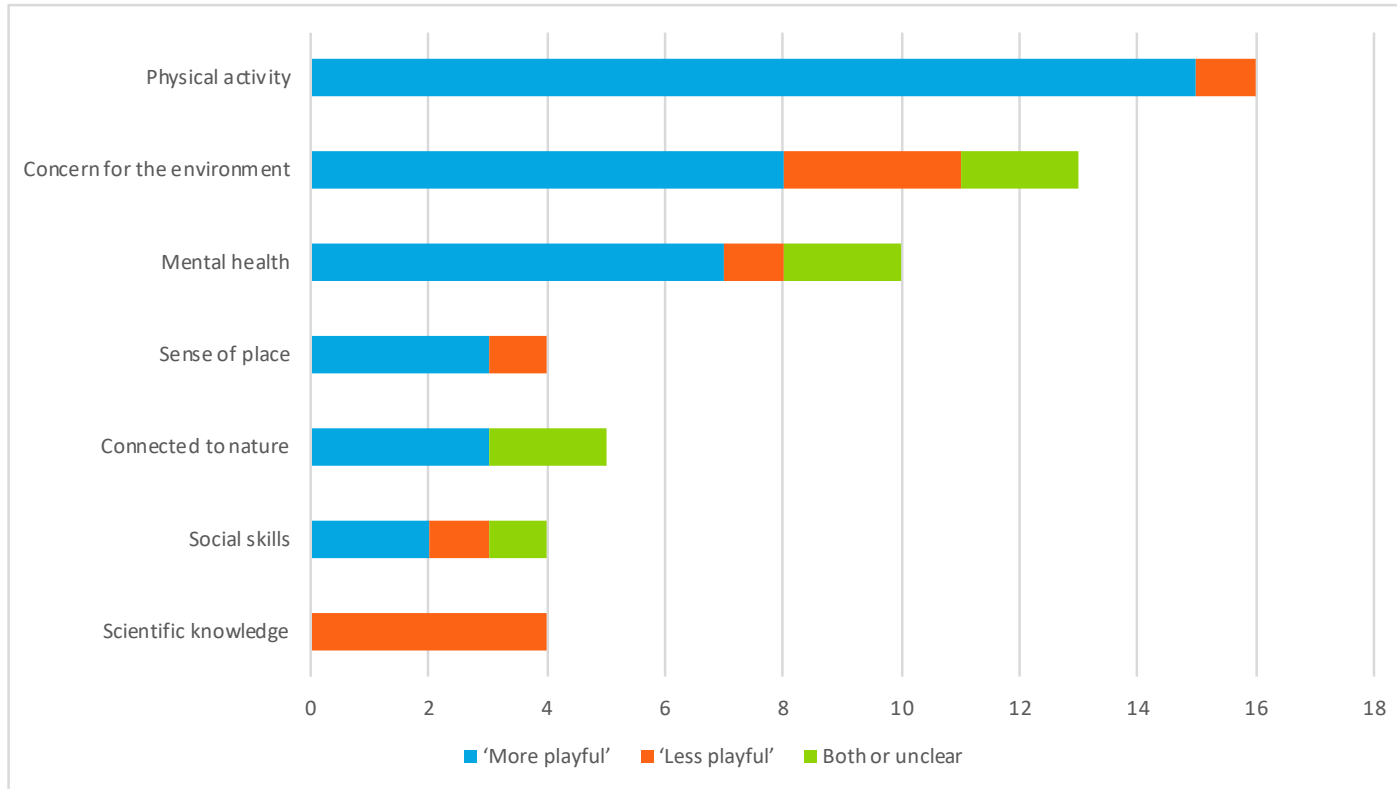


'Playing outdoors builds an appreciation for the natural environment – from head to heart to hand (learning, appreciating and taking action for conservation).'

Teacher in South Africa, Muddy Hands report

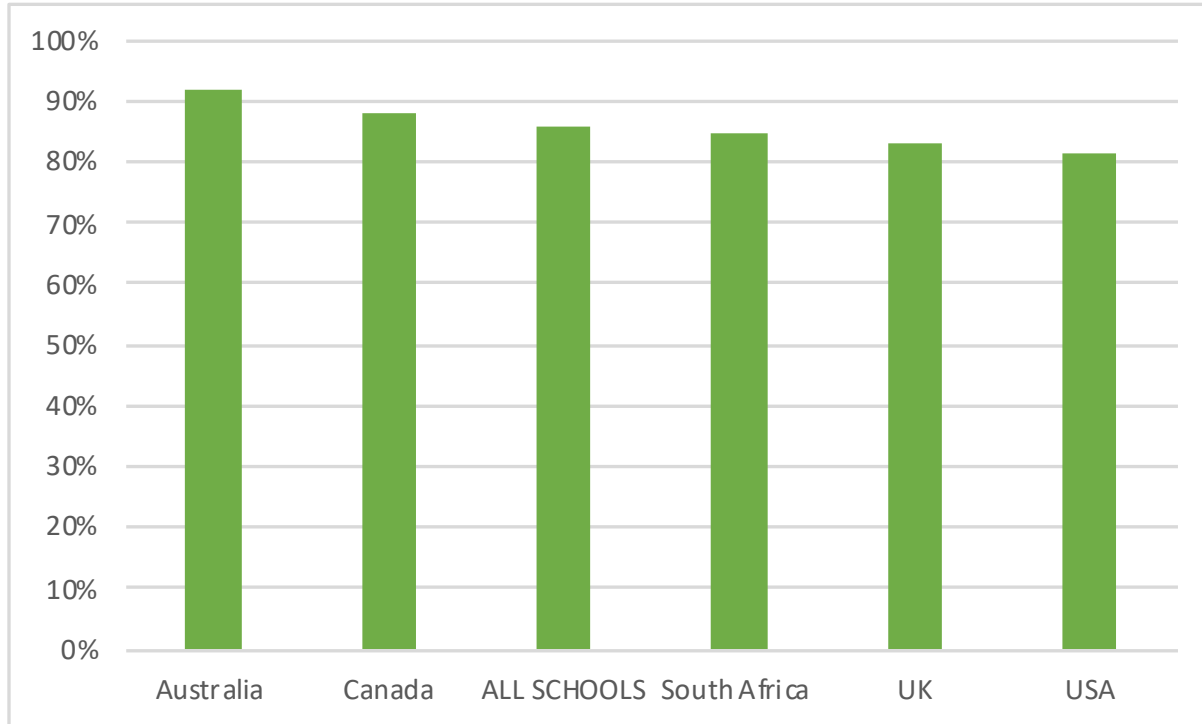
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TYPES OF INTERVENTION AND LONG TERM IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR



Tim Gill, Sowing
the Seeds, 2011

AFTER BEING OUTDOORS CHILDREN HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENVIRONMENT



"I think that all skills can be acquired from playing outdoors, but certainly environmental understanding can only truly come from being in it!"

(Teacher in Canada)

"Students learn to love and respect their surroundings as well as each other."

(Teacher in India)



IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES





'Play is fundamentally important for learning 21st century skills, such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity, which require the executive functioning skills that are critical for adult success.'

American Academy of Pediatrics (2018)

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**'We don't grow into
creativity, we grow out
of it. Or rather, we get
educated out of it.'**

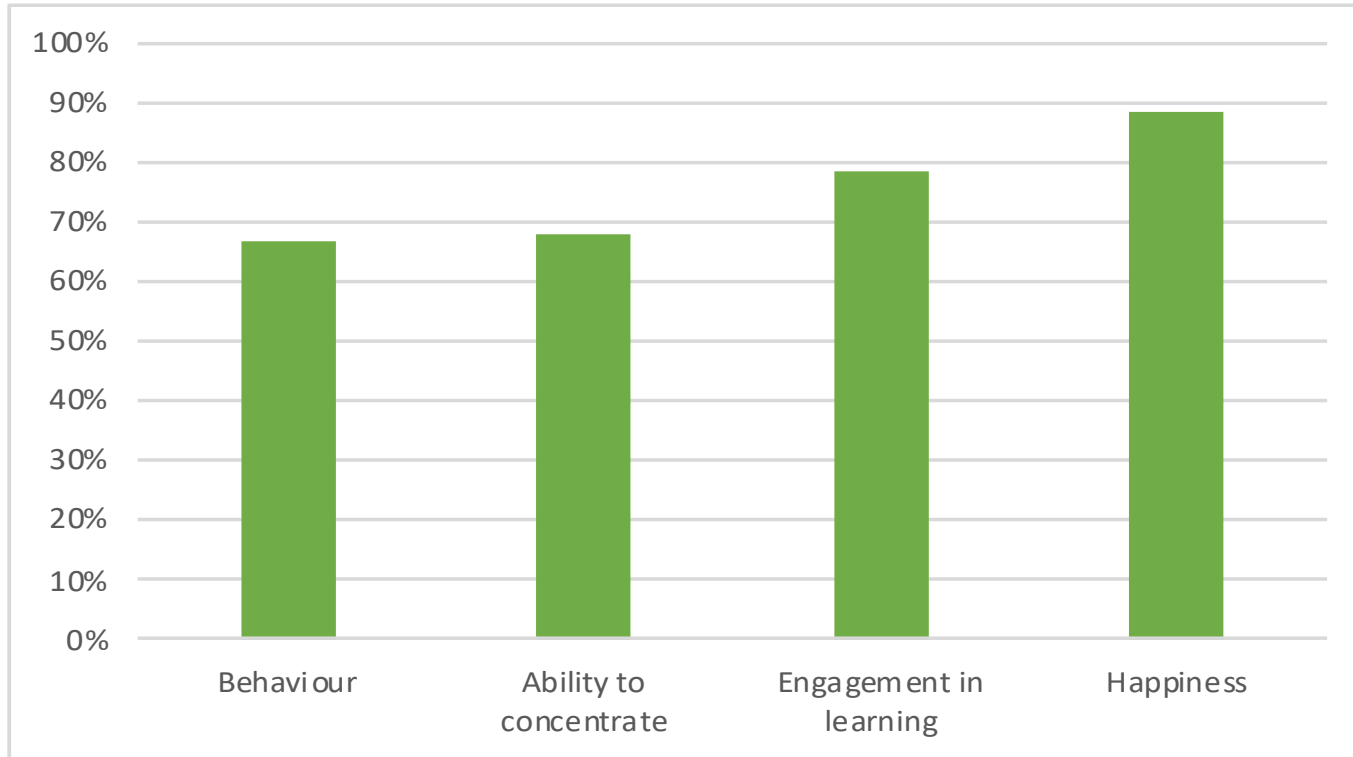
Sir Ken Robinson



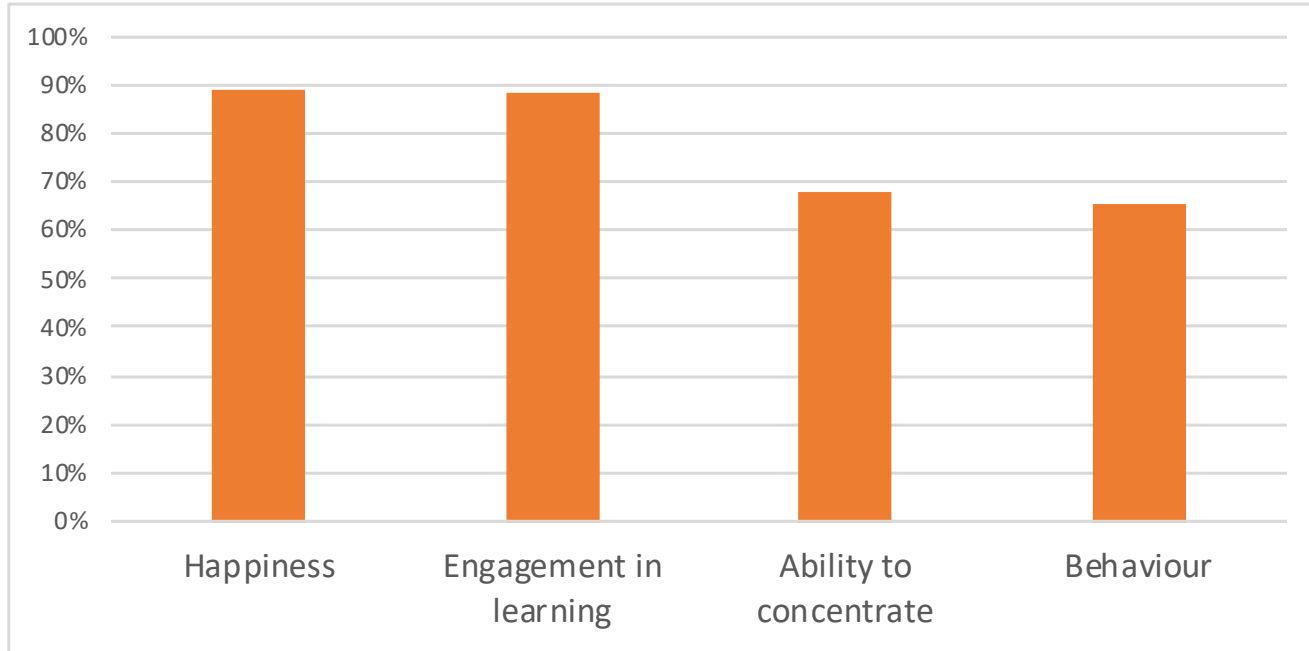
KEY SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH PLAYING OUTDOORS



CAPABILITIES IMPROVED AFTER PLAYING OUTDOORS



CAPABILITIES IMPROVED WHEN LEARNING OUTDOORS



“Our children frequently ask to work anywhere but the classroom as this provides space and independence for them to flourish.’

(Teacher in the UK)



**'94% of teachers
worldwide say that
children develop
imagination and
creativity from
playing outdoors'**

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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**'88% of teachers
worldwide say that
children are more
engaged in learning
when taking part in
lessons outdoors.'**

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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All the schools involved in the trial (increasing playtimes length and frequency) have, so far, reported:

- improved on-task behaviour,**
- better attention to task,**
- less fidgeting and**
- improved focus among children,**

when compared to children of a similar age and background not involved in the programme

D. Rhea, Liink Project, Texas.



PHYSICAL HEALTH



'Letting children go out to play is one of the best things that parents can do for their children's health: outdoor play uses more calories than clubs and tuition.'

Mackett, (2004).

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'Research shows that even subjects that might seem to have little to do with the outdoors, such as literature or dance, can benefit from being taken outdoors.'

(Waite et al. 2016)

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Outdoor play gets kids more active

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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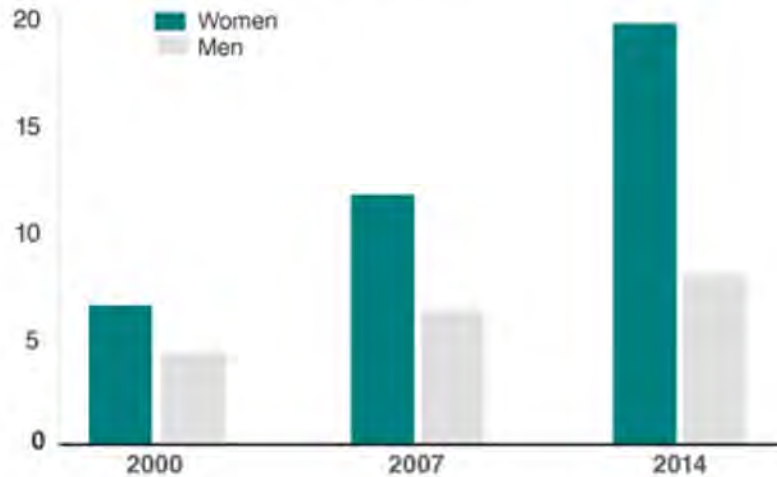
MENTAL HEALTH



WHAT IS GOING WRONG?

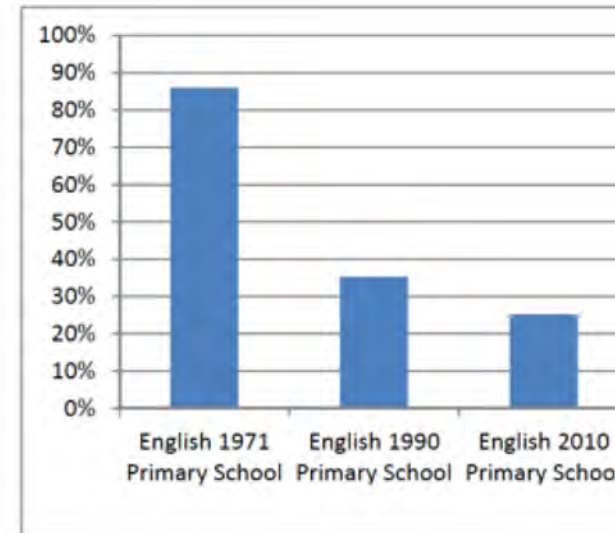
Rise in young people reporting self-harm in England

16 to 24-year-olds in 2000, 2007 and 2014 (%)



Source: NHS Digital

Percentage of parents reporting that their children are allowed to travel home from school alone 1971 – 2010.



Source: Children's Independent Mobility Report, Policy Studies Institute

'When taking part in lessons outdoors we see increased attendance and mood towards friends'

Teacher in Philippines, Muddy Hands report

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'A child with selective mutism (where a child doesn't speak to people other than close family), started to relax outside (over 6 months period) and then actually spoke to her friends at outside time.

Over time she did this at inside time too.'

(Teacher in Australia)



“When we get into the woods, please can I go and sit somewhere by myself for five minutes?”

“Of course. Why would you like to do that?”

“Because this is the only time I get some peace and quiet.”

(Child F, Y2) in McCree, Cutting, Sherwin, (2018) p151



Time spent outdoors boosts mental health.

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

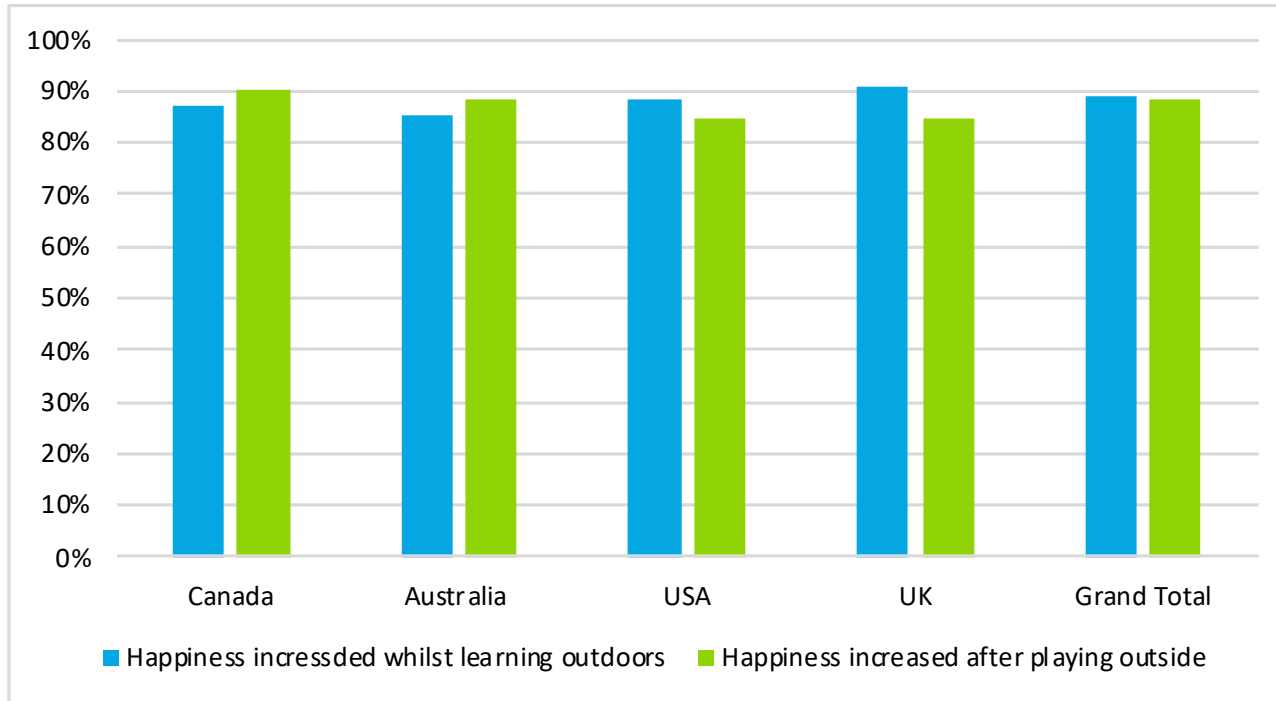
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TO BE HAPPY!



HAPPINESS INCREASED OUTDOORS



**'88% of teachers
worldwide say
that children are
happier after
playing outdoors.'**

Muddy Hands Report, 2018

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'The teachers are happier as well. When you get outside of your classroom and breathe fresh air it takes a bit of the everyday stress of being cooped up all day away.'

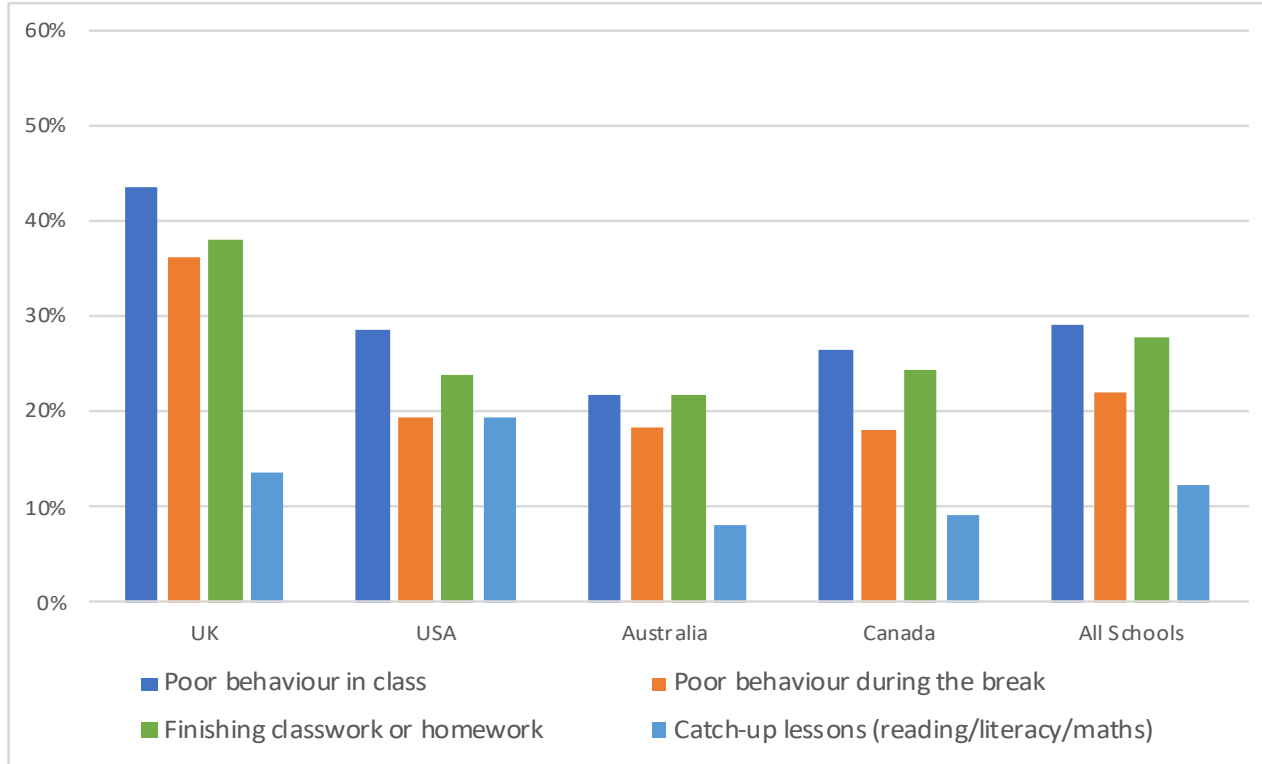
(Teacher in the US)



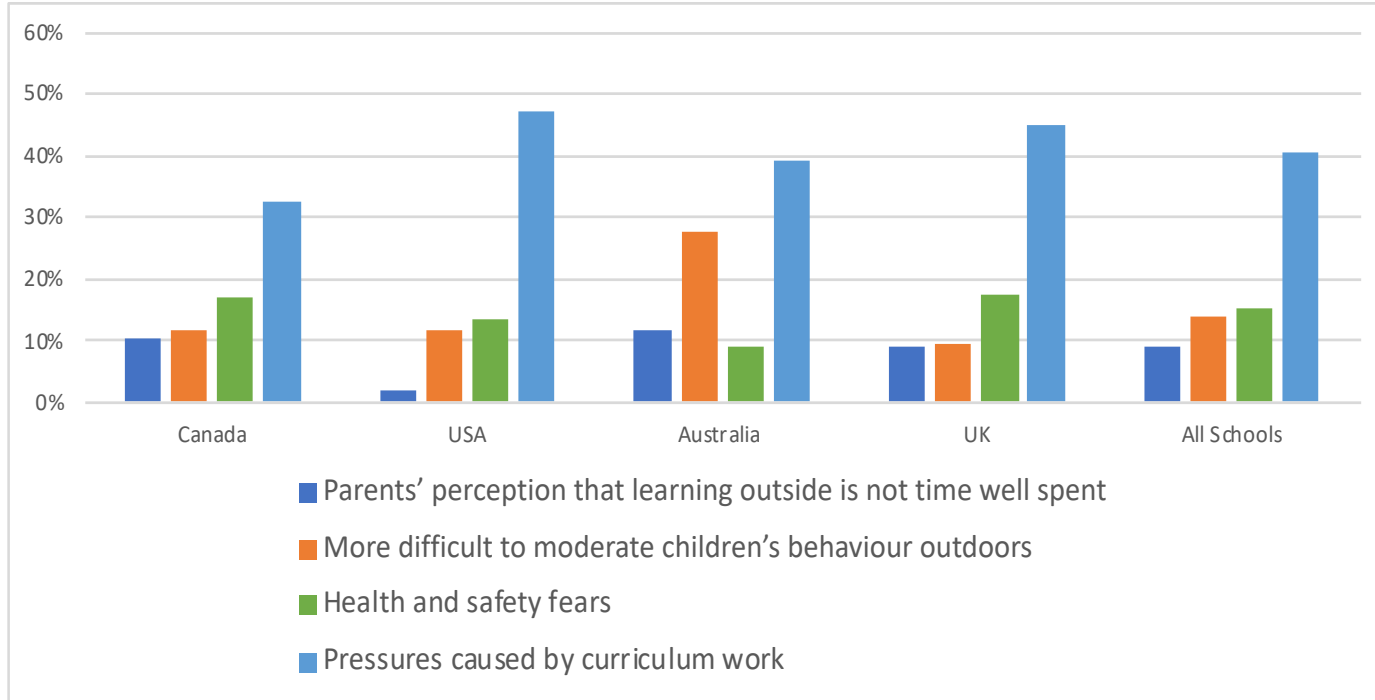
WHAT IS STOPPING CHILDREN GETTING OUTDOORS?



WHAT STOPS OUTDOOR PLAY?



WHAT STOPS OUTDOOR LEARNING?



WHAT STOPS YOU GETTING OUTDOORS?



'I just don't remember to step out of the classroom when we are working our way through the standards. I should go out more!' (Teacher in the US)

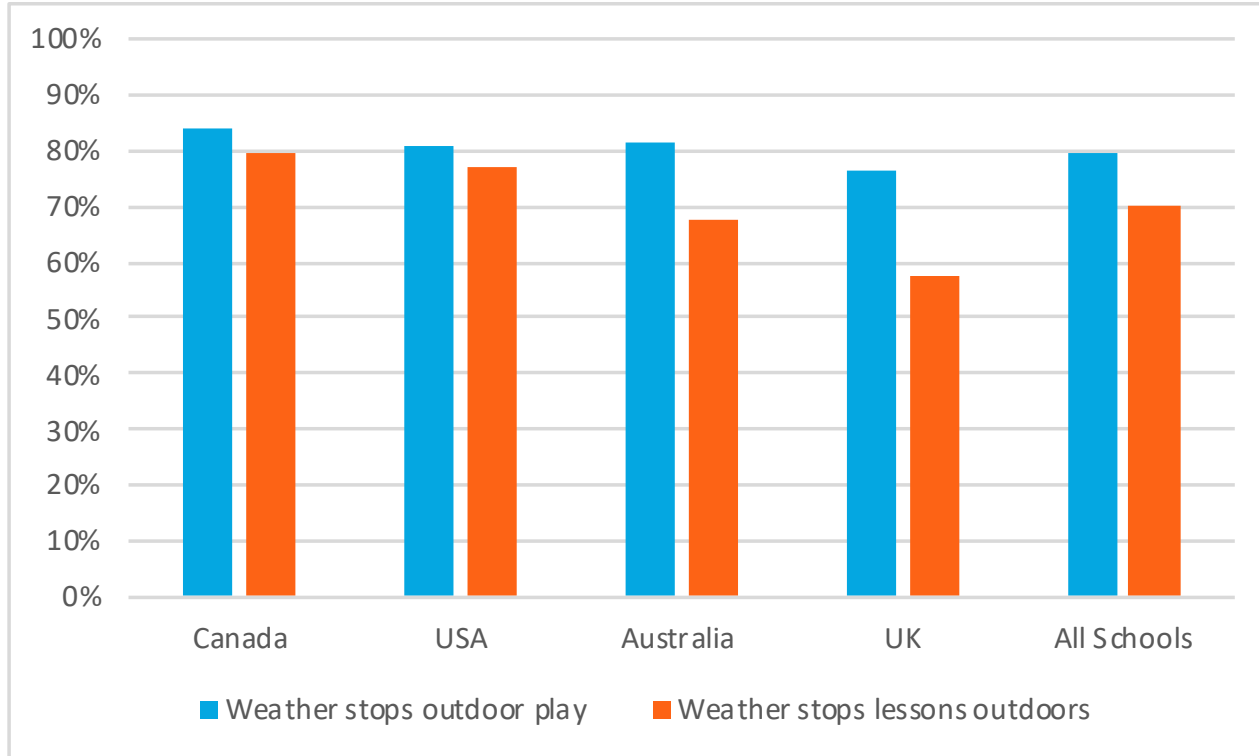
'The children love it, they really enjoy being outdoors and take in so much. The parents are very supportive and the feedback is good. The teachers tend to shy away from outdoor activities as they can be **hard to organise and children are so excited** to finally be outside it may not always go to plan. This combined with the added workload pressure in class often means it's easier to work indoors.' (Teacher in the UK)

'For the most part, nothing keeps our children indoors...[although] at least once a week [we] have to provide **clothing** to allow them to partake in outdoor activities in rainy or cooler weather.' (Teacher in Canada)

'Nothing keeps us indoors!' (Teacher in Wales)



THE WEATHER STOPS US GOING OUTDOORS



BUT WHAT COUNTS AS 'WEATHER'....



'We are not allowed to take the children out when the temperature is -20°C or colder.' (Teacher in Canada)

'Note our weather restrictions are tornados, frost bite and hail so large it can cause concussion.' (Teacher in Canada)

'Only the heat in India. During summers it's not practical to take them outdoors.' (Teacher in India)

'Cannot go out if temps are below 28F (-2C).' (Teacher in the US)



WHAT STOPS YOU GETTING OUTDOORS?

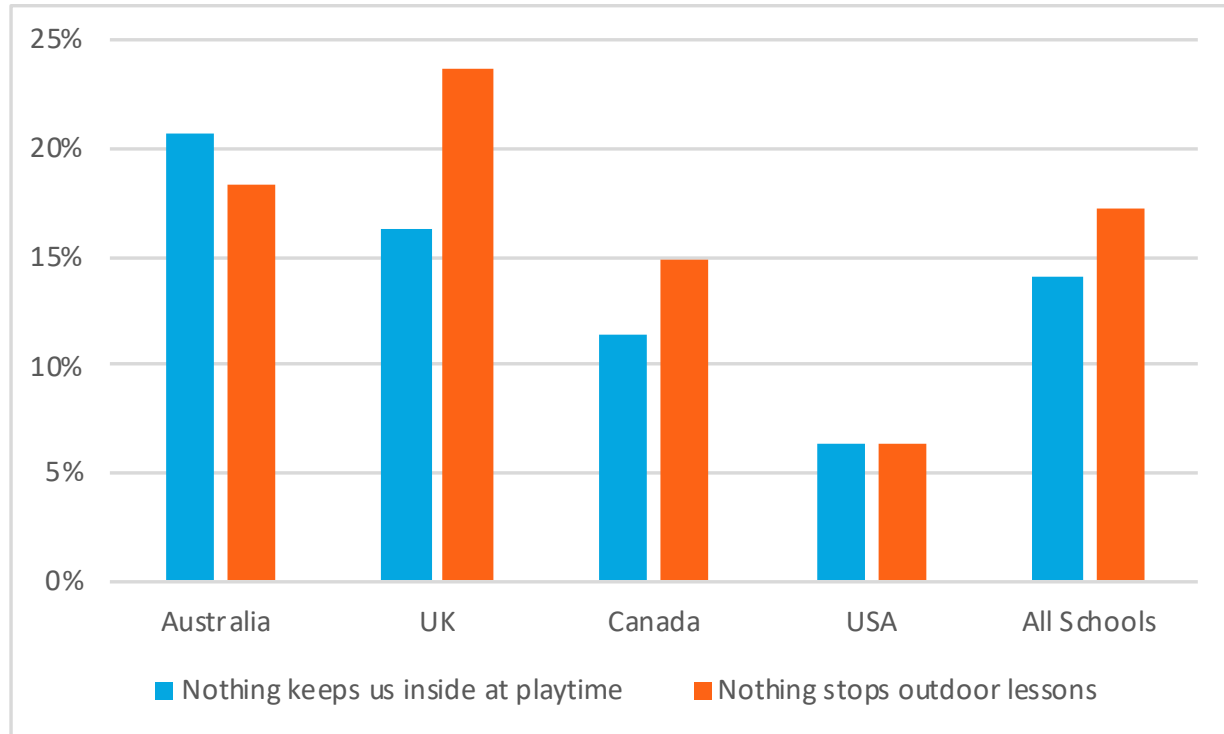
‘Sometimes the children get harassed by vervet monkeys who steal food out their hands and chase them threatening to bite them. On these days we have to play inside and close all the doors and windows because the monkeys will come inside if they find a way in.’

(Teacher in South Africa)



‘Snakes’ (Teacher in Australia)

NOTHING KEEPS US INDOORS



‘If we could spend the whole day outside every day we would!’

(Teacher in Australia)

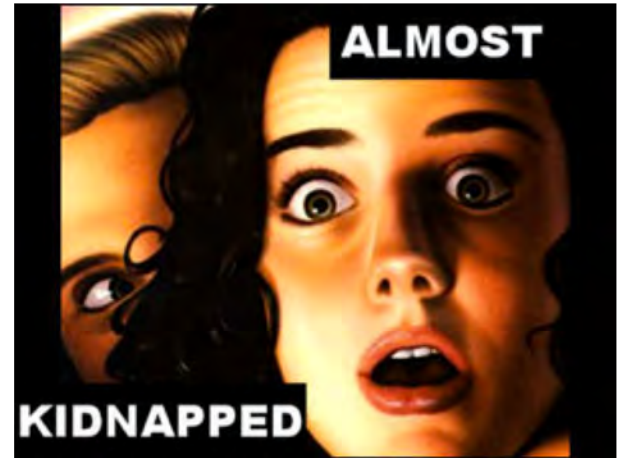
“We usually ignore wet playtime and put our waterproofs on and get outside. I give up my break time to supervise this. Midges can be pretty brutal at times, however we still go outside”

(Teacher in Scotland)



WHAT STOPS YOU GETTING OUTDOORS?

- Media – Deep pervading belief that children SHOULDN'T be outdoors
- Fear of strangers
- Traffic
- Pressure of curricula
- Lack of training
- Parental pressure
- Dangerous environment
- Air pollution
- Pressure from administrators and policy makers



SCHOOLS AS KEY INFLUENCERS





“School isn't supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world.”

– Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*

children & nature
NETWORK

www.childrenandnature.org

Illustration © Rob Shepperson <http://robshepperson.blogspot.com>

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DIRT



Dirt is Good



Conclusion....



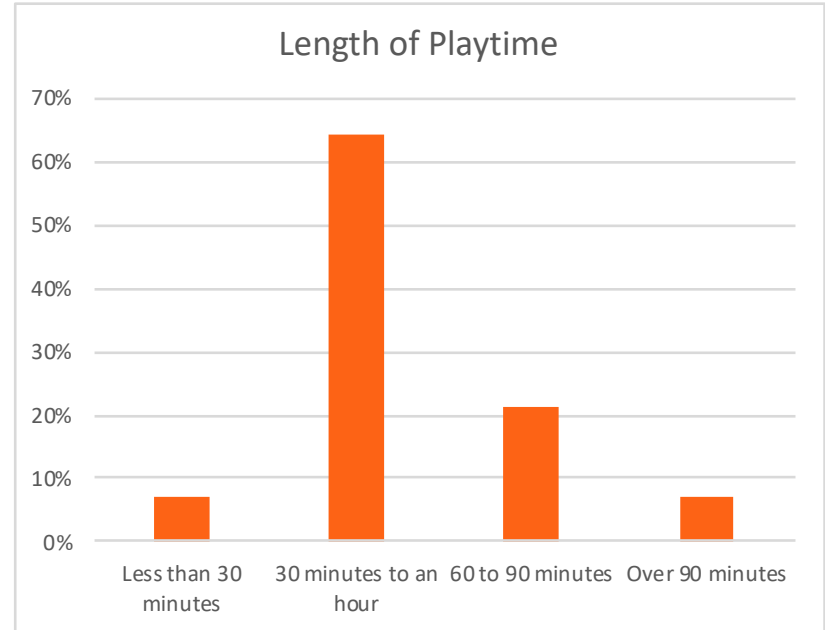
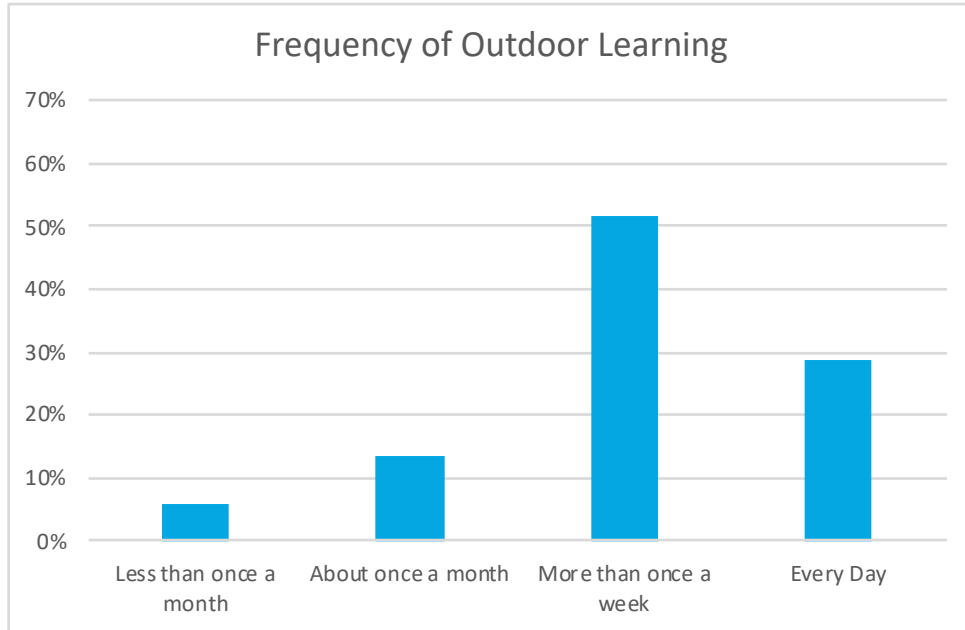
“Treating today’s kids as physically and emotionally fragile is bad for their future, and our country’s. With an unpredictable and rapidly changing economy ahead, kids need to be flexible, creative problem-solvers. They can’t solve their problems if adults are always right there, solving them first!”

Lenore Skenazy & Peter Grey

Let Grow



INCONSISTENCY OF TIME OUTDOORS ACROSS SCOTTISH SCHOOLS



Note: sample size is small, n=28, but distribution curve similar across all schools



“If we want happy children, they need to play outdoors. We have to make playing outdoors every day routine again.

By supporting Outdoor Classroom Day and by supporting the goal that playtime at school should be at least 60 minutes long, the Scottish Government can send the message that it believes that outdoor play is important, not just at school but every day.”

Ruth Maguire, Minister for the Scottish Parliament

#MuddyHands #OutdoorClassroomDay

“Many of us now believe that the future will belong to the nature smart – those young people with hybrid minds, who become leaders by developing both ways of knowing the world, the virtual and the natural.

Each school that participates in Outdoor Classroom Day will help young people take a step into that future.

And then another.”

Richard Louv, Muddy Hands Report 2018



Thank you

Contact

<https://twitter.com/OutdoorClassDay>

<https://www.facebook.com/outdoorclassroomday/>

<https://www.instagram.com/outdoorclassroomday/>

<https://outdoorclassroomday.com/>

Download the report from:

<https://outdoorclassroomday.org.uk/resource/muddy-hands-report/>

