

# The impact of 'nature-deficit disorder' on the health of children

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Children can more easily identify obscure cartoon characters than the native plants and animals that live outside their front door. And this lack of connection to the natural world can have a profound impact on their health and well-being.

Richard Louv, the author who coined the phrase, "nature-deficit disorder," will address this issue in a plenary address at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference & Exhibition Saturday, Oct. 2.

In his talk, Louv will speak about the transformation in the relationship between children and nature, and how society is teaching young people to avoid direct experience in nature. That unintended message is delivered by schools, families, even organizations devoted to the outdoors, and codified into the legal and regulatory structures of many local communities.

"A growing body of scientific evidence shows just how important direct contact with the outdoors is to healthy child development," Louv said. "This has implications for a wide range of health issues, including ADHD, child obesity, stress, creativity and cognitive functioning."

To stimulate a "Leave No Child Inside" movement, Louv will offer practical suggestions for action by parents, grandparents, government agencies, conservationists, urban planners, educators and others concerned about the future of childhood and the earth itself.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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