



Overview

Outdoor education policies can [promote resilience](#) in children, including increased confidence, attention, and reductions in disruptive behavior. Outdoor education gets children outside, [reducing fear and anxiety](#) about environmental issues and increasing their sense of [personal responsibility](#) for their future and community.

Policy Options

- **Outdoor Preschool Licensing:** Licensing can support small businesses and nonprofits, increase access for low-income children, improve safety, and make child care centers competitive for federal & grant funding. Washington [S.B.5151](#), Oregon [H.B.2717](#), Maryland [H.B.525](#) license or pilot licensing outdoor child care centers.
- **Outdoor School For All:** Outdoor learning grant programs can increase access to outdoor opportunities, especially for rural, small, and/or low-income communities. Georgia's [\(S.R.203\)](#) outdoor learning committee created an [outdoor learning grant program](#); Maine [\(L.D.1817\)](#) and Washington [\(H.B.2078\)](#) created outdoor learning grant programs for schools.
- **Outdoor Education in Curriculum:** New Hampshire [S.B.266](#), New Jersey [A.5313](#), and New Mexico [S.B.289](#) create opportunities for outdoor education in state curriculum. Georgia [S.B.202](#) would establish an outdoor education pilot program to understand state need for outdoor facilities and curriculum.
- **Green Schools:** In addition to up to [\\$64 per square foot](#) in cost savings, efficient ('green') schools offer real-world learning opportunities that promote outdoor learning. Maryland [S.B.383/H.B.531](#) increases the number of green schools and annually evaluates the program's cost effectiveness; Maine [\(L.D.612\)](#) established a Green Schools Coordinator.

KEY POINTS

- **Outdoor education can improve childhood health** by reducing [nearsightedness](#), reducing [vitamin deficiencies](#), and increasing both childhood and lifelong [physical activity](#).
- **Outdoor education can improve academic outcomes** by increasing [academic achievement](#), [school readiness](#), [social and emotional learning](#), and reducing [disruptive behavior](#).
- **Outdoor education can build appreciation for local and rural heritage** through immersion in time-honored outdoor industries, [activities](#), and [community resources](#).

Resources

- **Kentucky Association for Environmental Education (www.KAEE.org)** connects and empowers a wide network of educators, school administrators, and elected officials around Kentucky on environmental education.



The content of this resource was developed in partnership with the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education (KAEE).

