

Art for Advocacy

Explanation of Nature Deficiency Art Piece

Richard Louv, author and journalist, created the concept of nature deficiency. And is best known for his book Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder. In the book, Louv links the rise in technology to the rise of obesity, attentional disorders and depression.

The art piece attached was collaboratively created as an example of two drastically different worlds. It portrays the world of technology and the world of nature. Artists that created this piece were several Vancouver Island University Education students that are equally passionate about encouraging children to unplug technology and play outside.

My background consists of growing up in outdoor enthusiast family. We played numerous sports together and spent summers hiking and camping. Prior to this project, I believed that more children were living sedentary lives but didn't research the issue or know that nature deficiency was something that you could diagnose a child with. What I learned from the research below was the nature deficiency is an international problem that is getting worse with time. What I hope to accomplish with this knowledge is to spend more time outside with future students and to promote extra curriculum outdoor activities. Technology can't be abandoned, but it doesn't have to be used as frequently and it doesn't need to play a major role in raising children.

Studies that support a growing nature deficient population include:

Source #1: Statistics Canada

- Reported that there is growing evidence that Canadian health has deteriorated in the last couple of decades.
- "A quarter of children and youth are now overweight and obese and physical fitness has declined."
- 'Total daily sedentary time for Canadian children and youth averages 8.6 hours, or 62% of their waking hours and that sedentary time increases with age.'

Source #2: Children and Nature Network, Children's nature Deficit, What We Know and We Don't Know

Sept 2009 by Cheryl Charles Ph. D., Richard Louv

- "Studies do indicate that from the 1980's to 2000's children's lives have become increasingly structured and media oriented."

800 mothers in the early 2000's were surveyed by Manhattanville College in New York State, Dr. Clement. These

- Mothers reported that they played an average of 71% outside as a child

- The mothers also reported their children play an average of 26% outside
- Results were the same whether mothers were from an urban or rural background.

Source #3: Survey Associated with the Kaiser Family Foundation released in 2006. They surveyed 3000 parents and teenagers

Results:

- Children 6 months-6 yrs spend an average of 1.5 hrs a day using electronic media
- Children 8 years to 18 years spend an average of 6.5 hours a day using electronic media

(these statistics do not include hours using electronic media for homework)

- 1/3 of children live in a household where the t.v. is on all or most of the time
- Children 8-18 years old spend 3 hours watching t.v. and 1.75 hours listening to music daily
- International studies indicated that 72% of children watch t.v. in their freetime
- Indicated that there was a cross-sectional study found that preschoolers were less active even at play. They reported that 89% of preschoolers of their day at a daycare center doing sedentary activity and that the number of preschoolers going to day care has increased the same drastic rate as obesity.

Source #4- University of Glasgow Scotland

- Researchers attached electronic accelerometers on 78 3 year olds and found that they were getting an average of 20 mins of physical activity per day due to restrictive stroller, high-chairs and baby car seats.
- They also reported that the number of children that bike or walk to school has declined 25% in the past 30 years.

Groups Artists Information

Allie Tompkins, Emily Nicole, Leyla Nikkel, Martine Newill, Ashley Coward

Resources:

Richard Louv's book Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder

Education.com - <http://www.education.com/topic/nature-deficit-disorder/>

The Daily Green Website- <http://www.thedailygreen.com/living-green/definitions/nature-deficit-disorder>