



## Why Your Child Should Discover Nature

(NAPSA)—Families that spend more time in nature may see some surprising benefits. Research has shown that children who play outside in nature have lower stress levels and more active imaginations, become fitter and leaner, develop stronger immune systems and have greater respect for themselves and for others. Not every child gets these advantages, however.

### The Problem

Studies show that all too many children don't spend much time outdoors, even those among the more than 245 million Americans who live within 100 miles of a national forest or grassland. If children do spend time outdoors, it is typically spent participating in activities such as biking, walking, listening to music or using electronic devices. Nature-based activities, such as bird-watching, hiking, camping and fishing, are not as common. As a result, children are not developing a relationship with or appreciation for nature.

### Some Encouragement

To help, the U.S. Forest Service and the Ad Council launched a public service advertising (PSA) effort, "Discover The Forest," to encourage families to reconnect with nature. Originally launched in 2009, the campaign has new work this year, created pro bono by Burrell Communications, specifically targeting African American parents. For urban-dwelling families, nature can seem even farther away, but the truth is that most Americans live within 90 minutes of a forest or park—and it is worth the trip. The forest is a unique environment where children can flex their imagination muscles through exploration and discovery, and as any parent knows, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing their children's eyes light up when they discover something new.

"This new campaign seeks to get kids and families out to enjoy the wonders of our forests," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "The physical, mental and spiritual benefits our great outdoors provide are more important



**Experiencing nature firsthand offers many benefits for children and offers family fun.**

now than ever." His agency manages 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands for the American public. Its mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. "Many families are unaware of the benefits that nature provides children, including improving their physical and mental health and emotional well-being," added Peggy Conlon, President & CEO of the Ad Council, a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshaling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. "Through these PSAs, we're thrilled to show families how close they are to a forest, park or grassland and encourage them to spend active time outdoors."

### A Resource

The campaign website, [www.DiscoverTheForest.org](http://www.DiscoverTheForest.org), features interactive games, a list of activity ideas and a convenient forest locator, powered by NatureFind and Google Maps, which lets users find the closest forest or park.

### Learn More

You can also visit [www.facebook.com/discovertheforest](http://www.facebook.com/discovertheforest), [www.twitter.com/cheecker](http://www.twitter.com/cheecker) and [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org).