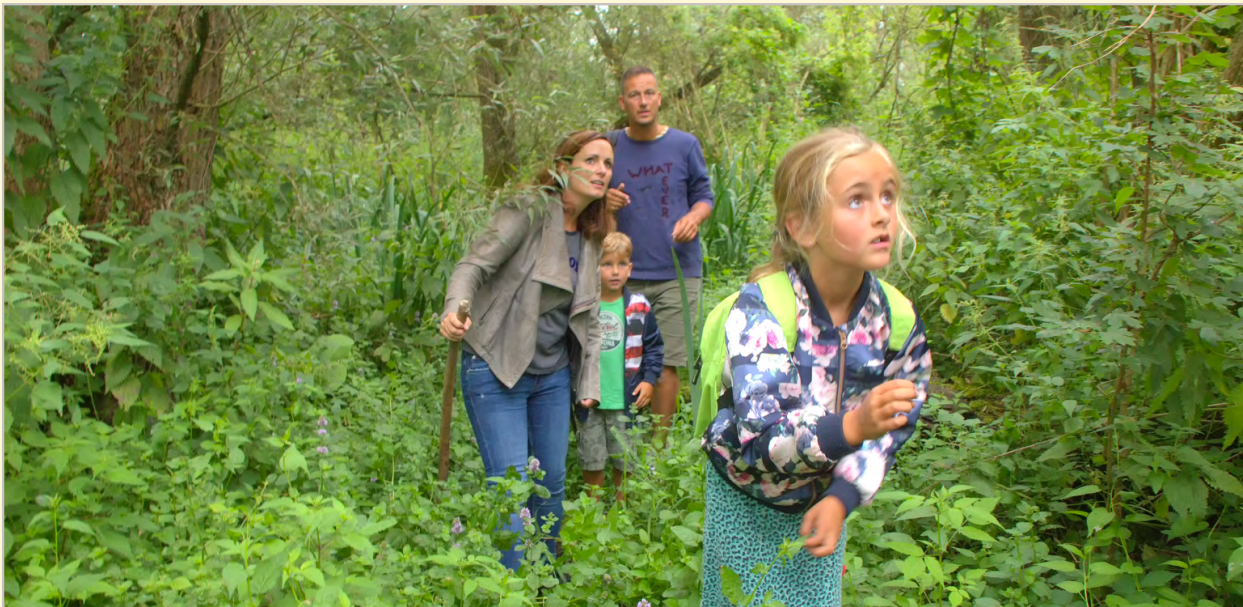


JUMP INTO NATURE

Annemarie Lammers (Sustainability Centre Weizigt)

More and more children are growing up in cities, and for many of them, playing in nature is such a rare activity. This has several causes: sometimes green spaces just aren't available close to home, but quite often, even though a nice green park is situated within 500 meters, children still don't use it. It seems they have lost the knowledge of how to play outside and many parents also keep their children inside because of safety reasons. And yet time spent in nature has so many important benefits.¹ Especially in the current hectic times, it only becomes more important to reconnect children with nature. That's why in 2014 we started a project in Dordrecht called Jump into nature. The main goal is to give children aged 4 - 12 and their parents, who may never visit nature, a great experience in one of the nearby nature areas.

A unique group of nature education, sports, recreation and health-partners offers the participants alternating activities in nature. With this cross-sectoral group - the orgware - we use the green available hardware - the city parks and the nearby National Park De Biesbosch - and add the software: activity days organised around three main categories: movement, experience and food. In



this way the children and their parents experience nature close to home and they learn how nice it is to spend time outdoors. We learned that this cross-sectoral approach is very inspiring, both for the participants and the partners. In the next years we will extend our work to even more green areas: besides the city parks and De Biesbosch, such as green school grounds and urban farming spots. This stimulates the children and their parents to explore their environment step by step: from very close to home and school to the bigger nature areas surrounding the city.

NOTES

1. On page 4 and 5 in "The Nature's Playbook of Canadian Parks Council" (2016) you can find an inspiring overview of the benefits of nature. See the pictures on the following page.

HOW DOES NATURE AFFECT US?

Nature is good for Canadians, and research is proving it again and again. Time spent outdoors provides irreplaceable benefits in our lives. *The Nature Playbook's* sister publication *Connecting Canadians with Nature—An Investment in the Well-Being of our Citizens* (2014) outlines this research and is an excellent resource for questions about the benefits of time spent in Nature.

