

# No Child Left Inside

## Colorado



**Colorado's natural environment is world-renowned.** *The landscapes define our heritage and are a cornerstone of Colorado's economy. Colorado citizens are frequently asked to make informed decisions about environmental and natural resource issues that are increasingly complex and that affect our quality of life and economic well-being. Additionally, today's children are the first Coloradoans to be effectively isolated from nature. Outdoor recreation and learning experiences have been replaced by sedentary indoor activities, such as watching television and playing on computers and with video games. This disconnect threatens children's education, physical and mental health and threatens the ability of tomorrow's leaders to understand and protect Colorado's resources. Today, Colorado leaders have the opportunity to address the challenges present in the life and workforce of the twenty-first century by leading the No Child Left Inside effort in Colorado.*

*Environmental education teaches how to think not what to think.*





*Environmental education is designed to achieve a public that is environmentally literate and can understand the implications of their actions, has the skills to critically think about their choices and makes responsible decisions.*

The No Child Left Inside - Colorado legislation enacted will prepare citizens, young to old to understand and address the major environmental, social, and economic challenges facing the state by focusing on a coordinated strategy to improve environmental literacy.

The legislation creates an environmental literacy council (Council) led by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Education. The Council will guide a collaborative effort to:

- ◆ Develop a comprehensive state environmental literacy plan\* to ensure a workforce and citizenry prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century
- ◆ Manage a fund to support the implementation of the environmental literacy plan
- ◆ Administer an environmental education grant fund to promote further development of environmental education programs to schools, communities, businesses and to support improved access to environmental education for underserved populations within the state
- ◆ Provide for a clearinghouse of environmental education information for the state

*\*the environmental literacy plan must be written to satisfy the mandate of federal No Child Left Inside legislation to qualify Colorado for federal grant money*

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*Environmental education is developed in accordance with best practices in education, is scientifically accurate, presents a range of perspectives in a balanced way, and encourages learners to form their own opinions.*

## The Environmental Literacy plan will help:

- ✗ Create opportunities for enhanced and ongoing professional development of teachers and environmental educators
- ✗ Improve state-wide access to existing environmental education materials and programs
- ✗ Serve minority populations with culturally appropriate environmental education programs
- ✗ Restore and increase field experiences as part of the formal school curriculum
- ✗ Create or support community programs that contribute to healthy lifestyles through outdoor activity
- ✗ Provide guidance to the State Board of Education to establish guidelines to incorporate environmental education into Colorado's curriculum-including opportunities to connect students to nature

