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Governor Granholm proclaims April 20 'No Student Left Inside Day'

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LANSING - Governor Jennifer M. Granholm recently signed an official proclamation designating April 20 as "No Student Left Inside Day" in Michigan in an effort to help reconnect children with the outdoors.

"One of the great gifts we can give our children is to make sure they connect with the amazing natural resources we have in Michigan," Granholm said. "Whether we take them fishing, hunting, hiking, mountain biking or simply let them discover the beauty of nature in our state, helping our children connect with the outdoors is essential to making sure our natural resources are protected and respected in the future."

"No Student Left Inside Day" is a national movement to help children connect with the outdoors. A recent study showed that children in the United States average just 30 minutes a week of unregulated time in the outdoors. Studies have linked the lack of unstructured, outdoor play time to childhood obesity and depression.

In Michigan, the Department of Natural Resources will be offering free activities for school groups on April 20 at state parks and recreation areas around the state.

On April 20, school buses will be able to enter a state park for free to allow children and their teachers to have a day of nature-based studies. Other vehicles entering a park or recreation area will need to display a Motor Vehicle Permit, which is \$24 for an annual permit and \$6 for a daily one.

More information on the activities the DNR is offering that day is available on the DNR's Web site at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr), under the Learning Corner section.

The information also includes lesson plan ideas that teachers can use at local parks or in areas around a school, if they cannot get to a state park or recreation area on April 20.

"Children are the future conservation stewards of our state," said DNR Director Rebecca Humphries. "On 'No Student Left Inside Day' in Michigan, we are making a strong push to get children to experience nature and activities you can do outdoors. A child's outdoor experience should extend beyond their playground or backyard."

Outdoor education has been shown to improve academic performance. A study by California's Department of Education showed that sixth graders involved in an outdoor education program increased their math and science scores by 27 percent.

More time spent outdoors playing also has health benefits for children, studies have indicated. A study by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign showed that outdoor activities reduce the symptoms of hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders in children.