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Dirt, Microbes & Children's Health

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The Children and Nature Network put a spotlight on the benefits of kids playing in dirt (i.e. gardens) recently. Did you know that one gram of soil can contain up to 10 billion microorganisms? And that a study from the University of Helsinki found that children at urban daycare centers who played in yards containing forest-floor organic matter and sod for a month had heightened microbial diversity on their skin, and had improved immune system regulation, compared to kids who played in standard daycare yards without biodiverse elements? Another study found that kids in a 10-week environmental education program had not only positive changes in their gut microbiota, but also improved psychological wellbeing.

Visit the organization's website at childrenandnature.org to read highlights on a few of the reasons why kids should spend more time playing in the dirt. If you're looking for content to share with consumers, you'll find a few good nuggets to share here. **GP**