



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS  
RELEASES SURVEY ON BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PLAY**

Columbus, OH— It's no secret that kids today don't engage in as much outdoor playtime as previous generations, and that shift has impacted everything from family bonds to mental/social and physical health. According to a new Franklin Park Conservatory survey of parents and grandparents in Ohio, the majority of families crave additional time spent outdoors, citing bonding time and emotional health as valuable resulting benefits.

"We've long touted the importance of connecting people with nature, and that concept has driven much of our programming and expansion over the years – most recently with the addition of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden," said Bruce Harkey, President and CEO of Franklin Park Conservatory. "The feedback from parents and grandparents in this survey confirms and gives more context to what we've known all along: the benefits of outdoor play extend far beyond fresh air and physical fitness."

Key findings from the survey included:

- 69 percent indicated their kids spend less time outside than they did, and three out of four respondents wish their families spent more time outside
- 67 percent of respondents cited kids' preference for playing with technology as a key barrier to outdoor time
- Unstructured weekday playtime decreases with age, from 3+ hours among the very young to less than 2 hours for older children – especially important because "play" is directly tied to cognitive, social and physical development
- Bonding/connecting with each other and physical activity are the top benefits respondents identified with outdoor play, with 94 percent and 97 percent, respectively
- One-third of respondents say that "emotional health" is the most valuable benefit of playing outside, suggesting that the outdoors can help provide fast relief for bad tempers and moods
- Respondents noted limited access to unspoiled environments (aside from parks and playgrounds), and also identified safety as a concern that deters outdoor play – making spaces like the new Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden even more valuable

Since opening The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden in May, the Conservatory has seen significant increases both in overall visitation and the diversity of neighborhoods from which those visitors are coming. Conservatory attendance is tracking to finish 70 percent over 2017's attendance with an increase in visitation from urban and suburban areas of central Ohio. Now that fall has arrived, additional opportunities to get outdoors and experience the year-round attraction include [Harvest Blooms](#), sponsored by Fahlgren Mortine (through October 28). This year's display collects familiar signs of fall and magnifies them into one centralized spectacular of



autumn. The exhibit includes: 5,000 members of the Cucurbitacea family (ornamental gourds, pumpkins, squash); 1,500 members of the Brassicaceae family (ornamental kale, cabbage, etc.); 4,500 flowering Chrysanthemums (aka hardy mums); and a 10-foot-tall "Pumpkin House" located in the Children's Garden.

November and December are also great months for families to visit and experience [Conservatory Aglow](#) (November 17 to January 2). This popular holiday exhibition will be bigger and better than ever and includes brilliant light displays, captivating visual art installations, and lush seasonal plantings throughout the Conservatory including the Children's Garden and Grand Mallway. Aside from special events, visitors can access the Children's Garden any time of the year (availability of some features are weather dependent).

For more information on The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden at Franklin Park Conservatory and upcoming exhibits and events, please visit [FPConservatory.org](http://FPConservatory.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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*Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers botanical collections, art and nature-based exhibitions, plant shows, and educational programs for all ages. Situated in an 88-acre urban park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House and 83,000 square feet of glasshouses, classrooms, and meeting and event spaces. The Conservatory owns a signature collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly. Light Raiment II, a permanent installation by internationally recognized light artist James Turrell, illuminates the John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn.*