

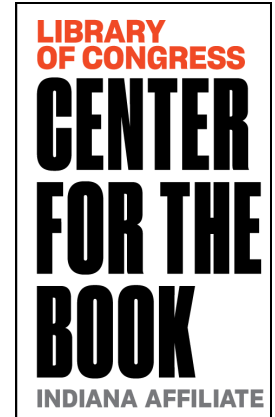


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Playing IN Indiana!

## First Place - 2023

Elin E.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Allen County  
Deer Ridge Elementary



### Lights, Camera, Indiana!

Three different states, three different houses, nowhere felt like home. All that changed when my family moved to Indiana. I was introduced to plays and musicals at my elementary school which sparked my love of acting. When I think of playing I think about acting, singing, dancing and enjoying performances. Playing in Indiana is special and unique because of the performing arts, music programs, and people.

Indiana has great performing arts schools and theaters. Performing arts schools teach everything from designing costumes to writing plays. Indiana has historic theaters that showcase ballets, concerts, plays, and musicals. There are theater programs like Fort Wayne Youtheater where kids can take acting classes. Indiana has many opportunities for anyone who wants to perform or enjoy acting and music.

Music programs are a fun way to play in Indiana. You can learn to play an instrument, join a school choir, or participate in musicals. At my school we play instruments, learn music from different cultures, and compose our own songs. I enjoy the music program, but nothing would be possible without the amazing teachers in Indiana!

The people are what make playing in Indiana so special. Everyone at school is very kind. I performed in a musical and some friends cheered, "You got this!" and my music teacher said, "You are born to be on stage!" Their words made me feel confident. I appreciate the people in Indiana.

After living in many different states I can say Playing in Indiana is truly one of a kind because of the performing arts, music programs, and people. I am proud to be a Hoosier! I want to be a professional actress, but until I get my big break I will be playing one in Indiana!



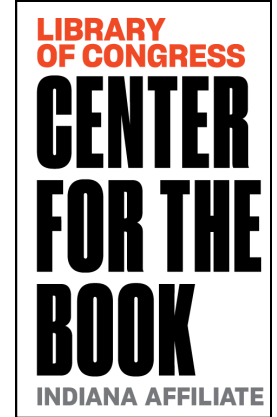


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

## Playing IN Indiana!

### Second Place - 2023

Kai V.  
Kokomo, Indiana  
Howard County  
Homeschooled



#### Playing at Indiana's State Parks

Indiana has 24 state parks. My family and I are on a quest to visit all of them. So far, we have been to 21. We have made many memories on this adventure and discovered several fun places to play and explore! I will highlight a few of my favorite state parks we have visited.

My all-time favorite was Turkey Run. Turkey Run has numerous acres to explore. The terrain is more rugged than most of the other state parks. There are lots of boulders to climb over, and canyons to walk through, and even a few ladders to climb. This state park was beautiful.

Another favorite was Clifty Falls. The trails there were also very rugged, which was fun for an energetic nine-year-old boy like me! We traveled down steep hills where we had to hold onto tree roots to keep from tumbling down the hill. There was also a tunnel to walk through. It looked like a cave, but there was an opening at each end. It was very dark, but my dad had a flashlight on his phone to help us see. We got wet shoes and muddy feet.

We had the thrill of our lives at Pokagon State Park. We traveled up there last winter to ride the famous toboggan slide. That was an awesome and extremely fast experience. It was also very cold that day.

Finally, in my top favorite was Indiana Dunes State Park. We enjoyed hiking the sandy dunes. It is harder than you think! I also loved swimming in the lake and making sandcastles on the beach.

I have enjoyed visiting the state parks and playing while exploring Indiana. I love my home state and all that it has to offer in nature.



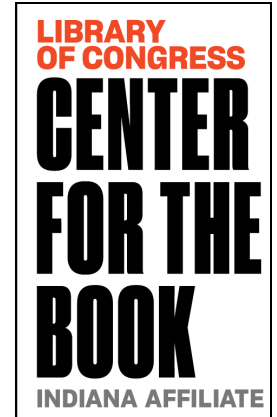


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

## Playing IN Indiana!

### Third Place - 2023

Eleanor M.  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Marion County  
Spring Mill Elementary



#### Fresh Air and Starry Nights

I love living in Indiana. I switch between my mom's and dad's houses. I love being outside with friends and family no matter where I am.

My dad lives in Zionsville. I run outside all day and look at the stars and sunset at night. I love running through the fields to my friends' houses. We make forts with things we find in the woods and throw mud. Every Saturday we go to the Farmers Market. I smell the eggs and waffles. I see kids laughing and playing. I hear the loud music. But most importantly, I taste the watermelon popsicle on my tongue, fresh, cold and delicious. On my stepmom's birthday sometimes we "sneak out" to the Farmers Market and get her favorite breakfast burritos. I love going there and simply laughing and playing with Resse, my friend.

At my mom's in Indianapolis, I ride my bike to the gas station and get a snack with my sister, Scout. I can even go out to the creek in my neighborhood and pick up trash and turn it into a fort or try to feed and play with a stray cat. On fall break we go camping at McCormick's Creek. We sit and read in hammocks. We eat and cook by the fire. My sisters and I go into the woods. We stumble to the water, and we stare at the beautiful creek and listen to the creek flowing past us. We splash and play and feel the icy water on our feet. I smell the fresh air and, with fireflies all around me, the warmth of the fire calms me. I watch in wonder as my mom carves her hiking stick.

So, to me, playing in Indiana means being outside with friends and family.



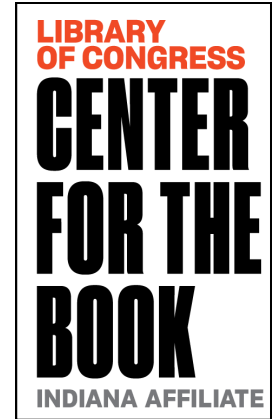


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

## Playing IN Indiana!

### Fourth Place - 2023

Gavin W.  
Greentown, Indiana  
Howard County  
Eastern Elementary School



#### Hoosiers Playing in Indiana

How do you feel about being a Hoosier? I love being a Hoosier because it is where I was born and it is home. Being a Hoosier means a person not only lives, but also plays in Indiana. By living in Indiana I get to experience many fun, cool, and exciting places.

I enjoy being a Hoosier because located in Indiana is my favorite theme and water park. It is called Holiday World and my family visits every summer. My favorite roller coaster is the Raven. The Raven is known as one of the world's top wooden roller coasters! Me and my family camp in a cabin down the road from Holiday World where we fish in a private pond, make smores over a fire, and play on the playground. Going to Holiday World is only one fun and historic place to visit in Indiana.

Next, I love to visit Conner Prairie. Conner Prairie is a outdoor museum and you can learn about history, see art, and have fun outside too. I like going in the fall because there is a corn maze, good food, and a headless horsemen haunted trail. I love to pet the horses and see the cows and pigs as well. There is a hot air balloon that I hope to ride someday. Conner Prairie is a really fun place to explore.

Being a Hoosier means so much to me. It means being a IU basketball fan, watching the Indy 500 race, and being able to eat delicious sweet com grown in your own back yard. Spending time with my family and playing with by two baby brothers makes living and playing in Indiana special, fun, and enjoyable to me. Indiana will always be home to me no matter where I go when I grow up. I will always choose playing in Indiana over any other place in the world.

