



**Great Outdoors Colorado**

1900 Grant Street, Suite 725  
Denver, Colorado 80203

(303) 226-4500  
GenerationWild.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:** Alana Watkins

[alana@vocapr.com](mailto:alana@vocapr.com)

303.916.2752

**GENERATION WILD LAUNCHES “JUST 20 MINUTES OUTSIDE” CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON KIDS**

*Research Shows Just 20 Minutes Outside Can Reduce Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Other Behavioral Issues That Have Become More Prevalent in Kids During the Pandemic*

**(Denver, CO) – June 14, 2021** – The emerging mental health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting kids. [Research](#) shows that cases of depression, anxiety, sleep-related issues and other behavioral problems have become more prevalent in kids during the pandemic, and [according to U.S. News & World Report](#), many experts believe a children’s mental health crisis is on the horizon. Fortunately, research also shows there is at least one thing parents can do to ease these mental health strains: get kids outside. Today, [Generation Wild](#), a movement created by [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) (GOCO) to reconnect kids with nature by increasing the amount of time they spend outside in unstructured play, is launching a **“Just 20 Minutes Outside”** campaign to directly address the role time outside can play in helping to alleviate the mental health issues affecting kids both during the pandemic and beyond.

“Kids are under pressure these days. Family life is always busy, but the pandemic upended normal routines, adding to stress. The year took its toll on all of us, and especially kids,” said GOCO Executive Director Chris Castilian. “Now more than ever, it’s important for kids to get outside for stress-relieving nature breaks. To feel free and easy and let their imaginations run wild. Generation Wild’s new list of 20 ideas for spending 20 minutes outside makes that easy to do.”

The campaign is launching with a [striking video](#) that takes the idea that all kids, at some time or another, turn into little monsters and that just 20 minutes outside turns them back into a kid again, and seeks to spread the word to parents about

Kids grow better *outside.*





**Great Outdoors Colorado**

1900 Grant Street, Suite 725  
Denver, Colorado 80203

(303) 226-4500  
GenerationWild.com

the importance of making sure kids get a healthy amount of outdoor playtime. A downloadable, printable and trackable [list](#), available in English and Spanish, provides inspiration. A [recent study](#) shows that spending as little as 20 minutes in a local park or green space can help significantly reduce kids' stress and anxiety levels. Additional benefits include boosting mood and self-esteem; reducing depression and feelings of isolation; improving focus; reducing aggressiveness; and lessening impacts of negative events.

“Research shows that kids who spent more time in green spaces growing up had lower rates of mental illness as adults,” says Jenna Glover, Clinical Child Psychologist at Children’s Hospital Colorado, a GOCO partner. “So that’s what I tell parents: what you do now with your kids outdoors will protect them throughout their lives.”

Generation Wild’s list of 20 ideas offers easy, fun and attainable ways to get kids outside for 20 minutes each day that doesn’t require spendy camping gear or a long drive to the mountains. The list’s imaginative and unique suggestions include Host a Mud Party, Go on a Color Scavenger Hunt, Play Flashlight Tag, Create a Bike Obstacle Course, Paint with Water on the Sidewalk, Go on a Micro Hike and more.

“Kids have so much stress. Any time we can take away their stress and let a little air out of that balloon, that helps it from bursting,” says Glover. “Having outdoor time on a regular basis is one of the ways to help kids be resilient and actually protect against developing a mental illness.”

Generation Wild was created by GOCO to reconnect kids with nature by increasing the amount of time they spend outside in unstructured play – the kind of play that used to be way more common. The program is an integrated, statewide effort supported by a statewide network of non-profit, public and private partner organizations. In [12 Colorado communities](#), diverse, locally based Generation Wild coalitions are creating equitable access to the outdoors with new places to play, outdoor programs, and pathways to leadership opportunities and jobs in the outdoors.



**Great Outdoors Colorado**

1900 Grant Street, Suite 725  
Denver, Colorado 80203

(303) 226-4500  
GenerationWild.com

# # #

**ABOUT GENERATION WILD**

Generation Wild was created by [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) (GOCO) to reconnect kids with nature by increasing the amount of time they spend outside in unstructured play – the kind of play that used to be way more common. The program is an integrated, statewide effort supported by a statewide network of non-profit, public and private partner organizations. In [12 Colorado communities](#), diverse, locally based Generation Wild coalitions are creating equitable access to the outdoors with new places to play, outdoor programs, and pathways to leadership opportunities and jobs in the outdoors. Follow Generation Wild on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

**ABOUT GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO**

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state’s parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO’s independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created when voters approved a Constitutional Amendment in 1992, GOCO has since funded more than 5,300 projects in urban and rural areas in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support. Visit [www.GOCO.org](http://www.GOCO.org) for more information.

Kids grow better *outside.*

