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GENERATION WILD IS ASKING COLORADO KIDS TO ‘TAKE YOUR BRAIN OUT’ THIS SUMMER TO HELP OFFSET THE IMPACT OF TIME SPENT ON SCREENS

Children’s Health Experts Explain How Time Outdoors Can Support the Development of Growing Brains

(Denver, Colo.) – May 4, 2026 – [Generation Wild](#), a movement from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) that works to connect kids with the outdoors, today launched ‘*Take Your Brain Out*,’ an initiative aimed at offsetting the effects caused by screens on kids’ brains. In a screen-saturated world – the average child spends more than seven hours a day on a screen and less than 10 minutes outdoors per day¹ – Generation Wild wants Colorado parents to know that time outside is not only beneficial but *essential* to supporting the development of a child’s brain. Generation Wild has partnered with top health experts to help Colorado parents understand the science behind these benefits.

“Parents today worry about screens co-opting their kids’ focus, attention, and joy, but here’s a game-changer: just carve out time for outdoor play, and nature will help reset those developing brains,” said GOCO Executive Director Jackie Miller. “*Take Your Brain Out* is a fun reminder of the great things that happen when we spend time outdoors, and Generation Wild provides plenty of tips and inspiration to make more time outside fun and easy.”

For a decade, Generation Wild has provided ideas for parents to get their kids outdoors, as seen with [Say Hi with a Snowman](#), [Wilderflowers®](#), [World’s Longest Hopscotch](#), and its

¹ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2020, October). Children and watching TV. https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx
Lund, D. (2018, June 26). Top 5 benefits of children playing outside. Sanford Health News. <https://news.sanfordhealth.org/childrens/play-outside/>

popular [100 Things to Do List](#). This year Generation Wild has partnered with health experts Dr. Pooja Tandon, a pediatrician, mom, and the Health Director at Trust for Public Land, and Dr. Joel Stoddard, a father, and Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Children’s Hospital Colorado, to educate Colorado’s parents on why it’s essential to carve out time for outdoor play.

“Time spent in nature is restorative for the brain, helps with emotional regulation, improves mental and physical health, reduces symptoms of ADHD, and can have benefits for sleep and memory,” said Dr. Tandon. “As a pediatrician and a mom, I like to prescribe green time as a strategy to decrease screen time. Because when kids and families spend time outdoors, we see real gains in physical health, mental well-being, and overall happiness.”

According to Dr. Tandon, spending time outdoors as a family also builds relational health. She encourages families to look for simple, flexible ways to incorporate outdoor time into daily routines. Family activity ideas from Generation Wild’s 100 Things to Do List include going on a picnic, sleeping under the stars, dancing in the rain, and exploring a state park.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and May 7 is Children’s Mental Health Day, making the mission of *‘Take Your Brain Out’* especially relevant. Spending a lot of time on screens has been linked to challenges with emotion regulation and social interaction in kids, leading to poor mental health. Outdoor physical activity can support communication, cooperation, and peer bonding², and just 20 minutes in nature has been shown to lower stress hormones and calm brain activity³.

Through his work at Children’s Hospital Colorado, Dr. Stoddard sees first-hand the emotional effects screens directly have on kids. The concern is not only the addictiveness and emotional regulation, but also that screentime takes away from important developmental activities such as relationship building, learning social cues and facing tough situations. When kids spend time outdoors, they are able to engage with their peers, strengthen bonds, and practice cooperation and communication skills.

Dr. Stoddard recognizes that when parents are under significant stress from work and busy schedules, screens sometimes become a default. Colorado is a place that invests in creating public outdoor spaces, and Generation Wild has [outlined several ways](#) for parents to get their kids off the couch and out the back door.

² Jean M. Twenge, W. Keith Campbell, [Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study](#). Preventive Medicine Reports, Volume 12, 2018, Pages 271-283, ISSN 2211-3355, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2018.10.003>

³ Hahnefeld, A., Fink, M., Le Beherec, S. et al. [Correlation of screen exposure to stress, learning, cognitive and language performance in children](#). Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry 34, 1615–1624 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-024-02593-6>

"The wonderful thing about kids being resilient is that there are lots of positive activities that kids can engage in and adopt, including spending time outdoors," said Dr. Stoddard. "If parents can find a community, find an activity, or simply find the energy to make small steps to get their kids outside, I believe that they will be on the right track."

Several other studies conducted have found direct benefits from spending time outdoors: Natural daylight supports circadian rhythms (the body's internal 24-hour clock), helping regulate sleep timing and improve sleep quality⁴; the outdoors protects developing eyes⁵; natural environments help restore directed attention and improve memory performance⁶; and a simple 20-minute walk in a park can improve attention in children with ADHD and help all brains gain focus⁷.

A full list of facts, findings and figures on the benefits of spending time in nature can be found on [GenerationWild.com](https://www.generationwild.com).

Generation Wild's '*Take Your Brain Out*' effort is being promoted through its [15 Generation Wild Communities](https://www.generationwild.com/15-generation-wild-communities) across the state. These GOCO-funded communities are home to coalitions of organizations that create locally-designed outdoor programs for kids and families. The Generation Wild team and their part-goat, part-yeti, all-friend mascot, Wilder, will pop up at several community events across Colorado this summer including at Bring on Summer in Montrose on May 30, the Poudre River Trail celebration in Timnath on June 13, SCARF in Pueblo on June 27, and Joy Park Fee Night in Denver on July 17.

Learn more about how time outside can help reset little brains at [GenerationWild.com](https://www.generationwild.com).

⁴ Ruder, D. B. (2019, June 19). [Screen Time and the Brain](#). Harvard Medical School.
Summer, J. V. (2025, July 23). [How Blue Light Affects Kids' Sleep](#). Sleep Foundation.
Nagare, R.; Woo, M.; MacNaughton, P.; Plitnick, B.; Tinianov, B.; Figueiro, M. [Access to Daylight at Home Improves Circadian Alignment, Sleep, and Mental Health in Healthy Adults: A Crossover Study](#). Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 9980. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18199980>

⁵ Ha A, Lee YJ, Lee M, Shim SR, Kim YK. [Digital screen time and myopia: a systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis](#). JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(2):e2460026. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.60026

⁶ Uncapher, M.R., K. Thieu, M. & Wagner, A.D. [Media multitasking and memory: Differences in working memory and long-term memory](#). Psychon Bull Rev 23, 483–490 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-015-0907-3>
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⁷ Qiulu Shou et al, [Association of screen time with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms and their development: the mediating role of brain structure](#). Translational Psychiatry (2025). DOI: 10.1038/s41398-025-03672-1

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (2008, October 15). [A Walk In The Park Improves Attention In Children With ADHD](#). ScienceDaily.

ABOUT GENERATION WILD

Generation Wild was created by [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) (GOCO) to connect Colorado kids to the outdoors by increasing the amount of time they spend outside. The program is made up of a statewide communications campaign designed to inspire Colorado families using tools like a list of [100 Things To Do Before You're 12](#), and a network of [15 Generation Wild communities](#) engaging more than 360,000 youth participants with outdoor programs, activities and career-pathways in the outdoors. Generation Wild has become a leader in the outdoor movement by executing several statewide initiatives such as [Say Hi with a Snowman](#), [Wilderflowers®](#), [World's Longest Hopscotch](#), and [Wilder, the film](#). For more information, visit [Generation Wild's website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [press page](#).