

GUEST SPOTLIGHT



THE EVERY KID OUTDOORS INITIATIVE

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Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation

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- Tom Adams, Director of the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation



What if we could increase the amount of time families spend in nature and decrease screen time and associated health problems?

EVERY KID OUTDOORS

The Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation, following direction from the 2019 Utah Legislative session ([House Concurrent Resolution 4](#)), has launched a new initiative aimed at getting kids outdoors to enjoy nature and realize the benefits of being active. The initiative is called Utah's Every Kid Outdoors (EKO), and it encourages kids and families to get outside, be active and try new affordable and accessible activities.

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POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Spending time in nature has many proven positive physical, mental, social and behavioral health outcomes for both children and adults.

Studies show it lowers stress levels and blood pressure, engages less-fit children and reduces the gap in gender differences in physical activity more than organized sports do.

There are even studies about the health benefits of stargazing! In one study, participants reported significantly less stress, more positive mood, and stronger awe experiences after viewing night sky scenes. Another study found people are kinder and more creative after looking at the stars!





Following is the list of 10 free or low-cost outdoor recreation activities that are part of the Every Kid Outdoors initiative.

- 1. Observe nature and wildlife in Utah
- 2. Explore Utah's parks, public lands and wild places
- 3. Experience The Greatest Snow on Earth
- 4. Gaze at the starry sky
- 5. Bring along a friend to nearby nature
- 6. Splash in Utah's rivers, lakes and streams
- 7. Follow a trail
- 8. Plant a seed
- 9. Play on Utah's rocks and mountains
- 10. Be a steward and take care of Utah's outdoor places



EKO EXPLORER PASSPORT

Any Utah child can complete these activities near their home, at a city park, National Park, State Park or in the thousands of acres of U.S. Forest Service and BLM land.

Families can download and complete an activity passport for their children to receive a certificate from Gov. Herbert for engaging in outdoor recreation activities. For more details, visit business.utah.gov/outdoor/eko.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The OOR is also excited to be preparing the Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation and Education Grant (UCORE) to launch in January 2020. This grant will provide funding for youth programming that contributes to healthy and active lifestyles through outdoor recreation. This could include dark sky programming, astronomy camps or classes. Another funding option for dark sky outfitting and infrastructure is the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG). This grant provides \$5m of funding each year for recreation infrastructure around the state! Find out more and dream up your next project here: business.utah.gov/uorg

