

## Alliance for Childhood

# Resources for Restoring Play

### Books

*All Work and No Play: How Educational Reforms Are Harming Our Preschoolers.* Sharna Olfman, editor. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.

A timely and valuable collection of essays on the importance of childhood play and how it is endangered.

*Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture.* Juliet B. Schor. New York: Scribner, 2004.

Schor paints an eye-opening picture of the vast corporate machine that has identified children as a direct path to the family purse and now markets to them relentlessly. With increasingly sophisticated ads, companies influence not only what children want but how they feel about themselves. And the consequences are frightening, Schor suggests: higher stress, lower self-esteem, rising rates of obesity and attention deficit disorder. Schor offers parents guidelines for “decommercializing” their children.

*Child Honoring: How to Turn This World Around.* Raffi Cavoukian and Sharna Olfman, editors. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006.

This anthology outlines the unprecedented threats to life at this defining moment in history, and offers a novel and systemic remedy for societal transformation based on honoring our youngest and “most valuable players.”

*The Child's Right to Play: A Global Approach.* Rhonda L. Clements and Leah Fiorentino, editors. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.

Clements, Fiorentino, and their contributors focus on the right of every child to experience the joy and developmental benefits derived from play. The volume brings together national and international specialists in the areas of early childhood and play leadership as well as playground manufacturers, parks and recreation directors, architects and landscape architects, child care providers, child life specialists, movement and physical educators, and parent advocates of play.

*A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play.* Vivian Gussin Paley. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Paley goes inside classrooms around the globe to explore the stunningly original language of children in their role-playing and storytelling. Drawing on their own words, she examines how this natural mode of learning allows children to construct meaning in their worlds, meaning that carries through into their adult lives. Proof that play is the work of children, this enchanting book will inspire and instruct teachers and parents as well as point to a fundamental misdirection in today's educational programs and strategies.

*Children, Play and Development.* Fergus P. Hughes. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn &

Bacon, 1999.

Hughes offers a comprehensive look at children's play from birth to adolescence. Stressing the developmental and psychological importance of play, he discusses the relationship of play to the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional growth of the child.

*Children's Play and Learning: Perspectives and Policy Implications.* Edgar Klugman and Sara Smilansky, editors. New York: Teachers College Press, 1990.

*Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood.* Susan Linn. New York: New Press, 2004.

An exposé of the \$15 billion marketing blitz aimed at children, with an excellent chapter on the importance of play.

*Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect Our Children's Minds—for Better and Worse.* Jane M. Healy. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Healy looks at computers in children's lives, examining the advantages and drawbacks of computer use for kids at home and school. She explores computers' effects on children's health, creativity, brain development, and social and emotional growth.

*Fool's Gold: A Critical Look at Computers in Childhood.* Colleen Cordes and Edward Miller, editors. College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood, 2000.

Available from the Alliance for Childhood, [www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org).

Describes the elements of a healthy childhood and outlines potential developmental risks associated with early computer use.

*The House of Make-Believe: Children's Play and the Developing Imagination.* Dorothy G. and Jerome L. Singer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

A classic from two of play's greatest researchers and advocates. The Singers theorize that children who have supportive persons, places, times, and props for imaginative play develop long-term adult creativity.

*The Hurried Child.* David Elkind. Reading, MA: Perseus, 2001.

Discusses how parents, schools, media, and new technologies are threatening the modern concept of childhood. As antidotes to these stressful pressures, he supports Piaget's developmental ideas and other philosophies that view childhood as a worthy and vital stage of life.

*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Richard Louv. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 2005.

Louv talks with parents, children, teachers, scientists, religious leaders, child-development researchers, and environmentalists who recognize the threat and offer solutions to bringing children back to nature. Louv shows us an alternative future, one in which parents help their children experience the natural world more deeply—and find the joy of family connectedness in the process.

*A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World.* Dorling Kindersley, in

association with UNICEF. New York: DK Publishing, 2002.

Introduces the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child to elementary school students and teachers. A section on the right to play illustrates cultural differences and presents the common practices that define play for all children.

*Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk.* David Elkind. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987. Dissects the phenomenon that produces “superkid” preschoolers. Elkind protests the proliferation of all-day kindergarten programs, academic preschools, and programs and materials designed to teach young children how to read, compute, ski, etc. He contends that such early formal instruction “miseducates” children and subjects them to stress and long-term personality damage.

*Play and Early Childhood Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. James E. Johnson, James F. Christie, and Thomas D. Yawkey. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999. Comprehensive textbook on play with an excellent reference section citing numerous research studies.

*Play, Policy, and Practice.* Edgar Klugman, editor. St. Paul: Redleaf Press, 1992. This fascinating collection of essays features selections from international experts in teacher education, policy, and planning, on topics such as the teacher’s role in enabling play, the undermining of play in the United States, and the importance of play in human development.

*Playing by Heart: The Vision and Practice of Belonging.* O. Fred Donaldson. Nevada City, CA: Health Communications, 1993. A wonderful book with lots of stories of the work of someone who plays for a living. “After playing together for a while, David said, ‘You know, Fred, play is when we don’t know that we are different from each other.’ ”

*The Power of Play.* David Elkind. To be released January 30, 2007 by Da Capo Lifelong Books. Amazon.com describes this forthcoming book: “In modern childhood, free, unstructured play time is being replaced more and more by academics, lessons, competitive sports, and passive, electronic entertainment.... *The Power of Play* suggests ways to restore play’s respected place in children’s lives, at home, at school, and in the larger community. In defense of unstructured “down time,” it encourages parents to trust their instincts and resist the promise of the wide and dubious array of educational products on the market geared to youngsters.”

*Reclaiming Childhood: Letting Children Be Children in Our Achievement-Oriented Society.* William Crain. New York: Henry Holt Owl Books, 2003. Child-development expert William Crain argues that the greatest gifts that we can bestow on our children include a strong sense of self, an enthusiasm for learning, the ability to think independently and creatively, and the confidence to explore the world. Rather than trying to control and direct children’s learning, we should give them opportunities to develop their natural artistic, poetic, dramatic, and linguistic capacities, and to form deep

bonds with the natural world.

*Remote Control Childhood? Combating the Hazards of Media Culture.* Diane Levin. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998. This book aims to inspire creation of a “village” that supports the development of a more positive media culture for children. Part 1 explains how media violence and culture affect children. Part 2 discusses classroom strategies for working effectively with children. Part 3 describes strategies for working on media issues outside the classroom, with parents, in schools, and in the wider community.

*Supporting Play: Birth Through Age Eight.* Dorothy Justus Sluss. New York: Thomson Delmar Learning, 2004. Helping young people learn through play is the focus of this text, aimed at teachers and future teachers.

*Your Active Child: How to Boost Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive Development Through Age-Appropriate Activity.* Rae Pica. New York: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Books, 2003. Pica argues that many children fall into one of two categories: either almost entirely inactive, or spending most of their free time in highly structured, overly stressful competitive sports that are age-inappropriate. Pica recommends age-appropriate activities and play based on the stage of your child’s development, from infancy to preadolescence.

*Your Child at Play* (a series of age-organized books). Marilyn Segal. New York: NewMarket Press, 1998. “It is a rare series for parents of infants and young children that manages to answer their mounting questions while providing the best expert advice in a warm and accessible format. These terrific books are handsome, engaging, and chock full of practical knowledge about childcare and guidance—what’s more, they provide numerous ways for parents and children to have fun as they explore each other’s worlds.” —Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, Yale University.

## **Periodicals and Journals**

*Child Care Information Exchange*  
Child Care Information Exchange has been a leading source of support, encouragement, and up-to-date information on childcare management for 25 years. Subscription information available at [www.ccie.com](http://www.ccie.com)

*Child Development*  
The flagship journal of the Society for Research in Child Development has published articles, essays, reviews, and tutorials on various topics in the field of child development since 1930. Source of many research studies on play  
Available at [www.blackwellpublishing.com](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com)

*Early Childhood Research Quarterly*

NAEYC's scholarly journal includes current research, along with "Practitioner Perspectives" that comment on that research. Available at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

*Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*

The journal of the Association of Child Psychology and Psychiatry is recognized as the leading journal covering both child and adolescent psychology and psychiatry. Brings together empirical research, clinical studies, and reviews of high quality arising from different theoretical perspectives. Available at [www.blackwellpublishing.com](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com)

The *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* is a biannual on current research in education and related fields. It is intended to advance knowledge and theory of the education of children, from infancy through early adolescence.

Available at [www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org)

*Play, Policy & Practice Connections* is the newsletter of the Play, Policy & Practice Interest Forum of NAEYC. One needs to be a member of NAEYC to access this valuable newsletter. See [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

*PlayRights* is the quarterly newsletter of the International Association for the Child's Right to Play. By joining the U.S. branch you get both the international publication and the U.S. publication. To join, see [www.ipausa.org/application.htm](http://www.ipausa.org/application.htm). Back issues are available online at [www.ipausa.org/newsletter.htm](http://www.ipausa.org/newsletter.htm)

*Young Children*

The peer-reviewed journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Subscription information available at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

## **Articles on Play**

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's excellent series on play, by Karen MacPherson:

"Development Experts Say Children Suffer Due to Lack of Unstructured Fun," Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2002.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/lifestyle/20021001childsplay1001fnp3.asp>

"Creative Play Makes Better Problem Solvers," Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2002.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/lifestyle/20021002childsplay3.asp>

"Experts Call Unstructured Play Essential to Children's Growth," Thursday, Oct. 3, 2002.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/lifestyle/20021003childsplay3.asp>

"Play Essential for All Children," position paper of the Association for Childhood Education International. Available at [www.acei.org/playpaper.htm](http://www.acei.org/playpaper.htm)

“Speaking Out for Play-Based Learning: Becoming an Effective Advocate for Play in the Early Childhood Classroom,” by Susan Oliver and Edgar Klugman, Jan/Feb, 2004. Available at <http://www.playingforkeeps.org/site/documents/speakingout.pdf#search=%22%E2%80%9CSpeaking%20Out%20for%20Play-Based%20Learning%22>

“Resources for Managing Common Play Challenges,” by Susan Oliver and Edgar Klugman, Sept/Oct, 2003. Available at [http://www.playingforkeeps.org/site/documents/play\\_problems.pdf#search=%22%E2%80%9CResources%20for%20Managing%20Common%20Play%20Challenges%E2%80%9D%20%22](http://www.playingforkeeps.org/site/documents/play_problems.pdf#search=%22%E2%80%9CResources%20for%20Managing%20Common%20Play%20Challenges%E2%80%9D%20%22)

“What’s New in Play Research?” by D. Fromberg, from CCIE, Issue #118, p.53-56. Available at [www.ccie.com](http://www.ccie.com)

“Rethinking Children’s Play: How Are Today’s Toys Changing the Way Your Kids Play and What They Learn.” Available at <http://fun.familyeducation.com/outdoor-activities/play/35262.html>

“Hand-Made Minds: The Real Meaning of Hands-On Education,” by Frank Wilson, Waldorf Research Bulletin, Fall 1999. Available at [www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal\\_Articles/RB5101.pdf](http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal_Articles/RB5101.pdf)

## **Clinical Reports**

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued an important report in October 2006 titled “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds.” The AAP describes the report as “written in defense of play and in response to forces threatening free play and unscheduled time. These forces include changes in family structure, the increasingly competitive college admissions process, and federal education policies that have led to reduced recess and physical education in many schools.” See [www.aap.org/pressroom/play-public.htm](http://www.aap.org/pressroom/play-public.htm)

## **Play Organizations and Links**

*Adventure Playgrounds, Berkeley*

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/marina/marinaexp/adventplgd.html>

The Adventure Playground at the Berkeley Marina opened in 1979. It is a unique outdoor facility where staff encourage children to play and build creatively, including unusual child-designed and built forts, boats, and towers. Children can hammer, saw, and paint. By providing these low-risk activities, Adventure Playground creates opportunities for children to learn cooperation, meet physical challenges and gain self confidence.

*Adventure Playgrounds*

<http://adventureplaygrounds.hampshire.edu/index.html>

Adventure playgrounds provide a space for children to play freely and creatively without the limitations of fixed play equipment or organized activities and games. Children are given the safety of an enclosed supervised environment. Playworkers are always present to mediate disputes between children and to help them when necessary. Lia Sutton prepared this website as a senior project while studying at Hampshire College. It gives an overview of adventure playgrounds.

*The Association for the Study of Play*

<http://www.csuchico.edu/kine/tasp>

Membership organization, formerly the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play. Sponsors conferences, research, and a newsletter. Also publishes *Play and Cultural Studies*, an annual peer-reviewed volume of current theory and research on play in a variety of disciplines.

*Boundless Playgrounds*

[www.boundlessplaygrounds.org](http://www.boundlessplaygrounds.org)

Boundless Playgrounds is the first national nonprofit dedicated to helping communities create playgrounds where all children, with and without disabilities, can develop essential skills for life as they learn together through play.

*CCFC—Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood*

[www.commercialexploitation.org](http://www.commercialexploitation.org)

Based at the Judge Baker Children's Center at Harvard University, CCFC is a national coalition of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, and concerned parents who counter the harmful effects of marketing to children through action, advocacy, education, research, and collaboration among organizations and individuals who care about children.

*The Children's Environments Research Group, Roger Hart*

[http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/cerg/about\\_cerg/index.htm](http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/cerg/about_cerg/index.htm)

CERG provides an important link between university scholarship and the development of policies, environments, and programs that fulfill children's rights and improve the quality of their lives.

*Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative Web Site*

<http://ecap.crc.uiuc.edu>

The new repository for ERIC/EECE materials

*Family Education*

[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)

Parenting tips and articles, family activities, and expert advice

*Games Kids Play*

[www.gameskidsplay.net](http://www.gameskidsplay.net)

Children's games, rules for playground games, jump rope rhymes, circle games, etc.

*The Good Toy Group*

[www.goodtoygroup.com](http://www.goodtoygroup.com)

A site showcasing 58 independent toy retailers who produce an online catalog featuring toys chosen by them on the basis of creative play value, cultural sensitivity, and nonviolence that promote happy, healthy childhoods

*Hamill Family Play Zoo*

<http://www.brookfieldzoo.org/pgpages/pagegen.34.aspx>

The idea behind the two-acre Play Zoo is that children need to touch, explore, build, and do. Touching live animals, planting a garden, examining animal X-rays, fingerpainting with mud, searching for bugs, exploring a stream, and building animal homes are all in a day's play. The goal is to foster in children a connection with nature as they have fun.

*The Institute for Play*

[www.instituteforplay.com](http://www.instituteforplay.com)

Founded by retired psychiatrist Stuart Brown, who writes: "What the Institute for Play is offering is a mix of information and resources to give you a deeper understanding of the nature and importance of play, and connections to helpful people, organizations, and information. We will also address play's role in various arenas of human endeavor, such as education, violence prevention, community building, and our favorite—play for its own sake." Offers a video series that has appeared on PBS, *The Power of Play*.

*International Association for the Child's Right to Play – US Branch*

[www.ipausa.org](http://www.ipausa.org)

An international, interdisciplinary, non-governmental organization whose purpose is to protect, preserve, and promote children's play as a fundamental human right of all children around the world. Considers play to be the only means possible to ensure the maximum development of each individual and the societies in which they live. Presents and works for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Their site gives information on organizing a Play Day in your community. Publishes the *PlayRights* newsletter

*Kaboom*

[www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org)

Developing partnerships among individuals, civic and community groups, and businesses and foundations, toward building safe, accessible, fun and much-needed community playgrounds.

*Kid Source*

[www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com)

Articles of interest: Learning Through Play, Parental Involvement in Play, Toy Selection and Buying Guide for different ages

*Lemelson Center/Smithsonian Institution*

<http://invention.smithsonian.org/home/>

The Invention at Play national traveling exhibit explores the connection between play and the creative impulse of inventors. Includes stories of inventors, discussions on play, great quotes on play, and little video clips such as one on “Play for Play’s Sake.”

*Natural Learning Initiative*

[www.naturalearning.org](http://www.naturalearning.org)

Robin Moore at N.C. State University is director of the Natural Learning Initiative. The group promotes the importance of the natural environment in the daily experience of all children through environmental design, action research, education and dissemination of information; to help communities create stimulating places for play, learning, and environmental education

*National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families*

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

A good downloadable booklet: *The Power of Play: Learning Through Play from Birth to Three*

*Play Wales*

<http://www.playwales.org.uk/>

Play Wales/Chwarae Cymru is the national organization for children's play in Wales. It is an independent charity funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. Its aim is to act as a champion for children's play; and to increase awareness and understanding of the critical importance of play in children's development. “It is our belief that play which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated is vital in a child's development.”

*Playing for Keeps*

[www.playingforkeeps.org](http://www.playingforkeeps.org)

A national non-profit coalition of parents, toy industry leaders, scholars, educators, cultural leaders, and others dedicated to the optimal development of children by supporting, promoting, and protecting the role of play in our culture.

*Street Play*

<http://www.streetplay.com>

Lists of events, activities, and information on street games.

*Touch the Future*

[www.ttfuture.org](http://www.ttfuture.org)

Comprehensive web site on child and human development, based on the work of Joseph Chilton Pearce and others. Information on how to get a 90-minute video, “Discovering the Intelligence of Play,” from an invitational symposium on play with Joseph Chilton Pearce, Fred Donaldson, James Prescott, Stuart Brown, and Michael Mendizza.

*TRUCE: Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment*

[www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org)

An organization of early childhood professionals that works to promote a positive play environment for children. TRUCE produces written materials such as the Toy Action Guide and Media Violence and Children: A Call to Action. As a small, grassroots organization, it believes that toys should enhance children's natural ability to actively engage in imaginative and meaningful play.

*Center for Screen-Time Awareness (formerly TV Turn-off Network)*

[www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)

Grassroots organization that sponsors the annual TV Turn-off Week each April. It offers many practical suggestions for alternatives to screen time.