



FROM THE GROWING KIDS' PARENTING RESOURCE LIBRARY

Play Gaining Momentum

Learning is the best of all wealth; it is easy to carry, thieves cannot steal it, and tyrants cannot seize it; neither fire nor water can destroy it; and far from decreasing, it increases by giving. -Naladiyar

"[Effort to Restore Children's Play Gains Momentum](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/garden/06play.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1)," was the encouraging title of a recent New York Times article (January 5, 2011). You can access the article by clicking on the following link: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/garden/06play.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1.

Here are a few excerpts from the article...

"For several years, studies and statistics have been mounting that suggest the culture of play in the United States is vanishing. Children spend far too much time in front of a screen, educators and parents lament — 7 hours, 38 minutes a day on average, according to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation last year. And only one in five children live within walking distance (a half-mile) of a park or playground, according to a 2010 report by the federal Centers for Disease Control, making them even less inclined to frolic outdoors...

"Too little playtime may seem to rank far down on the list of society's worries, but the scientists, psychologists, educators, and others who are part of the play movement say that most of the social and intellectual skills one needs to succeed in life and work are first developed through childhood play. Children learn to control their impulses through games like Simon Says, play advocates believe, and they learn to solve problems, negotiate, think

creatively, and work as a team when they dig together in a sandbox or build a fort with sofa cushions. (The experts define play as a game or activity initiated and directed by children. So video games don't count, they say, except perhaps ones that involve creating something, and neither, really, do the many educational toys that do things like sing the ABCs with the push of a button.)...

"To try to reach more parents, a coalition called Play for Tomorrow this fall staged what amounted to a giant play date in Central Park. The event, known as the Ultimate Block Party, featured games like I Spy, mounds of Play-Doh, sidewalk chalk, building blocks, puzzles, and more. The National Science Foundation was closely involved, advising organizers — and emphasizing to parents — the science and the educational value behind each of the carefully chosen activities. Organizers were hoping to attract 10,000 people to the event. They got more than 50,000.

"'We were overwhelmed,' said Roberta Golinkoff, a developmental psychologist at the University of Delaware and a founder of the event along with Dr. Hirsh-Pasek. They are now working with other cities — Toronto, Atlanta, Baltimore, and Houston, among them — to stage similar events, along with making the Central Park gathering an annual one."

Exchange Resource on Promoting Child's Play

The Beginnings Workshop Book **Play** contains insightful articles on The Spirit of Play, The Value of Play, Block Play, Make-Believe Play, and Play & Culture. This book can be ordered individually or as part of the discounted set of 8 Beginnings Workshop Books.