

Pointers For Parents

Generation X-ers Prefer To Stay Home And Play

(NAPSA)—Now that Generation X is starting to have children, new parenting trends are beginning to emerge. Parents in their 20s to mid-30s are often more child-focused and typically recognize the value of unstructured play more than their baby boomer predecessors.

“Free play is an antidote to too much organization,” says Dr. Brian Sutton-Smith, a noted psychologist, folklorist, lecturer and author. “The gradual decline in time allotted for recess in our schools, as well as the increase in structured play activities over the past few years has been troubling. I am thrilled that parents are beginning to embrace the idea that play does not have to be justified.” Dr. Sutton-Smith has long advocated a return to unstructured play, which he believes is a necessary and powerful catalyst for a child’s intellectual, social and emotional development.

Here are some tips for making sure your children are playing enough:

- Watch less television. Studies have shown that children spend a lot of time in front of the TV. Cutting back to only those shows that offer quality programming can free a good-sized chunk of time for unstructured play.

- Let kids be bored. Children need to learn to create their own fun. Experts say that by using their natural imagination, children will find ways to amuse themselves—even if the source is their own daydreams.



Children need free time to play, laugh and grow.

- Send your children to play outside whenever you can. Playing outside promotes more running around, which helps your child sleep better at night and helps battle the obesity epidemic among America’s youngsters.

- Call a recess. Like adults, kids need a break from their work. Unfortunately, many schools have cut or even eliminated recess to increase instructional time and preparation for standardized tests.

One company that recognizes today’s parents’ changing feelings and attitudes about the value of open-ended play is Fisher-Price. Its products and advertisements focus on the joys of play for children and their parents, giving parents advice and help to nurture and enhance their children’s play experiences. Because playing with toys is more than fun, it’s the way kids learn and grow. For more information go to www.fisher-price.com.