

Playing Can Help Combat Childhood Obesity

(NAPSA)—Play is in peril. Play is quickly disappearing from our children's lives, and it's taking a toll on the health and happiness of our children, our families and our communities. Today, children spend less time playing outdoors than those in any other generation, spending instead an average of 7.5 hours a day in front of a screen.

Lack of play is directly linked to increased childhood obesity—one of the main issues facing the younger generation today. The White House Childhood Obesity Task Force recently issued a report with recommendations on how to “solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation.” Physical activity and play were cited as key elements. Lack of play is also linked to a decrease in creativity, imagination, problem-solving skills, resiliency and an increase in classroom behavior problems.

Play Matters!

“Play is inherently active and is a long-term, preventative measure for obesity. Kids who play are less likely to develop obesity-related problems. Play is also a critical factor for improving attention, attitudes, creativity, memory and so many other vital learning skills,” said Darell Hammond, CEO and Co-Founder of KaBOOM!, the national nonprofit leading the movement to save play. “We want to restore a culture of play so that playing and being active are a natural part of our lives.”

Saving Play!

For 15 years, KaBOOM! has led the effort to help save play by constructing innovative, kid-inspired play spaces, using a community-built model that improves the well-being of children as well as the neighborhoods in which they live. “Organizations such as KaBOOM! are necessary not just to the health of our children, but to the health of the entire nation,” said first lady Michelle Obama in a speech at a KaBOOM! playground build in San Francisco.

Get Your Play On!

KaBOOM! offers resources to help communities become more playful:



Giving children a safe place to play can help combat obesity, encourage creativity, foster imagination, and increase the overall health and happiness of children.

- Support Your Local Playground—At playspacefinder.kaboom.org/, neighbors can connect, share, and discuss safety issues and favorite playgrounds.

- Plan a KaBOOM! Play Day—At playday.kaboom.org, communities can organize fun field-day events that get the whole family active and having fun.

- Build/Improve a Playground—To build a new playground or to give an existing playground some TLC, kaboom.org offers a free, interactive project planner that helps novices plan and execute playground builds and park improvement projects.

- Get a Ph.D. in Play—Playschool.kaboom.org offers free online training sessions with child development and play industry experts so that anyone can learn more about the importance of play.

“Without ample play we will continue to see a decrease in creativity, resiliency and imagination, as well as other vital life skills that help children learn more effectively in school and prepare them for a successful adulthood,” added Hammond.

Celebrate Play!

Kids need the same opportunities to play that we had growing up. Take your kids to your local park or playground. Get a street blocked off for play or get everyone together to build a playground in your community. Join the movement to save play and help restore the health of our children.

For more information, visit www.kaboom.org.