



The Let Grow Play Club

A program that gives kids the chance to organize their own games and fun, developing social skills

PROBLEM: Kids are getting anxious, out of shape, and acting out

It's not your imagination. Kids are getting less fit and more stressed. Psychologists think the reason may be lack of play. Studies show the more active kids are, the better they do in school and on tests. They're also healthier. But our kids aren't playing enough.

How come? We think that for our kids to be safe and successful they need to spend all their free time in organized, adult-run, after-school activities.

But it turns out the opposite is true.

When kids make their own fun, like playing tag, they actually get more exercise than at adult-led sports. And when they organize their own games, from basketball to make-believe, they "automatically" learn leadership and problem-solving. How can we give our kids this "free play" advantage?

SOLUTION: Before or After School Play Club in the Gym and on the Playground

At the start or end of the day, schools put out some balls, jump ropes and cardboard boxes in the gym and/or playground. An adult stays on the premises, but intervenes only when absolutely necessary. Think lifeguard, not coach. It is up to

the kids to figure out their own games, negotiate their differences, and play freely—the way we did!

This solves almost every problem at once:

- There is a critical mass of other kids—of mixed ages!—to play with.
- The kids learn social skills, focus, communication and imagination by organizing their own games.
- They learn to control themselves to keep the game going—the foundation of "executive function."
- When kids run around they run around. They actually get more exercise than in organized sports. (Take that, obesity!)
- Free play spurs cognitive development as well as physical development.
- The parents know their kids are safe.

If kids just go home after school, they may not venture out again, and even if they do, they might not find anyone else to play with. So let's get them playing the old-fashioned way, at school.

The Let Grow Play Club is a simple solution that is almost free. Let Grow would like to help you implement it at your school. For more information, contact us at Info@LetGrow.org.