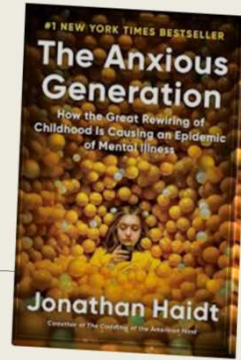


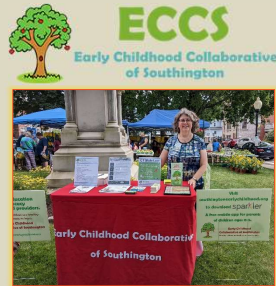
# Encouraging a Play-based Childhood

COMMUNITY CAFÉ, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

PRESENTED BY THE PARENT AMBASSADORS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATIVE OF SOUTHLINGTON




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## Your Southington Parent Ambassadors and ECCS Director

(LEFT TO RIGHT) JESSICA SPRINGER-CAP, PARENT AMBASSADOR : JOANNE KELLEHER, ECCS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR : BETSY MINTZ, PARENT AMBASSADOR

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# ECCS

Early Childhood Collaborative  
of Southington


**Mission:** Collaborating to ensure Southington's children are healthy and prepared to learn through advocacy, programs, resources, and support.

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Tell us who you are and what is your why for being here tonight.

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## Community Agreement to Educate and Empower

1. **Be Respectful:** Be aware of body language, verbal communications, and do not interrupt others. This is a judgement free and shame free space.
2. **Be open-minded:** Be curious and receptive to new ideas and perspectives.
3. **Be willing to learn:** Be willing to be surprised and learn something new.
4. **Be willing to engage in difficult conversations:** Be able to stay in hard conversations and honor the humanity of others. Again, judgement free and shame free space.
5. **Be willing to disagree:** Agree to disagree, but not to disengage.
6. **Be willing to acknowledge mistakes:** Acknowledge when you make a mistake and engage with others with grace and understanding.
7. **Recognize that everyone has something to contribute:** No one knows everything, but everyone knows something.
8. **Be an active listener:** Listen carefully and try to understand the other persons perspective.
9. **Be willing to try new things:** Be willing to try new ideas or new ways of doing things.
10. **Be aware of your own privilege:** Be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and make space for others to share. No monopolizing the conversation.



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## What is a community café?



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## Why this topic? Why now?

### 70's/80's Child



How I lived without a smart phone



How I lived without an iPod



How I lived without Google



How I lived without an Xbox, PS3 or Wii



How I lived without text messaging



How I lived without email, Facebook, or Twitter



How I lived without YouTube



How I lived without GPS



How I lived without a Kindle or Nook

**THE 1980S**



**THE 2020S**







**2000's Nostalgia**



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## What is a Play Based Childhood?

- ~ Self directed play
  - Child determines how to play, when, and for how long
- ~ Enjoyable activities
  - No objectives or goals, just enjoyable play
- ~ Unstructured play
  - Free play. Play and explore with no objective
- ~ Process Oriented
  - The process is the journey
- ~ Imaginative
  - Pretend play using imagination and creativity

WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO DO IN CHILDHOOD 55

**Meet Up with Friends Daily**



Year	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
1991	45	40
1993	48	42
1995	48	42
1997	48	42
1999	45	40
2001	45	40
2003	45	40
2005	45	40
2007	45	40
2009	45	40
2011	35	30
2013	30	25
2015	25	20
2017	25	20

**Figure 2.1.** Percentage of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who say that they meet up with their friends "almost every day" outside school.<sup>12</sup> (Source: Monitoring the Future. I explain how I use this important dataset in the endnotes.)<sup>13</sup>

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Early Childhood Collaborative of Connecticut

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## A reading from The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt

LIFE ON EARTH



LIFE ON MARS



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That was a  
ridiculous  
scenario, right?

- + What do you think of the passage?
- + Would you let your child go?
- + Would you allow them to give permission via a click of a box?
- + What would you do differently?
- + How would you protect your child?
- + Does this seem familiar?

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## So, which is better and/or safer for our kids?

### KEEP THEM CLOSE AND ALWAYS UNDER A WATCHFUL EYE

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
~ More likely to be safe from being taken	~ More inside play
~ Less time learning enhanced self reliance	~ More television/screen time
~ Less connection to nature	~ More time isolated/alone
~ Decreased physical fitness	~ More time with family
~ Lack of independence	

### ALLOW THEM TO BE OUTSIDE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYING WITH PEERS

<u>PROS</u>	<u>PROS</u>
~ Can help improve mood, attention, and focus	~ Increase in physical development
~ Increases better balance and coordination leading to less chance of injury	~ Increase ability to make new friends and develop social skills
~ Being independent outside helps build confidence	~ Stimulates creativity and imagination
~ Being outside help build immunity	~ Allows children to test the limits of their environment in a safe way
~ Encourages problem solving	~ Helps to make sense of the world around them but through play
~ Improves motor skills	~ Being outside is linked to feeling less stressed
~ Teaches cognitive flexibility	



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## How play affects development



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# An ever-changing society

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HOW TO ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO HAVE A CHILDHOOD WHILE ALSO KEEPING THEM SAFE – INFORMATION ON NEW LAWS IN CONNECTICUT

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# Time to PLAY!

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# New Connecticut State Laws

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## An Act Concerning Circumstances Presenting A Substantial Risk To A Child's Health Or Safety

"Section 1 (a) (1) any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any **child under the age of twelve years** who knowingly leaves such child **unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety**, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

(2) in determining whether an action constitutes a violation of this subsection, (A) **consideration** shall be given to whether or not the parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of a child under the age of twelve years exercised judgment that a reasonable person would use in determining **whether the child was of sufficient age, maturity, physical ability and mental ability to be unsupervised under the circumstances**, and (B) no finding of substantial risk may be based solely on a parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of such child **allowing such child's participation in independent activities, including, but not limited to, traveling to and from school, traveling to and from commercial or recreational facilities located near such child's home and unsupervised outdoor play, provided such child is of sufficient age, maturity, physical ability and mental ability to engage in such activities and the child's participation would not lead a reasonable person to believe that such participation creates an obvious danger to the child's safety"**



C G A - Connecticut General Assembly (2023- SB1133)

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## AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHERS AND PARAEDUCATORS. Public Act No. 23-159

"Sec. 4. (NEW) (effective July 1, 2024 (a) (1) "free play" means unstructured, voluntary, child-initiated activities that are performed by a child for self-amusement and have behavioral, social and psychomotor rewards....

(2) "guided play" means learning experiences that combine the child-directed nature of free play with a focus on learning outcomes and adult guidance.

(3) "play-based learning" means a pedagogical approach that emphasizes play in promoting learning and includes developmentally appropriate strategies that can be integrated with existing learning standards. ...



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## AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHERS AND PARAEDUCATORS. Public Act No. 23-159

“SEC. 4. (NEW) (EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024)(b) Each local and regional board of education **shall provide for play-based learning** during the instructional time of **each regular school day** for all students in **kindergarten and any preschool program** offered by the board. Such play-based learning *shall* (1) *be* incorporated and integrated into *daily* practice, (2) allow for the needs of such students to be met through **free play, guided play and games**, and (3) be predominantly **free of the use of mobile electronic devices..**”



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## AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHERS AND PARAEDUCATORS. Public Act No. 23-159

“(c) Each local and regional board of education **shall permit a teacher to utilize play-based learning** during the instructional time of a regular school day **for all students in grades one to five**, inclusive. Such play-based learning (1) *may be* incorporated and integrated into *daily* practice, (2) shall allow for the needs of such students to be met **through free play, guided play and games**, and (3) shall be predominantly **free of the use of mobile electronic devices...**” [CGA 2023-HB6880](#)



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## Community Brainstorming

HOW CAN THE SOUTHINGTON COMMUNITY ENCOURAGE ALL CHILDREN TO PLAY SAFELY AND INDEPENDENTLY?

ALL COMMENTS ARE WELCOME.



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Thanks to Community Cafe Supporters



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## Survey

- WHAT OTHER NEEDS ARE THERE IN THE COMMUNITY?
- TOPICS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY CAFES?
- HOW CAN WE BETTER WORK TOGETHER?
- WHAT ELSE CAN THE ECCS DO?

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## Additional Resources

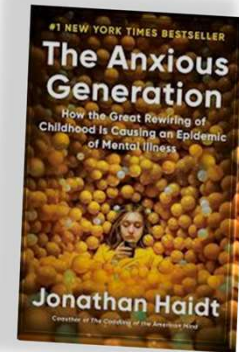
- [Resources - The Anxious Generation](#)
- [Let Grow - When Adults Step Back, Kids Step Up.](#)
- [OutsidePlay](#), they have a parent tool
- [The Let Grow Experience is Life-Changing Homework.](#)

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The Anxious Generation  
By Jonathan Haidt  
ONE COMMUNITY – ONE BOOK

Bestseller - How the Great  
Rewiring of Childhood Is  
Causing an Epidemic of Mental  
Illness

Presented by ECCS, Southington  
Public Schools and Southington  
Public Library 01/16, 02/05,  
02/19, 03/05, (Snow Date 3/12 )  
at 6:30 pm at SPL.  
Registration coming soon.



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Thank  You

For listening,  
For guidance,  
For inspiration,  
For encouragement,  
and  
most importantly  
For being here.



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