



Newsletter

<https://sites.google.com/a/northampton-k12.us/nps/our-schools/jackson-street-school>

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You may also connect with us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/#!/NPSDistrict>

Ms. Alessi's website: <https://sites.google.com/northampton-k12.us/mindfulnessatjss>

JSS Office 587-1510

Volume 22 No. 28

March 30, 2018

If you wish to have a copy of this letter written in Spanish, French or Arabic, please contact the school department at 587-1315. Si le gustaria esta carta en Espanol, es posible. Llama 413-587-1315. Si vous voulez une copie de cette lettre en Français, veuillez contacter le Département de l'École 587-1315. إذا أردتم الحصول على نسخة من هذه الرسالة بلغة عربية، فيرجى الاتصال بالادارة في 587-1315.

MESSAGE FROM MS. AGNA

THE ALL-SCHOOL CONCERT last Friday was EXTRAORDINARY!

Thank you so very much to ALL students, staff, faculty, families and of course, Ms. O'Connell for "orchestrating" it all, so ably assisted in 5th grade by Ms. Totty! We are so fortunate to have the "specialist" teachers that we have, Ms. O, music, Ms. Totty, PE, Ms. Barry, PE (for KDG and 1st), Ms. Lilly, art and Ms. Russell, library (who will honor at our Fine Fine School assembly in June) – our THANKS to them all for their work for ALL!

For those who didn't hear, there was a reason that I arrived in a shopping cart during the 5th grade assembly! It was quite unexpected for many! As you may know, the 5th graders saw a performance of STOMP at the Bushnell in December. One of the scenes had many shopping carts zooming around the stage as a dance – so that's why we added one to our STOMPish performance!

TARDIES & ATTENDANCE

Ms. Deirdre, our school secretary, reports that we have had a 2nd BANNER WEEK – another week of drastic reduction in tardies!! Thanks so much everyone for your continued efforts!

CROSSING GUARD

As you may have noticed, we have been relying on the Northampton Police Dept., when there is someone available to serve as crossing guard in front of our school. The replacement for Joe ended up getting a full-time job and the position is vacant. The Police Dept. is in charge of hiring crossing guards for Northampton Schools and they are seeking someone for our position. If you know of anyone who might be interested, PLEASE ask them to contact the department ASAP! In the meantime, please let us know when you see that no one is crossing students in front of our school! I will also caution of our students about this situation.

MCAS

We begin the season of testing next week – 3rd graders will take the English Language Arts portion – on paper test booklets – on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 3 & 4, with a makeup day on Thursday the 5th (and other makeup days in the next 3 weeks). We work hard to minimize stress about these tests by helping students understand what to expect, teaching and helping them learn the skills to be tested as well as reassuring them that this is just a test, that we just ask them to try their best and all will be fine!

I, as a parent AND as an educator, know the challenges and ambivalence that some of you may be feeling about the tests and having your children take them. Our younger daughter was a 10th grader at NHS the first year (2000) that MCAS was given. I got a call in my office at JSS from the high school principal who asked me to come to her office – which I did. There I found our daughter and heard that she had stormed out of the math test because it asked them to do calculus, which they had not yet studied. I will always be grateful to the principal for helping us work out a plan, in such a respectful, honoring way. Please let me know if you would like to talk about this – either with your children's teachers and/or with me. I welcome this dialogue.

The stakes are very high for our schools if we do not do well or if we have many students who do not take the tests – these are the facts. We have just been informed that the MA Dept. of Education is debating, through open hearings, whether to turn schools that do not do well (they end up in low levels – 5-6) and have the Department take over control, turning the schools into charter schools. This has happened in a larger urban district, Lawrence and now Holyoke is considering turning their middle schools in charter schools. This is very sobering. There is no data as yet to show whether Lawrence's experiment in charter schools is working – this is being studied. My opinion, shared by many, is that losing control of our schools in this way is not a good direction to go in. I have more information on this

and will share with our School Council meeting on April 30th, at our PTO meeting on April 11, at our next Coffee Hour on April 4, and with you, if you would like to know more.

Again, I am very happy to speak with you about this – and any other topic – just let me know.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Garden Work Day - Sunday April 29th, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Let's get our school garden ready for spring planting!

(AT LEAST) TWO WAYS TO LOOK AT IT!

Some of who may have come across the article I've printed at the end of this edition of the newsletter – the following is the title and an excerpt:

IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO GET A GOOD JOB, LET THEM PLAY MORE

By Jenny Anderson

"Play is a primary, indeed a primal, way that we learn to understand and experience the world around us," writes educator and creativity guru Ken Robinson in the introduction to "Real Play Every Day: An Urgent Call to Action," a white paper on the science of play funded by Unilever. (Unilever, it should be noted, has an incentive for wanting kids to get dirty: It runs one of the world's largest laundry detergent businesses).

"The simple act of free, self-initiated play helps unlock a child's innate creativity, imagination, interests and talents," Robinson writes. "It helps children to uncover who they are, and imparts invaluable skills they will need to possess in the uncertain future they will face tomorrow."


I have also come across the following – as, hopefully, a humorous antidote to the pressure you/we as parents/caregivers/educators feel in these days of hyper stress and expectations for us all to do the right thing by our children. Please know that I offer this in solidarity and again, with humor!

HOW TO BE A PARENT IN 2017 (2018 too!) Make sure your children's academic, emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual, physical nutritional, and social needs are met while being careful not to over stimulate, under stimulate, improperly medicate, helicopter, or neglect them in a screen-free, processed foods-free, GMO-free, negative energy-free, plastic-free, body positive, socially conscious, egalitarian, but also authoritative, nurturing but fostering of independence, gentle but not overly permissive, pesticide-free two-story, multilingual home, preferably in a cul-de-sac with a backyard and 1.5 siblings spaced at least two years apart for proper development, also don't forget the coconut oil.

HOW TO BE A PARENT IN LITERALLY EVERY GENERATION BEFORE OURS: Feed them sometimes.

And to all who will be celebrating, a very HAPPY PASSOVER and EASTER to you!!

With great respect and affection,


Gwen Agna

PLEASE CHECK OUR LOST & FOUND TABLE – IT'S VERY FULL!

Stay tuned for HOLA make-up days for the snow days!!

Free Yoga Class

Please come to Karuna on Friday, April 27th - 4:00 - 5:00

To practice with Ms. Alessi

And your whole family!

Balloon Powered Car Exhibition at Morning Math Club - April 3

Families and staff are invited to come to Morning Math Club (room 110) on Tuesday, April 3 at 8:15 am for the culmination of our Spring Engineering Challenge. Over the last two weeks, multi-age teams of K-5 engineers designed and built balloon-powered cars to propel themselves at least 15 feet (without a push!). Engineers can arrive as early as 7:50 am to put any finishing touches on their cars. Families and staff are invited to attend the "road test" from 8:15 to 8:40 am.

Thanks to Tom Gralinski and the Smith STEM Outreach Program and all our amazing family and community volunteers for supporting our young engineers.

PTO NEWS

Swing Into Spring

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Swing Into Spring auction the best! We had over 250 items to auction off and our record amount of attendees helped make that happen. It was great to see so many parents, caregivers, JSS teachers and staff out enjoying themselves. There was electricity in the air and it was so exciting to be a part of!

This event would not have been possible without the help of so many volunteers. A HUGE thank you to:

Alana Kaczmarek, Alice Rich Lewis, Andrea Doehne, Ashley Hildt, Beth Maurer, Danielle Johnson, Fidel Hidalgo, Gavin Grant, Jacki Emond, Jess Saalfield, Jessica Terry, Jonathan Weil, Jordan Abbott, Jude Almeida, Kate Parrott, Kerry LaBounty, Kim Ang & Ping Liew, Laura & Jonathan Fallon, Lindsay Slabich, Lisa Clauson, Liz & Reid Bertone-Johnson, Margaret Byrne, Marie Anne Dambrov, Marisha Marks, Marta Blyth, Mary Clark, Megan Murphy Wolf, Nicole Bourdon, Nicole Walsh, Pallavi Bandal, Phil Mathews, Rachel Merrell, Summer Cable, Tamara Galvin and William Sherr for donating your time and energy to this event.

Thank you to **Ashley Miller** for organizing all of the classroom art projects. Seeing the wonderful pieces of artwork that the children create has become one of my favorite parts of the auction! Thank you to Jan Sabach for designing the invitation - what a colorful addition to this year's auction!

And thank you especially to the auction committee - **Jo Comerford, Jennifer Prewitt-Freilino, Beth Riemer, Liz Horn and Alyssa Richardson**. You are the best!

Because of our wonderfully generous underwriters - **Optical Studio, Easthampton Savings Bank Foundation, King & Cushman Insurance, Northampton Area Pediatrics, J. Greene Painting, Wohl Family Dentistry and Northampton Pediatric Dentistry** - all of the money raised at the auction will go directly to the Principal's Fund!

The numbers are still coming in, but it's looking like we may have surpassed our goal! I am so proud to be a part of the amazing Jackson Street School community and I'm already looking forward to next year's auction!

Cheers! - Karen Hodges

And a huge THANK YOU and BRAVO to **Karen Hodges**, who took on leadership of Swing into Spring this year and not only did it all with grace, but made it the biggest, best one in memory! Karen, your hard work and dedication are amazing - we are so lucky to have you at JSS!

Help finish off the Winter JSS Grocery Gift Card Fundraiser!

We have \$6,000 more to sell.

This will complete a \$3,125 fundraising effort for JSS without you losing a penny The gift cards cost & are worth their face value

-- meaning you pay NO extra money --

Buy as many as you want in \$25, \$50, or \$100 increments.

We have cards for River Valley Co-op, Big Y, and Stop & Shop.

To purchase your gift cards ...

Stop by the table inside the main door

Before school (8:30-9:15a)

After school (2:45-3:15p)

April 3, 5, 9, 11 & 13!

Send an email to Julie Harvey Park, juliebaboolie@yahoo.com

Payments can be made by cash or check (preferably) or PayPal:

- Checks should be made out to the "Jackson Street School PTO" with Grocery Card Fundraiser in the memo line. Hand the check to one of the JSS PTO Leadership Team or place it in the PTO mailbox in the office.
- Credit card payments can be made by clicking the "Donate" button at the bottom of the PTO webpage (www.jsspto.org). Forward your PayPal receipt to jacksonstreetpto@gmail.com or juliebaboolie@yahoo.com to confirm your order.

Many Thanks For Your Generous Support,

The JSS PTO Leadership Team Alana, Gwen, Jo, Julie, Liz, Pallavi

NATURE'S CLASSROOM MEETING FOR 4th GRADE PARENTS ON TUESDAY, APRIL 3 at 6:00 PM

We are holding an introductory meeting about Nature's Classroom for all 4th grade parents on Tuesday, April 3 at 6:00 pm in the cafeteria at JSS. This is a chance to get together, familiarize ourselves with what NC is and what is needed from us as parents (logistically, financially) and brainstorm together about fundraisers for this incredible trip. Some of the very successful ones in past years have included movie nights, a spaghetti supper, a "Parents' Night Out," (several of you did a great job with this in December) and others. If you are interested in coordinating any of these - or have some new ideas for fundraisers - we would LOVE to hear about them.

Kathie Bredin has kindly offered to come to the April 3 meeting to share her knowledge about fundraising for NC and what past classes have done.

If you cannot attend on April 3 but want to help with NC fundraising, please let me know. We need all hands on deck for what is one of the most treasured and memorable experiences our students have at JSS.

Thank you so much!

Best, Liz Horn (mom of Charlotte Shimpach in Mr. Strouse's classroom)

P.S. Information packets with details about the trip will be coming home soon!

FAMILY CENTER COFFEE HOUR ON WED., APRIL 4

Please join us if you can for Coffee Hour in the Family Center on Wednesday, April 4 from 9:00 to 10:00 am - free coffee, tea and treats, conversation with other parents/guardians/staff, and younger children always welcome! Ms. Agna usually joins us too!

LOCAL CHORUS CONCERT TO BENEFIT NATURE'S CLASSROOM - FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Johnny's mom Nerissa Niels' Local Chorus is having an amazing benefit concert for Nature's Classroom (thank you so much, Nerissa!)

Local Chorus Winter Concert! A Fundraiser for Rising 5th graders to go to Nature's Classroom at the Senior Center, 67 Conz St, Northampton MA 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Tickets available at the door. Sliding scale of \$10-\$20--all proceeds after expenses will be split evenly between the four Northampton public schools' rising 5th grade classes

<https://www.facebook.com/events/153542662006543/>

Local Chorus is an independently run chorus for kids aged 5-13, run by musician/activist Nerissa Niels. We sing a wide repertoire of folk, pop, rock and classical music in one-, two- and three-part arrangements. Repertoire includes songs by The Beatles, Tom Petty, Leonard Cohen, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie and Lin Manuel-Miranda. Our mission is to bring joy to the community through music and performance.

NEF GRANTS

NEF Small Grants deadline is April 16 - is there a project you would like to see?

The Northampton Education Foundation (NEF) offers Small Grants to Teachers to bring special programs and projects to our schools. There are two grant cycles a year, and the deadline for the Spring one is April 16. Parents can initiate projects, although all grants must include a teacher or school administrator. Some of the grants that NEF has funded recently at JSS include a classical music program coming to JSS later this Spring, Sojourner Truth's Florence: A Walk Through History, Improv Out, field trips with Grow Food Northampton and a program for staff on Promoting Racial Literacy.

This is a wonderful opportunity - would you love to see a special performer or guest come to JSS? Is there a field trip or classroom project that would really enhance learning here but is not in the school budget? Is there a professional development opportunity for teachers and staff?

The application isn't long or intimidating - really! - and NEF really wants to hear your ideas.

The JSS PTO can offer support for the grant writing process - just let us know.


Details about the application, including what NEF does and does not fund, application questions and FAQ can be found on the

NEF website: northamptoneducation.org

Just click on the link for Small Grants to Teachers: <http://northamptoneducation.org/small-grant-application/>

And if you want help with this, please email Liz Horn and I will connect you with support: elhorn@mindspring.com

IN THE NEWS

 **Lucia and Marcelo Flajnik-Palladino's mother, Celeste Palladino's** letter to the Daily Hampshire Gazette was published on the topic of arming teachers with guns - it is posted on the bulletin board outside the main office.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Valley ADHD Parent Support Group

Next meeting: Monday, April 2, 2018

1st Monday of Every Month 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Northampton Area Pediatrics, LLP

193 Locust St., Northampton Conference Room

Join other area parents and caregivers to...

- Receive ADHD information and support
- Be heard without being judged
- Hear how others cope with similar issues and challenges
- Learn about local resources for families
- Hear from area specialists on pertinent topics
- Learn new strategies to try at home
- Leave feeling empowered and hopeful

Light refreshments will be available.

Questions? Please contact: ValleyADHDfamilies@gmail.com

"ENOUGH AS SHE IS" WITH RACHEL SIMMONS AT NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL - WED., APRIL 4 at 6:30 PM

Rachel Simmons is a bestselling author, educator and coach who helps girls and young women grow into authentic, emotionally intelligent and assertive adults. She will share strategies to help girls move beyond impossible standards of success to live healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives. Join us for a talk followed by a Q&A and book signing.

Hosted by the Northampton Education Foundation.

All donations are tax-deductible and benefit the Northampton Education Foundation.

If you wish to bring a girl to this event, Rachel recommends 7th-12th graders.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/enough-as-she-is-with-rachel-simmons-northampton-ma-tickets-43145016907>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR – We’re always adding new dates so keep checking. PLEASE check the Northampton Public Schools website for district calendar updates.

Parents Hour in the Family Center every other Wed. from 9-10AM, beginning Wed. Sept. 6.

Walking School Bus (See you in the Spring!) – Ms. Agna alternates on Fridays around 8:10AM between the bike path (starting behind Stop and Shop) and Hampshire Heights, starting at the bottom of the hill near the CVS plaza.

Tues, Apr. 3 Nature’s Classroom meeting for 4th grade families

Thurs. Apr. 5 HOLA Session 3 ends

Fri. Apr. 6 WALKING SCHOOL BUS STARTS AGAIN!! Ms. Agna will walk through Hampshire Hts. starting at 8AM!

Wed. Apr. 11 All-school assembly – 1st graders present at 1:30PM.
JSS PTO meeting 6:30-8PM

NO SCHOOL – APRIL VACATION April 16-20, 2018

Tues. Apr. 16 NEF grant deadline

Sun. Apr. 29 GARDEN WORK DAY 10AM-2PM

Mon. Apr. 30 JSS Council meeting 3:30-5PM

Sat. May 12 SOS PLANT & GARDEN MARKET 9-1PM at Smith Vocational/Agricultural School

Wed. May 30 all-school assembly honoring our JSS/High School Grads – with KDGners at 2PM

Fri. June 8 FIELD DAY (rain date on Friday, June 15)

Thurs. June 14 all school assembly “FINE FINE SCHOOL” led by Ms. Agna at 10:00AM

MCAS DATES

April

Tuesday April 3, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade ELA

Wednesday April 4, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade ELA

Thursday April 5, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade ELA

Tuesday April 10, 2018 MCAS 4th Grade ELA

Wednesday, April 11 MCAS 4th Grade ELA

Thursday April 12, 2018 MCAS 4th Grade ELA

Tuesday April 24, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade ELA

Wednesday April 25, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade ELA

Thursday April 26, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade ELA

May

Tuesday May 1, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade Math

Wednesday May 2, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade Math

Thursday May 3, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade Math

Thursday, May 3, 2018 MCAS 3rd Grade Math

Tuesday May 8, 2018 MCAS 4th Grade Math

Wednesday May 9, 2018 MCAS 4th Grade Math

Thursday May 10, 2018 MCAS 4th Grade Math

Tuesday May 15, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Math

Wednesday May 16, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Math

Thursday May 17, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Math

Monday May 21, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Science

Tuesday May 22, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Science

Wednesday May 23, 2018 MCAS 5th Grade Science

IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO GET A GOOD JOB, LET THEM PLAY MORE

By Jenny Anderson

February 28, 2018

Fears about automation displacing workers around the world ranked high on the list of Things to Be Very Worried About at the World Economic Forum in January. “At the end of the day, we have to fire a lot of people,” said Ursula Burns, chairman of the supervisory board at telecom group VEON, and former CEO of Xerox—which, indeed, recently had to fire a lot of people.

Most of the remedies on offer were the usual high-level suggestions: re-train workers, offer some kind of universal basic income, design a “new social contract” that requires companies to factor in the needs of workers along with maximizing shareholder value. But one group of CEOs looked a little further down the supply chain, offering a scientifically grounded but under-appreciated solution to the problem: play.

Helping kids play more “will equip them to be relevant to the workplace and to society,” said John Goodwin, CEO of the Lego Foundation and the former chief financial officer for The Lego Group.

That may sound self-serving coming from a Lego executive. But research shows that play is crucial in establishing the foundations of social, emotional, and academic learning. Dressing up like Batman or building imaginary cities with blocks help young children cultivate creativity, develop emotional intelligence and regulation (pdf), and build empathy—the very skills that robots can’t replace.

At Davos, this notion was popular even among those who don’t build toys for a living. Kai Fu Lee, a Taiwanese venture capitalist who opened Google’s China office and who has worked in artificial intelligence (AI) for more than three decades, said we need to develop the skills that are unique to humans. “There are four things AI cannot do as well as humans: creativity, dexterity, compassion, and complexity.” Empathy, he said, would be paramount. “We have a human responsibility to do this.”

“Play is a primary, indeed a primal, way that we learn to understand and experience the world around us.” Laying the foundations for imaginative problem-solving starts early, said Goodwin, who was joined by two other play enthusiasts: Jesper Brodin, CEO of IKEA, and Paul Polman, the CEO of Unilever, who blew off dinner with US president Donald Trump in order to kick off the Real Play Coalition. The group will focus on governments, schools and parents, all of whom seem to undervalue play. They used the World Economic Forum to raise the issue among those who might need to hear it most: industry and government leaders focused on the future of the global economy.

“We don’t look at kids as economic capital,” said Goodwin. “We are vested in children developing from a child-centric perspective.” But the World Economic Forum isn’t focused on kids, or even education; its focus is on capitalism and its component parts, including workers. So the Real Play Coalition cast kids as future workers, championing the radical idea that if we train children in the skills they need to survive automation now, we won’t have to worry as much about re-training them as workers later.

The science of play

According to experts who study such things, play has a technical definition with certain criteria that must be met. Kenneth Rubin, a professor human development at the University of Maryland, and his colleagues, say play should be “intrinsically motivated,” rather than imposed by parents; pleasurable; actively engaging; and operate outside of life’s many rules. (Naptime be damned, we are flying to Mars on a purple unicorn!)

Researchers have identified various categories of play—physical, constructive, imaginative, dramatic, and games with rules—all of which help children develop in three domains: physically, socially and emotionally and cognitively:

- Imaginative play, such as drawing, dancing, or playing with water, lays the foundations for creativity, allowing kids to express feelings, communicate, and experiment with reality.
- Building with blocks or cardboard develops fine motor skills. It also helps kids to develop resilience, or grit (those block towers do fall down) and start reasoning and problem-solving (“How do I build a tower that does not fall down?”).
- Chasing, hiding, jumping and wrestling build gross motor skills, the basis for which will be used to crawl and walk and run, not to mention persevere and think (exercise helps with memory consolidation).
- Dramatic play (such as dressing up, role play, puppets, and storytelling) helps children with emotional regulation and critical relationship skills, including empathy, cooperation, and negotiation.

“Play is a primary, indeed a primal, way that we learn to understand and experience the world around us,” writes educator and creativity guru Ken Robinson in the introduction to “Real Play Every Day: An Urgent Call to Action,” a white paper on the science of play funded by Unilever. (Unilever, it should be noted, has an incentive for wanting kids to get dirty: It runs one of the world’s largest laundry detergent businesses).

“The simple act of free, self-initiated play helps unlock a child’s innate creativity, imagination, interests and talents,” Robinson writes. “It

helps children to uncover who they are, and imparts invaluable skills they will need to possess in the uncertain future they will face tomorrow.”

Play on the wane

We know that play is integral to helping children develop into healthy, well-adapted people. Yet play is an “endangered species,” Goodwin said in Davos to a rapt group of besuited industry executives, who were seated on small block chairs and building Legos. According to research commissioned by Edelman Intelligence, 56% of respondents in a survey of 12,710 parents in 10 countries said their kids spent less than an hour every day playing outside—less time than prisoners in a maximum security prison spend outdoors. One in 10 kids never play outside, and two-thirds of parents say their kids play less than they did. (Quartz has requested the research from Edelman, and will update when we hear back.)

What are kids doing if they’re not playing? Smartphones, video games, and tablets play a role. But so does over-scheduling kids in organized activities like soccer, violin lessons, and dance, which do not fit the definition of play. Parents know kids need academics, sports, and music to “succeed,” so they focus on those activities, relegating play to a trivial pastime that can be sacrificed. Yet pushing kids to spend more time studying has not translated to more engagement in schools. Gallup data shows that about 26% of fifth-graders had a low level of engagement in school; by 12th grade, that figure had reached 68%.

“There is a narrow focus on high-stakes, single-result tests which prevents kids from employing their creative juices,” Goodwin said.

“There is a narrow focus on high-stakes, single-result tests which prevents kids from employing their creative juices.” There’s no doubt that kids need to learn math and science. But they also need to learn how to be human. “We’re trying to train our kids to be better computers, but our kids will never be better computers than computers,” Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a professor of psychology at Temple University and a leading expert on play, told the New York Times. Too often, we underestimate the importance of activities that help kids learn to negotiate with others, explore the world, or invent new ideas. “These are things humans do better than computers, and play helps us develop that.”

Peter Gray, a professor of psychology at Boston University, argues that modern parenting, with its emphasis on organized activities and academics over unstructured, free play, is probably the root of the spike in mental-health problems among kids today. Kids don’t learn critical life-coping skills because they never get to play, he argues: “Children today are less free than they have ever been.” And that lack of freedom has exacted a dramatic toll.

What to do?

Goodwin said the primary purpose of the Real Play Coalition is to elevate the importance of play, so that it’s not just a cause championed by a small group of CEOs at Davos, but an activity that governments and parents embrace and fight for. That starts at birth and extends to schools.

“We are not adapting our education systems for human learning, and that’s where we have to make an intervention with urgency,” he said.

As kids enter preschool and formal schooling, the debate around the right balance of academics and play is fiery. Some argue that taking academics out of early education is fine for rich kids, who have ample enrichment at home, but can hurt poorer kids who start school almost a year behind their wealthier peers. However, many agree that there are ways to make all early learning more playful—including how we think of math in preschool.

The potential for workers to be displaced by automated technology is real, and the angst associated with joblessness—and loss of identity—could lead to social unrest, warned Alibaba’s Jack Ma. “Each technology revolution has made the world unbalanced,” he said at Davos. To shield future generations from such a fate, we need to let them get out the blocks and start building.

This reporting is part of a series supported by a grant from the Bernard van Leer Foundation.