

Parents,

Join the Movement!



Play Tectonics

Communication · Education · Transformation

Parents have a lot to worry about these days. Some go completely overboard protecting their kids--like the current Snow plow species, a ramp up from parenting 2.0 Helicopter. But for those willing to parent honestly, we have to be transparent and mindful.

Perhaps the greatest gift you could give your child is the awareness and ability to find refuge from the outside world -- not hooked up to a handheld -- but rather to nurture the mindscape where intellectual curiosity can grow, and relationships with the world can be discovered -- through Play. For Play is how we engage the blank pages of life. Like Einstein's meditative naps and daydream journeys on light beams, which allowed him to escape routinely from the outside world to inform his own mind, a truly private space is essential to developing a capacity to meet the world with some degree of faith in ourselves.

It is no secret that the noise and shadow of technology has become a loud, looming presence in our lives today. We live in an information-age that has ironically resulted in perhaps the greatest ever obstacles to communication. We can almost instantly generate the answer to virtually any question with the tap of our thumbs, yet retaining that information and sharing it in conversation seems to be a fading art. Play is preventative -- an antidote to repel the gravitational pull and habituating clutches of technology

Through Play, you and your child can discover communication pathways that invite active listening and receptivity. In one-on-one play, a parent and child can choose by turns to lead, guide, question, or simply follow; in play child and adult alike independently explore social experiences that nourish mental health and mindfulness. Play-Based communication is a path that fosters love, curiosity, and self-exploration. A parent who connects with the child early through Play establishes a lifelong power source for building cooperation and a thriving relationship.

As kids grow, the ever increasing threats of isolation and habituation that technology creates can be met with the authenticity of 'play-based communication', a natural way to keep minds of all ages active and engaged. Making your home a place where Play can be nurtured can give your child the tools to face outside environments that are increasingly designed to operate against him or her. Not the least of these environments is your child's school.

School learning culture is a stressful, isolating space. In school, the authentic child is left outside the door to the classroom to submit to the accountability machine. Under the ever-present evaluative, judgemental gaze, a punitive outdated factory system has been colonized by big tech and big government. And while there are positive forces attempting to change the learning culture, continuing practices in the form of Testing and Active Shooter Lockdown Drills directly impact your child amidst the conflict and ground-shaking political, economic and social dysfunction we daily experience all around us. Play-based communication gives children the power to enter this stressful environment, armed with a language that allows them to express their inner voice with confidence, and to succeed by rising above a destructive learning culture.

Play is the domain of childhood. It beckons parenthood to engage. Play is the biological legacy and birthright not just of homelife but by extension the life of learning. Home-schoolers have successfully shown this to be true. Both physical and later mental play evolved along with family life to help adults bond with and prepare the young for survival and success.

Play offers parents a way to navigate the rocky school culture. Many parents feel intimidated by school, and are resistant about talking to the teacher; by adopting play as a learning guide, parents have a strategic way to share with the child; a fresh way to think about lessons and projects; something to add to the conversation. "This is what we're doing to promote learning at home." When parents speak up about Play, they are putting the teacher on notice to expect something different. When the children bring in work that incorporates elements of play, the kids themselves are planting the seeds of Play in the culture and in the minds of their teachers.

Play offers a natural way for parents and community to begin exercising its right to shape and gain more say in what goes on in the schools that their taxes pay for. Play is a kind of concentration, involvement, and ownership; a power and a birthright rooted in our connection with parenthood. Power and control is a natural outgrowth of parenthood that can and should be claimed in the name of education for generations to come. Too many special interests have tentacles extended into the learning culture; the 'powers that be' currently have the final say in how things are organized and experienced. However, it's fair to say that teachers and children are the ones who are subject to a system of control and authority that has disenfranchised them -- racially, economically, professionally and morally. The adoption of Play in practice and principle can set in motion a movement with the power to transform the learning landscape.

Few programs have the power to impact so many children and solve so many problems for so few dollars. Our flagship innovation, Puppetools[®] or Play Language, has been designed to make use of materials that are already present in many classrooms; paper, scissors, and glue. A modest fundraiser can not only provide introductory training for teachers, but provide students with hands-on materials to incorporate a language of symbols and ideas that can be applied to any lesson or any assignment.

When a teacher decides to begin engaging in play through communication, the impact on both the teachers and the kids is profound. In this way, the foundation of Play should be deepened and broadened and made part of the learning culture to reconstitute and transform it.

"I must tell you that I loved this course. I have used puppets for a number of years, but never really knew in what direction to go. You have given me many ideas and so have other members of the class. I don't think I have ever been so excited about anything in teaching before (and I have taught for more than 20 years). Watching the children's reactions is most exciting and besides I really feel I am being creative-- something I never felt before. Thank you so much!"

-Marilyn , Special Ed

About the Movement

"Play Tectonics" is a play on *Plate* Tectonics -- the geological theory advanced in the early 20th Century by meteorologist Alfred Wegener who claimed that the continents moved on plates, and invited us to advance our own novel idea that the land mass we call Education moves forward naturally on the power of play -- if we get

out of the way. Like all legitimate theories, Play Tectonics is based on observation and the taking of intellectual risk to stick one's neck out and make a claim. Wegener and his outlandish idea was laughed at and ridiculed by professional geologists. Ironically, the quality of his thinking was childlike. Not to take anything away from his scientific discovery, but it's important to consider how many 5th graders might look at a map of the world, and arrive at Wegener's observation: "Hey, the continents fit together like a puzzle!" Meaning, kids, above all, have been denied their power and the freedom to learn in the full light of play.

"We the People" make up the Play Tectonics Movement. In the learning culture, it's all of us -- kids, parents, teachers, community who are left to deal with the culture of the herd with its trappings and hamstringing of the mind. The one force that can lift us all above the learning factory into a space of mind we can call our own is Play Energy. Our kids are due such a birthright.

We therefore claim Play Tectonics as the 'movement to move education forward on the power of play'. This is not the passive play commonly associated with the discarded building blocks of early childhood education. Instead, Play Tectonics is active engagement. This is Play with the power to transform behavior, communication and knowledge. We deliver play energy into the lives of children and teachers through communication, knowing that the impact of Play delivered in this way is profound, although still seldom seen or understood, and something of a discovery.

As parents, we believe it's time to bring the lofty implications of Play down to earth. This is about our children and the years of freedom we deny them by tolerating the reality of an institutional learning culture -- *and you*. As first teachers, parents are the first and last line of defense against those in the learning culture who care more for their financial and political stake than they do for the children and their teachers. Either we make sure that the culture is made to serve every child and his or her inherent love for learning, or we leave it up to the "professionals" as we have always done, and continue to believe that the present way of schooling is the best we can do. Play as Language is a natural and intuitive means of communication. As kids grow accustomed to the look, flow, and feel of the paper forms, they develop a 'play literacy' that empowers them to tackle schoolwork with greater confidence.

For teachers, Play is not just about teaching that's effective and inspired; it's also about leveraging Play's catalytic power to strengthen their position in the learning culture. And for a profession that needs greater respect, economic and political power, Play represents positive activism. For school officials and administrators, Play is way to begin planting the seeds of creative fertilization in classroom labs, identifying single practitioners of the citizen science of Play or a small group of teachers without having to get whole school or system buy-in. Explore the possibility of bringing change to your school. Form a team of Play Pioneers! It's in your hands and capacity. By working together, we can help you leverage Play as an organizing principle for change via a grassroots movement.

"How do we start?", you may be asking yourself. The answer: We have taken our proprietary media of Play Language, proven and trademarked under the name Puppetools[®], and updated it for today's learning interfaces. Using mobile friendly Google Classroom, our introductory course, Puppetools Basics, is now available to experience at your convenience. By enrolling, you become a member of a community of fellow Play activists, with certification by Play Tectonics available for those who enroll. As parents and teachers begin discovering the power of Play and Play Language, they will play a key role in advancing a transformative process. Your participation can help make that discovery happen. Visit PlayTectonics.com/puppetools to enroll.