



Young Athletes, Couch Potatoes, and Helicopter Parents: The Productivity of Play

Jessica Skolnikoff, Robert Engvall

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Major newspapers, news programs, and magazines across the country have recently addressed the current issues of childhood obesity, the link between exercise and improved academic focus, and the importance of diet and exercise in improving the health of our children. As many schools consider cutting recess and removing physical education from their curricula, it has become increasingly important to examine the possible effects of this decision and what it might mean for children and their physical and mental well-being.

In *Young Athletes, Couch Potatoes, and Helicopter Parents*, Jessica Skolnikoff and Robert Engvall look at the important issue of play and its changing role in today's hyper-structured society. The authors conducted countless interviews combined with extensive research in order to gain a comprehensive theory on the current nature of play and how it has affected children's lives. Specific topics addressed include the impact of over-involved parents upon the play of their children, how kids are chosen for sports teams and the effect of these selections on the kids, the lack of unstructured play, and the lasting impression of society's competitive mindset on children.

This book is not a criticism of parents who want to be involved in their children's lives, but addresses the structural and cultural issues around the changing role of play and the ways in which kids' sports are viewed in today's society. Intended not only for childhood development studies, education, sociology, popular culture, and sports studies, this book will be of interest to parents, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, and educators.

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