



PRESS PLAY

A conversation about play with Katy Smith

**LEARNERS
EDGE**

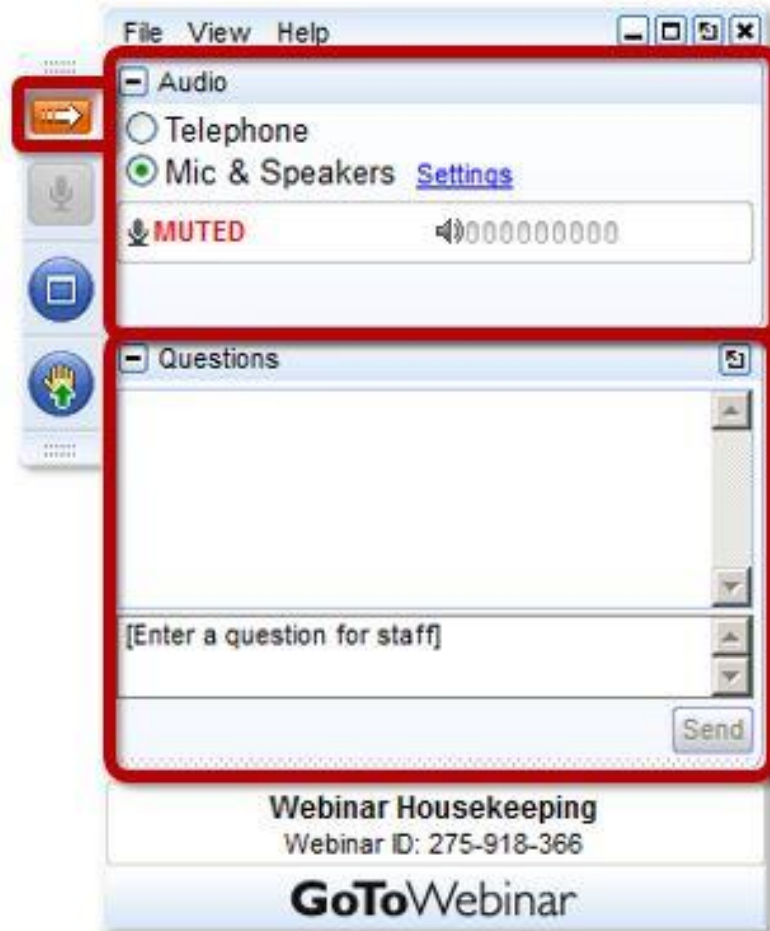
Founded by teachers.
Dedicated to learning

Susanne Leslie, Interviewer

- Proud mother of a recent UW Badger graduate and a U of M Golden Gopher senior
- Loves anything and everything outdoors – during all four Minnesota seasons
- Former parent educator
- Has been with Learners Edge for ten years
- Current Role: Lead Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at Learners Edge

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Your Participation

Open and close your control panel

Join audio:

- Choose "Mic & Speakers" to use VoIP
- Choose "Telephone" and dial using the information provided

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

Note: Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.

Connector, Story-Teller, Play Advocate & 2011 Minnesota Teacher of the Year


Katy Smith

- Lives in Winona, Minnesota with her husband, Matt
- 3 grown daughters and 2 brand new sons-in-law
- First parent educator to be honored with the Teacher of the Year Award
- Undergraduate degrees in social work and parent education
- Licensed parent educator
- Master's in Education
- Master's in Early Childhood Public Policy and Advocacy

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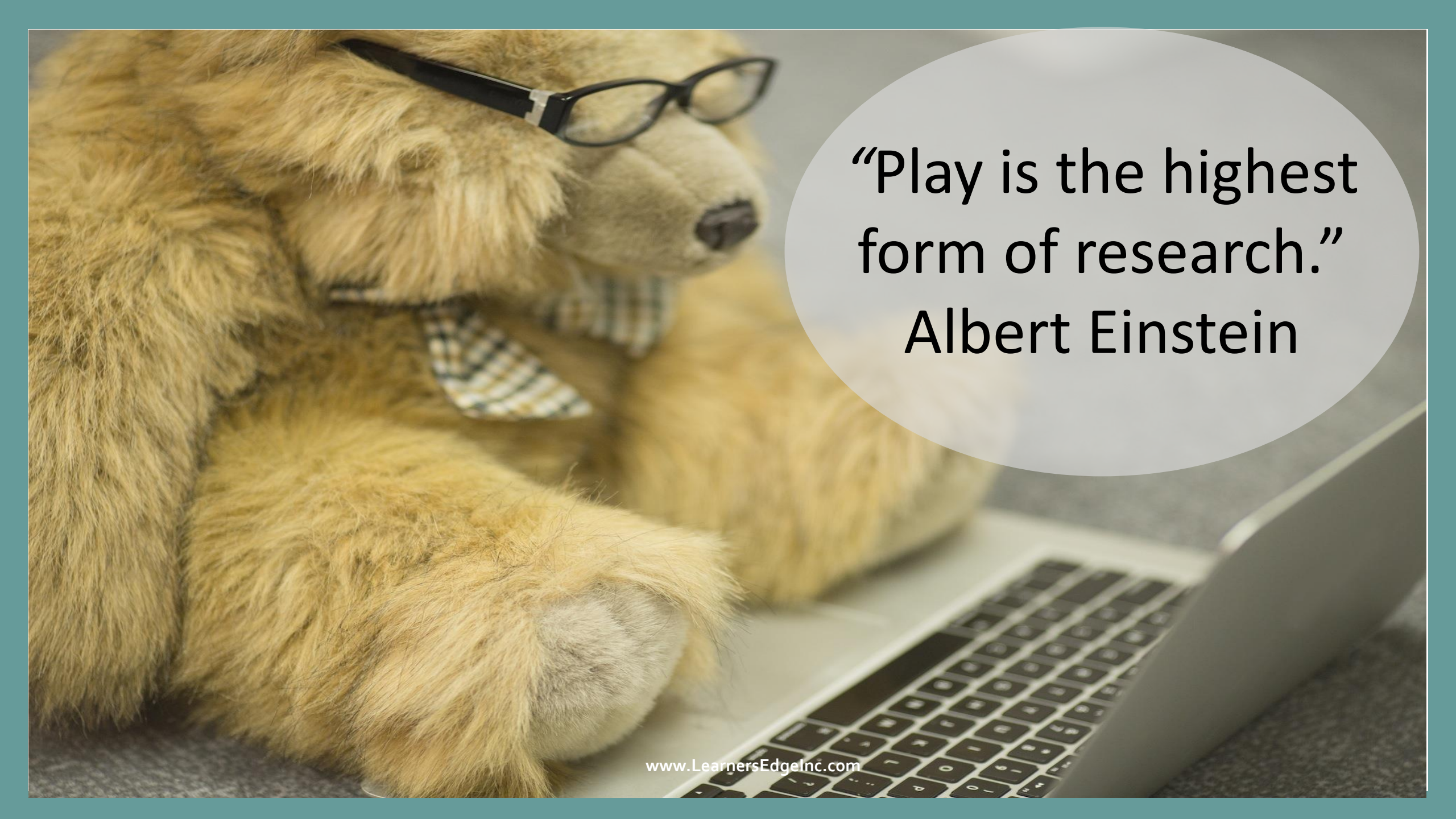
“Do something every
day that scares you.”

Eleanor Roosevelt



“For more than fifty years,
children's free play time has
been continually declining,
and it's keeping them from
turning into confident adults.”
(Gray, 2011)



A fluffy yellow teddy bear is the central focus, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a blue and white checkered bow tie. It is positioned next to a laptop, with its paw resting near the keyboard. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

“Play is the highest
form of research.”
Albert Einstein

PLAY DOH is RIGOR!

Hand strength

Dexterity

Pincer grip



Trust the Research.

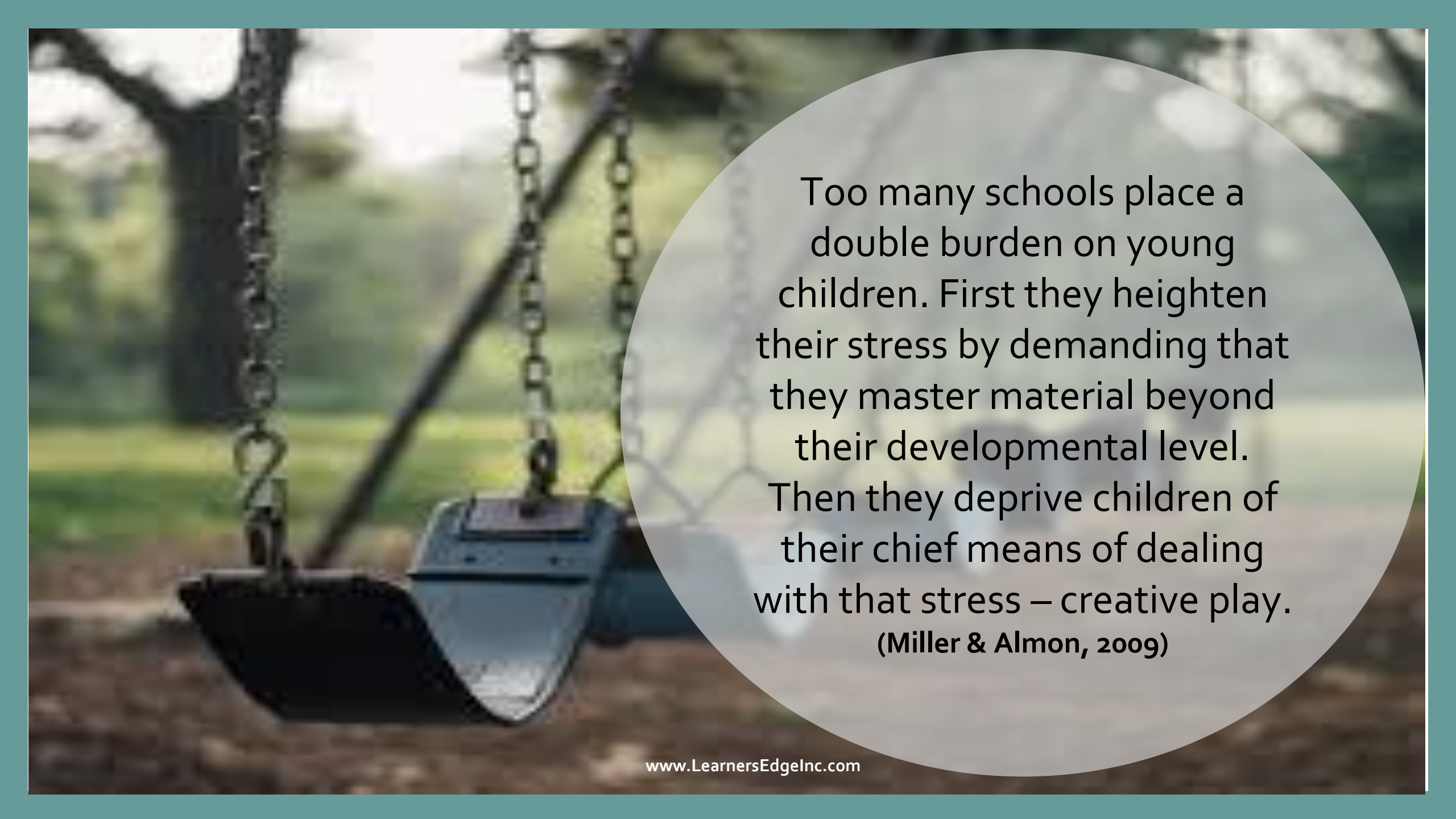
- Play teaches children are in control of their own life, they learn to solve problems, experience joy, how to get along, empathy, how to get over narcissism--and by definition teaches creativity and innovation.
- Play is nature's means of ensuring that young mammals, including young human beings, acquire the skills that they need to acquire to develop successfully into adulthood.
- Play in the classroom fosters improvements in such subjects as mathematics, language, early literacy, and socio-emotional skills, and it does so for children from both low and higher income environments.
- Because play's benefits are so extensive, play has been asserted as a revolutionary and developmentally important activity.
- Play should be viewed as a valuable classroom activity that enables children to develop a wide variety of social and academic skills.
- Through play, children learn how to get along with others, solve problems, inhibit their impulses, and regulate their emotions.
- In play, children make friends and learn to get along with others as equals.

(Gray, 2011; Lewis, 2015)

If the research
states play is the
foundation to
learning...

Why, then, is play
the first thing to
go?



A photograph of a swing set in a park. The swing is empty and hangs from a chain. The background is a blurred green field and trees. A large, semi-transparent circular overlay is on the right side of the image, containing text.

Too many schools place a double burden on young children. First they heighten their stress by demanding that they master material beyond their developmental level. Then they deprive children of their chief means of dealing with that stress – creative play.

(Miller & Almon, 2009)



Teacher Comments:

- If playing is happening in my classroom I am looked down upon
- I've been told my students should be in their seats doing pencil and paper work to prepare for first grade
- Pressure not to play often came from principals whose background was in high school teaching and have no experience with early childhood education
- An administrator told me "you are going to stop singing and start teaching, right?"
- Teachers feel pressure to call play centers "developmental centers," "work centers" or to describe play as "active learning"
- A teacher suggested that dramatic play centers should be removed from kindergarten classrooms because "there is a time crunch and not enough time to spend on things."

(Gray, 2011; Lewis, 2015)

P = Project

L = Learning

A = All

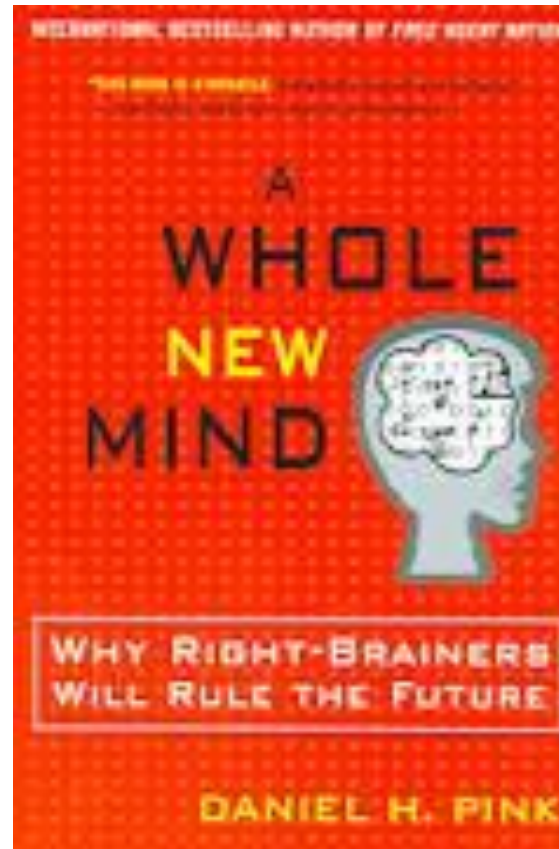
Y = Year

**“NECESSITY MAY BE THE MOTHER
OF INVENTION BUT PLAY IS MOST
CERTAINLY THE FATHER.”**

Roger von Oech, *A Whack on the Side of the Head*



Daniel Pink, *A Whole New Mind*

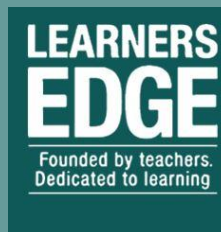


Google campus

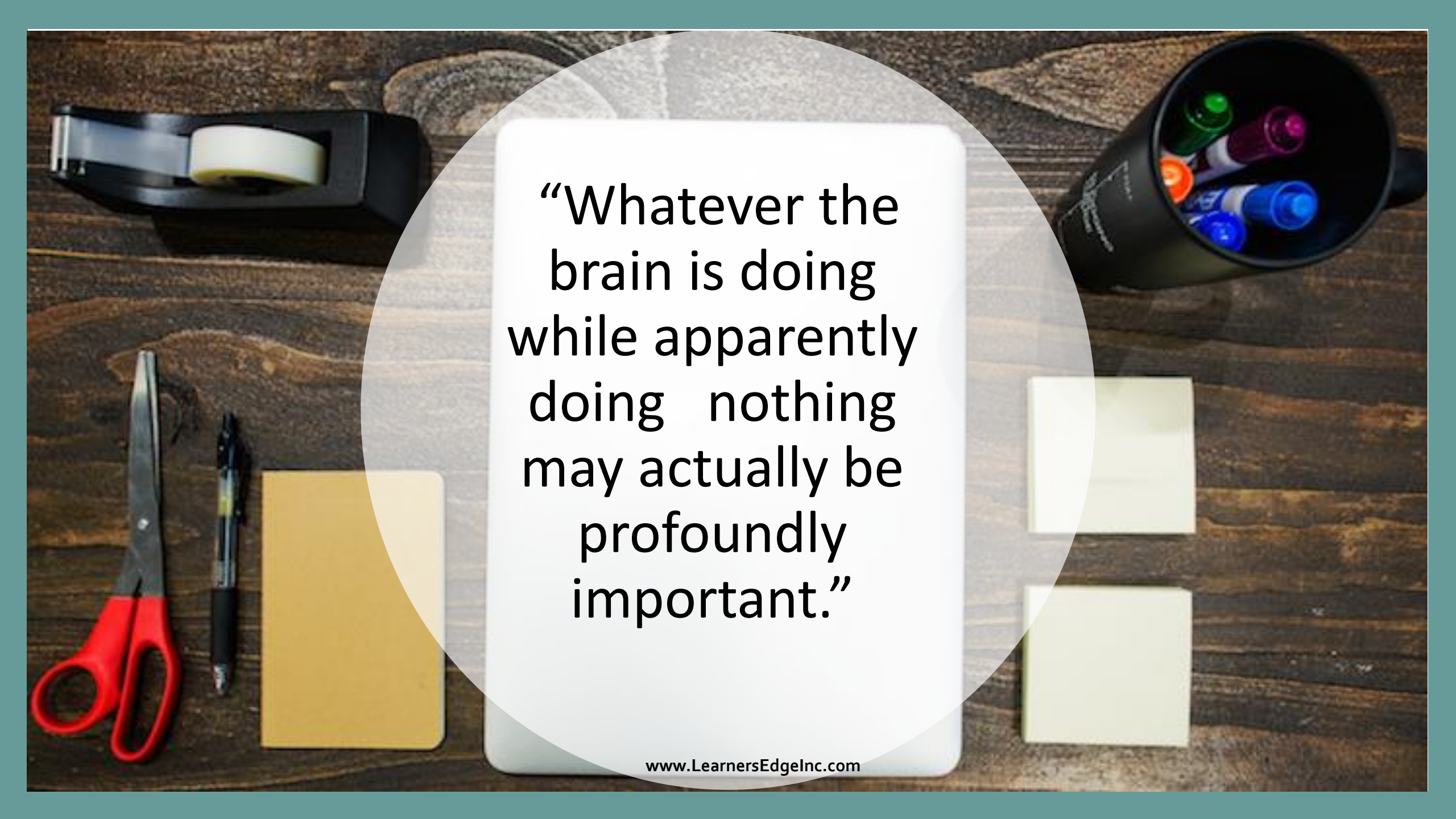


“SITTING STILL AND BEING QUIET IS NOT A MARKETABLE JOB SKILL.”

Diane Trister Dodge, *The Creative Curriculum*







“Whatever the
brain is doing
while apparently
doing nothing
may actually be
profoundly
important.”



Four stylized human figures are arranged horizontally. From left to right, they are red, orange, green, and blue. Each figure has a circular head and a simple, rounded body with two legs. They are all facing forward.

**Center for Disease
Control**

12.7 million

1 in 6--children



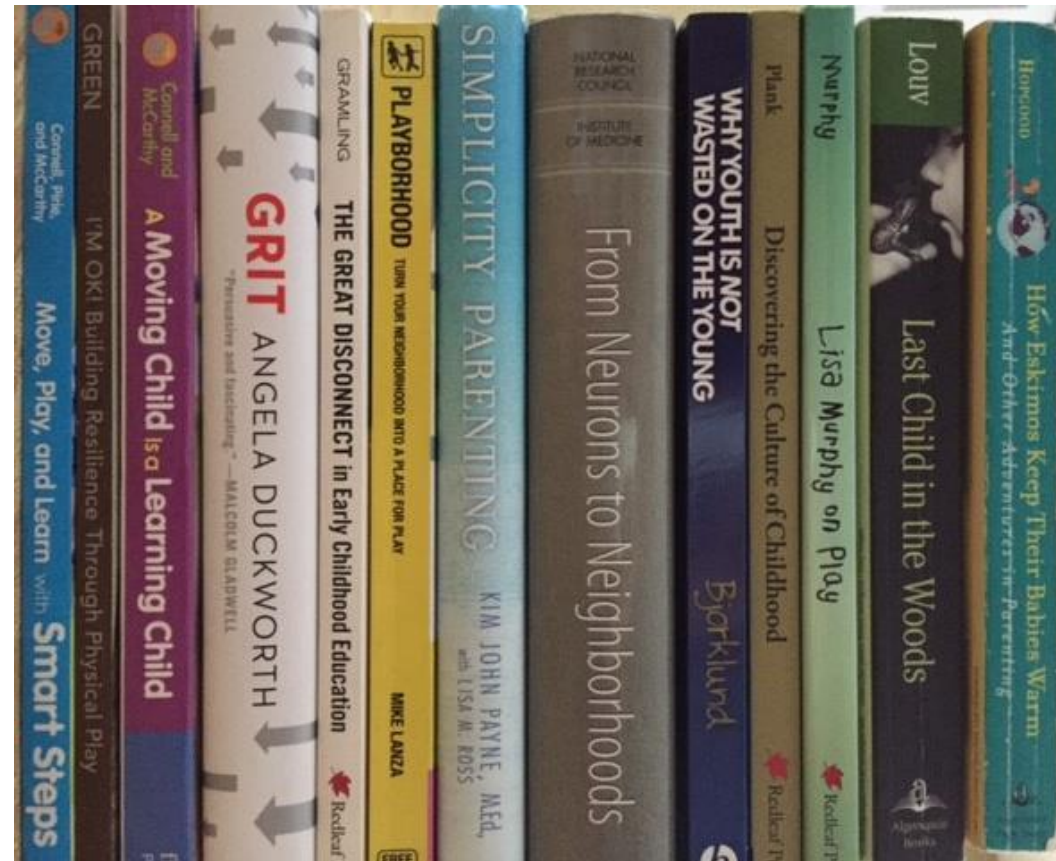
Teach Yourself to Play, too!

- Play can be a tough concept to grasp if one has never played.
- Self-directed play can feel foreign to young teachers who grew up with cell phones and organized sports.
- It's important for our students, and it is just as important for us. (Miller & Almon, 2008)

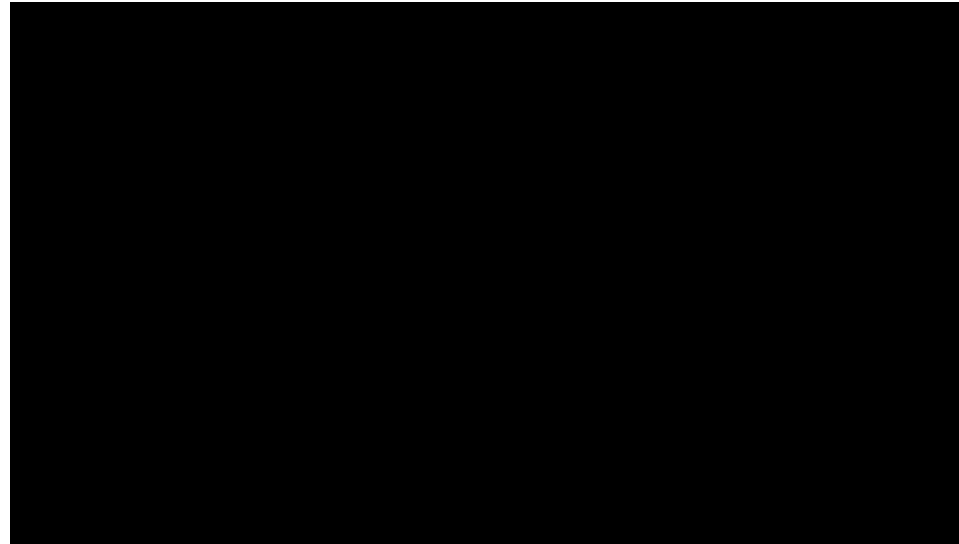
Become a Play Warrior.



Learn about play!



Become an advocate for early childhood education!



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xMsPYYtkBg>



**Add play to your classroom
(and your life)!**

Questions?

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Facebook: KatySmithWinona
Website: KatySmithMN



References:

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- Miller, E., & Almon, J. (2009). Crisis in Kindergarten: Why children need to play in school. Alliance for Childhood.

Video Resources:

- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/250-everyday-fun-with-shapes-let-s-talk-about-math-video>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_XR4wJU90A
- <http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/teaching-learning-hip-hop>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pg/KatySmithWinona/videos/>