

# There is Plenty of Time to Grow Up, But, Let a Child be a Child

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## Opinion

As a professional and a mother, I remember that the development of an infant through early childhood moves so quickly after the time of birth. One thing for certain is that "childhood" should be one reflected in joy, exploration, assimilation of knowledge through experiences, joy, and happiness. There is no greater pleasure than hearing and seeing a happy child laugh, grow, and showing joy. These particular memories provide the binding force that links many children to their parents. However, for so many unfortunate children it has become a time of abandonment, neglect, abuse, and great sadness due to trauma or injury. From the time we are born into this world our eyes and ears have become a direct link to the daily experience as a growing young child. Although, speech comes later as a youngster, children do learn to mimic what they hear from daily influences. For instance, words such as "Da-Da", "Ma-Ma", and "Nan-Na" are just a few easy phrases that are easily formed by children. This would be an interesting study to evaluate the effects of how trauma at an early age affects their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development during 2016 compared to fifty years ago? Whole family units of the 1960's or family life in the 60's was very different growing up as a baby boomer. Whereas now, the baby-boomers are now grandparents and possibly the primary caretaker for their grandchildren. There was a very different perspective in the 1960's functioning as extended family support and now in 2016 they have become primary caretakers raising grandchildren as the responsible parent.

In the past, the level of focus was upon cultivating the family unit and nurturing the young mind through family-time, family activities, and maintain an emotional connectivity through the tough times. As of now in 2016, physical/emotional connections or lack thereof with infants or children could be attributed to

workplace demands, rules, breakdown of the family unit, electronic stimulation and less social interactions have created children who now prefer surfing the internet, engaging in games online, and meeting virtual friends, than playing a game with their actual peers. I personally have experienced play-time with children who had no idea or knowledge of the game "Duck-Duck Goose". Shocking as it maybe, playing games as a child has now become obsolete in many ways. Therefore, many of these children become socially and emotionally disconnected from one another and society. More importantly, these children now view themselves as socially awkward and socially inept around others.

According to Hoff et al. [1] discussed that individuals with social phobia displayed symptoms during childhood through adolescence. Hoff et al. [1] found that an increase impairment did occur for social, academic, and other domains increased with age despite controlling for Social Phobia characteristics. Clinical findings suggested the importance of parents scheduling social activities for younger children would be important to reduce symptoms. Hoff et al. [1] also found that by addressing Social fears at a young age would prevent later maladjustment in adolescence. Which means that parents, mentors, foster-parents, and educators can impact this situation by increasing social activities.

So, how do we as parents, professionals, and mentors fix this evolving current trend? By allowing children to be "children" physically, emotionally, and cognitively each day.

Let them go outside and spend less time on the electronic devices, set up time intervals for electronic uses, go outside, go to the park, walk, run, ride a bike, climb a hill, roll down a hill, fall down, get back up, skin their knee, bump their head, play football, basketball, hockey, baseball, or go fishing. A family outing to

Chucky Cheese once in while would build upon those cognitive and social building blocks that will stimulate social development and increase social decision-making skills that may increase social acceptance and social adaptability in the future. Real and actual social interaction cannot be substituted by the internet and virtual situations which may not be socially acceptable in society. Thus, communication and establishing interpersonal

relationships cannot be replaced by technology, these skills are important milestones for every growing and developing child.

### References

1. Hoff A, Kendall P, Langley A, Ginsburg G, Keaton C, et al. (2015) Developmental differences in functioning in youth with social phobia. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*. Advance online publication.