

Children Aren't Playing Much, and Parents Aren't Happy About It

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PALO ALTO, Calif., Nov. 28 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Over 80% of all children in the United States never play in their neighborhoods without adults present, according to a new survey published on Playborhood.com. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the figure is even higher – over 90%.

“Childhood as we parents experienced it decades ago is vanishing in America,” said Mike Lanza, CEO of Playborhood, the parent company of Playborhood.com, an online community for parents who want their children to play outside in their neighborhoods. “Kids used to play on their own in their neighborhoods every day.”

Today, in their free time, most children either stay inside in front of screens – TVs or computers – or they are driven around to adult-organized activities by their parents. Experts such as Kenneth Ginsburg of the American Academy of Pediatrics argue that free play – i.e. play that is driven by children, not adults – is essential to children’s development, and they regret the marked decrease in free play experienced by children in America.

The Playborhood.com survey finds that parents are also very concerned by this. Over 80% expressed a desire that their children’s play time increase in the coming years. Asked why they would like their children to play more, their number one answer was because “play is fun for children.” Their second most common answer was, “play increases children’s social skills.”

Not only are parents concerned, but they are willing to back up that concern with lots of money. Two thirds said they would move to a house with substantially better play opportunities for their children, and they would be willing to pay tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars extra for those houses. Almost 50% of parents said they would pay over \$50,000, and over 15% said they would pay over \$200,000.

“Many parents are dissatisfied with their current neighborhoods because their kids aren’t playing there,” said Lanza, “but they don’t know how to find better ones or make their present ones better. The real estate industry and local governments are failing them.”

Playborhood recently launched its first Playborhood Local site for Palo Alto and Menlo Park, CA, to help parents there create more play opportunities for their children. The company plans to launch other Playborhood Local sites for many other American communities in 2008.

To see Playborhood online, visit Playborhood.com at playborhood.com or Playborhood Palo Alto / Menlo Park at pamp.playborhood.com.

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