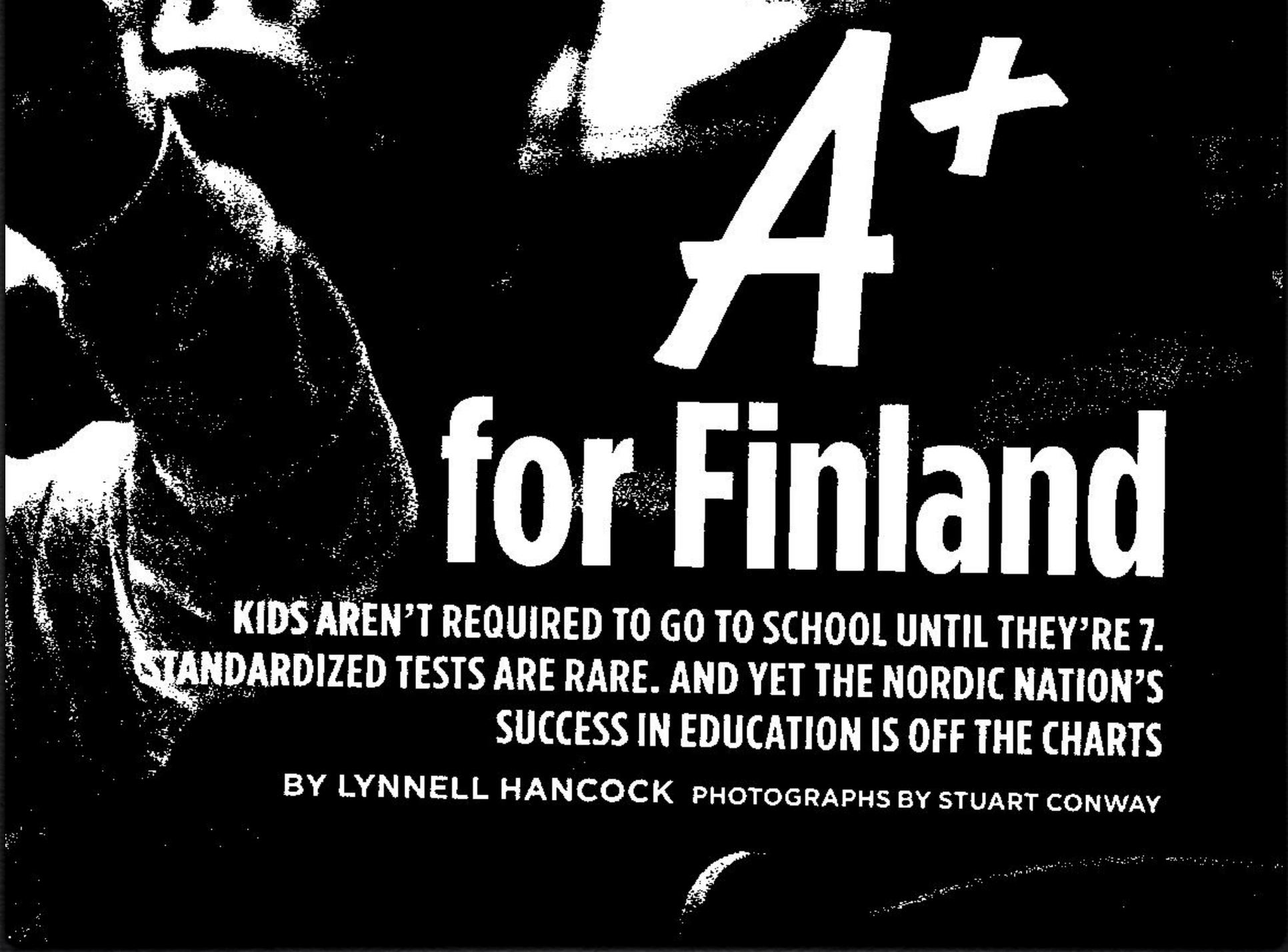




**Putting Play, Character
Development, Creative Time, and
Academic Content in Perspective**

**Dr. Debbie Rhea
Texas Christian University
Liink Project Founder & Director**

The Idea



A+

for Finland

KIDS AREN'T REQUIRED TO GO TO SCHOOL UNTIL THEY'RE 7. STANDARDIZED TESTS ARE RARE. AND YET THE NORDIC NATION'S SUCCESS IN EDUCATION IS OFF THE CHARTS

BY LYNNELL HANCOCK PHOTOGRAPHS BY STUART CONWAY

Purpose of Sabbatical

- 1) Contact Texas school district superintendents to identify interested parties for a pilot project to test the proposed model**
- 2) Observe, interview, and collect data from teachers, administrators, government officials, students, and the community in Helsinki and other cities**
- 3) Develop a model based on the most necessary Finnish strategies in order to create a successful public school system in Texas;**
- 4) Integrate/test the model in a pilot program in three Texas school districts of committed superintendents.**

Sabbatical – Fall 2012

- **Observe in Grades 1-12: classroom, PE, recess**
- **Observe at the Universities : methods classes; education**
- **Interview**
 - **Principals**
 - **Teachers**
 - **Dr. Pasi Sahlberg, Ministry of Education & Culture**
 - **Matti Pietilä – Secretary of Education**
 - **Dr. Patrik Scheinin - Dean of Education**
 - **Sports Federation Representatives**
 - **Professors at Jyvaskyla and Helsinki**



FINLAND

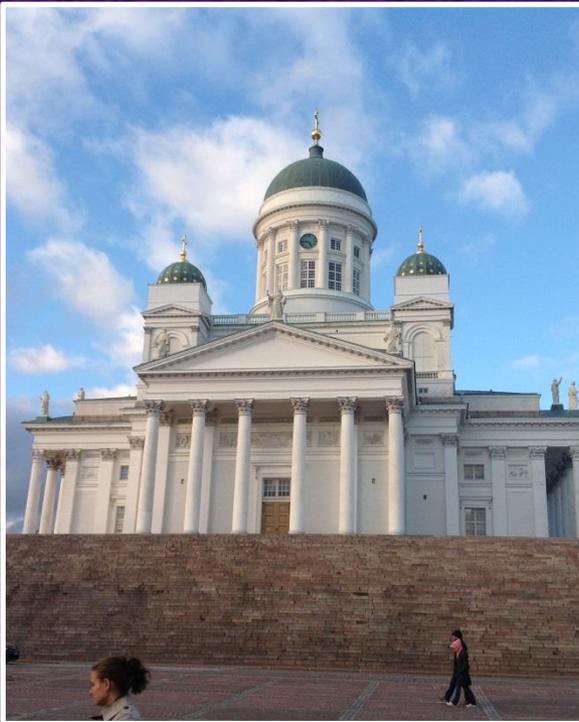


Finland Transportation



Walking Everywhere

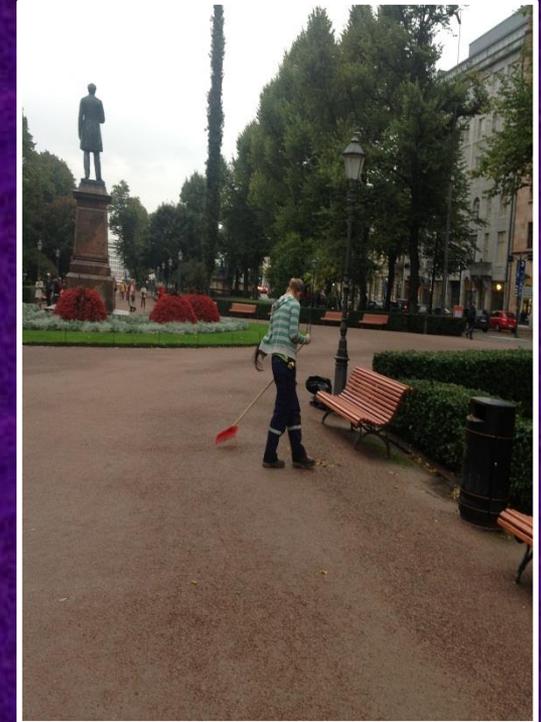
Helsinki Cathedral



Senate Square



Esplanade



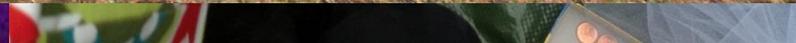
Research Agenda: 6 Weeks

- **Observe in Grades 1-12: classroom, PE, recess**
- **Observe at the Universities : methods classes; education**
- **Interview**
 - **Principals**
 - **Teachers**
 - **Dr. Pasi Sahlberg, Ministry of Education & Culture**
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Unstructured Play



Outdoor Preschool Education



U.S./Finland Comparisons

o U.S.

- o Ranked 21, 24, 31 (reading, science, math)
- o 12 mandated standardized tests
- o 75.5% graduate
- o \$11,301 per secondary school student

o Finland

- o Ranked 5, 6, 12 (reading, science, math)
- o 0 mandated standardized tests
- o 93% graduate
- o \$7,829 per secondary school student

Unstructured Play (Recess) in the Schools

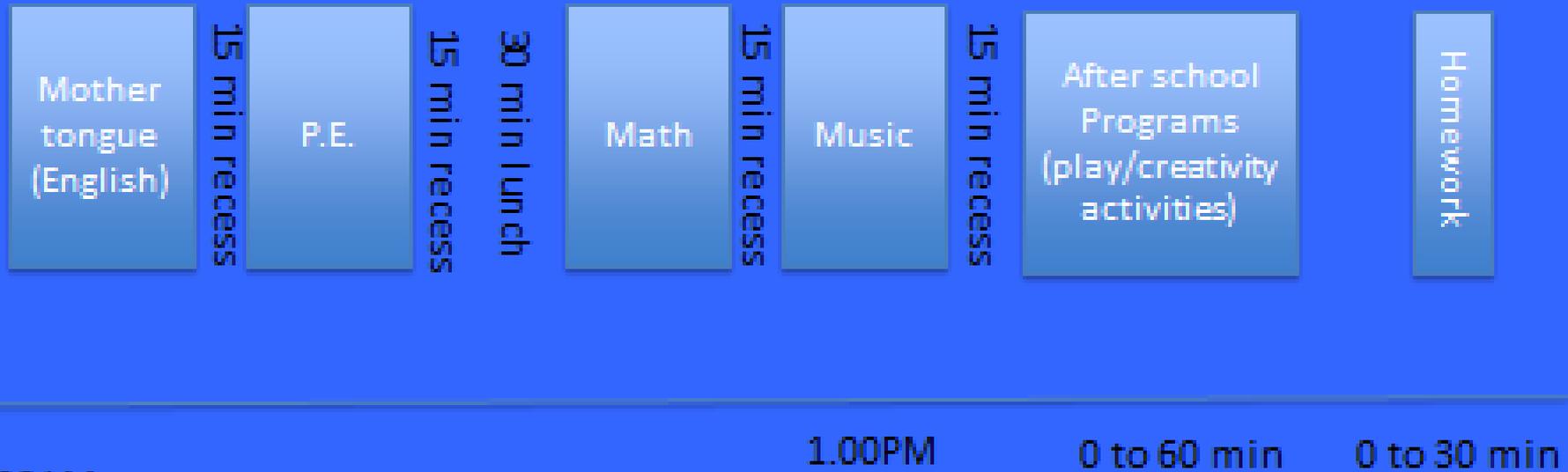


- o **ACSM: 60 minutes of MVPA daily**
- o **Finland & others: 120 minutes MVPA daily**
- o **Finland: no more than 2 hours sedentary at a time**
- o **Outside unstructured play every hour for 15 minutes**
- o **Walking to & from school**

Content Areas Emphasized

Content Area	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-9	Total
Math	3	3	15	11	32
Finnish	7	7	20	9	43
Physical Educ	2.5	2.5	8	6	19
Science	2	2	10		14
Biology, Physics, Chem				17	17
Foreign Lang1			9	7	16
Foreign Lang2				6	6
Health				3	3
Religion/Ethics	1.5	1.5	5	3	11
History	1	1	2	7	11
Art	1	1	6	2	10
Craft	1.5	1.5	7	2	12
Music	1	1	4	2	8
Total hours per week	20.5	20.5	21.5	25	

Typical 1st Grade School Day



No grading of pupils' learning

No standardized assessments

No external standards

What I Learned in a Nutshell

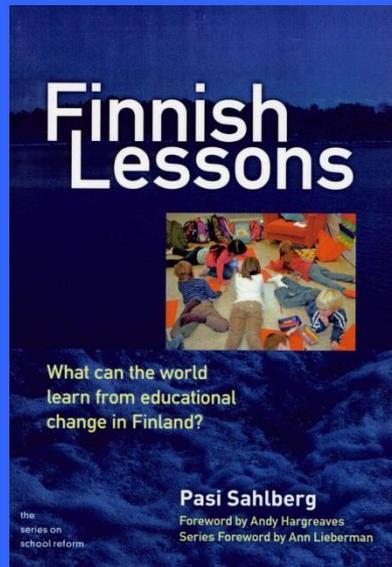
- Teachers are highly respected
- Equality is essential
- Everyone works together for success
- Administrators teach too!
- Physical education and unstructured play are a must!
- Content areas are designed by hours per week not classes taught per day
- Saunas are in almost every home
- Outside activity is the key for everyone all the time
- Ethics is a must!

What needs to change in the schools?

How do we create change once we know what it is?

Back to the U.S.

- o Department of Kinesiology Green Chair – Invited Dr. Pasi Sahlberg to present on education reform



**Discussions on
leadership, equity and
quality in education**

Pasi Sahlberg, PhD
CIMO/University of Helsinki

Visiting Chair to Texas Christian
University, Harris College

March 20, 2013



@pasi_sahlberg

Dr. Pasi Sahlberg: Kinesiology Green Chair

**March 20: K-12 Superintendent/Administrator/Coordinator
Workshops**

9:30 School Leaders Lecture – Future Schools

11:00 Lunch

12:45 School Leaders Lecture - Assessments

1:30 School Leaders Lecture – Equality

2:30 School Leaders Lecture – PE/Play/Creativity

3:20 Final Questions – leadership training, roles, etc

Created the Liink Project (Let's Inspire Innovation 'N Kids)

MISSION

To bridge the gap between academics and social, emotional, and healthy well-being.

The Liink Project aims to develop the whole child through increased recess and character development.

Needed Funding for the 1st year

The logo for Texas Christian University (TCU) is displayed in a stylized, blue, outlined font. The letters are bold and blocky, with a slight shadow effect.

\$125,000.00

Began talking to school districts & private schools

- Fort Worth ISD
- Irving ISD
- Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD
- Wylie ISD
- Birdville ISD
- Dallas ISD
- Seguin ISD
- And many more...

Four Step Liink Approach to Higher Academic Success

- 1. Increase the amount of play/recess in the schools**
- 2. Treat all courses as content; add character development as a content area**
- 3. Assess students differently - local control**
- 4. Restructure the school day (less hours in classroom for K-6 students; extra time in play/creativity)**

From Finland to Fort Worth

Ethics = 20 min per day = 1 hr per week

Recess = 1 hr per day = 5 hrs per week



6 hrs per week of non-content

LET'S COMPARE...



Typical K-2 School Day
7 Hours Total



35 hrs per week
(No ethics/recess)



30 hrs content per week
6 hrs content per day



#21 Reading **#31** Math **#24** Science



Typical K-2 School Day
4.5 Hours Total



22.5 hrs per week
(Includes 6 hrs ethics/recess)



15 hrs content per week
3 hrs content per day



#5 Reading **#12** Math **#6** Science

Even if U.S. schools reassigned 6 hours of content time to recess/ethics, they would still have 2 more hours per day of content than their Finnish counterparts.

Two Step Liink Approach

- 1. Increase the amount of play/recess in the schools to four – 15 minute outdoor unstructured segments throughout the day**
- 2. Add character development as a content area – three 15-20 minute lessons weekly**

Liink Project (formerly Project ISIS)

2013-2014

- o Collaboration between TCU Kinesiology/Education faculty**
- o Trinity Valley School & Starpoint School**
- o K-1 Teacher training 2013-2014 year**
- o K-1 baseline data collection Fall, 2013**
- o Launched Liink January 6, 2014 (added 3-15 minute recesses daily & *Positive Action* – three, 15-minute lessons weekly)**
- o Continue to add next grade level yearly over the next eight years**
- o Target Liink in public schools after data shown (mirror the above TVS pilot steps with public schools as pilot)**



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES
SOCIAL SITUATION-CONTEXT INFLUENCES
INTRAPERSONAL INFLUENCES

Schedule of Recesses

-  School starts 8:15
-  Announcements until 8:25
-  Class began 8:25 ish – 9:20
-  **Recess 1: 9:20 – 9:35**
-  Class again
-  **Recess 2: 10:30-10:45**
-  Lunch
-  Physical education daily
-  **Recess 3: 2:00-2:15**
-  School out: 3:00

Identified Ways to Measure the Children

- ◊ Recess
- ◊ Classroom
- ◊ Attentional Fatigue
- ◊ Burnout
- ◊ BMI, Attendance, Discipline, Medications
- ◊ Academic Reports

Foundation & Donor Support

Albert Herzstein
& Ethel ——— Charitable Foundation

THE
PENROSE
GROUP

TCU



Donor:
Munnerlyn's

Liink Playmates

 **Trinity Valley School (TVS)**

Matching control school

 **Starpoint School**

Matching control school

 **Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD**

One intervention school & one matching control school

 **Irving ISD**

Three intervention schools & one matching control schools

Liink Project 2013-2019

School	2013-2014 Year 1	2014-2015 Year 2	2015-2016 Year 3	2016-2017 Year 4	2017-2018 Year 5	2018-2019 Year 6
TVS: Trinity Valley	K-1	K-2-I 3, 4 PA	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6
SP: Starpoint	K-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6
EME: Eagle Mountain		Training	K-1	K-2	K-3*	K-4
BE: Irving ISD		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
GE: Irving ISD						
TE: Irving ISD						

Teacher/Administrator Training Schedule 2015

Training Day	Training Date	Training Topic
1	January, 2015 (full day)	Philosophy/Mindset/ Project
2	Feb (full day)	Play/Creativity/Recess & Positive Action Curriculum
3	Mar/Apr (after school)	The intervention & teacher role
4	Apr (after school, if needed)	The intervention & teacher role
5	End of May (full day)	Integrating recess & positive action; Assessments; Creativity; Development
6	August, 2015	Begin intervention; ongoing training this semester

Sample Schedule of Recesses

- School starts 8:15
- Announcements until 8:25
- Content 8:25 ish – 9:05
- **Recess 1: 9:05-9:20**
- Content (9:20-10:20)
- **Recess 2: 10:20-10:35**
- Lunch (10:35-11:05)
- Content (physical education & another co-curricular)
- **Recess 3: 12:40-12:55**
- Content
- **Recess 4: 2:00-2:15**
- Content
- School out: 3:00

Liink Website

o www.liinkproject.tcu.edu

What can you take from today?

- Change in the schools is possible
- Play breaks (15 minutes) are needed throughout the day
- Outdoor physical activity as much as possible
- Weather is not an excuse
- Unstructured play is good
- Character development curriculum is a necessity
- The message has to be unified across the community