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Contact: Crista Marchesseault

E-mail: cristam@gesellinstitute.org

Voice: 203-777-3481 x704

Child Development Experts Advocate National Recess Week: March 2-5

New Haven, CT, February 27, 2009 – Just in time for *National Recess Week*, March 2-5, 2009, a [New York Times article](#) reported results of conclusive studies published in the *American Academy of Pediatrics* and the *Journal of School Health* showing that recess benefits children in many ways, including higher test scores and fewer classroom behavior problems. These findings support the work and position of Gesell Institute of Human Development, a New Haven based, independent non-profit organization whose work focuses on the education and support of teachers and parents worldwide.

In support of this research, Gesell Institute questions why local schools are not promoting recess and recommends the website www.rescuingrecess.com. Says Gesell Executive Director Dr. Marcy Guddemi, “Eliminating recess so there is more time to ‘learn’ in the classroom is absurd. Research shows that children are better learners and actually score *better* on tests when they have real opportunities to play. Children need real recess—that is, unstructured play time where they are able to enhance language, problem solving, cooperation, turn-taking, persistence, and motivational skills. Eliminating recess actually hinders our goal of increasing test scores in New Haven.”

Dr. Guddemi, who has held the position of Executive Director at Gesell Institute for a little over a year, has been a long-time member of the *American Association for the Child’s Right to Play*. This advocacy organization is a national chapter of the *International Play Association: Promoting the Right of the Child to Play*, based on the 1959 United Nations Declaration of Rights for Children and the subsequent 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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Promoting the benefits of recess and the child's right to recess is just one of the advocacy agendas that the American Association promotes. The organization has been instrumental in helping grassroots organizations introduce and pass state legislation mandating recess. See www.ipausa.org for more information. "The missions of IPA and Gesell go hand-in-hand. The United Nations guarantees the child's right to play and Gesell promotes the well-development of all children—and play is essential for well-development, at home and at school, both at recess and in the classroom learning through play," says Guddemi.

Gesell Institute has been associated with how children grow and learn since 1950. The work of Arnold Gesell, PhD, MD, (1888-1961), founding Director of the Yale Child Study Center, and the Institute's namesake, was a profound influence on field child development. Based on Gesell's pioneering work documenting infant and child growth and development through cinematography during the first half of the century, Gesell programs and publications today help parents and educators understand the ages and stages of childhood. Professional development and parent workshops cover a broad range of topics regarding child behavior, healthy growth and development, and positive learning outcomes. Community programs help create collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers to support school success. For additional information and resources, visit www.gesellinstitute.org. For questions about recess and play, e-mail Dr. Guddemi at mguddemi@gesellinstitute.org.

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