



# The Case For Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World

*Susan Linn*

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In *The Case for Make Believe*, Harvard child psychologist Susan Linn tells the alarming story of childhood under siege in a commercialized and technology-saturated world. Although play is essential to human development and children are born with an innate capacity for make believe, Linn argues that, in modern-day America, nurturing creative play is not only countercultural—it threatens corporate profits.

A book with immediate relevance for parents and educators alike, *The Case for Make Believe* helps readers understand how crucial child's play is—and what parents and educators can do to protect it. At the heart of the book are stories of children at home, in school, and at a therapist's office playing about real-life issues from entering kindergarten to a sibling's death, expressing feelings they can't express directly, and making meaning of an often confusing world.

In an era when toys come from television and media companies sell videos as brain-builders for babies, Linn lays out the inextricable links between play, creativity, and health, showing us how and why to preserve the space for make believe that children need to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.

## The Case For Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World Details

Date : Published April 1st 2008 by The New Press

ISBN : 9781565849709

Author : Susan Linn

Format : Hardcover 258 pages

Genre : Parenting, Nonfiction, Education, Psychology, Plays

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# **From Reader Review The Case For Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World for online ebook**

## **Derek says**

I think conscious, informed parenting choices are important. I believe that there are many challenges to raising children today that we don't consider enough. I believe that there are capitalist and corporatist agendas that are at least potentially damaging to children and their maturation. And so I picked out this book to become more familiar with one of these issues.

But I really struggled to become engrossed in the book, more than I've had in years. The writing was engaging. Linn seemed well-informed, and makes her case without seeming hyperbolic, as is often the risk when addressing topics involving pervasive social problems. The content was decently structured. I can only conclude that the problem was largely in me, an inherent lack of interest in this specific topic of study--and, to be honest, a bit of defensiveness about some reliance on electronic media. I'm one of those parents who resorts more than I should to screens to distract the kids and give myself some breathing room. I guess we'll see if those were the main obstacles when I read more on child development like this in the future by different authors or who approach a different aspect of the subject.

In any case, as far as I could tell, Linn did a fine job of exploring why play and make believe is important in the maturation process. Perhaps it could have been a bit more explicit, rather than relying so much on anecdotes. But the anecdotes, of which Linn surely has a wealth, are adequate for illustrating her points.

I wish Linn had concluded with more specific ideas than just reiterating the importance of play and urging us to shield children from electronic media for as long as possible. What are the best ways to introduce play among children with whom it may not have been a priority? What are some good minimums to set at the beginning of trying to emphasize play? What are some ways to encourage more directed play and weaning kids off the sorts of scripts that commercial media promote, as she suggested it does earlier in the book?

Not a bad read.

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## **Audrey says**

Just say NO! to Disney! It's so sad how commercialized childhood is in the US today. :-(

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## **Melissa says**

I am already in the same camp as Susan Linn but it was good to have my values reinforced by someone like her. We really limit screen time in our house and we only allow educational videos, no TV programming. I have always found the commercials and corporate marketing in children's media very dangerous and I feel validated by reading this book. My husband & I cancelled cable when our son was born and some people thought we were crazy but it has been a great choice. It is hard to be a "screen free" home, especially in these times, but you can limit it and provide other choices: playing outside, coloring, painting, games, reading, music, playing puppets, playing dress up, etc.

Another thing that she really made me think about is the type of toys your children play with. I have never been a fan of battery operated toys because they are loud, annoying and bad for the environment. Linn explains that they also stifle children's creativity because they already come with preset noises, voices or personalities. The child doesn't get to make up their own noises or personalities for the toy. An interesting idea that I had not put a lot of thought into previously.

Her stories about providing therapy to children through play with hand puppets were amazing. And as a parent, I found her observations about children's play to be reassuring. Children are curious about subjects such as death, violence and bullying and will act this out through play. They act out their fears and curiosities while playing. My 3 year old has recently become curious about death and will tell me a stuffed animal has died. My husband & I wondered if we should be concerned, but now I am reassured that it's normal and it's something he is trying to grasp mentally and it comes up often when he plays.

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### **Chris Callaway says**

1.5 stars. I wanted to like this book more, but after the first couple chapters it seemed to lose focus. There is a long section in the middle that consists of case studies from the author's work at a children's hospital. Those cases do show that playing with puppets can be therapeutic, but the first and third parts are supposed (from what I thought, at least) to be about play in more ordinary circumstances and the societal pressures that work against it. Linn has some good ideas about that latter topic, but they're mixed in with a lot of sweeping generalizations and undersupported claims (she even can't resist getting in a swipe at the Bush administration for good measure). It's tempting to write the book off as an attempt to use the languages of science and politics to mask what is essentially an East Coast snobbish disdain for the consumption patterns of lower and lower-middle class people, but that's not completely fair. Still, the book would be stronger if it featured more hard data and less hand-wringing. In short: I didn't learn nearly as much from this book as I had hoped.

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### **Alisha says**

Fantastic.

The case studies were hard, but the idea of a war-play dilemma (which is not the subject of this book, but is introduced) is intriguing to me, so I think I'll read more about it that as well.

Did not like the link between the war in Iraq and marketing tactics of baby Einstein. Linn had so much well-backed and executed content and it was just a personal political statement. I am not a fan of the war, or baby Einstein, but come on! I don't think Bush OR baby Einstein are the devil incarnate. (this was a short paragraph in the book, but I was annoyed at Linn for giving her critics something to use, when everything else in the book is so remarkable!)

Did like the explanations of WHY make believe is so important, and also how to protect it for our kids. We were pretty much a no TV family anyway, but now even more so, this book, coupled with my research into the campaign for a commercial free childhood, makes me a staunch supporter of legislation to limit this type of marketing. I WANT my kid to be able to create whatever he wants, and not have strict "right/wrong" for toys. REALLY liked this book. I think I was raised with a lot of it in mind, and I gotta say, I had a very happy childhood!

Additionally, the idea of screen time being detrimental hits at the core of my beliefs, and its nice to have read studies that give ME some backing to family, friends, etc.

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### **Melissa says**

A lot of stuff I already knew. Mostly made me feel dismal instead of hopeful. Stressed me out wondering whether or not my kids are playing enough.

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### **Adrienne says**

Okay, this book is my new bible. I'm not even kidding. I'm thinking about starting my own religion based on it. (Okay, now I am kidding.) But seriously, if every parent read this book and abided by even SOME of its principles, the world would be a much healthier and happier place.

I really find the information in this book so uplifting and wholesome and healthy. It's a good read for that reason alone. But what makes it even better is that it motivates you to take action, whether it be in the lives of your own children or just for children in general.

One of my favorite quotes from this book:

"Creative play fosters divergent thinking, the capacity to think 'outside the box', imagining ideas and solutions to problems that go beyond convention. Divergent thinking is a threat to totalitarianism. It is essential to democracy."

Linn really opened up my mind with regard to make believe. I have always been a believer in creative play to foster "creativity", but I never fully appreciated the broader implications of that term. Everything that prepares us for success as adults has its roots in healthy childhood play. With screens commanding more and more of our children's time, they are losing more and more opportunities to develop the skills that will equip them for later success and happiness.

As for the guilt factor in this book...I can see where that comes from. Linn is advocating a very high, almost screen-free, standard. I can certainly acknowledge the temptation to appeal to the television for a much needed moment of solitude. But what would we do if we just didn't have TVs? We would get creative and figure out something to occupy our children while we took a break. It's like screens are zapping our creativity as adults, too. We just don't know how to function without them. But in my experience, getting away from them has the same effect on us as it has on children: it is difficult--almost unthinkable--at first but over time it becomes easier and easier, to the point that we actually recognize TV for the boring, inane diversion that it is.

I think Linn does a very good job backing up her claims with legitimate research. I do think she gets a tad political. I agree with her politics, but still, they may have a better home in a different type of book.

All in all, I wish I could give this book more stars. I LOVE it! Oh, and the fact that Linn is a ventriloquist and puppet therapist just makes it that much cooler.

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## Diana says

You know it's a good one when I can't help dog-earing the library copy... That being said, I could have done without the middle section about some of the clinical cases she worked with. There seemed to be some repetition, too, between Parts 1 and 3, but overall, fabulous content that should stop every parent dead in their tracks before they make another toy purchase or turn on the TV.

OK, so onto all the details I dog-eared...

### Chapter 1: Defending Pretending: The Necessity of Make Believe

- "Pretend play combines two wondrous and uniquely human characteristics, (1) the capacity for fantasy and (2) the capacity for, and need to, make meaning of our experience." (p.12)
- These 2 traits of creativity and the capacity for making meaning have been "devalued to the point of endangerment by the prevailing societal norms characterized by a commercially driven culture and bombardment of electronic sounds and images." (p.13)
- It can no longer be assumed that young children know how to play creatively as preschoolers often spend their play reenacting what they see on TV.
- Children shouldn't have to be taught to play as it comes naturally when they are given time and opportunity in an even moderately nurturing environment.
- Instead of doing everything we can to protect play, we are cutting out recess and enrolling kids in organized sports or structured classes. Kids who are at home after school can't find other kids to play with or live in neighborhoods their parents feel aren't safe enough for them to play outside.

### Chapter 2: Sold Out: Commercialism, Technology, and Creative Play

- Though play is essential to the development of creativity, empathy, critical thinking, problem solving, and making meaning the prevailing societal norms actively undermine play instead of supporting it.
- Besides the factors mentioned above (after-school programming, lack of outside safety), funding for parks and playgrounds are being cut, as are recess and the arts in schools as education these days is nothing more than "teach to the test."
- "The synergy between unfettered commercialism, the proliferation of electronic media, and other advances in media technology may generate corporate profits, but it's wreaking havoc with children's play." (p.27) So basically, as a society, we've placed shareholders above our children...
- Due to the first the VCR and now DVDs and Tivo, children have unlimited access to their favorite programs -- they don't have to make a favorite character their own in a world they construct in their imaginations, they can just sit and absorb it via the screen or the endless media-linked toys and other products. (Example, give a kid a Cookie Monster puppet and he will create no other script than for CM to scarf cookies.)
- Toys do too much which is why kids are done with them 3 days after Christmas. "A good toy is 90% child and 10% toy." (p.37) The more the toy contributes to the interactive process, the less creative effort required from the child. Goes back to why plain old blocks are so great.
- "A childhood bereft of make believe, or open-ended play, deprives children of opportunities for developing their capacities for imagination and creative thinking." (p.40) Children's museum had pre-cut projects because when they tried open-ended, the kids didn't know what to do with the materials.

### Chapter 3: Baby Scam: The False Promise of Screen Time for Infants and Toddlers

- Everything we know about how babies and toddlers learn points away from screens and to what they do

naturally -- engage with those who love them and explore their world with their 5 senses. In fact, there is no credible evidence that screen media benefits them at all.

-- Screen media is passive -- the opposite of the way young children learn. Early TV viewing is habituating, making it likely for them to watch more as they get older. 6 year olds also do worse on math and reading tests if they watched more TV before age 3. Finally, a preschooler's risk for obesity is 6% higher for every hour watched per day.

#### Chapter 4: True Romance: My Love Affair with D.W. Winnicott

-- According to pediatrician and psychoanalyst Winnicott, "a child growing up in an environment that is either unsafe as the result of neglect or too demanding as the result of incessant stimulation and demands to respond may develop a reactive or "false" self instead of the "true" or creative self that flourishes in a supportive holding environment." (p.68)

-- Children need an opportunity to express their true feels or they develop a false self.

-- Kids use puppet play to explore powerful feelings and deal with difficult situations. Their play may be exaggerated towards the gruesome or violent, but it is the theme that is important as well as the non-threatening play that a puppet alter-ego provides. (This is the focus of Part 2 of the book, each chapter a different clinical case.)

#### Chapter 9: Wham! Pow! Oof! How Media Violence is Killing Play

-- The negative impact that screen violence can have on children's behavior and attitudes is well-documented, yet (as an example) 117 of the 129 toys marketed with Transformers were rated for 5 and under. Same goes for most action movies, many rated as PG-13.

-- Video games are worse: the interactive nature and that players are rewarded for committing acts of violence. This is why the Army uses violent video games to train special ops forces.

-- Violent images different than stories because children can't stop the images and there's no cognitive maturity required to access as there is with reading.

-- Children overexposed to media violence "get stuck" in the same repetitive play as children who have been psychologically overwhelmed by some sort of traumatic experience.

#### Chapter 10: The Princess Trap: Make Believe and the Loss of Middle Childhood

-- "When fairy tales become commercial megabrands, their depth and malleability diminish, and so does their value as springboards for creative play." (p.174)

-- The focus of the Disney Princess brand is "glitter and acquisition" and there are over 40,000 licensed items for sale.

-- While boys are steered towards violence by commercialized make believe, girls are given a view of femininity based on stereotypes of beauty, race, class, and behavior.

-- Bratz dolls may be ethnically diverse but instead of promoting dreams of royalty, "it promotes dreams of acquiring the trappings of rich teenage sluts." (p.177-8)

-- Middle childhood (age 5 - 11) is disappearing as children immersed in commercial culture are gaining the trappings of maturity (language, clothing, and accoutrements) at a younger age. This in spite of the fact that there is no evidence that their actual development is keeping pace.

-- Instead, children forced to grow up too fast are rewarded with world-weariness, cynicism, and a lack of wonder.

-- Adults remembering their own childhoods have their best play memories from ages 6 to 10, but creative play (building forts, making up games and rules to go with, having adventures) is disappearing with the immersion in commercialized culture.

#### Chapter 11: Playing for Life: What We All Gain from Make Believe

-- Innocence (a combination of immature cognition and lack of experience) is naturally left behind as we

mature, but wonder should not be as it's an essential component of creativity. Science, art, and spirituality all depend on wonder.

-- "By preventing children from playing, we are depriving them of chances to get to know themselves in relation to the rest of the world." (p.200)

-- Skills learned in play are essential to thriving in and protecting a democratic society.

Chapter 12: Sasha, Your Peas Are Calling You: Nurturing Play in a Culture Bent on Squashing It

-- Yes, it's hard for overstressed parents to make time to play with their children, but it's even harder for kids to play on their own. They need adults to provide them with time, space, and silence.

-- The demise of play should be viewed as a public health problem.

-- Advocacy organizations include the Alliance for Childhood (play into classrooms), the American Association for the Child's Right to Play (bring back recess), No Child Left Inside (kids out in green spaces), and the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

-- Play flourishes where screen media and commercial culture are limited. Ideas given include unstructured time, time for children to play outside on their own, having screen-free time, providing art supplies (not prefab projects) and open-ended toys (age-appropriate suggestions at [truceteachers.org](http://truceteachers.org).)

-- Rely on impromptu games (I Spy, making words from a longer word, etc) instead of phone apps or car dvd players to get kids to notice and engage in the world around them.

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## Rachel says

Dear Susan Linn,

Thank you for the work that you do and bringing light to the importance of play. As parents, educators, caregivers, etc. it is difficult to know how to navigate technology and media consumption in today's society. The stories you share and suggestions you offer help show a possible path. Your point of view is not extreme, as you note, we can't all move to the woods, so providing balance is also key when we are faced with so many mixed messages.

Despite the wisdom and guidance you share, your book was tainted for me by a comment you made in the second chapter, "Sold Out." You state,

"I was visiting a small children's museum recently, which was filled with wonderful exhibits designed to stimulate creative play. When we came to the art room, however, I noticed that children were engaged in making pictures that involved pasting buttons on top of pre-cut construction paper stems. When I wondered aloud why they didn't provide a more open-ended experience, the director said sadly, 'We tried that. The children just don't know what to do with the materials.' It's disconcerting that institutions like children's museums now find themselves serving children who enter their doors without the skills or inclination to engage in open-ended creativity. In response, they are less likely to provide such activities, and children have lost yet another opportunity for creativity and self-expression."

This statement is apparently based on one visit to a small children's museum. Did you consider visiting other museums to compare what different institutions were doing when it comes to arts programming and creative outlets for children? As an employee of a children's museum, please do not assume that what one institution is doing represents all such institutions. From the time that this book was published in 2008, perhaps even the children's museum referenced in your work has changed its practices in response to new trends in museum education. Just as technology and consumerism are constantly evolving and finding new ways to



target/entice children, so too are museums evolving in response to provide opportunities for play and experiences off screen.

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### **Heather says**

It's not a sin to let your children watch tv or play on the computer...however think about it each time you turn on either one of them. We have not had much time for either of the two lately as "punishment" for my daughter. Its amazing how much more the child (and parents and silblings as well) reads, plays, colors, etc. So...um I really liked the book. Makes you think about tv, computer, toys etc. And how children seem to grow up more quickly these days maybe because of media? who knows.

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### **Esther says**

Maybe 2.5 stars, mostly because she seems to forget or change her target audience several times in the book. It often read like an academic textbook rather dry, heavy-handed and redundant. Then for several chapters she delves into case studies from her therapy practice and doesn't really make everyday applications so her audience seemed to be therapists. Random parts here and there were directed to who she states is the target audience- average, every day parents/teachers and/or society in general.

I appreciated her main points and the research she provided about how important play is to children, adults and society in general and how play and make believe is becoming an endangered species. It is on the endangered list, the research has found, because of the popularity and constant access to tv, movies, video games and electronic toys. She does lay it on a little too thick when she is describing these evils. Although she mentions that she doesn't belong to anti-television, absolutely no electronics or technology camp it pretty much sounds like she does. But I did realize that I was being a little too lax, lazy, lenient etc... towards how much exposure Aurora was getting because it was easy and available. So I taped a big sign on our tv that says "Play is an endangered species" to help me make a conscious choice to turn on a movie or not for her. It's helped. I also gathered up all her electronic toys only kept her favorites. The book was beneficial, I just rather that it was written differently.

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### **Lori says**

This book sounded very interesting. I really enjoyed the author's previous book, Consuming Kids, but I did not find this one as engrossing. I thought it would focus more on the broader aspects of make-believe play but it seems that a major chunk of the book revolved around playing with puppets.

The chapter called "The Princess Trap" was much better explained in the book "Cinderella Ate my Daughter" by Peggy Orenstein. Also, if I remember right, Consuming Kids covered this topic better.

The last two chapters of "The Case for Make Believe" were the best of the whole book, and made me wonder if the rest of the book was necessary.

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## **Erin says**

I didn't realize until I'd gotten home from the library with this book that it was written by the author of *Consuming Kids*, which is an amazing book that I still think about often although I read it a couple years ago. I enjoyed this book as well, but I don't think the author supported her case in this book as well as in the previous one. I felt like she repeated her argument many times without giving good strong evidence to support her beliefs, and her advice for parents on how to save make believe filled only a few pages of the whole book. I also feel like she might lean too far to the extreme for the average person, advocating that parents wait as long as possible before introducing the screen to their child, which for most of us is just not possible. (For example, what am I supposed to do with my baby while his two older brothers are watching a video. I'm sorry, but the simple fact that he's the third child automatically means he's going to be introduced to the tube from a very young age.)

Despite these criticisms, though, I found this book thought-provoking, especially the case studies that she includes from her puppet therapy sessions. And even if I don't agree that children should have zero media access, I do believe that parents should responsibly limit and monitor their kids' TV and computer time and be actively fighting against commercialism. Overall, this book was a good refresher of why *Consuming Kids* was such a great book, and if nothing else, it sparked my interest in this subject and commitment to raising consumer savvy children.

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## **Sharon says**

A slim and easy-reading but important volume about the importance of pretend play to children's development and learning. The author is a ventriloquist who decided to become a psychologist and uses her puppets to do therapy with children, which I found fascinating in and of itself. But further she presents a well researched argument for some very vital facts we all need to know -

- How important play is to cognitive, social and emotional health
- How policies that have a negative effect on children's development and learning are the rule in many schools
- How children's relationship with media characters has changed over the last several decades and the impact this is having on child development
- How critical parents decisions about screens' place in the lives of their young children can be
- Important information about choosing toys for children
- Outright lies that are told to parents to try to pressure them to buy or participate in things that are bad for their children
- The change in middle childhood and the loss of that stage as a time for elaborate imaginative play

And she also tells you what you can do about all these things. The book doesn't leave one helpless, but rather empowered, which I appreciated.

And she gets all that into a book that is just over 200 pages long and very easily readable. I love Einstein Never Used Flashcards but it's thicker, dense and I think more daunting for busy parents. For educators who like to geek out about child development it's great, and also a very important read, but I'd be more likely to recommend this one to most as a start.

She didn't come right out and say, I don't think, although she certainly made the point that using screens with babies and toddlers becomes a vicious cycle. She talks about it, but I do wish she made the point a little more directly and quotable I guess.

Parents put a child in front a screen in order to calm them or occupy them and then find that the very skills the child needs to learn in order to calm and to interact meaningfully with their environment are impinged by the screen, leaving them less able to learn to do these things. The parent soon finds they truly can't get through a shopping trip, make dinner or bathe without using a screen, and then the cycle is very hard to break at that point. Whereas, if the child had learned to play with toys and otherwise interact with their environment in the first place, they would likely have those skills by now.

She definitely makes a case for following the AAP recommendation and doing no screen time for children until they are at least 2. I just think she falls short of explaining directly that doing so will make it EASIER for parents to get the things done they need to do in the long run, not harder.

This would be an important book to get into the hands of prospective parents and parents to be, and also of early childhood educators. I know I've recommended it to a few of my colleagues lately. For them it will be preaching to the choir but it's good to have the studies to back up what we see to be true and important, and it would be a good book for teachers to share with parents.

#### Favorite Quotes:

"Given the importance of play to children's lifelong cognitive, social, and emotional health, one would think that we would do everything possible to preserve space for it in our children's lives. Yet the exact opposite is happening. Studies on how children spend their time suggest that the time children spend on creative, pretend play is diminishing. A recent survey on children's time use suggest that from 1997 to 2002, over the course of just five years, the amount of time that six- to eight-year-old children spend on creative play diminished by about a third.

In spite of the researched links between play and learning, government policies such as No Child Left Behind promote rote learning at the expense of quality playtime even in kindergarten. Time allotted to recess - another in-school opportunity for play - has been severely diminished, or cut out altogether, all across the country. Nor are kids left with much time to play outside of school."

"Here's how it works with screen media. When I was a child, Flash Gordon movies were serialized on television, but only occasionally. Disney's Peter Pan wasn't on television, and the TV adaptation of the Broadway play was broadcast annually for a few years. Instead of unlimited access to the media programs we loved, children had unlimited access only to our own imperfect memories of the stories and characters we saw on the screen. The only way I could satisfy my desire to immerse myself in the world created by screen versions of Peter Pan was to construct it myself. In a sense, I had to play. In the process, I could make Neverland my own."

"[Quoting Joan Almon, Director of the Alliance for Childhood] 'A good toy is 90 percent child and 10 percent toy.' The more a toy contributes to the interactive process, the less effort a child makes to think creatively, to

come up with solutions or act spontaneously - and the less benefit children derive from that toy."

"The media and marketing industries have been wildly successful in convincing parents that screen time is both beneficial to babies and essential to child-rearing. That both beliefs are false, and that science to date even suggests that screen time may be harmful to babies, does not seem to matter. It's a warped tribute to the power of advertising that the baby media industry is booming despite all evidence to the contrary and the public concerns of such respected advocates for children as T. Barry Brazelton, Alvin F. Poussaint, and David Elkind. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) actually recommends no screen time for children under two. Yet almost 50 percent of parents believe that baby videos have a positive effect on child development."

"The road to losing out on middle childhood begins in infancy. It starts by training babies to depend on screens for entertainment and the things they sell for amusement and comfort. Before they can even ask for it, we decorate their cribs, clothing, toys and diapers with media characters and place them in froth of screens at every opportunity. They learn to take their pleasures from the hints electronic media provide. By the time children hit preschool, the characters they loved as babies are associated with baby things...By the time they are entering "tweendom," children are receiving strong commercial messages to stop playing with toys altogether and start getting wired."

"The links between nurturing democracy and nurturing play - and the threat that a market-dominated society poses to both - became piercingly clear to me when, in 2007, President George W. Bush lauded Julie Aigner-Clark, the creator of Baby Einstein, in his State of the Union address. After I picked myself up off the floor, I realized how fitting it was for that particular president to single out Aigner-Clark as a stellar example of entrepreneurship. The Baby Einstein Company (which she sold to Disney for more than \$20 million in 2001) and the Bush administration actually had a great deal in common. Both have specialized in brilliantly crafted, hugely successful, false and deceptive marketing to promote their brands...[both use] unsubstantiated claims...both exploit fear as a tool for marketing. Both have relied on building a passive and accepting media audience."

"Make believe flourishes best when a community of caring adults provides children with gifts that can't be bought: time, space and silence."

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## **Dave says**

This is an excellent book by a woman who understands children! I have fond memories of Susan Linn, who in the 70's made periodic appearances on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood with her puppets, Audrey Duck and Cat-a-Lion.

In this book she talks about the importance of creativity and make-believe play in children and how to encourage it. She also describes how play therapy with her puppets has helped her help children to deal with very painful issues in their lives.

In addition, she touches on how commercialism strives to turn our kids into consumers from as young an age as possible, and thereby quash their creative play, though she goes much deeper into this topic in her other book, Consuming Kids.

Although not a parent myself, I remember enough about how it felt to be a child myself to see the wisdom in

this book -- I would recommend it to any parent!

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