

Preschool Isn't Giving Kids Enough Time to PLAY

Our kids are failing at preschool and preschool is failing our kids.

At least, that's the sense one gets from Yale educator Dr. Erika Christakis. In a recent interview with [NPR](#), Christakis explained that today's preschools are seeing a lot of problems:

"[M]any young children are doing poorly in our early education settings.

We've got a growing problem of preschool expulsions, a growing problem of children being medicated off-label for attention problems. We have a lot of anecdotal evidence that parents are frustrated and feeling overburdened."

And why is this? According to Christakis, it's because educators are trying to impose on preschoolers a structure more appropriate to older children, and even adults:

"We have very crammed [preschool] schedules with rapid transitions. We have tons of clutter on classroom walls. We have kids moving quickly from one activity to another. We ask them to sit in long and often boring meetings. Logistically and practically, lives are quite taxing for little kids because they're actually living in an adult-sized world.

Curriculum is often very boring. A staple of early childhood curriculum is the daily tracking of the calendar. And this is one of those absolute classic mismatches, because one study showed that, after a whole year of this calendar work where kids sit in a circle and talk about what day they're on, half the kids still didn't know what day they were on. It's a

mismatch because it's both really hard and frankly very stupid."

So what should be done? If you believe Christiakis, it's not that complicated. She says that the best thing you can do for preschool-age children is let them play and make friends. That's how 3-4 year-olds learn.

It's a bit sad that our society now has to be told this kind of thing.

Image Credit: Lotus Carroll via Flickr bit.ly/1hYHpKw