

Can Rising Depression Rates Be Reduced by This New Education Tactic?

There are two common trends in the world of early-childhood education. The first is to have children spend more time engaging in play. The second is quite the opposite, and attempts to give young children a head start by filling their minds with rigorous academics.

But one English school for children ages four and five seems to be ignoring both of these trends and instead trying its own. According to [The Guardian](#), Downshall Primary School is incorporating elderly individuals into its school days.

“The elderly visitors come to school three days a week with their carers and support workers, and the aim is to accommodate nine each day. They have their own room where they can socialise with each other and where children can come to play.”

As *The Guardian* goes on to explain, such an arrangement is helpful not only to the children in their social interactions, behavior, and reading scores, but is also helpful to the elderly participants. The ability to interact socially, exercise the mind, and ease depression and loneliness are a few of these perks.

Unfortunately, that last aspect is something with which both the old and young appear to be struggling. In the U.K., it was recently reported that the number of children being treated for anxiety has increased by [60 percent](#). In the U.S., [25 percent of teens](#) are believed to struggle with an anxiety disorder. And in Australia, antidepressant usage for both the elderly and the young [has doubled](#) since the turn of the 21st

century.

There are a number of legitimate possibilities which may be driving these depression increases. But could one of them be the separation which has occurred between the young and the old?

Former teacher of the year John Taylor Gatto [sheds some light](#) on this idea:

“Our school crisis is a reflection of this greater social crisis. We seem to have lost our identity. Children and old people are penned up and locked away from the business of the world to a degree without precedent – nobody talks to them anymore and without children and old people mixing in daily life a community has no future and no past, only a continuous present.”

Given this, do we need to break out of the mentality that the young and old are better off isolated amongst those of the same age? Would we not only see some of the rising depression relieved from these generations, but also a reawakening of the essential [historical knowledge](#) which so many of today’s young people seem to have lost?

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