



Empowered by Play, Inc.

Helping families and teachers protect and promote imaginative play in our way-too-busy, consumer-driven, media-filled world.

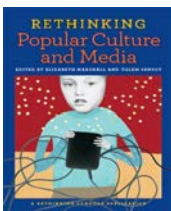


July, 2011

Summertime Greetings from Empowered by Play!

First off, **Empowered by Play** is hoping you are finding many playful moments during these summer months! Water, sand, mud, and a gentle breeze are all you really need. Our family has been blessed with many opportunities to swim in pools and ponds - a wonderful endeavor that is both relaxing and energizing at the same time. We've had cousins sleeping over, too, with evening adventures including fire flies and board games. Great moments and memories, for sure.

2011 has been a terrific year so far for Empowered by Play. We've had the opportunity to advocate for play, and to help others do the same, at schools, libraries, community centers and professional conferences in and around New York and Boston. Two highlights include **The Case for Block Play in the Digital Age** presented at NYSAEYC's annual conference (New York State Association for the Education of Young Children), and participating in **Healthy Kids Day** sponsored by the YMCA in the city of Newburgh, NY. At the Healthy Kids Day event, we were able to set up an interactive block-building activity, and promote healthy play ideas with the parents, grandparents, and children we met. Throughout the day, we promoted the upcoming Screen-Free Week, and made a growing list of over 100 Screen-Free activities. It was a new venue for us, and we were encouraged to find families very interested in learning more about how to get their children away from screens and involved in imaginative and active play. **(See photos above!)**



Rethinking Popular Culture and Media is a powerful new publication by **Rethinking Schools**, and I am proud to report that it includes *Six, Going on Sixteen*, my essay about my classroom experiences combating age-compression and the commercialization of childhood. This anthology is filled with insightful essays written by teachers, scholars and activists, on a range of topics related to pop culture and media. I highly recommend it for teachers (elementary and secondary), administrators, activists – and anyone who works with children and is looking for strategies to help get a handle on our current world of commercialization, media-saturation and pop culture.

Later this month, I will join Deborah Meier, national education leader and Empowered by Play Board Member, as we present at the **Save Our Schools** Event July 28th- 31st in Washington D.C. This conference, rally, march and call to action is being held in response to the recent education “reform” efforts which have effectively demoralized teachers and students nationwide. Currently, our emphasis on high-stakes testing has pushed out authentic learning (this includes play) and a whole-child focus, reducing

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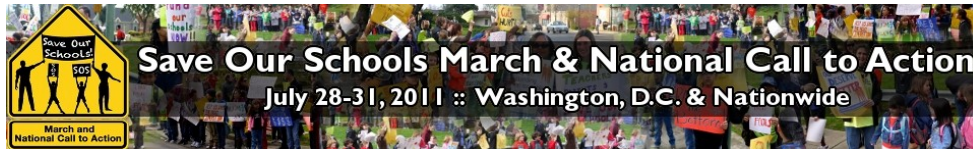
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education to multiple-choice tests. Our children should be experimenting with *blowing* bubbles, not filling in bubbles. I know that well-respected early childhood leaders Diane Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige will be there, along with Jonathan Kozol, Diane Ravitch, and others who are fighting for justice in education. I encourage you to join the movement – and attend the [Save Our Schools March and Rally](#) in Washington D.C. on July 30th. You can also check the Save Our Schools website for coordinated events in other cities.



FYI...Now is the time to book Empowered by Play for fall and winter workshops and presentations. Our calendar gets booked quickly, so please contact us soon if you are considering offering an Empowered by Play workshop for parents or teachers in your community. Thanks!

And, we wish to take a moment to thank you for all you have done to help Empowered by Play continue to grow. We have received generous block donations from our dear friends at [Community Playthings](#) as well as [KEVA planks](#), and we've already used these blocks with hundreds of people: teachers, parents and children. We have also been able to purchase a portable LCD projector through donations from our supporters. Having the projector has allowed us to bring our presentations to more organizations and to save on renting costs when presenting at conferences. Thank you, thank you, thank you! And, thanks as always, to our Board of Directors who help in countless ways: Stephen J. Bywater; Avi Silber, M.D.; Deborah Meier and Kathy Clunis.



Finally, you can show support by: forwarding this email to friends who would be interested, suggesting to your school or library that they host an [Empowered by Play workshop](#), following Empowered by Play on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), or by making a donation. *Please make checks payable to **Empowered by Play** and mail to P.O. Box 10062, Newburgh, NY 12552.* You can also stay up to date by checking out our [blog](#)!

Thank you so very much! And best wishes for a playful summer! (That's me playing! →)

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin,



Founder and Director of Empowered by Play, Inc. A New York State not-for-profit.

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