



# In Defense of Childhood: Protecting Kids' Inner Wildness

*Chris Mercogliano*

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## **In Defense of Childhood: Protecting Kids' Inner Wildness** Chris Mercogliano

As codirector of the Albany Free School, Chris Mercogliano has had remarkable success in helping a diverse population of youngsters find their way in the world. He regrets, however, that most kids' lives are subject to some form of control from dawn until dusk. Lamenting risk-averse parents, overstructured school days, and a lack of playtime and solitude, Mercogliano argues that we are robbing our young people of "that precious, irreplaceable period in their lives that nature has set aside for exploration and innocent discovery," leaving them ill-equipped to face adulthood. The "domestication of childhood" squeezes the adventure out of kids' lives and threatens to smother the spark that animates each child with talents, dreams, and inclinations.

There is plenty that those involved with children can do to protect their spontaneity and exuberance. We can address their desperate thirst for knowledge, give them space to learn from their mistakes, and let them explore what their place in the adult world might be.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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