

draws on Marilyn Patterson's concept of the "bodymind" to propose a more integrated paradigm that recognizes both agency and liberation. By framing play as an embodied aesthetic experience that engages the senses, she suggests, it opens transformative possibilities for individuals and communities, echoing the rhythmic and communal act of double Dutch. Through a womanist theological anthropology, Lockhart-Rusch underscores how play can aid Black women in reclaiming their identities as image bearers of God. Furthermore, womanish modes of play—such as affirmations and the creation of vision boards—that center embodied expressions of God's love encourage participants to regard their bodies as sacred, fostering a deeper awareness of the divine both within themselves and in others.

In part 4, "Twenty Questions: Are We Doing Double Dutch Yet?," Lockhart-Rusch concludes her work by introducing the concept of a clearing space as essential to womanish play. Distinct from safe spaces or brave spaces, clearing spaces invite participants to show up authentically and unapologetically, engaging in laughter, dance, lament, and imaginative possibility. Drawing on the pedagogical legacies of Olivia Pearl Stokes, Anne Streaty Wimberly, bell hooks, and Katie Geneva Cannon, Lockhart-Rusch argues for the necessity of a womanist pedagogy of play as vital to educating in faith. Such spaces foster cognitive and affective growth and well-being and facilitate learning across difference. She concludes with four examples of womanish play, framed as enkindling the world, which call participants to collectively resist injustice and promote communal flourishing.

Doing Theological Double Dutch is a significant contribution that deserves the attention of educators, theologians, play scientists and experts, and scholars in many disciplines. Lockhart-Rusch masterfully weaves together play theory, theology, and womanist thought to offer a compelling model that not only bridges theory and practice but also includes accessible examples easily adaptable for the classroom. Although further research is warranted, her work offers a pivotal foundation for a pedagogy of play that honors culture, embodiment, and the equal partnership of mind and body. In a field where theological institutions have long marginalized Black women and other minority groups, this book offers a liberating pedagogical vision, one that attends to the body, affirms the sacred worth of all of God's children, and reimagines the theological classroom as a clearing space for creative and imaginative play capable of cultivating healing, inclusion, and transformative community.

—Deja Wilson, *Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ*

I'm Not Getting Them Ready for Kindergarten: Breaking Tradition in Early Childhood Education

Kristen Day

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In I'm Not Getting Them Ready for Kindergarten: Breaking Tradition in Early Child-

hood Education, Kristen Day outlines her philosophy of play and advocates a play-based pedagogy for all students, particularly the youngest learners. As the founder of an alternative program, the former Butterfly Hill Nature Preschool, she provided a setting that allowed children ample time to play and explore, supporting their natural development. After this preschool closed, she became an author, keynote speaker, podcaster, and early childhood leader.

With witty anecdotes and numerous references to influential scholars like Lev Vygotsky, Stuart Brown, and Peter Gray, Day makes a compelling case for the importance of childhood play. Day calls for creating environments that nurture natural learning through child-led practices. She laments traditional academic preschool programs that rigidly adhere to outdated teaching methods for young children, such as circle time, calendar curricula, and didactic teaching. She identifies these methods as ineffective and developmentally inappropriate, arguing for environments in which children can engage in self-directed activities that promote discovery learning and foster creative thinking.

In such settings, teachers can refine their observational skills and facilitate playful learning experiences, acting as side-line guides rather than center-stage sages. After closely observing young students, teachers would document behaviors, skills, and conversations and then reflect on their observations for authentic assessment. In all, Day articulates how a playful approach and a prepared environment benefit children by aligning with the natural progression of child development

and embracing a holistic perspective.

Day also lists specific activities she does not recommend for children, including worksheets, teacher-constructed craft projects, and behavior charts. She offers instead a natural approach and provides examples of viable alternatives such as process art, loose parts play, and an emphasis on connection over correction. For example, she presents reading instruction that emphasizes guided play activities as an ideal approach to inspire children's excitement about stories rather than merely focusing on decoding print. Day explains that children naturally develop skills through play without excessive adult interference. Indeed, she believes adults should nurture like attentive hummingbirds rather than hover like surveillance helicopters.

Day offers valuable advice for new parents and early childhood educators. She asserts that, in our uncertain times, developmentally appropriate, play-based programs prepare children for kindergarten by fostering resilience and holistic growth. Within the pages of her book, readers will find a captivating narrative that evokes long-forgotten memories of cherished childhood experiences. Although directed toward those working with young children, the lessons and insights are relevant to teachers of learners of all ages. Day asserts that adults ought to allow children to experience boredom, choose their activities, and have the time and space to resolve conflicts. In other words, they should be free to play.

—Vivien L. Geneser, *Texas State University, San Marcos, TX*