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Prescription: Play. Remedy for a generation failing to thrive

Lek på resept

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Childhood play was a sanctuary. A space where there was only room for joy, not for worries. We all have some memories associated with play. A place, a smell or a song. In an instant, you are back in time. Today, children play less outside – and less with each other. They experience more demands and less freedom than children did a generation ago. More and more children and young people also struggle with health problems and dissatisfaction.

Increased knowledge about the importance of play shows that this may be connected. For many children and youths, play has moved into a screen, and AI is now also invading childhood. These are playgrounds that are proving to be threats to children's safety and health in a way we could never have imagined. All mammals play because play is a prerequisite for health, development and survival.

Play develops empathy, curiosity and mental resilience – qualities we presently need more than anything. This means that we as a society must bring free play back into the fight – not only for the health of our children – but for the future of the earth.



Photo: Lina Hindrum

Charlotte Lunde works as a doctor and child and adolescent psychiatrist. She has extensive experience from the specialist health service for children and adolescents but has also worked with adults. Lunde is also a journalist and is an active public debater and especially a sought-after speaker on the topic of play, learning and mental health. Together with Professor Per Brodal, she has previously published the book *Play and Learning from a Neurological Perspective - How Good Intentions Can Destroy Children's Will to Learn*.

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