

1957

## A Survey of Practices and Attitudes of Elementary Educators Regarding Playground Supervision in Douglas and Chelan Counties

Vern L. Huffman  
*Central Washington University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), and the [Educational Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Huffman, Vern L., "A Survey of Practices and Attitudes of Elementary Educators Regarding Playground Supervision in Douglas and Chelan Counties" (1957). *All Master's Theses*. 125.  
<https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd/125>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@cwu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@cwu.edu).

A SURVEY OF PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY  
EDUCATORS REGARDING PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION  
IN DOUGLAS AND CHELAN COUNTIES

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington College of Education

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

---

by  
Vern L. Huffman  
August, 1957

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

---

Roy F. Ruebel, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

---

Dean Stinson

---

Jettye Fern Grant

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The investigator wishes to acknowledge his gratefulness to Dr. Roy F. Ruebel for the assistance and suggestions he gave during the writing of this paper.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Statement of the problem. . . . .	1
Purpose of the study. . . . .	2
Limitation of the problem . . . . .	3
Definitions of Terms Used . . . . .	3
Character . . . . .	3
Control . . . . .	3
Elementary educators. . . . .	3
Organized play. . . . .	4
Supervised free play. . . . .	4
Suggestion. . . . .	4
Supervision . . . . .	4
Teaching. . . . .	4
Method of Research. . . . .	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE. . . . .	7
Literature on Need for Play . . . . .	7
Literature on Criticism of School Practices .	10
Literature on Need for Supervision. . . . .	11
Literature on New Practices . . . . .	14
Summary . . . . .	15

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES REGARDING PLAYGROUND	
SUPERVISION . . . . .	17
Objectives. . . . .	17
Relaxation. . . . .	17
Integration with physical education . . . . .	20
Extension of the curriculum . . . . .	21
Evaluation. . . . .	23
Hobby development . . . . .	25
Student leadership. . . . .	26
Techniques. . . . .	27
Teacher's responsibility. . . . .	27
Planning. . . . .	29
Supervision . . . . .	29
Use of student play leaders . . . . .	32
IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	33
Summary . . . . .	33
Recommendations . . . . .	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	36
APPENDIX. . . . .	39
A. Questionnaire . . . . .	40
B. Percentage of teachers, principals, and super- intendents who agreed with the questionnaire statements. . . . .	46

CHAPTER	PAGE
Appendix C. Percentage of teachers, principals, and superintendents who indicated they practice the questionnaire statements	49
D. Average percentage of teachers, princi- pals and superintendents responses on attitude toward and practice of the questionnaire statements . . . . .	51

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Playground supervision has been a problem which has given teachers concern since the origin of school playgrounds. As school enrollments have increased, so have the problems of playground supervision. Whenever children play together, conflicts arise due to (1) differences in personality; (2) misunderstandings; or (3) accidents. School children are the responsibility of the school personnel from the time they start to school in the morning until they arrive at home in the afternoon. One must be aware of this responsibility and ready to fulfill his part in it. In order to prevent conflicts, teachers must be aware of factors which cause them.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Providing the proper supervision for children on school playfields is a major problem confronting elementary teachers and administrators today. Increased enrollments and larger classes have made it difficult for teachers to leave the classroom to supervise the play areas. School patrons demand that school children be properly supervised at all times. It is



necessary that these demands be considered and that an attempt be made to find the best possible solutions.

Purpose of the study. The purposes for this study were: (1) to discover existing playground practices in selected elementary schools in Central Washington, (2) to discover existing attitudes of teachers in selected schools in Central Washington, and (3) to gather information that would aid teachers and administrators in the elementary school playground supervisory problem.

An attempt was made to discover the attitudes and practices of elementary educators regarding: (1) the use of the recess period, (2) periodic releases from routine for teachers, (3) the requirement of teacher supervision on the playground, (4) children's desires during their recess time, and (5) attitudes and practices which have educational implications.

It was intended that this study would reveal information about playground supervision that would be valuable to elementary school educators. Differences in opinions were included for the purpose of showing the range of opinions rather than that educators are not working together in harmony. From this wide range in opinion the investigator was able to decide that further study of this problem would be beneficial. Many times improvement in school practices are not possible until educators with a

wide range of opinions are able to get together and analyze problems from every aspect.

Limitation of the problem. This study was limited to a specific area. A personal observation of each school's practices was virtually impossible because of the time element and the financial factor involved in travel necessary for such observation. The limitation of time made it impossible to interview all the elementary educators in the two counties to discuss attitudes and practices; therefore, a questionnaire was used to gather data pertinent to the study. The study was further limited in that it included only those elementary schools having over one hundred pupils.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Character. The habits and attitudes of an individual, taken together and integrated.<sup>1</sup>

Control. The situation by which boys and girls are kept within a specified pattern of conduct by means of rewards or punishments.

Elementary educators. Teachers, principals and

---

<sup>1</sup>Elmer D. Mitchell, et. al. The Theory of Play (New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1948), p. 273.

superintendents of school districts having elementary schools.

Organized play. Activities organized by the teacher for the children.

Supervised free play. Observation of the play area with occasional suggestions given by the play supervisor.

Suggestion. The process of communicating an idea from one individual to another, when the idea is accepted more or less uncritically or without rational ground.<sup>2</sup>

Supervision. The process of interpersonal relationships through which the learning experiences of boys and girls are improved.<sup>3</sup>

Teaching. Activities immediately associated with the direction of learning, and immediately associated with the large group of concomitant activities which the teacher is called upon to perform in connection with supervising extra-curricular activities, counseling students, working with a school staff, and living in a community.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>3</sup>A. S. Barr, et al. Supervision (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), p. 568.

<sup>4</sup>Kimball Wiles, et al. Supervision in Physical Education (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 3.

### III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The descriptive-survey method of research was used in gathering materials for this project. Sources of data were very limited on this problem. The survey of materials included (1) related topics found in periodicals and books, (2) correspondence and personal interviews with elementary educators, and (3) responses to a questionnaire sent to elementary educators in Douglas and Chelan Counties, Washington. Two hundred thirty-three teachers were sent questionnaires mimeographed on white paper. The eighteen principal's questionnaires were on green paper and the thirteen superintendent's questionnaires were on yellow paper. In this way the investigator was able to keep the returns separate and make separate tallies.

The questionnaires were distributed primarily through the principals who met with the Chelan-Douglas County Principal's Association. In this way a high percentage of returns was expedited. The investigator is indebted to this group for their help in completion of the project. A copy of the questionnaire used is found in appendix A. The teachers returned 79.8 per cent, the principals returned 83.3 per cent and the superintendents returned 76.9 per cent of the questionnaires sent out.

The investigator studied books on the theories of play. A study of available periodicals containing items

on playground supervision was completed. During the process of gathering information, the need for a considerable amount of correspondence and interviews was discovered. The questions used in the questionnaire were chosen because they represented ideas of writers on the topic or on related subjects. Many of the ideas had been tried in various schools and then published because they were felt to be successful.

When the questionnaires were returned the responses were tabulated. The results of these tabulations may be found in the appendix.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Play is an activity which is found all over the world. Play, too, is old. Excavations in the ruins of ancient Egypt and Babylonia reveal toys such as dolls, tops, rattles, and various other trinkets of pottery and metal, showing that the boys and girls of these remote civilizations engaged in play activity.<sup>1</sup>

#### I. LITERATURE ON NEED FOR PLAY

Most writers agree that in our modern society the chores and work of children have been greatly decreased. This, as a result, has made available a larger amount of leisure time for the child. The change in our manner of living, due to the industrial revolution, is not conducive to the development of health and of a vigorous physique. Society has tried to counteract this lack in the activity of children by providing healthy play activity for children. The play activity helps to take away the monotony of childhood and develops creativeness and sociability on the part of the child.

Regarding the need for play, Davie stated that:

---

<sup>1</sup>Mitchell, op. cit., p. 105.

Play is a biological and social necessity for children. It is the most fundamental thing about a child, who in the course of a year has more hours for play than for school or sleep or anything else. The value of play is manifold. It increases the physical fitness of the young; it develops cooperation, a sense of mutual rights, sportmanship, obedience, loyalty, friendliness, democracy, and other qualities; it is an antidote for anti-social tendencies; it affords mental development and acts as a mental stimulus. It is in his play that the child gains control of his body, that he acquires accuracy and precision in motion, and in judging distance, sights, and sounds. It is the way by which the child, particularly the young child, learns of life. Play for the child is one of the most serious facts of life; it is a form of work for the young and the basis of all natural education. Play is a matter of public concern, and the community should not only have ample space but should see that proper consideration is given to the environment of the places in which play is carried on.<sup>2</sup>

In the world of play the child is often his natural self. He may be an entirely different person from the one the adult sees in formal situations. The transformation in the play activity may reveal the inner child. To the observing adult a child may appear uncombed, underweight, and shy. It is possible that he has always been strictly disciplined at home and made to feel that he was always wrong. As a result of his home experience, he may tend to be afraid at school. He quite often will give the answer, "I don't know," rather than voice an opinion. One day the teacher may observe him at play and in the excitement of

---

<sup>2</sup>Maurice R. Davie, Problems of City Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1932), pp. 678-9.

play he becomes alive, forgets self and reveals inherent desires and possibilities. The unfolding of his personality may start with a good hit in a baseball game which wins the acclaim of the group and sparks his self confidence. This child, who fails in school because he is mal-adjusted or insecure, finds in play an outlet for his emotional needs.

The opposite type child may give the impression that he knows it all. He is really in his element when engaged in a game and feels he should have the best position in the game. In this case the child has to modify his behavior to achieve group approval.

Borst contended that when children are playing together, they exhibit a whole range of emotions ranging from unselfishness to anger and jealousy.<sup>3</sup> Borst stated:

The interplay of twenty or thirty personalities may be likened to the combining of ingredients to make a stew. The results may be good or bad depending upon the combinations. When children play together, these possibilities constantly challenge the leader. In the role of the wise and encouraging counselor, the leader can help the child to adapt himself as the game requires, knowing that the child will transfer some of his ability to the problems<sup>4</sup> he faces in the classroom and in every day happenings.

---

<sup>3</sup>Evelyn Borst, The Book of Games for Boys and Girls (New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1953), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



## II. LITERATURE ON CRITICISM OF SCHOOL PRACTICES

Several writers have accused the public schools of failing to take advantage of the play program.

Brownell pointed out that the public schools seldom face realistically the problem of providing education for leisure time and that too many of the existing activities are tolerated principally because they offer relief from the supposedly more necessary academic education.<sup>5</sup>

Bonser condemned the school for destroying the early interest of the child and for neglecting to direct his interests toward constructive enterprises and social activities. He stated that the school failed to utilize the clues inherent in childrens' spare time activities which reveal their interest and capacity for constructive, scientific, industrial, and social studies of current value. These interests and capacities would seem to be of first rate importance for the economic, civic, and social well-being of our society.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>C. L. Brownell, "The Influence of School Training on Leisure Time Activities," Journal of Health and Medical Education, 6:12-13, 1935.

<sup>6</sup>Walter Monroe, Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950), p. 1007, citing F. G. Bonser, School Work and Spare Time (Cleveland: Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1918), p. 176.

Bonser concluded that recreational habits of permanency are acquired during the elementary school period; thus, the elementary schools have the greatest opportunity to influence leisure time activities for adult life.<sup>7</sup>

### III. LITERATURE ON NEED FOR SUPERVISION

Not too many years ago the recess period was used merely to provide a change from the restricted activity of the classroom. Children were released from teacher-directed activity of the classroom for fifteen to twenty minutes daily and set free to occupy themselves on the playground according to their own wishes. The older and more aggressive children took over the larger play areas and forced the other children into marginal areas. Authorities in the field believe that recess and noon activities should be considered an integral part of the physical education program. The learnings that children acquire during regular instruction periods are practiced in these non-instructional periods.

School enrollment increases have caused crowded play areas and make organization and supervision a necessity. Elementary school personnel have the responsibility of organizing their schools so that children can have

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

worthwhile play experiences in fresh air and sunshine. They must have relaxed noon lunch periods, adequate play facilities and time to develop desirable health habits. The success of recess and noon play organization is dependent upon the extent to which the classroom teacher prepares his class for the program. Occasionally the teacher should observe his children at play during noon and recess and indicate his interest in their activities. Children should frequently be asked to discuss the problems, successes, and failures which they have experienced in play.<sup>8</sup>

Trethaway stated that organized play at recess and noon has proved valuable in the following ways: (1) develops pupil interest in constructive play; (2) gives each child an equal opportunity to play; (3) develops sportsmanship, pupil leadership, resourcefulness and the ability to take part in a group activity without direct teacher supervision; (4) provides a laboratory period in which skills, knowledge, and techniques learned in the physical education instructional period are applied; (5) provides efficient and maximum use of the total playground area; and (6) makes playground supervision by the teacher

---

<sup>8</sup>Edwin H. Trethaway, "Don't Just Turn Them Loose," National Education Association Journal, April, 1954, pp. 214-5.

more pleasant and effective.<sup>9</sup>

Children will play with or without guidance. It doesn't take the presence of an adult to make children want to play. The play spirit is present in the beginning, and it will find expression. The impulse to play is natural; but, the forms of play must be learned. Mitchell contended that the qualified playleader brings order out of chaos. He does this, not by force or suppression, not by rules, regulations and penalties; he does it by getting people to move in the direction of their interests and lends his services to the fullest satisfaction of these interests. He accomplishes this by keeping people happily occupied in activities of their choice, and by developing an atmosphere of mutual confidence through constant cooperation.<sup>10</sup>

Curtis wrote that the director of a properly conducted playground does not direct its activities in the sense in which this is usually understood. He starts the program, organizes or gets the children to organize the teams and arranged the tournaments and contests. The child is thus no less a free participant in the directed playground than he is in the undirected one.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.      <sup>10</sup>Mitchell, op. cit., p. 518.

<sup>11</sup>Henry S. Curtis, Education Through Play (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), p. 63.

## IV. LITERATURE ON NEW PRACTICES

At St. Vincent's school in Kansas City, Missouri, the children felt they would enjoy their play period more if some type of organization could be fostered. It was decided jointly by the children, teachers and recreation leaders, that all the children in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, who were interested in leading games for the first four grades on the playground during recess, would be given instruction in leadership techniques and game skills. Only those children who were interested in learning leadership technique would be given the opportunity for training. It was further required that the children taking the course complete the entire course and take an examination. The children did not lose their own recess period because of their work with the younger children. Children were not assigned more than two or three periods per week; because, the loss of continuity of the leader's own classes had to be considered.

Peterson contended that the opportunity for growth and development afforded these children in taking responsibility for other youngsters more than off-set the loss of time spent out of regular classes.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>J. A. Peterson, "Supervised Recess," Recreation, 47:431-2, September, 1954.

Kilroy, principal of an elementary school in Oceanside, New York, described a system of child leaders used in the Oceanside School District. A group of sixth grade students were picked to work as game leaders or assistant leaders for the noon hour program. The physical education leader of the school held conferences with the game leaders and discussed recreational leadership. From these discussions a "game leaders' code" was developed. Periodic meetings followed to iron out difficulties. School assemblies were held with game leaders in charge giving extemporaneous speeches which explained the organized play program. At one of these meetings the leaders took the game leaders' oath and was presented with a badge. The program was considered desirable and was adopted in other schools in that school district.<sup>13</sup>

## V. SUMMARY

The survey of literature is convincing that there is a need for play. It has been pointed out that the opportunity for observing and helping the child while at play are without number. All the articles read indicated that proper supervision was vital to the success of the

---

<sup>13</sup>Thomas J. Kilroy, "Child Leaders Take Over Noon-Hour Playground," Nations Schools, 47:53-4, January, 1951.

play program. Literature available on current practices dealt with the problem of providing proper supervision.

## CHAPTER III

### ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES REGARDING PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

This study was conducted to find the existing attitudes and practices regarding the use of play periods. In this chapter the investigator has attempted to interpret the results of the survey. The objectives of the use of recess presented are (1) relaxation, (2) integration with the physical education program, and (3) extension of the curriculum. An attempt was made to include the existing attitudes, practices, differences of opinion and examples regarding each phase of the program.

#### I. OBJECTIVES

Relaxation. There is a definite place for relaxation within the child's school schedule. The problem is to determine the method of relaxation. The survey indicated that elementary educators feel there is a need for relaxation. Some children are able to achieve this objective best through supervised free play activity. Other children achieve the objective by being able to pursue their own special interests. Another type of children must have their time wholly organized for them. Very few educators feel that children should have play periods entirely free



from supervision. Mitchell has suggested that the play leader has the opportunity to bring order out of chaos.<sup>1</sup> Few children can achieve the objective of relaxation when all children are turned loose without supervision. It is the responsibility of the teacher and play leader to determine the needs and provide the facilities for fulfilling the needs of all children.

Several comments about child relaxation were received from respondents and are listed as follows:

1. A child at play is generally more relaxed and normal.
2. The child's true attitudes and behavior are more apt to be portrayed in a play activity than in a formal class which has more strict supervision.
3. Children react differently when they are alone or in small groups than they do in the normal class setting.
4. To really get to know a child he must be observed when he isn't under pressure.

Teachers, like children, are in need of relaxation. They vary in their needs as do children in achieving this

---

<sup>1</sup>Mitchell, loc. cit.

objective. Teachers have indicated that they can fill this need in various ways. Some prefer to relax over a cup of coffee. Others enjoy the change of atmosphere achieved by leading their classes in play activities. A chance to have a few minutes for planning solutions of class problems will satisfy others.

According to the survey more and more administrators are recognizing the need for teacher relief from stringent schedules. They feel that when used properly teacher release can benefit teachers, pupils and the school program in general.

The following comments were received about the use of released time:

1. Recesses and noons, when off duty, are usually used to correct papers, help slow children or to collect materials needed in another class.
2. There should be some person hired to take care of playground work.
3. With so many children going home on busses there is too little time to give extra help to those who need it.
4. Any playground duty uses up the time that teachers can use for special instruction.
5. Someone should be given the direct responsibility

for setting up a good playground program. Most teachers do not have the time, training or energy to spend on the play area. After the program was set up the teachers should assume their role and do a good job with the help of the play director.

6. Teachers would be in favor of improving playground activities if it wouldn't increase the teacher load.

Integration with physical education. Integrating recess time with the physical education program does not necessarily mean that recess takes the place of physical education. The techniques, games and skills learned in the physical education class can be practiced during recess time. For the best results with this practice a close working arrangement between the physical education director and the classroom teacher would be necessary. Teachers need to be aware of the physical education activities being taught if they are to help the children practice them. The physical education teacher must also be aware of the play needs of children so that he may instruct them in the skills they need.

A large percentage of educators stated that they believe the integration of the physical education program with recess time would be a good practice. Even though

there was strong support for integrating these activities, educators indicated they had not been practicing this technique. More administrators responded that they felt the integration program would be beneficial than did teachers. Trethaway described this type of program as one that would be helpful to pupils and teachers. This practice can give direction to the whole play program.<sup>2</sup>

The following comments of teachers indicate a need for the integrated program.

1. It seems that children have a difficult time using their play time effectively.
2. Children don't know how to play by themselves.
3. Children seem to want to be told what to do.
4. Sportsmanship and good playground conduct should be stressed outside of the recess time so that they can be practiced during the play period.

Extension of the curriculum. The recess period can be considered an extension of the curriculum. This time should be considered as much a part of the school day as class time. If time is allowed for recess activities there must be a need to justify the use of that time. Educators

---

<sup>2</sup>Trethaway, loc. cit.

must be aware of the physical development as well as the mental development of the child. School personnel strongly supported the idea that there was a need in this area. The survey also indicated that too little is being done in actual practice toward realization of this objective. The school administrators feel to greater degree than do teachers that this objective is being neglected.

The following pertinent comments were included by teachers on their questionnaires:

1. A child's social attitudes can best be judged when observing him at play.
2. Supervised play affords an excellent opportunity to properly guide a child toward good social attitudes.
3. A student is often well behaved in the presence of his teacher. When released to the play area he sometimes becomes too aggressive. If his originality and aggressiveness can be recognized and directed into proper channels, he will become an asset to his group. His regressions may vanish in the school room situation and use of his natural desire to be a leader may be possible. The child may gain self confidence and cease being a bully.

4. Better citizens can be developed through a teacher's recognition of personality traits if she can supply the proper therapy.

Evaluation. Much can be accomplished in evaluation of children's problems if the classroom teacher observes the play activity. The child at play has the opportunity to develop creativeness and sociability. He not only has the possibility of developing his physical faculties but may develop his mental capacity. Children need to express themselves in other than classroom situations.

One teacher, for example, stated that she was able to evaluate and help correct the problem of a little boy who always played with girls. She mentioned that she felt that she could not have been successful if she hadn't worked with him on the play area. When it was recognized that the boy wasn't reacting normally to boys his own age the parents were contacted. It was found that during his pre-school years he had played almost entirely with his three cousins who were girls. A plan of cooperative play was initiated immediately by the play supervisor that would include him in activities with other boys. His social adjustment improved rapidly when he was directed into the program of cooperative play.

The following examples were given by teachers as

items that can be observed on the play area and later evaluated:

1. An opportunity is provided for determining why some children are not included in the group, will not cooperate in the games, must always win to be happy, are boastful, poor sports and when not allowed to dominate coax friends away from group play.
2. One boy tried to gain recognition for himself by trying to organize a gang and resist authority. Observation of his play revealed that he lacked play skills necessary to compete successfully with other boys. In directed play activity he sometimes forgets his fears and reveals that his anti-social attitude has been a cover up.
3. A little boy in a first grade room was not interested in anything that was done in the room. He would not talk to the teacher or anyone else while he was in the room. He did what he could in the room but there was no "spark" present. One day he was overheard telling other students that if they would play a ball game he would broadcast it. The children responded to his suggestion and played with him. The child received such a thrill from this activity that

he was allowed to do it whenever possible. He talked incessantly about this activity. A whole new world opened for him as a result of this experience. It is not so likely that his interest would have been discovered in the classroom.

4. A few of the problems observable on the play area are: (1) lack of acceptance by peers, (2) enthusiasm or lack of it, (3) inclination to withdraw to one's self, and (4) substitution of activities for ones of lesser skill.

Hobby development. The hobby development program can help in child development. Many times educators feel that this program can't be placed into the crowded school schedule. School personnel should analyze all activities that have a possibility of helping to develop the total child. This program was pointed out as one that should be considered in the public schools. Responses to this proposal indicated that even less was being done on this program than was felt should be done. These activities should be included in the elementary school because they are basic to child development, according to Brownell.<sup>3</sup> They should not be included only for the purpose of offering relief

---

<sup>3</sup>Brownell, loc. cit.



from the supposedly more necessary academic education.

One teacher stated that she believed in hobby clubs. She also suggested that in rural areas the 4-H program with its good leadership was able to develop the children's interest in the field.

Student leadership. A plan of teaching interested upper grade students play leadership techniques and game skills has been previously considered. It was concluded that the plan had been successful and that it had been adopted in other schools.<sup>4</sup> The response to this proposal by elementary educators was one of partial approval. They also indicated that very few had tried such a plan.

Teachers commented on the proposal of teaching play leadership as follows:

1. Interested upper grade students should be given instruction in play leadership if they desire it. This instruction should be given during a study or free period. The activity should not be considered a chore but a privilege. A faculty member should be on the playground at all times when play leaders are being used.
2. Older students who are responsible and who show

---

<sup>4</sup>Kilroy, loc. cit.

an interest in teaching or children's play activities should be instructed in play leadership techniques. They must understand that it is necessary to have a good scholastic standing and an ability to make up any work they would miss. Many children would find out about their potential as teachers if they gained experience as a play leader.

## II. TECHNIQUES

The various methods for achieving the objectives of a well balanced recess program are presented in this section. The basic items that were considered are: (1) teacher's responsibility, (2) classroom planning, and (3) types of supervision.

Teacher's responsibility. It is the responsibility of school personnel to provide the best instructional and child developmental activities possible. The philosophy that schools and school programs are built for the development of children and not for the convenience of teachers must be considered. Elementary educators are more aware of the total developmental needs of children now than they ever have been in the past.

The methods of organizing the play area have been

referred to as organized play and supervised free play in this study. In organized play the teacher organizes and directs the play activity. In supervised free play the teacher observes the play activity and solves difficulties that arise from children's free choice of activity. A blend of these two types of organization is needed to achieve the proper supervision of play areas.

This survey points out the fact that teachers are aware of this responsibility. A summary of the responses to the existing practices indicates that the goal is not being reached. Teachers, principals, and superintendents generally agree that improvement in this area is needed. Several comments were included on the questionnaire concerning this problem and are listed as follows:

1. It should be possible to plan a sequential physical education program consisting of rhythms, games and skills that can be used through the elementary school. The teacher could then build upon the skills learned the preceding year.
2. Play time should be at least indirectly supervised, but the average teacher's schedule is too full to add direct supervision of play time to it.
3. It would be wonderful to have a physical training program and release the teacher from the job they dislike. The children would gain a great deal

from it.

4. It seems the fashion to assume that children are incapable of deciding what they want to do for entertainment without adult leadership or direction. Recess periods should be free periods for children with a minimum of teacher direction.

Planning. If the recess period is considered a part of the elementary school extended curriculum, planning is needed to justify that claim. Some classroom time should be used for preparation for play. Much of the preparation for play can be taken care of in the regular physical education period, but some time could be well spent in preparing the children for their play immediately preceding the play period. Many educators have indicated that there is a value in this type of program. Few responses were received that would indicate this to be a common practice. Many times children who are slow with academic work will be chosen to lead play activity in the class situation when preparation is made in this way. This gives one more possibility for the child to experience success in the classroom.

Supervision. The quality and type of supervision

on the play area determines to what extent this activity is successful. The investigator found that elementary educators were concerned about this problem. There is much indecision about the type of supervision to use. In this study the types of supervision have been classed as direct and indirect. Direct supervision requires that the teacher be present on the play area to organize, direct and observe the play activity. This study points out that educators do not believe this to be the best method of controlling the play activity. The term indirect supervision suggests that the teacher observes the children who are playing and may suggest activities for some of them. Elementary educators believe that each method used by itself is not adequate. A blending of both types of supervision is needed if the goal of having a well planned and balanced play program for children is achieved. Differences in recreational needs must be recognized as well as the differences in the child's academic area. Supervisors who are aware of child differences find that they must organize activity for some children, suggest activities for some and merely observe the activities of other groups.

The investigator found various opinions about the problem of supervision. Educators indicated that they feel supervision to meet the needs of the individual is needed,

but they suggest that present supervisory programs do not meet that need. The following examples are typical comments received about supervision:

1. If the whole play area is supervised by one person there is not enough time to pay any special attention to any one group.
2. The supervisor can be friendly, care for accidents, prevent them if possible, and give a few suggestions here and there.
3. The playground director cannot take part in a game and let the rest of the children take care of themselves.
4. Even some fifth and sixth grade children seek encouragement and approval from the person on duty. The teacher thus has an opportunity to encourage these children to join others in playing games.
5. Sometimes the supervisor can learn why children are not playing with others and give that information to the room teacher.
6. Personality "quirks" can often be spotted on the playground.
7. It would be more effective if the principal or superintendent would guide playground and

building behavior by talking directly to children in the classroom and on the play ground rather than by sending bulletins. Children always have much respect for them and grow a little weary of hearing the same comments from their teachers so many times.

Use of student play leaders. If older children are taught play leadership techniques and game skills they should be given the opportunity to use these skills in helping the play supervisor. Peterson<sup>5</sup> and Kilroy<sup>6</sup> both mentioned that they had used student play leaders very successfully. These were the only examples found by the investigator during the survey of literature.

This study indicates that elementary educators can see advantages in this plan. They feel that such a plan would not only help the play supervisor but could be an enriching experience for the play leaders. In spite of the favorable comments supporting this plan, teachers indicated that it had seldom been tried. One teacher commented that such a plan had been in effect in their district very successfully. The plan was discontinued after a new superintendent had been hired.

---

<sup>5</sup>Peterson, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup>Kilry, loc. cit.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

A comparison of the literature read during the process of this survey compared with the practices discovered in Douglas and Chelan Counties are pointed out in the following summary statements:

1. School personnel were assuming their responsibility for the safety and well being of children.
2. Play activity was not regarded as vital to the total development of the child.
3. Too many recesses were made up primarily of free play activity.
4. Play activity was regarded as extra-curricular, rather than, a part of the extended curriculum.
5. The problem of providing adequate types of supervision was not understood.
6. Too many teachers felt they were too busy to show an interest in the childrens' play activity.
7. Schools were not doing an adequate job of gaining and utilizing information about the child when he was at play.
8. Schools were not doing an adequate job of



- preparing children for leisure time activities.
9. Schools were not training promising young students as play leaders and using them on the play area.
  10. Many schools gave teachers release time from teaching schedules.
  11. School personnel were not satisfied with the type of supervision being offered.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study brought to the attention of the investigator some areas of our educational program that need revision. The following statements are listed as recommendations for action:

1. Colleges of education should initiate a course of instruction on the extended curriculum for elementary schools.
2. Cadet teachers should be made aware of their responsibility to the extended curriculum. They should also be made aware of the benefits of the program.
3. Elementary principals should study the effectiveness of the playground program in their own schools.
4. A study of the entire physical education program

and play needs of children should be included in an in-service training program.

5. Administrators should be sympathetic to the problems that teachers feel they have in this area.
6. Administrators should consider these problems and be able to suggest ways that teachers can carry on a successful supervision program.
7. The use of child play leaders should be tried.
8. The school schedule should be set up to include a hobby development program.
9. A continuous evaluation program should be effected, so that, the entire needs of children can be met.
10. The term "teacher duty" should be removed from the conversations of educators. The term "teachers opportunity" should be used in this connection.
11. Improvement in the whole play program of children must be undertaken carefully. The administrators, teachers and pupils must grow into the extended program together.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

- Barr, A. S., et al. Supervision. New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1947.
- Bonser, G. F. School Work and Spare Time. Cleveland: Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1918.
- Borst, Evelyn. The Book of Games for Boys and Girls. New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1953.
- Curtis, Henry S. Education Through Play. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915.
- Davie, Maurice R. Problems of City Life. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1932.
- Mitchell, Elmer D., et al. The Theory of Play. New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1934, revised 1948.
- Wiles, Kimball., et al. Supervision in Physical Education. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956.

### B. PERIODICALS

- Brownell, C. L. "The Influence of School Training on Leisure Time Activities," Journal of Health and Medical Education, 6:12-13, 1935.
- Kilroy, Thomas J. "Child Leaders Take Over Noon Hour Playground," Nations Schools, 47:53-4, January, 1951.
- Peterson, J. A. "Supervised Recess," Recreation, 47:431-2, September, 1954.
- Trethaway, Edwin H. "Don't Just Turn Them Loose," National Education Association Journal, April, 1954.

## C. ENCYCLOPEDIA

Monroe, Walter. Encyclopedia of Educational Research.  
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950.

APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

ROCK ISLAND SCHOOL  
March 1, 1957

To: Elementary Educators

Re: Survey of attitudes and practices regarding playground supervision.

The attached questionnaire is an attempt to obtain information for a survey that I am making on playground supervision. I am planning to use the results of this survey in my Masters Degree thesis.

This questionnaire is divided into Section A., an attitude scale, and Section B., a performance scale. Although the questionnaire appears to be lengthy it may be rapidly checked.

In order to clarify some of the statements the following definitions are given.

Supervision-The act of observing play and curtailing activity that might be harmful.

Supervised free play - The children choose their own play activity but a teacher is always present.

Indirect supervision-The teacher is present on the play area and may suggest some play activity.

Direct supervision-The teacher is present on the play area and organizes, directs and observes the play activity.

I appreciate the time and effort you have given to consider these statements. When you have completed the questionnaire please return it to your principal. The tabulations from this questionnaire will be returned to your principal for those who are interested.

Thank you sincerely,

Vern L. Huffman  
Elementary Principal

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. Attitude Scale. Please indicate your attitude toward the following statements by use of the scale on the right of the page.

	(Encircle the number)	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. School personnel should assume responsibility for the safety and well being of children . . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
2. Play is a vital factor in helping a child learn to control and develop his physical and mental faculties. . .		1	2	3	4	5
3. Play activity helps take away the monotony of childhood. . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
4. Play develops the child's creativeness and sociability. . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
5. Recesses and noons should be considered an integrated part of the physical education program . . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
6. The play period should be used as a practice period in which skills, knowledge and techniques learned in the physical education instructional period are applied . . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
7. A teacher should be aware of factors which cause conflicts on the play area		1	2	3	4	5
8. There is a possibility of developing a child's character during the playground activity. . . . .		1	2	3	4	5
9. A teacher should show interest in a child's play activity. . . . .		1	2	3	4	5



10. The playground supervisor should either organize or have the children organize the play program . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
11. All recess time should be organized by the teacher. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
12. The playground supervisor can maintain the play area as an orderly one by indirect supervision . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
13. All recess time should be directly organized and supervised by the teacher . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
14. Teachers need a periodic release from the supervisory schedule . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
15. Recess time should consist of both organized and supervised free play. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
16. Recesses and noons should be used primarily to provide a change from the restricted activity of the classroom . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
17. The classroom teacher should take some class time to prepare the children for their recess activity. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
18. Periodic releases from supervisory schedules should be used by the teachers for relaxation . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
19. A child is more often his natural self when he is playing . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
20. Some recesses should be used for directed play . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
21. Children prefer to be supervised during their noon and recess time . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
22. The public schools could do a better job of utilizing information gained while teachers are observing children's spare time activities . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
23. Play activities often reveal the child's interests and capacities. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5

24. Public schools realistically face the problem of providing education for leisure time . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
25. The elementary school has a greater opportunity to influence leisure time attitudes of the child than the secondary school . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
26. Facilities for developing hobbies should be provided during noon and recess time. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
27. The teacher should be in charge of the hobby development program. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
28. It would be a good practice to use upper grade students to help organize and supervise the playground activities of the primary grades . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
29. Interested upper grade students should be given instruction in primary play leadership . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
30. The opportunity for growth and development afforded the play leaders in taking responsibility for other youngsters would more than offset the loss of time from regular classes. 1 2 3 4 5
31. A faculty member should be on the playground even though student leaders are there. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
32. A teacher has the opportunity to gain valuable information about his students by observing them while on playground supervision . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
33. Cite an example of the above question.

B. Performance Scale. Please indicate the word (by number) that most nearly fits your school situation.

(Encircle the number)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Seldom	Usually	Nearly Always	Always

1. We have a director of physical education in our school system who helps teachers with physical education problems. (Check the box  if you do not have one.) 1 2 3 4 5
2. We have an adequate physical education program in our school for boys . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
3. We have an adequate physical education program in our school for girls. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
4. Our children apply the skills, knowledge and techniques learned in the physical education instructional period during the recess period . 1 2 3 4 5
5. We have a multi-purpose room or gym available for the children to play in. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
6. Recesses and noons are considered to be an integrated part of the physical education program in our school . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
7. Our recess periods are supervised by teachers . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
8. Our recess periods are used to provide a change from the restricted activities of the classroom. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
9. I have interest in the children's play activity. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5

- 10. In our recess time the teacher supervises free play activities . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 11. When I am the supervising teacher I organize the play activity. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 12. We have a rotating schedule so that teachers take turns at supervision. . .1 2 3 4 5
- 13. We have periodic releases from the supervisory schedule that can be used for relaxation. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 14. Our principal includes himself in the regular playground supervision schedule. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 15. Our principal helps on playground supervision outside the regular schedule. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 16. The men in our faculty take care of their share of the playground supervision . . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 17. The women in our faculty take care of their share of the playground supervision. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 18. Our school provides facilities for developing hobbies during recess periods . . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 19. I help children develop hobbies during recess time . . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 20. We have a training program for student play leaders. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 21. We use student play leaders to help in the primary grades. . . . .1 2 3 4 5
- 22. Feel free to make any comments concerning problems suggested in this questionnaire.

## APPENDIX B

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND SUPERINTENDENTS  
WHO AGREED WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

	Teach.	Prin.	Supt.
1. School personnel should assume responsibility for the safety and well being of the children . . . . .	95.2	93.3	100.
2. Play is a vital factor in helping a child learn to control and develop his physical and mental faculties. . . . .	98.7	100.	90.
3. Play activity helps take away the monotony of childhood. . . . .	74.8	80.	70.
4. Play develops the child's creativeness and sociability . . . . .	95.7	93.3	90.
5. Recesses and noons should be considered an integrated part of the physical education program. . . . .	46.7	66.7	80.
6. The play period should be used as a practice period in which skills, knowledge and techniques learned in the physical education instructional period are applied . . . . .	43.2	80.	60.
7. A teacher should be aware of factors which cause conflicts on the play area. . . . .	97.9	100.	90.
8. There is a possibility of developing a child's character during the playground activity. . . . .	93.5	100.	90.
9. A teacher should show interest in a child's play activity. . . . .	95.7	100.	90.
10. The playground supervisor should either organize or have the children organize the play program. . .	47.9	73.3	80.

	Teach.	Prin.	Supt.
11. All recess time should be organized by the teacher . . . .	5.4	20.	20.
12. The playground supervisor can maintain the play area as an orderly one by indirect supervision	76.3	53.4	20.
13. All recess time should be directly organized and supervised by the teacher . . . . .	10.7	20.	10.
14. Teachers need a periodic release from the supervisory schedule. .	93.	86.7	100.
15. Recess time should consist of both organized and supervised free play	73.6	86.7	90.
16. Recesses and noons should be used primarily to provide a change from the restricted activity of the classroom . . . . .	82.8	66.7	60.
17. The classroom teacher should take some class time to prepare the children for their recess activity	52.6	80.	70.
18. Periodic releases from supervisory schedules should be used by teachers for relaxation. . . . .	80.3	67.7	70.
19. A child is more often his natural self when he is playing. . . . .	84.1	100.	90.
20. Some recesses should be used for directed play. . . . .	70.1	93.3	80.
21. Children prefer to be supervised during their noon and recess time	28.5	53.3	60.
22. The public schools could do a better job of utilizing information gained while teachers observe children's spare time activities	48.9	86.7	70.

	Teach.	Prin.	Supt.
23. Play activities often reveal the child's interests and capacities	89.3	100.	100.
24. Public schools realistically face the problem of providing education for leisure time . . . . .	41.4	67.7	50.
25. The elementary school has a greater opportunity to influence leisure time attitudes of the child than the secondary school. . . . .	52.7	53.	50.
26. Facilities for developing hobbies should be provided during noon and recess time . . . . .	33.3	40.	70.
27. The teacher should be in charge of the hobby development program	21.5	26.7	70.
28. It would be a good practice to use upper grade students to help organize and supervise the playground activities of the primary grades. . . . .	50.	60.	50.
29. Interested upper grade students should be given instruction in primary play leadership . . . . .	63.8	66.7	50.
30. The opportunity for growth and development afforded the play leaders in taking responsibility for other youngsters would more than offset the loss of time from regular classes . . . . .	33.9	46.7	30.
31. A faculty member should be on the playground even though student leaders are there . . . . .	93.	93.4	50.
32. A teacher has the opportunity to gain valuable information about his students by observing them while on playground supervision .	89.8	93.3	100.

## APPENDIX C

## PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND SUPERINTENDENTS WHO INDICATED THEY PRACTICE THE QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

	Teach.	Prin.	Supt.
1. We have a director of physical education in our school system who helps teachers with physical education problems . . . . .	17.7	33.4	60.
2. We have an adequate physical education program in our school for boys	54.8	66.7	80.
3. We have an adequate physical education program in our school for girls	37.1	53.4	80.
4. Our children apply the skills, knowledge and technique learned in the physical education instructional period during the recess period . .	47.7	60.	70.
5. We have a multi-purpose room or gym available for the children to play in. . . . .	50.5	53.3	90.
6. Recesses and noons are considered to be an integrated part of the physical education program in our school. . . . .	39.2	26.7	70.
7. Our recess periods are supervised by teachers . . . . .	92.	93.3	80.
8. Our recess periods are used to provide a change from the restricted activities of the classroom . . . .	88.2	93.3	90.
9. I have an interest in the children's play activity . . . . .	90.2	93.3	90.
10. In our recess time the teacher supervises free play activities . .	79.5	93.3	90.
11. When I am the supervising teacher, I organize the play activity. . . .	31.2	53.3	40.



	Teach.	Prin.	Supt.
12. We have a rotating schedule so that teachers take turns at supervision . . . . .	86.	93.3	90.
13. We have periodic releases from the supervisory schedule that can be used for relaxation. . . . .	64.5	66.7	80.
14. Our principal includes himself in the regular playground supervision schedule. . . . .	31.2	46.6	60.
15. Our principal helps on playground supervision outside the regular schedule. . . . .	40.9	66.7	80.
16. The men in our faculty take care of their share of the playground supervision . . . . .	67.8	93.3	90.
17. The women in our faculty take care of their share of the playground supervision . . . . .	88.3	86.6	90.
18. Our school provides facilities for developing hobbies during recess period. . . . .	8.1	6.7	30.
19. I help children develop hobbies during recess time. . . . .	8.1	6.7	10.
20. We have a training program for student play leaders. . . . .	5.4	0.	10.
21. We use student play leaders to help in the primary grades. . . . .	7.	6.7	10.

The table above indicates that 17.7 per cent of the teachers, 33.4 per cent of the principals, and 60 per cent of the superintendents responded that they practice question No. 1.

## APPENDIX D

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS RESPONSES ON ATTITUDE TOWARD AND PRACTICE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

	Attitude	Practice
1. School personnel should assume responsibility for the safety and well being of children . . . . .	96.2	88.4
2. Play is a vital factor in helping a child learn to control and develop his physical and mental faculties . . . . .	96.2	48.3
3. Play activity helps take away the monotony of childhood . . . . .	74.9	48.3
4. Play develops the child's creativeness and sociability . . . . .	93.	48.3
5. Recesses and noons should be considered an integrated part of the physical education program. . . . .	64.5	45.3
6. The play period should be used as a practice period in which skills, knowledge and techniques learned in the physical education instructional period are applied . . . . .	32.	59.2
7. A teacher should be aware of factors which cause conflicts on the play area. . . . .	96.	89.4
8. There is a possibility of developing a child's character during the playground activity . . . . .	94.5	89.4
9. A teacher should show interest in a child's play activity . . . . .	95.2	91.2
10. The playground supervisor should either organize or have the children organize the play program. . . . .	67.1	50.

	Attitude Practice	
11. All recess time should be organized by the teacher . . . . .	15.	12.5
12. The playground supervisor can maintain the play area as an orderly one by indirect supervision. . . . .	26.6	87.6
13. All recess time should be directly organized and supervised by the teacher. . . . .	13.6	50.
14. Teachers need a periodic release from the supervisory schedule. . .	93.2	70.4
15. Recess time should consist of both organized and supervised free play	83.4	50.
16. Recesses and noons should be used primarily to provide a change from the restricted activity of the classroom. . . . .	69.8	90.5
17. The classroom teacher should take some class time to prepare the children for their recess activity. . . . .	67.5	
18. Periodic releases from supervisory schedules should be used by teachers for relaxation . . . . .	72.7	70.4
19. A child is more often his natural self when he is playing. . . . .	91.4	
20. Some recesses should be used for directed play. . . . .	81.1	12.5
21. Children prefer to be supervised during their noon and recess time.	20.4	
22. The public schools could do a better job of utilizing information gained while teachers observe children's spare time activities. . . . .	68.5	
23. Play activities often reveal the child's interests and capacities .	96.4	

	Attitude Practice	
24. Public schools realistically face the problem of providing education for leisure time . . . . .	53.	11.6
25. The elementary school has a greater opportunity to influence leisure time attitudes of the child than the secondary school . . . . .	51.9	11.6
26. Facilities for developing hobbies should be provided during noon and recess time. . . . .	21.6	14.9
27. The teacher should be in charge of the hobby development program. . .	13.6	8.3
28. It would be a good practice to use upper grade students to help organize and supervise the playground activities of the primary grades . . . .	53.	7.9
29. Interested upper grade students should be given instruction in primary play leadership. . . . .	60.	5.1
30. The opportunity for growth and development afforded the play leaders in taking responsibility for other youngsters would more than offset the loss of time from regular classes. . . . .	36.9	
31. A faculty member should be on the playground even though student leaders are there. . . . .	78.8	87.6
32. A teacher has the opportunity to gain valuable information about his students by observing them while on playground supervision . . . . .	94.4	

The table above indicates that 96.2 per cent of the elementary educators favor statement No. 1, and 88.4 per cent practice the statement.