



## Too Busy, Too Organised

There have been a number of articles in the news lately about children being too busy, too organised by parents with little time to feel bored or to entertain themselves. No doubt many of you have heard the term 'helicopter parenting' and, on the flip side, 'free range kids'. Whilst these may be the two extremes, I think it's fair to say that children now have less time to entertain themselves than they have had in the past. This also means a busy life for parents, racing from ballet to soccer, back to ballet, back to soccer and a quick trip to the shops because one child can't live another day at school without a pink highlighter!

Hovering too closely, doing too much, expecting to fight all of your child's battles – is a recipe for disaster, warn some experts. Andrew Fuller, author of *Tricky Kids: Transforming Conflict and Freeing Their Potential* (Finch Publishing, 2010), says all parents should bear the following in mind:

- Children learn competence and confidence by tackling some things on their own.
- There are some situations in which your child can cope without your help.
- Help is not always helpful. Sometimes it robs children of the opportunity to work out their own way of doing things.
- Rarely or never do anything for a child that he can do for himself. It's easy to keep feeding them with a spoon or dressing them, but the parents who encourage their child to do these tasks on their own are genuinely doing the best for their child.

I would be the first to say there is no black and white in parenting – only large grey areas! However it's a good idea to reflect on what you do. This is a very topical area at the moment and certainly one that impacts schools, so I think it is worth reading about and discussing.

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***'It is one thing to show your child the way, and a harder thing to then stand out of it' – Robert Brault***