

**'YOU CAN'T TOTALLY AVOID
ACCIDENTS. SO HOW HARD SHOULD
WE TRY?'**

A discursive reconsideration of safety in early childhood

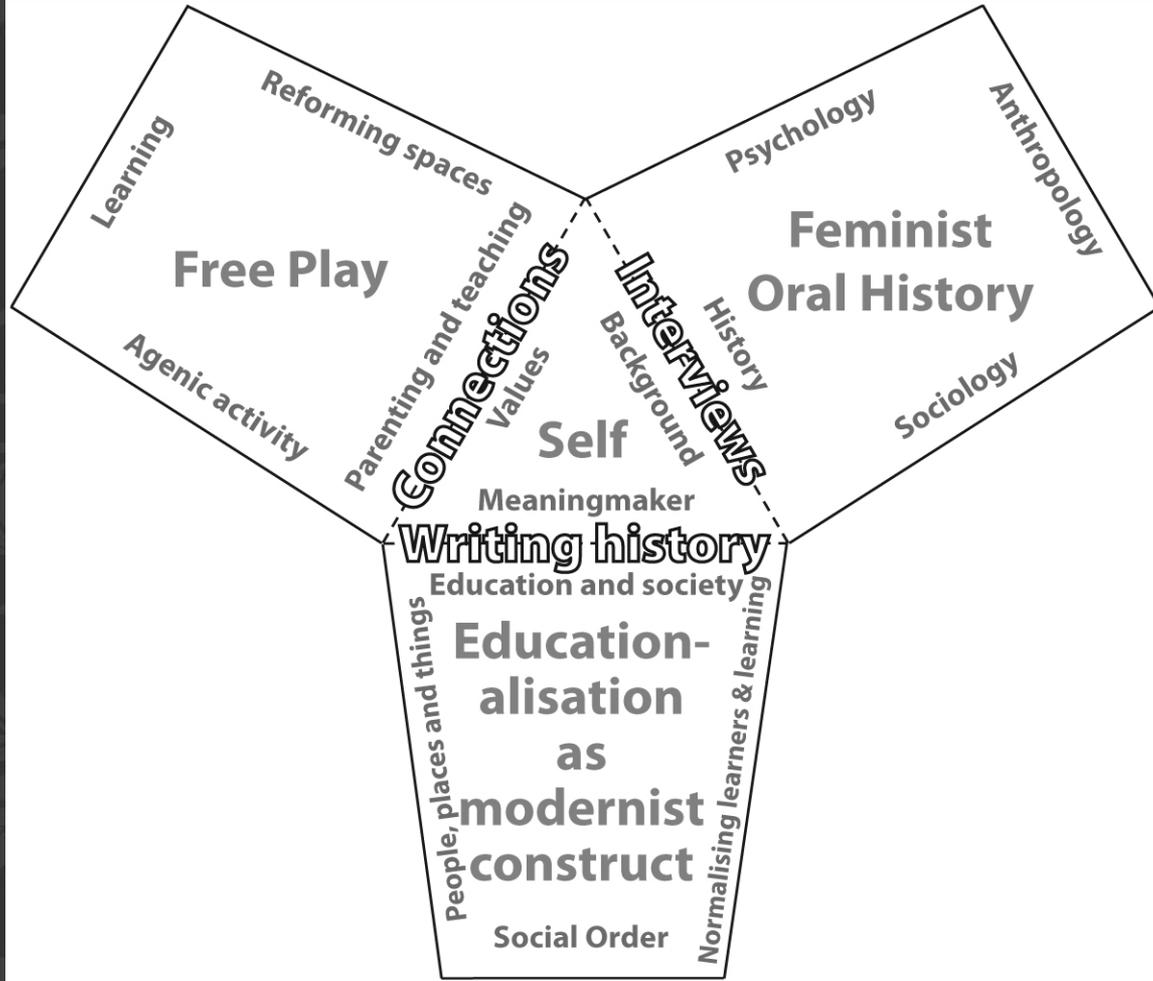
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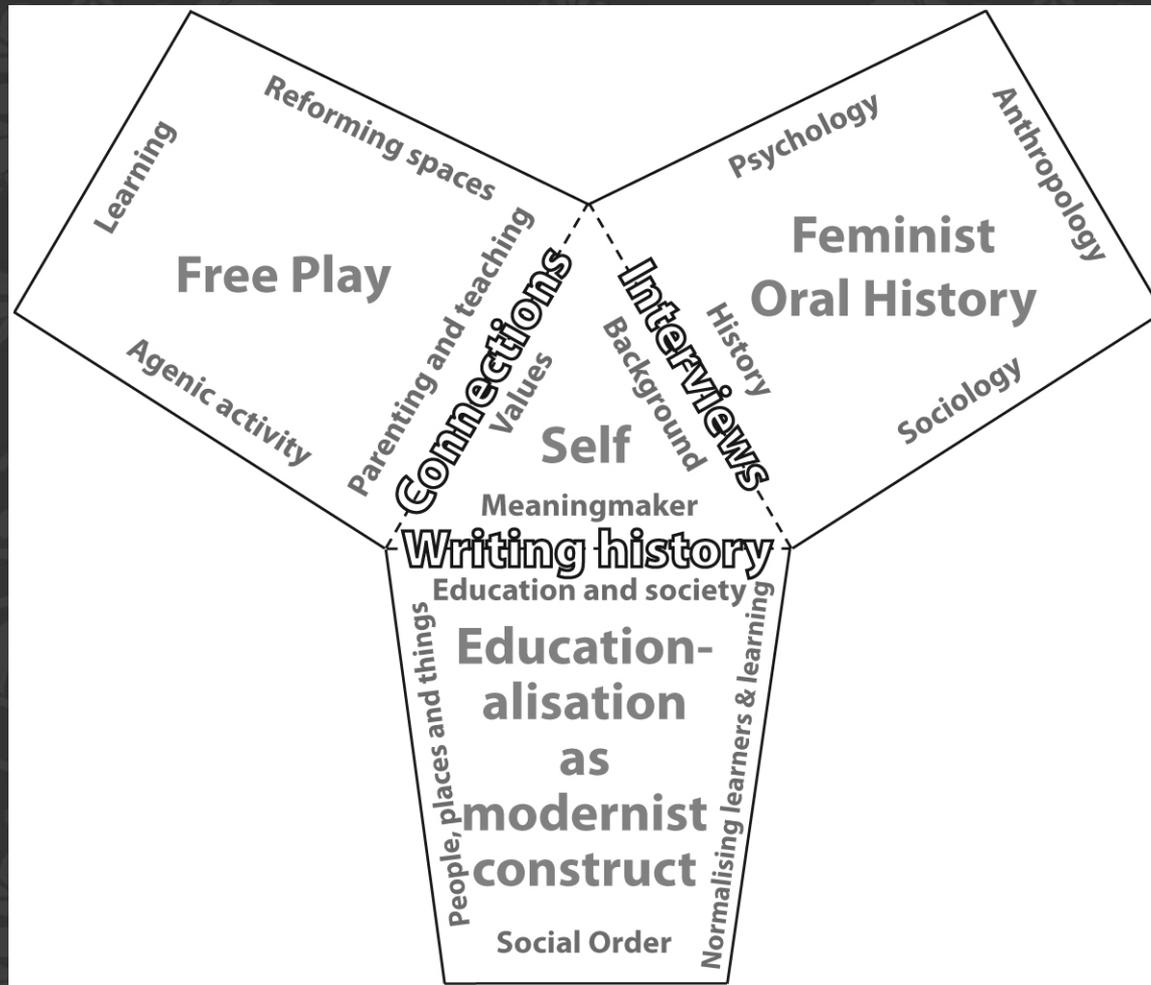
RESEARCH TOPIC

What is the history of the idea that ‘children learn through play’?

In New Zealand – this means

‘Free Play’





The bricolage is the art and knowledge of 'making do' (and making meaning) within a context. It contrasts with the global expert who can go anywhere and transfer their skills. It contrasts with the consumer who buys what they need, rather than 'making do'.

19 INTERVIEWS WITH 23 PEOPLE –
HISTORIC LEADERS

* Marie Bell
Lynda Boyd
Mary Alice Bramwell
Robbie Burke
Val Burns
Barbara Chapman
* Ailsa Densem
Trish Gargiulo
* Lex Grey
Pam Hanna
Pat Hubbard
Kahuwaeru Katene
Jo Kelly

Joan Kennett
Alison Leonard
Wendy Logan
Geraldine McDonald
Anne Meade
Noreen Moorhouse
Beverley Morris
Pat Penrose
Mary Purdy
Margaret Wollerman

THE PROCESS...

Prompting questions:

Why are you seen as an expert on play?

How has your understanding about play changed in your experience?

What did play mean in e.c. contexts that you experienced?

Taped, 'highlights' transcribed, returned to interviewee for comments and factual correction



WHAT THEY SAID.....



Carpentry in earlier days

WHY ARE CHILDREN KEPT
'SAFER'? ...WORKING THEORIES

Size of family

'all eggs in one basket'

Parental/cultural
experiences and values
align with low-risk activity

Parental anxiety

Interruption to family
routines/employment

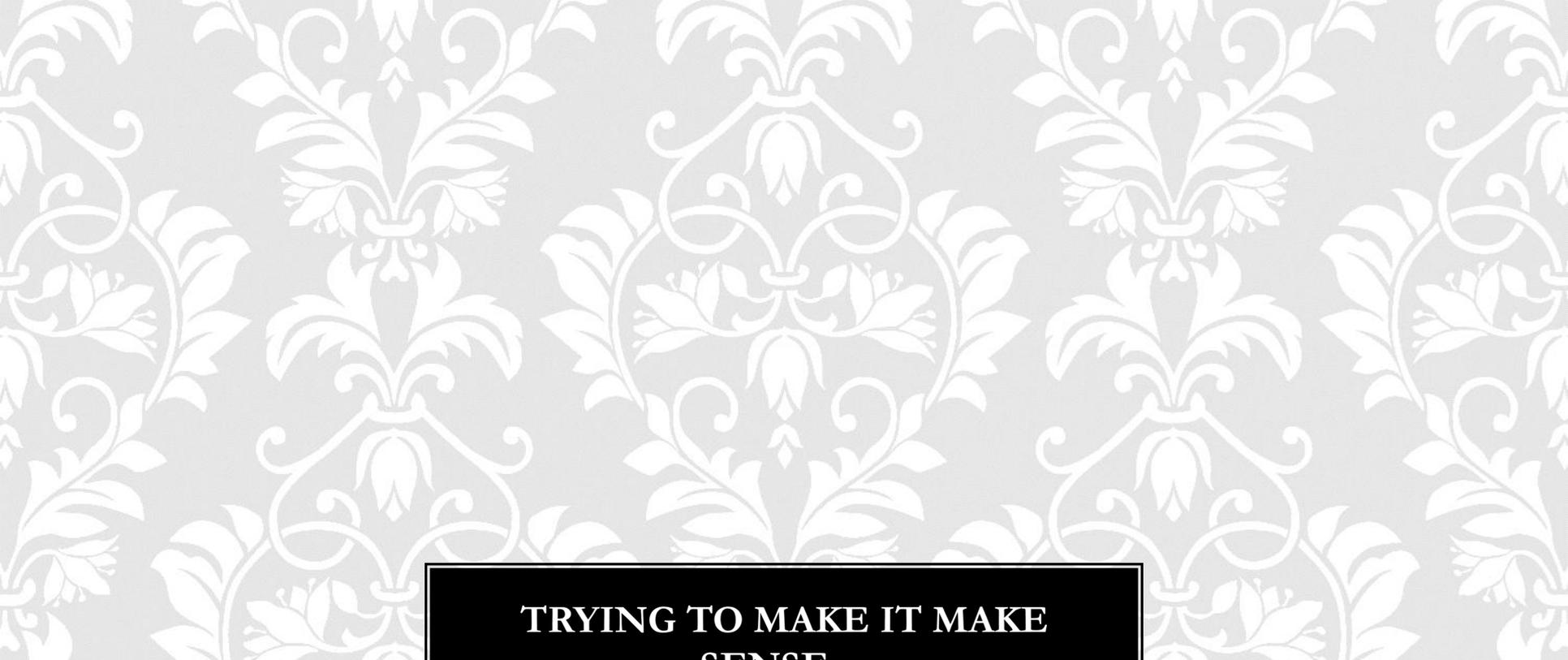
'It's the times.....'

Institutionalisation of
young children

EC teachers prioritise
safety over active play?

Fear of accusations of
neglect

Documentation of
accidents 'pathologises'
them



**TRYING TO MAKE IT MAKE
SENSE...**

**ECE AS SITE OF
'RESTLESS REFORM'**

What social and political goals does e.c.e. serve?

Perhaps constructions of 'safety' will reflect those goals?

SAFETY AND PLAY....

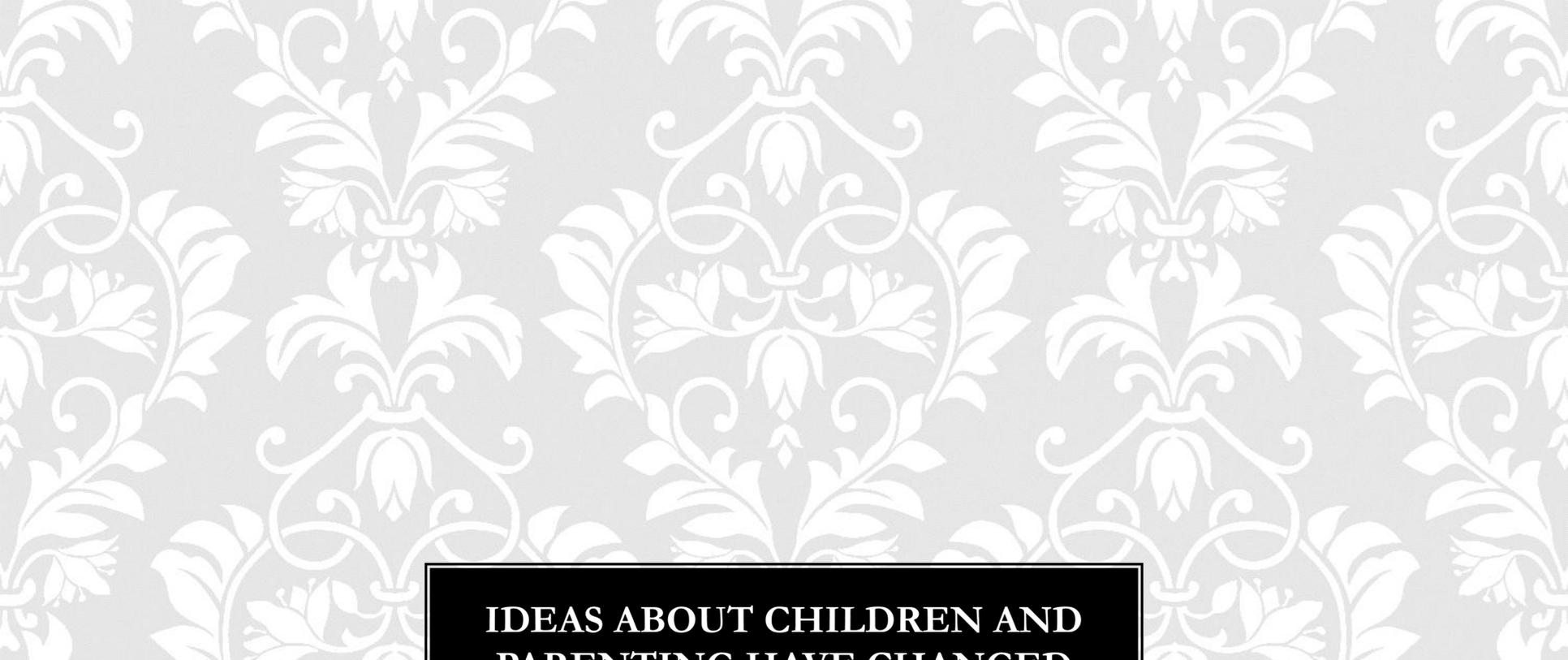
Both are imprecise constructs
requiring thoughtful interpretation
when used in professional contexts.

Definitions are problematic....

*Perhaps Safety and Play can be seen most
clearly in their opposites?*

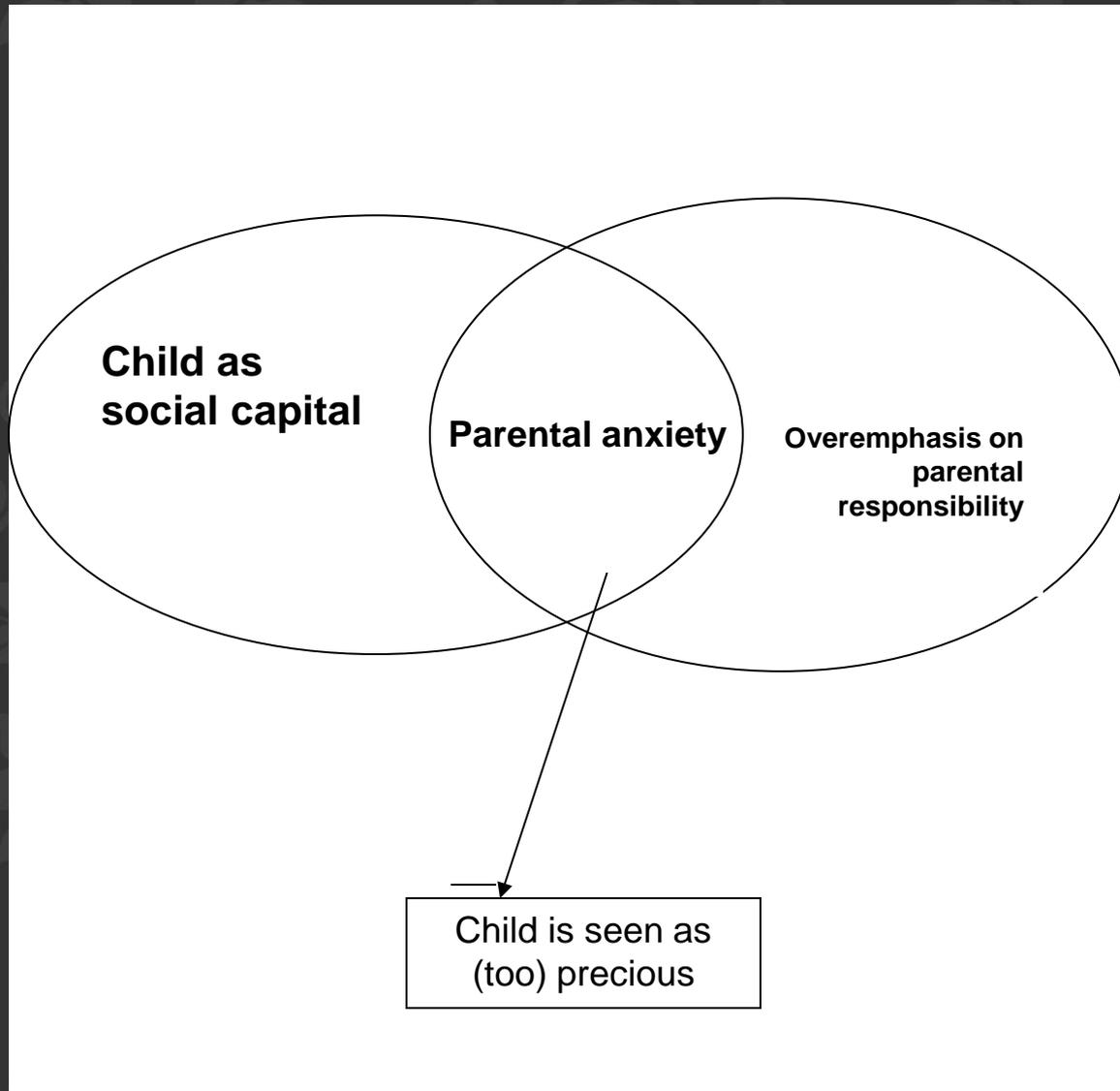
Both can be seen as ‘nodal’ * –
socially constructed and
open to playing a key part in reform
and governance agendas...
‘We can always do better...’

(* See Jo Ailwood, 2003)



**IDEAS ABOUT CHILDREN AND
PARENTING HAVE CHANGED**

Discourses – ‘regimes of truth’





Technologies of (observation
and) surveillance

(Neoliberal) systems of
accountability

Normalising of children in the care
of others



Technologies of (observation
and) surveillance

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accountability

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of others



See Louy, 2005 on
'containerised'
children

'You can't totally avoid accidents.
So how hard should we try?'



CAN WE COMPLICATE SAFETY?

Can we foreground Resilience as strongly as we foreground Safety?



SOME SOURCES

Ailwood, J. (2003). Governing early childhood education through play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 4(3), 286-299.

Louv,r. (1995). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from Nature Deficit Disorder*. London, UK: Atlantic.

Stover, S. (2003). *Good clean fun: New Zealand's Playcentre movement*. Auckland: Playcentre Publications.

Stover, S. (2011). *Play's progress: Locating play in the educationalisation of early childhood in Aotearoa New Zealand*. (PhD thesis). AUT University, Auckland.

Photos

From Microsoft Clip Art
Except for



From Stover, 2003.