

Childhood in Today's Political and Social Context

„Learning to Read in Kindergarten: Little to Gain and Much to Lose"

In the United States there is a catalog of literary competencies, the so-called Common Core State Standards (CCSS), listing what children at particular ages are required to be able to do. For kindergarten there are more than 90 "standard competencies" that small children are expected to master. These include the ability to read books alone and understand them. The Alliance for Childhood recently published a 12-page protest, citing the results of many research studies indicating that reading and writing standards for kindergarten are not developmentally appropriate. We include the statement, signed by Joan Almon among others [\(only in English\)](#).

European Ministers of Education Want to Foster and Limit Childhood Creativity at the Same Time

On May 21st, EU education ministers discussed a paper drafted by "experts" and passed it as a "recommendation" for member countries. This includes, on the one hand, the view long represented by Waldorf educators that creativity and free play in early childhood foster the development of important competencies for adulthood: adaptability and readiness to solve problems and to take initiative. On the other hand, it recommends that "digital competencies" be developed already in early childhood. One can surely ask what these two have to do with one another, since early and frequent screen consumption is well known to lead to passivity and poverty of imagination (for example the paper by Paula Bechmann, Gerald Hüther, Sally Goddard Blythe u.a.) You can read the full declaration of the Ministry Council [here](#). The concrete recommendations begin on Page 6 (only in English).

‘Child Development in Education Integrating Neuroscience with Education in Policy and Practice’

Sally Goddard Blythe belongs to those scientists who for some time now have been pointing out the importance of physical development and concrete sensory experience for later cognitive development. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the The Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology (INPP) a conference will take place on October 7th in London, addressing among other topics, "How physical development lays the foundations for learning success." [Registration information here](#) (EU education ministers should be warmly invited to attend).

The "Irish Times" published a lengthy article on June 2nd by Sally Goodard Blythe in which she writes, "We are losing the recognition of how important physical development is for anything else we want to happen later on." "[\(to the article\)](#)."