

# LET THE CHILDREN **PLAY**

**Australian College of Educators**

Epping, NSW, AUSTRALIA

28<sup>th</sup> October 2019

 [pasi\\_sahlberg](#)



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY



# MUSCULAR FITNESS

It's time for a jump start!



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS  
AUSTRALIA

## REPORT CARD 2018

Overall physical activity	D-
Physical activity in school	B
Active transportation	D+
Sedentary behaviours	D-
Family and peers	C+
School	B
Community & environment	A-
Government	D
Physical fitness	D+

2018 Report Card

on Physical Activity for Children and Young People

## HIGHLY WIRED

**94 per cent** of teenagers,  
**67 per cent** of primary children **36 per cent** of preschoolers have their own mobile screen-based device

**43 per cent** of young people report using their devices at bedtime

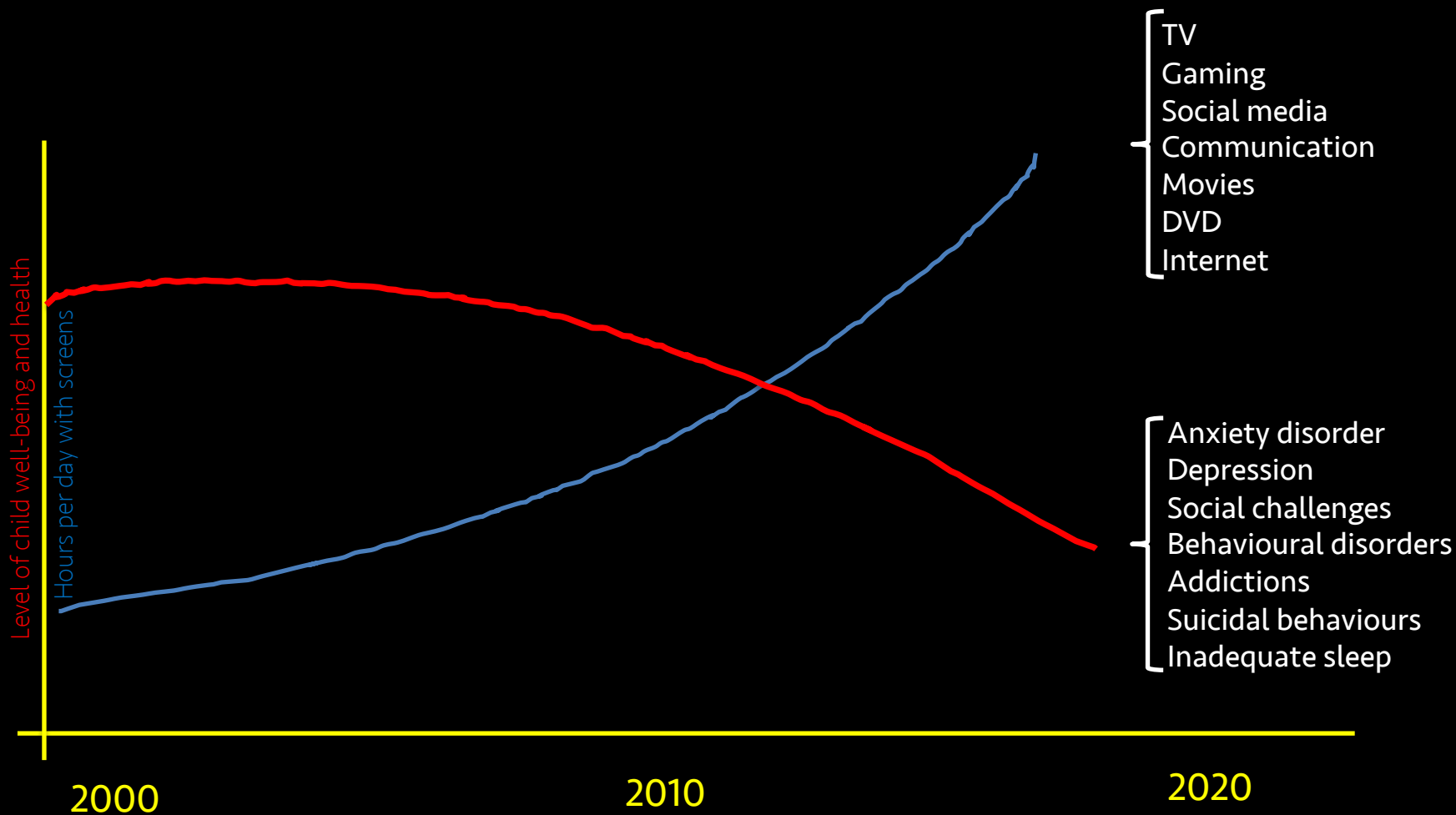
**85 per cent** of teenagers exceed the recommended two hours a day of screen time

Teenagers spend **44 hours** a week on average on screens (for educational, entertainment and communication purposes)

**A quarter** of children have sleep problems attributed to screen use

Source: RCH National Child Health Poll





# DISCONNECTING

Alberta teachers have observed dramatic changes in their student populations over the past three to five years.

## EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES



of teachers say that the number of students with emotional challenges has increased.



of teachers say that the number of students with social challenges has increased.

**85%**

of teachers say that the number of students who need behaviour support has increased.



“ Is a student’s increasing online presence decreasing real-world satisfaction and positive peer-to-peer interaction? ”

— Elementary school teacher

## MOOD DISORDERS

**3 out of 4** teachers say that the number of students with cognitive challenges has increased.



### STUDENT CHALLENGES

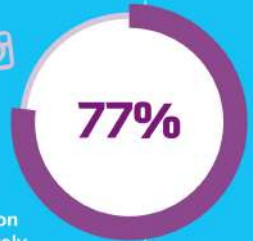
**ANXIETY DISORDER 85%**

**DEPRESSION 73%**

When Australians\* are asked about the affect of smartphones and social media...



think smartphones and social media have reduced time that children have for daily physical activity and active outdoor play.



say social media is a distraction in their child’s life that negatively impacts their wellbeing and family relationships.

\*1700 respondents nationwide





[Home](#)

[About us](#)

[People](#)

[Research](#)

[Professional Learning](#)

[Videos & Podcasts](#)

[In the Media](#)

[Events](#)

[Contact us](#)



# Welcome to the Gonski Institute for Education



UNSW  
SYDNEY



Gonski Institute  
for Education

[Get involved with our current research project 'Growing Up Digital' \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

Our core mission at the Gonski Institute for Education is to address inequity in Australian education

**The state of play**

A majority of parents believe that children are under pressure to grow up too quickly.

A majority of parents think children today spend less time playing compared to when they were young.



Parenting paradigms are shifting to overprotecting children from risk-taking.

Many parents believe that their children benefit more from structured activities as opposed to unstructured free play and outdoor activities.

United States: Only 13 states have laws that mandate recess time during the school day, and 8 has recommendations for physical activity in schools.

England: "Nurseries not preparing children for school", says Ofsted.

Mexico: Many parents don't want to pay for the time their children play in Early Childhood Centers.

Australia: "The word 'play' has become problematic in Australian schools."

*Source: Let the Children Play, 2019*

# LEGO Play Well Report 2018

**38%**

of parents say they don't feel they play enough



**30%**

of Families spend less than five hours playing together every week

**10%**

of Families spend less than two hours playing together every week

**61%**

of parents get distracted when they do play

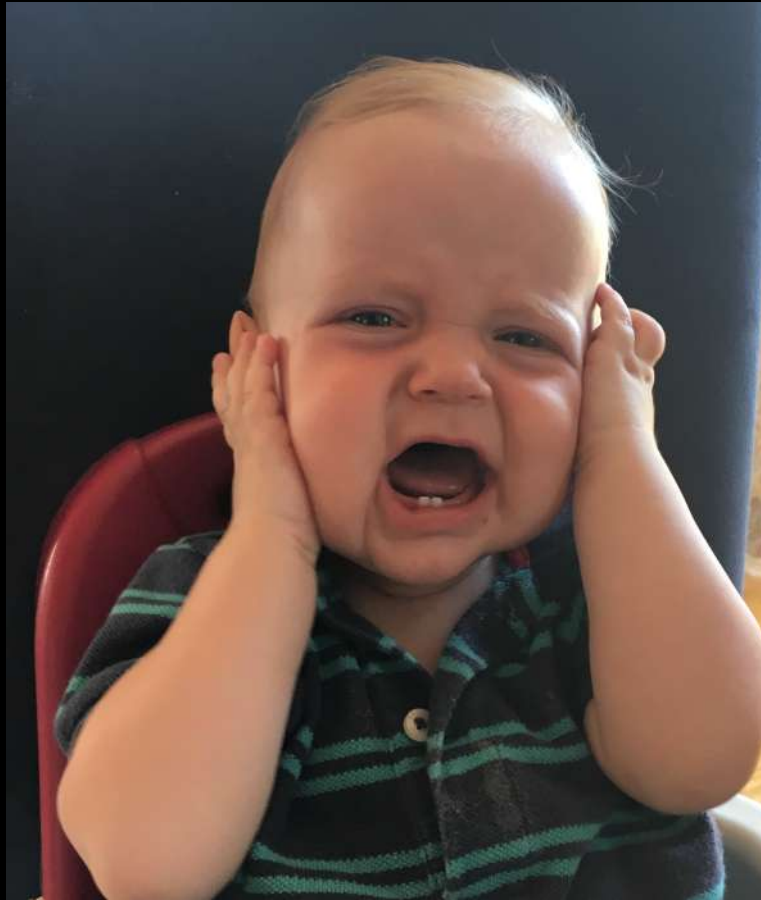


**1 in 5 (17%)**

children say they are too busy to play



**Doctor's order**



In Australia, 24.2 per cent of young people experienced mental distress, up from 18.7 per cent in 2012.

# DOCTOR'S ORDER: The Children Must Play

*“Play is integral to a child’s education. The importance of playtime for children cannot be overemphasized to parents, schools, and community organizations.”*



## Let the Children Play

HOW MORE PLAY WILL  
SAVE OUR SCHOOLS AND  
HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

PASI SAHLBERG & WILLIAM DOYLE

foreword by SIR KEN ROBINSON



# **WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION:** The Children Must Play



*“To grow up healthy, children need to sit less and play more.”*

# DOCTOR'S ORDER: The Children Must Play

*“Recess is fundamental to the school experience and develops lifelong skills of communication, negotiation, cooperation, sharing, and problem-solving.”*



## Let the Children Play

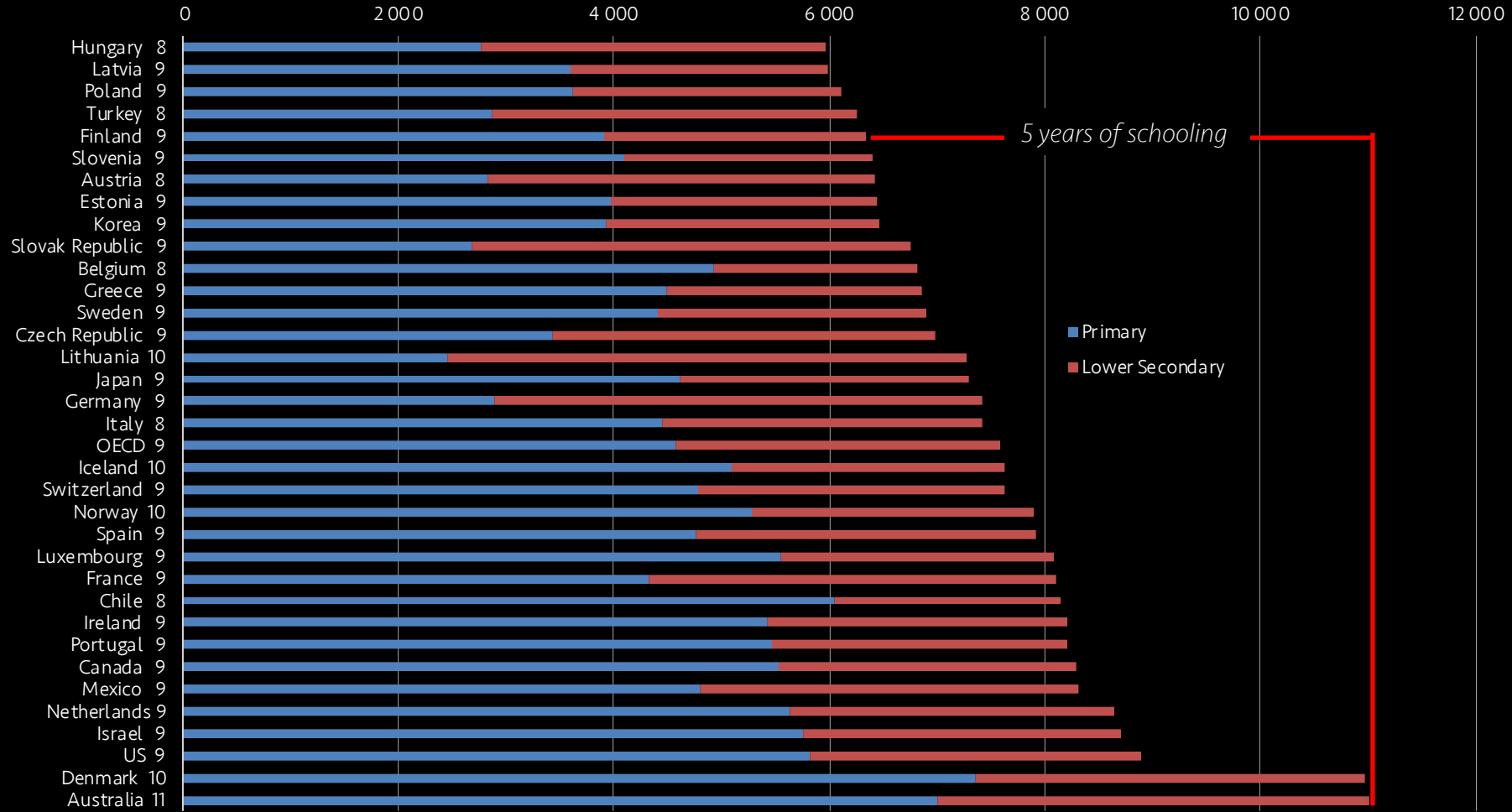
HOW MORE PLAY WILL  
SAVE OUR SCHOOLS AND  
HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

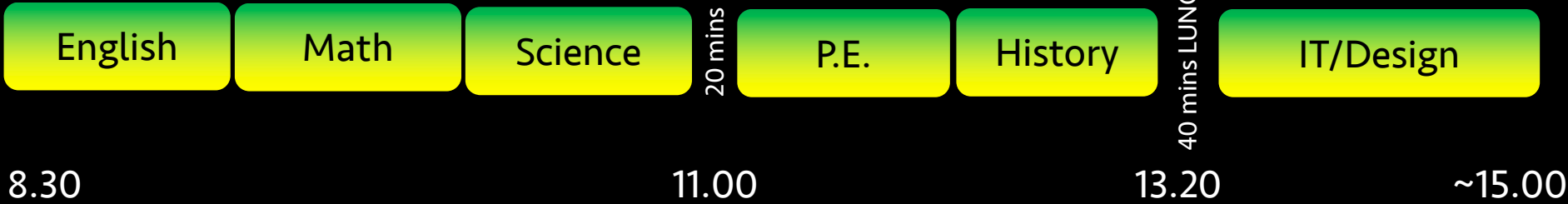
PASI SAHLBERG & WILLIAM DOYLE

foreword by SIR KEN ROBINSON

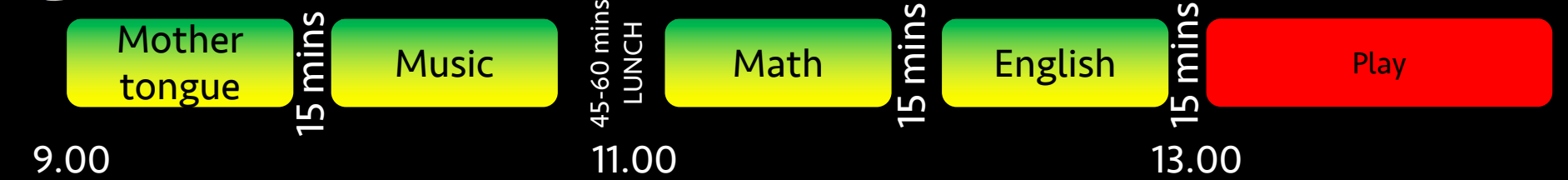
**Let the children play**

# Total number of compulsory instruction hours in primary and lower secondary schools

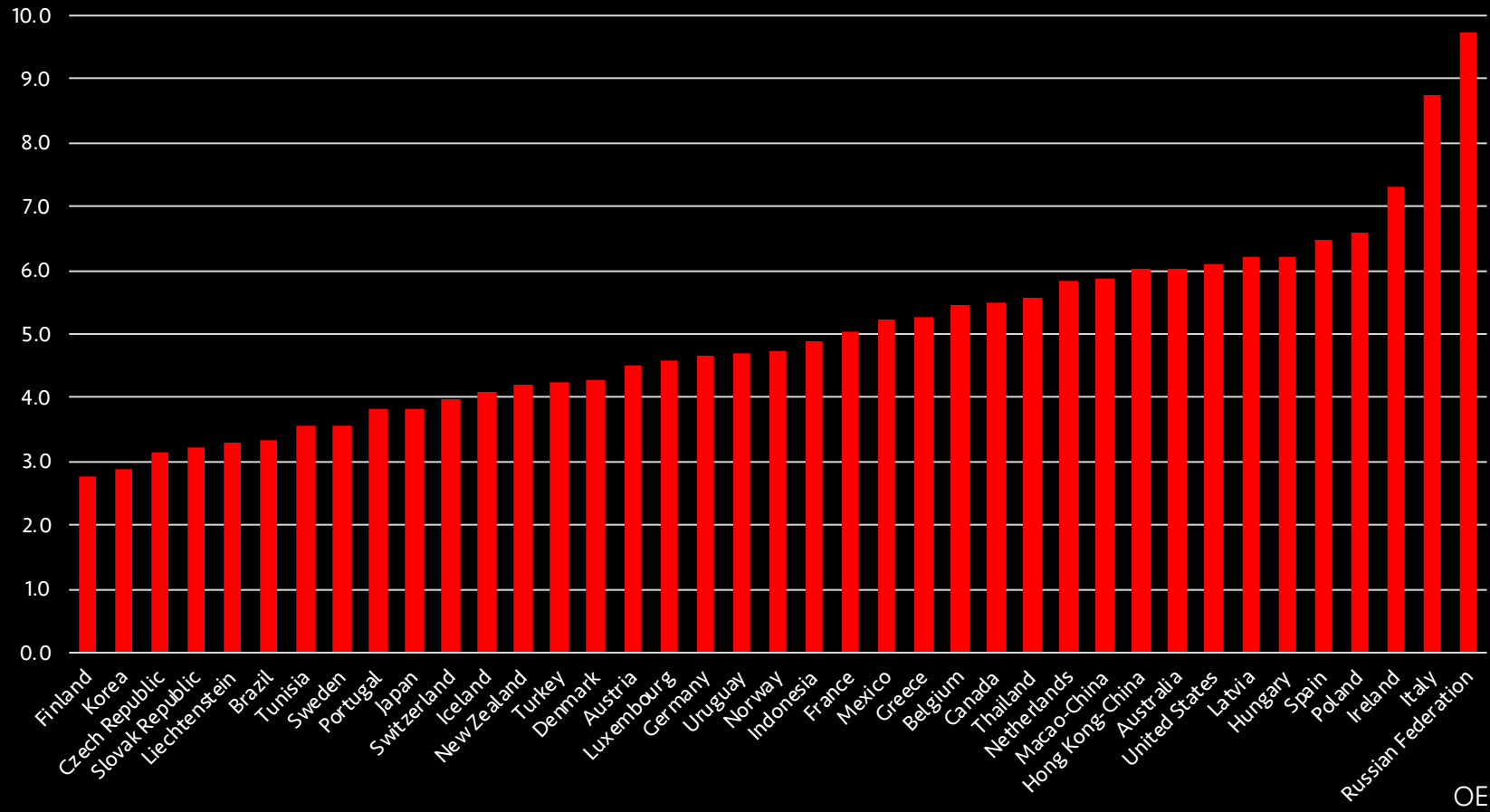




# A typical Year 1 and 2 primary school day



# Homework or other study set by teachers per week (hours)



# What should we do?

“Play is the cheapest and easiest way to help children to learn communication, problem-solving, negotiation, and empathy.”

**THANK YOU!**



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

