



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

ANNA VERSPOOR

BA (University of British Columbia, 2005)

**“What To Do? Mothers’ Accounts of their Children’s Discretionary
Time-Use”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Thursday, April 23, 2015

10:00am

Human and Social Development Building
Room A373

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Marie Hoskins, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Doug Magnusson, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Tim Black, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Alexandra Branzan Albu, Department of Electrical Engineering, UVic

Abstract

It is suggested in both academic literature and popular media that many children's opportunities for play, particularly in North America and during middle childhood are decreasing and that the consequences include negative impacts on social, emotional and physical well being. One of the explanations for the decline in play, particularly amongst middle and high socio-economic-status families is an increased participation in structured extracurricular programming. This qualitative study explores parental accounts in order to understand some of the underlying ideas that shape their decision-making. Semi-structured individual interviews conducted using questions generated from a background literature review are implemented with five mothers, four of whom are spoken with twice. A thematic analysis approach is used to analyze the data. Integrating further literature, the ensuing discussion focuses on how a culture of fear may be contributing to an uncontrollable busyness of both parents' and children's lives. Within the discussion of fear, protection, prevention and preparation are isolated as individual themes. Particular focus is given to the preparation mentality and the relationship with discourses of intensive mothering. This study contributes new information to the existing dialogue about changes in children's time-use, and provides insight into avenues for further qualitative research in the field.

Keywords: parents, school-age, discretionary time-use, qualitative, thematic analysis