

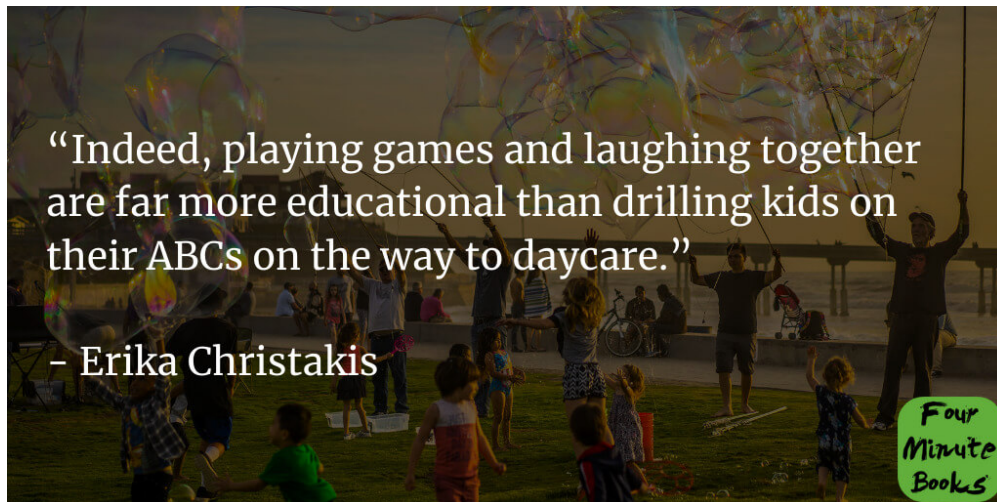
# The Importance Of Being Little Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The Importance Of Being Little* outlines the terrible inefficiencies of preschools, identifies how brilliantly curious the minds of kids are, and teaches ways to help them succeed through focusing more on principles like play and skill-development.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Sometimes I'll look at my toddlers playing in the yard and wish they were a little older so I could take them hiking. But then I have to remind myself that these years will go by faster than I think and that I should cherish every moment.

Before I know it, I'll be sending my oldest son off to college, echoing the words of Harry Chapin's in *Cat's In The Cradle* when he says "he'd grown up just like me."

When it comes to my kids' playful attitude I wonder how long it will last. I especially worry about how going to school is the biggest threat to their natural curiosities. Will they discover the joy of learning, or will it get smothered underneath useless facts?

This is especially important to me right now as my boy is starting preschool. I hope to preserve his wonder-filled mind, which is why I really enjoyed reading Erika Christakis's *The Importance of Being Little: What Young Children Really Need from Grownups*.

It's taught me the real risk that sending my kids to school poses for their development and what we all might do to mitigate it.

I learned a ton from this great book, and here are just 3 of my favorite lessons:

1. Preschools are made for the benefit of adults, not children.
2. To help kids learn most efficiently, we need to realize the importance of trust and play in teaching.
3. Skills are more crucial to a child's success than facts.

Let's get right to it and learn how we can help our little ones learn better!

## **Lesson 1: Children don't benefit from the current preschool system, which adults designed to benefit themselves.**

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If you were to walk into the boardroom of an office, what would you see? Everybody would be sitting down, quietly paying attention. When you go to the average school these days, you'll find the same thing.

This pattern might help parents but doesn't do much to benefit children. It makes sense that parents would see it as more of a daycare when you consider the worries they have for their kids.

As public health data becomes more accessible, it's easier for fathers and mothers to get anxious about safety. This meant that preschools became safer, which did help decrease accidental deaths of kids one to four by 57% between 1960 and 1990.

Although security has improved, parents still don't trust preschool, thinking of it as unsafe and ineffective. **These high expectations have made education methods focus more on lecturing than play, even though the latter is more productive.**

Direct instruction, as it's often called is completely passive. It assumes the students are objects that will learn by having a teacher simply tell them what they need to know. Because it doesn't engage children, it doesn't actually work.

A teacher might tell their students about days and months, for example, without even giving a thought to whether or not that's how they think. If they had, they'd learn that kids don't think in terms of months and years.

## **Lesson 2: A teacher must incorporate trust and play if they want to help students learn efficiently.**

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I don't remember much from when I was a 6-year-old. But I won't ever forget the way my first-grade teacher comforted me after I accidentally broke a mug on her desk. I also often remind myself about how much I trusted my fifth-grade teacher when she was helping me reach my full potential.

As I think back through my elementary school days, the experiences I remember the most always involved either some form of play or trust.

When it comes to play most people think of it as contradictory to learning. **But it's got a vital role in child development, including building memory and other essential cognitive functions.**

Animals even use recreation to improve their survival skills. Smarter mammals, like elephants and chimps, have fun more than other creatures. After all, learning comes easier through experience than anything else.

Trust is also crucial for students to develop a connection with their teachers. Forming a strong bond like this encourages positive learning experiences and helps young people improve.

A teacher might, for instance, ask the class to work together to find the solution to a question, possibly even one that one of them asked. They could then let the kids lead and remind them of what they've learned before that might help.

Remember, engagement always comes first.

### **Lesson 3: Useless facts don't do as much for children's success as skills.**

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You're probably reading the title of this lesson and thinking back to all of those boring classes you hated. I know because it's exactly what I did when learning this from the book!

We all get frustrated with the inefficiencies of our school system. But if we just stopped there and made changes based on this, we'd miss the whole point. The real needs we must try to meet with education are those of the kids.

First, this means being more intentional about what and how we teach. It's time to set goals to refocus on children's personal development, visualize how to get there, then make it happen.

At the core of these much-needed improvements would be removing the parts of curriculum that focus on useless facts and replacing them with skills. This would equip young people with everything they need to succeed throughout school and life.

Consider how a child could use problem-solving and communication skills while working on a group project in class and during family time. **A kindergartner that learns these same skills will also help them perform better in the later years of school.**

It will take time and money to make these changes, but the investment in our children and our future is worth it.

### **The Importance Of Being Little Review**

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*The Importance Of Being Little* is starting to make the idea of homeschooling my kids sound even better! It's a shame that our society can't seem to figure this learning thing out. Add this to the growing list of books that identify how broken our education system is!

## **Who would I recommend *The Importance Of Being Little* summary to?**

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The 60-year-old who thinks that the government's most important job is anything other than education, the 31-year-old parent of a kid who is about to go into preschool, and anyone with the power to reform the awful public schooling system.