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## Children's lives more 'scholarised'

Children's lives are becoming increasingly "scholarised" as parents come under pressure to turn the home into an extension of school, a major report on primary education has found. Children's lives are becoming increasingly "scholarised" as parents come under pressure to turn the home into an extension of school, a major report on primary education has found.

Teachers have cut back on play-times and ministers want children to spend more time at after-school and breakfast clubs, doing their homework or taking part in sport or drama.

The study, published by Cambridge University, warned that children were likely to fight such attempts by adults to control their activities "at all times" - even during their free time at home. The research by Berry Mayall, from London's Institute of Education, forms part of the Cambridge-based Primary Review, the biggest inquiry into primary education for decades.

The report said: "English children attend school for six hours a day and are also asked to do homework for school, even in the first years of primary schooling. Children's time outside formal schooling is increasingly spent under adult supervision in environments which can be described as 'more school'.

"Thus in order to facilitate mothers' paid work, more children now spend time in 'breakfast clubs' and in after-school care centres. This expansion can be understood as part of a general move to ensure that children are supervised by adults at all times; and that their activities are controlled by adults.

"Parents have an important function in helping their children to have some free time."

The report followed repeated calls from ministers for parents to take a greater interest in their children's education.

Schools Secretary Ed Balls recently suggested that all parents should spend 10 minutes a day reading stories to their children, and buy more books as Christmas presents.

A separate report from the Primary Review reinforced evidence of concerns over the pressure placed on children by national curriculum "Sats" tests in maths, English and science. The study, by Carol Robinson from Sussex University and Michael Fielding from the Institute of Education, found pupils themselves were worried about how little they were learning.

The researchers said: "Pupils find themselves under considerable pressure to perform well in the national tests."

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