Not Much Time to Play

Ana Contreras

BEFORE YOU READ: As a child, did you spend more time playing or doing chores? How was it different for the girls and boys in your family?

I do not have much to say about playing. When I was a child, I did not have time to play. I was the fourth child and the first daughter, so I had to help my mother. I remember I was too little to reach the stove, I stood on a box to make tortillas.

Sometimes I played with my friend in the afternoon. Her name was Roxana. We used plastic bags to make our own “homes.” We cooked food in cans over rocks with a real fire. However, we only played for a short time. My mother was waiting for me to clean and cook.

In school, we played soccer with the boys. Playing soccer was so fun because I lived in a small town, and I did not have much freedom.

My brothers helped my mother too. They grew the beans and corn. They worked hard too.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. Ana had three older brothers. She was the first daughter. Why is that significant in this story?
2. What did Ana play with her friend Roxana?
3. Why was recess at school so important to her?
4. Her brothers worked too. What did they do? What can you infer about what was different for boys and girls growing up in El Salvador?
5. Read all or part of the box on the next page. Say the main idea.
7. Write about your own experience doing chores and playing as a child.
NEW YORK, 7 October, 2016 – Girls between 5 and 14 years old spend 40 percent more time, or 160 million more hours a day, on unpaid household chores and collecting water and firewood compared to boys their age, according to a report released by UNICEF ahead of International Day of the Girl on 11 October.

“Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls: Taking stock and looking ahead to 2030” includes the first global estimates on the time girls spend doing household chores such as cooking, cleaning, caring for family members and collecting water and firewood.

The data show that the disproportionate burden of domestic work begins early, with girls between 5 and 9 years old spending 30 percent more time, or 40 million more hours a day, on household chores than boys their age. The disparities grow as girls get older, with 10 to 14 year olds spending 50 percent more time, or 120 million more hours each day.


After you read: According to the article, girls spend more time than boys doing chores. What are the various ways this might affect their lives in the short- and long-term?