



Sorry kids, we've cancelled childhood: Exploring risk, play and the safety creep

ACIP 2018 Injury Prevention Conference
June 13, 2018 | St. John's Newfoundland



Agenda

1. Introduce concept of “safety creep”
2. Look at the language of risk
3. Explore tools for balanced conversations

Students
hallway
speed
is 1 km/h
please walk.
MacLeod's
Landing





Safety Creep:

The notion that increased societal expectations for surplus safety in children's recreation have advanced subtly, gradually, and beyond a point justified by available data.

Noticeable movement in safety creep can be triggered by single events and is, by its nature and application, incompatible with healthy child development.



! DANGER



**Toxic
Hazard**



Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning
Volume 13, 2013 - Issue 3: Outdoor play and learning in early childhood from different cultural perspectives

3899 Views
18 CrossRef citations
19 Mentions

ARTICLE
Everyday uncertainties: reframing perceptions of risk in outdoor free play
Arita Nelson Nishues, Arita Bundy, Alex Broom, Paul Tranter, Jo Ragen & Lina Engelen
Pages 224-237 | Published online 10 Jun 2013
Download citation | <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729675.2013.798588>

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Abstract
This paper reports the results of risk reframing, an intervention to offer parents and educators a context for building new and complex perceptions of risk in children's outdoor free play. Our objective was to alter these adults' perceptions of risk to increase the sustainability of an innovative child-centred playground intervention. Qualitative data in the form of audio-recordings of risk reframing sessions, brief participant evaluations and field notes kept by project staff were collected and either transcribed in their entirety or summarised in brief written reports. These data were subjected to constant comparative analysis to identify emergent themes. Results suggest that educators and parents benefit from opportunities to share risk perceptions and discuss the costs and benefits for offering outdoor free play to children to achieve their common goals for children: health, happiness and resilience.

Keywords: Play, Risk, Reframing, Children, Parents

People also
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“Results suggest that educators and parents benefit from opportunities to share risk perceptions and discuss the costs and benefits for offering outdoor free play to children to achieve their common goals for children: health, happiness and resilience.”



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

 **Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience** 

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/dcn

Review

Beyond stereotypes of adolescent risk taking: Placing the adolescent brain in developmental context[☆] 

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ARTICLE INFO

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ABSTRACT

Recent neuroscience models of adolescent brain development attribute the morbidity and mortality of this period to structural and functional imbalances between more fully developed limbic regions that subserve reward and emotion as opposed to those that enable cognitive control. We challenge this interpretation of adolescent development by distinguishing risk-taking that peaks during adolescence (sensation seeking and impulsive action) from risk taking that declines monotonically from childhood to adulthood (impulsive choice and other decisions under known risk). Sensation seeking is primarily motivated by exploration of the environment under ambiguous risk contexts, while impulsive action, which is likely to be maladaptive, is more characteristic of a subset of youth with weak control over limbic motivation. Risk taking that declines monotonically from childhood to adulthood occurs primarily under conditions of known risks and reflects increases in executive function as well as aversion to risk based on increases in gut-based reasoning. We propose an alternative Lifespan Wisdom Model that highlights the importance of experience gained through exploration during adolescence. We propose, therefore, that brain models that recognize the adaptive roles that cognition and experience play during adolescence provide a more complete and helpful picture of this period of development.

“Experience gained during risk taking can lead to more adaptive decision making over the long term.”



Traditional definition of Risk:

/risk/

noun

a situation involving exposure to danger.

verb

expose (someone or something valued) to danger, harm, or loss.

Synonyms: endanger, imperil, jeopardize, hazard, gamble, chance;



Suggested Definition:

Risk is a neutral construct that describes the variation between the expected and unexpected outcome in the context of behaviours or decisions.

Risk can be experienced along a spectrum that ranges from positive to negative outcomes, the perception of which is subject to personal interpretation.



Risk is now neutral

- Risk is separate from the outcome
- Risk describes a variation spread that can be bigger with few controls (less desirable), or smaller with more controls (more desirable):

Risk with fewer controls

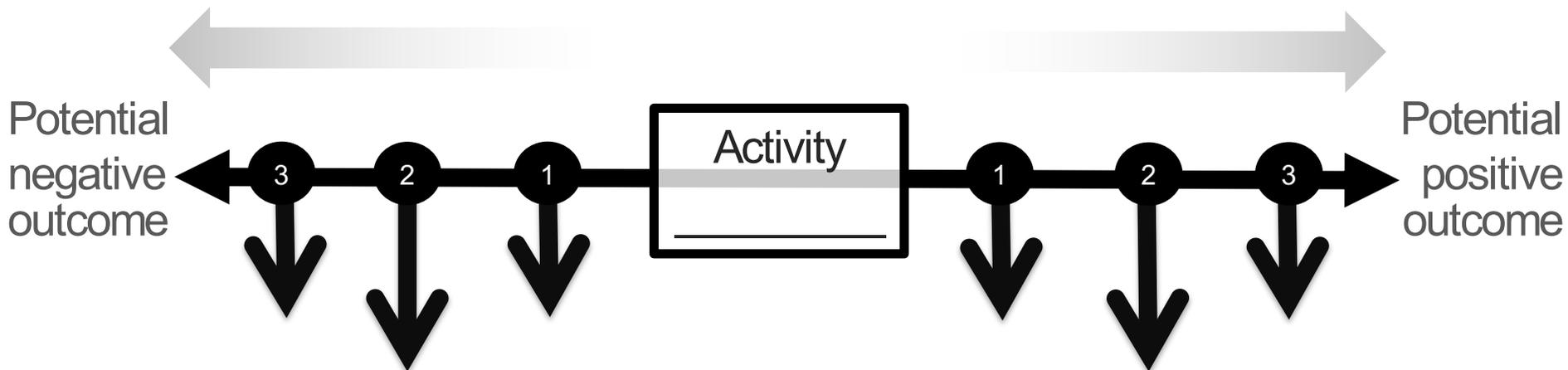
Risk with
more controls



Risk is experienced along a spectrum

- The spectrum of outcomes is separate from risk
- Outcomes can be negative or positive





1

2

3

MITIGATE

1

2

3

ACCENTUATE

OUTSIDEPLAY.ca

Take a risk, go play outside!

An online tool to help parents and caregivers gain the confidence to allow their kids to engage in more outdoor play.



Click to watch video!



BC INJURY research and prevention unit





Overview of Risk-Benefit Assessment

Project/ proposal name:			
Type of assessment (tick one box):	<i>Designer</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>Provider/manager</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>Post-installation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>Monitoring</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessor:	<i>Name</i>		
	<i>Position</i>		
	<i>Date</i>		
Description and location of facility, feature, activity or equipment			
Date to review risk-benefit assessment:			
Signature of senior worker/manager:			

Main Form: Risk-benefit assessment

Benefits:	
Risks (<i>taking into account any technical information identified in the supplementary form below</i>):	
Local factors:	
Precedents &/or comparisons:	
Decision:	
Actions taken:	
Ongoing management and monitoring:	

Source: Ball, Gill and Spiegall on behalf of the Play Safety Forum, 2014



Next steps...

1. Identify safety creep by recognizing and challenging the bias.
2. Reframe risk as an essential element of healthy child development.
3. Redefine what injury means in the context injury prevention and through the lens of healthy child development.



Thank you!

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Resources:

1. **Risky Play** - Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter
Link: <https://ellenbeatehansensandseter.com>
2. **Rethinking Childhood** – Tim Gill
Link: <https://rethinkingchildhood.com>
3. **Managing risk in play provision: A position statement** - Play Safety Forum, UK
Link: <http://www.playenland.org.uk/media/120462/managing-risk-play-safety-forum.pdf>
4. **Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide** - David Ball, Tim Gill and Bernard Spiegel
Link: <http://www.playenland.org.uk/media/172644/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>
5. **Risk-Benefit Assessment Form** - David Ball, Tim Gill and Bernard Spiegel
Link: <http://www.playenland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/psf-risk-benefit-assessment-form-worked-example.pdf>
6. **Position on Active Outdoor Play**
Link: https://www.participaction.com/sites/default/files/downloads/Participaction-PositionStatement-ActiveOutdoorPlay_U.pdf

Resources:

7. **What Is the Relationship between Outdoor Time and Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Physical Fitness in Children? A Systematic Review.**

Link:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=What+Is+the+Relationship+between+Outdoor+Time+and+Physical+Activity%2C+Sedentary+Behaviour%2C+and+Physical+Fitness+in+Children%3F+A+Systematic+Review>

8. **Play Safe**, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Link:

www.playsafeinitiative.ca

9. **Parents' Perceptions of Risk and the Influence on Children's Everyday Activities**

Link: <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=5a79ffc6-11f1-4020-ac7b-ebe564539f3a%40sessionmar4009>