Outdoor play & risk: Essential for healthy child development

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Outline:

What, Why and How of Outdoor Play & Risk

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- How do we support it?
What was your childhood like?
Why outdoor play?
Benefits of Outdoor & Risky Play

Play is the engine of optimal child development

Brussoni (2019) Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development
Risk Management Skills: Keeping kids safe means letting them take risks

Brussoni et al (2012) IJERPH, 9, 3134-3148
What happened to play?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>1981 N=1485</th>
<th>2009 N=558</th>
<th>2012 N=577</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play areas</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green spaces</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports grounds</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shops</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Swimming, pool/bathing place</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table 27, Björklid and Gummesson, 2013

Table 9: Percentage of parents granting 7- to 9-year-old children licence to go to different activities, Sweden.

What are we afraid of?

We didn't want our precious Benjamin to get hurt, so we got him a stunt double.
Stranger Danger

Risk of abduction by a stranger in Canada: $\approx 1:14,000,000$

Dalley & Ruscoe, 2003

Leave child unattended for 200,000 years

Warwick Cairns

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Canadian mortality rates for all unintentional injuries, ages 0-19 years (1950-2009)

Richmond et al., 2016, CJPH, 107(4-5), e431-7
### Table 1. Percentage change in the number of deaths in children under 15 years of age by injury mechanism in 2000 and 2015 for WHO European region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All injuries</td>
<td>V01–Y89 (minus X41–X42, X44, X45)</td>
<td>34,603</td>
<td>20.12</td>
<td>18,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintentional injuries</td>
<td>V01–X40, X43, X46–59, Y40–Y86, Y88, Y89</td>
<td>30,632</td>
<td>17.81</td>
<td>16,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road injury</td>
<td>V01–V04, V06, V09–V80, V87, V89, V99</td>
<td>6411</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poisonings</td>
<td>X40, X43, X46–48, X49</td>
<td>1752</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>W00–W19</td>
<td>2480</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire, heat, and hot substances</td>
<td>X00–X19</td>
<td>3273</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drowning</td>
<td>W65–W74</td>
<td>7949</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to mechanical forces</td>
<td>W20–W38, W40–W43, W45, W46, W49–W52, W75, W76</td>
<td>2507</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disasters</td>
<td>X30–X39</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional injuries</td>
<td>X60–Y09, Y35–Y36, Y870, Y871</td>
<td>3971</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-harm</td>
<td>X60–X84, Y870</td>
<td>1688</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal violence</td>
<td>X85–Y09, Y871</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective violence and legal intervention</td>
<td>Y35–Y36</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sethi et al. (2017). IJERPH, 14, 1128
Child injury mortality rate, 2008

CDC, Vital Signs, 2012
Injury by Exposure Time

Systematic review
Medically treated injuries, ages 6-12 years:
• Active commuting
• Sports participation
• Leisure time (recreation, play)
Injury by Exposure Time

Systematic review
Medically treated injuries, ages 6-12 years:

- Active commuting: $0.15-0.52/1000$ hours
- Sports participation: $0.20-0.67/1000$ hours
- Leisure time: $0.15-0.17/1000$ hours

Nauta et al., 2014, Sports Medicine

A child would need to play 3 hours/day for $\approx 10$ years.
“In fear that death can take away our child, we take the child away from life…”

Janusz Korczak

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How do we bring back play?
Outdoor Play Supportive Environments

Photo: Mi Pham
Why play is important for kids

Why play is important for all of us

Why we are important for play!
What’s your WHY?
Thank you!

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