

Perceived Risk of Unstructured Physical Activities for Children: Do our Fears Reflect Reality?

Ian Janssen, PhD

School of Kinesiology & Health Studies,
Department of Public Health Sciences,
Queen's University
Kingston, ON



Science Officer Spock

Think with our brain not our heart



We tend to amplify risks for things that are....



imposed by other people
sources that are unfamiliar
less personal control/
less common

**Children are put at risk
if their life is made too safe**



Active outdoor play, and its risks, is a necessity for children



Physical Activity Influences Health



weight and fat
cardiovascular risk factors
diabetes risk factors
mental health problems

Additional Benefits of Outdoor Active Play



resilience

conflict resolution

socialization with neighbours

connection with nature

9 IN 10

**children don't get enough
physical activity
for health benefits**

Children should accumulate

**60 MINUTES
DAILY**

**of moderate-to-vigorous
physical activity**

Meeting the 60 minute/day Guideline



- 3 hours of organized sport
- 8 hours of physed or 2 hours of D.P.A.
- 1 hour of brisk walking
- 3 hours of active play
- An equivalent combination of the above

Meeting the 60 minute/day Guideline



20 min D.P.A.

15 min walk

50 min hockey

60 min active play

= 60 min MVPA

Active play is needed to meet physical activity targets!

Meeting the 60 minute/day Guideline



**60 min dance class
120 min active play** = **60 min MVPA**

Active play is needed to meet physical activity targets!



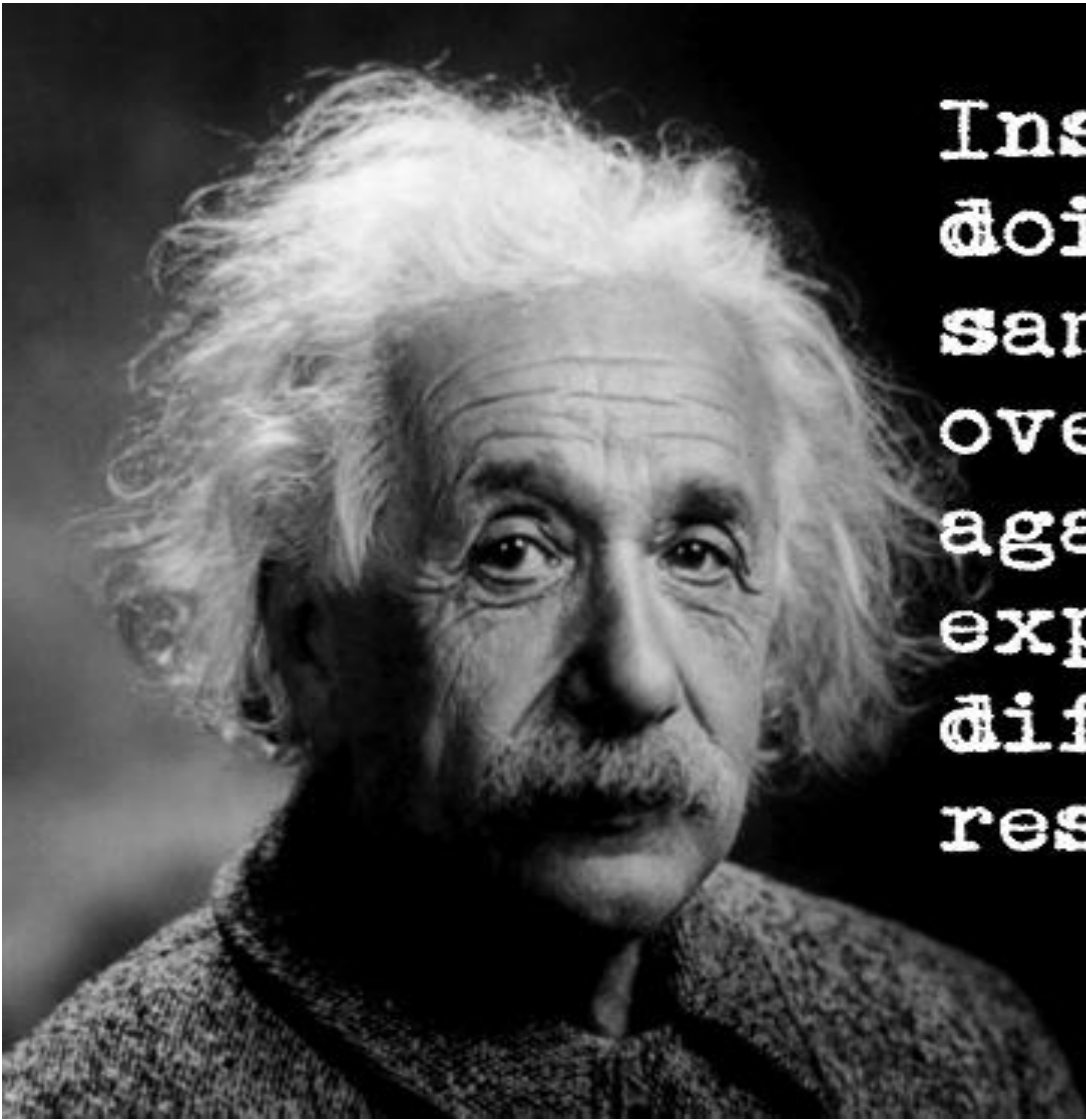
Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

D-

The overall grade in the Report Card.

Physical Activity Domain	Report Card Grade, 2012-2015
Organized sport	B
Physed & D.P.A.	C
Active transportation	D
Active play	F or Inc.

Physical Activity Domain	Ranking for Investments and Attention
Organized sport	1
Physed & D.P.A.	2
Active transportation	3
Active play	4

A black and white portrait of Albert Einstein, showing his characteristic wild, white hair and mustache. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

Insanity:
doing the
same thing
over and over
again and
expecting
different
results.

- Albert Einstein

What are the barriers to active outdoor play?



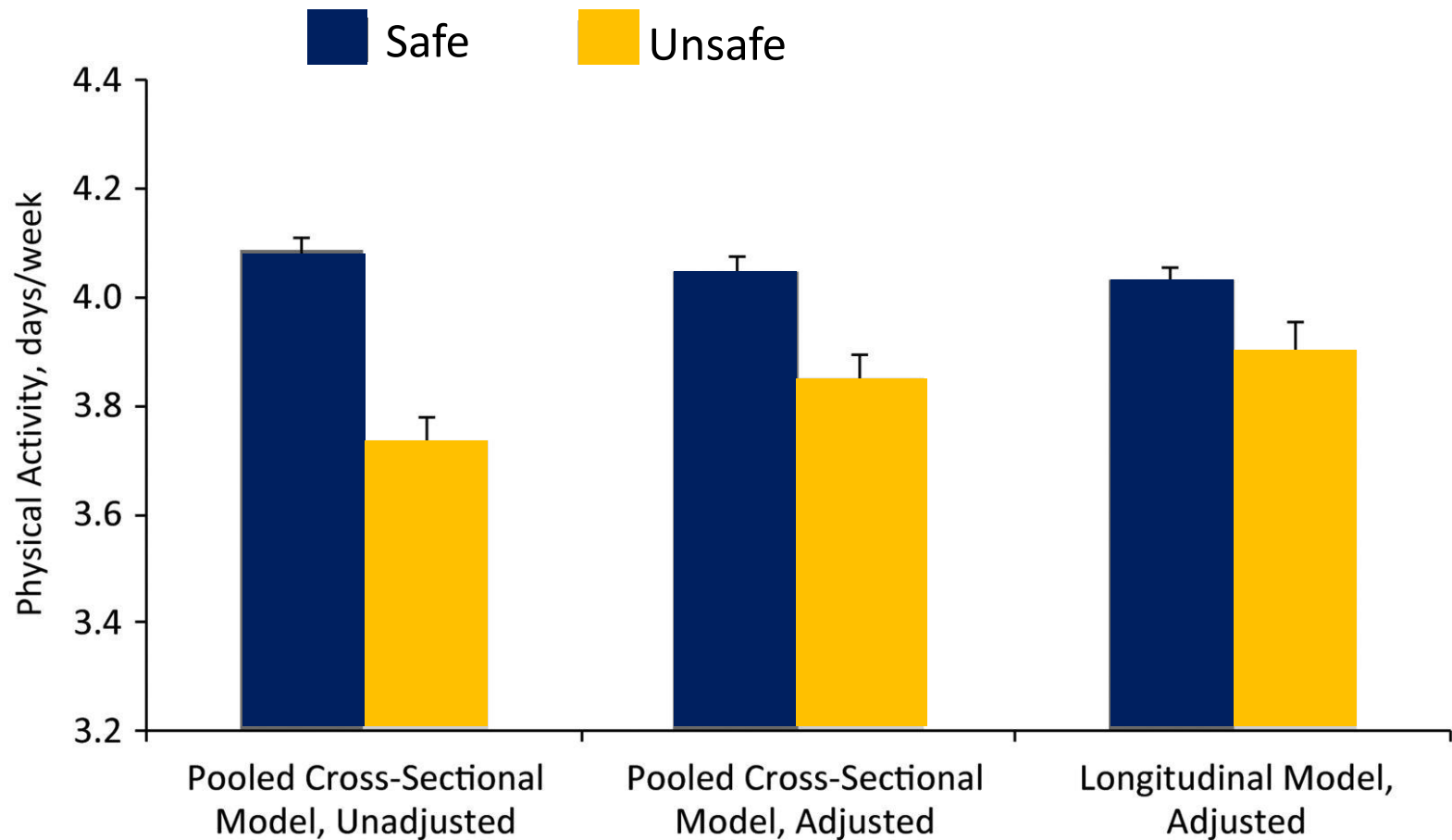
FEAR





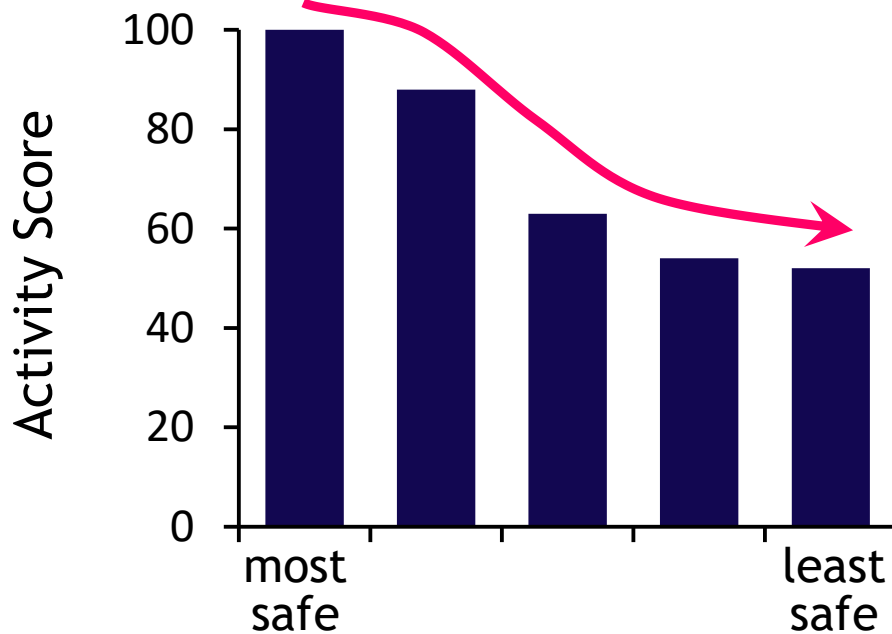
Outdoor play is perceived as being dangerous, and these perceptions influence our behaviours.

Parent Perceptions of Neighborhood Safety and Children's Physical Activity

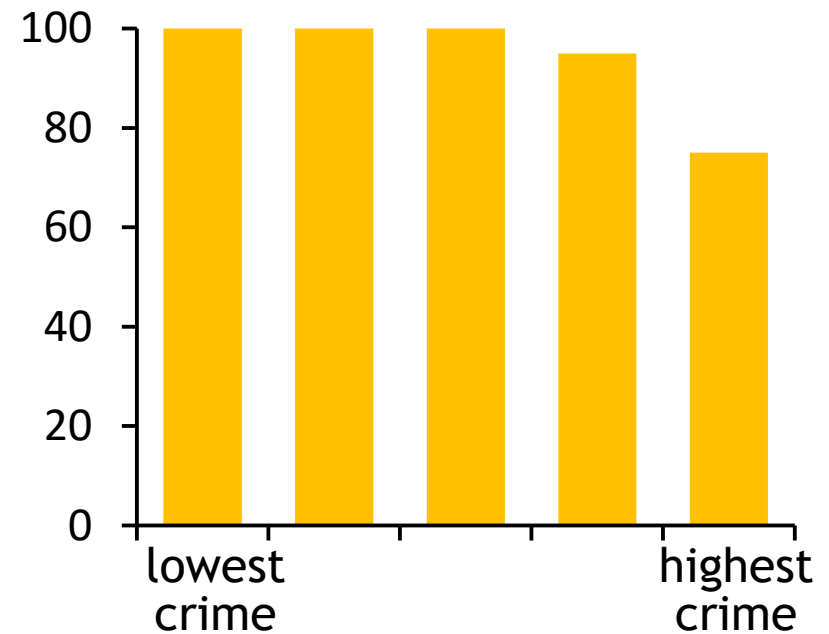


Perceived Safety, Crime, and Physical Activity in Youth

Perceived Safety



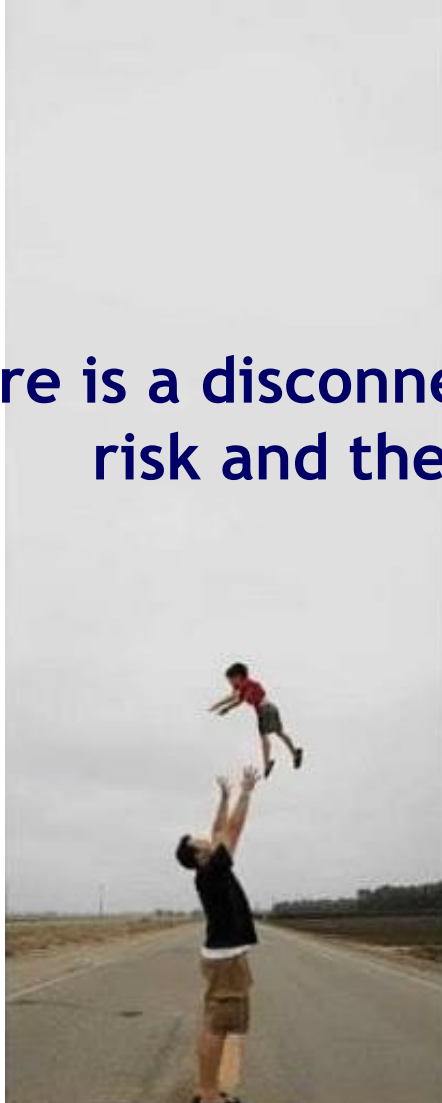
Crimes Rates



80%

of parents perceive
that traffic and
strangers are a problem

**How the kid
experiences it**



**How mom
sees it**



**There is a disconnect between the actual
risk and the perceived risk.**

Who accounts for the vast majority of motor vehicle related deaths and hospitalizations among children?

A) occupants of motor vehicles

B) pedestrians (eg, playing on sidewalk or road)

C) bicyclists

Within Canada, how many children are kidnapped by a stranger each year?

A) 1

B) 10

C) 100

D) 1000

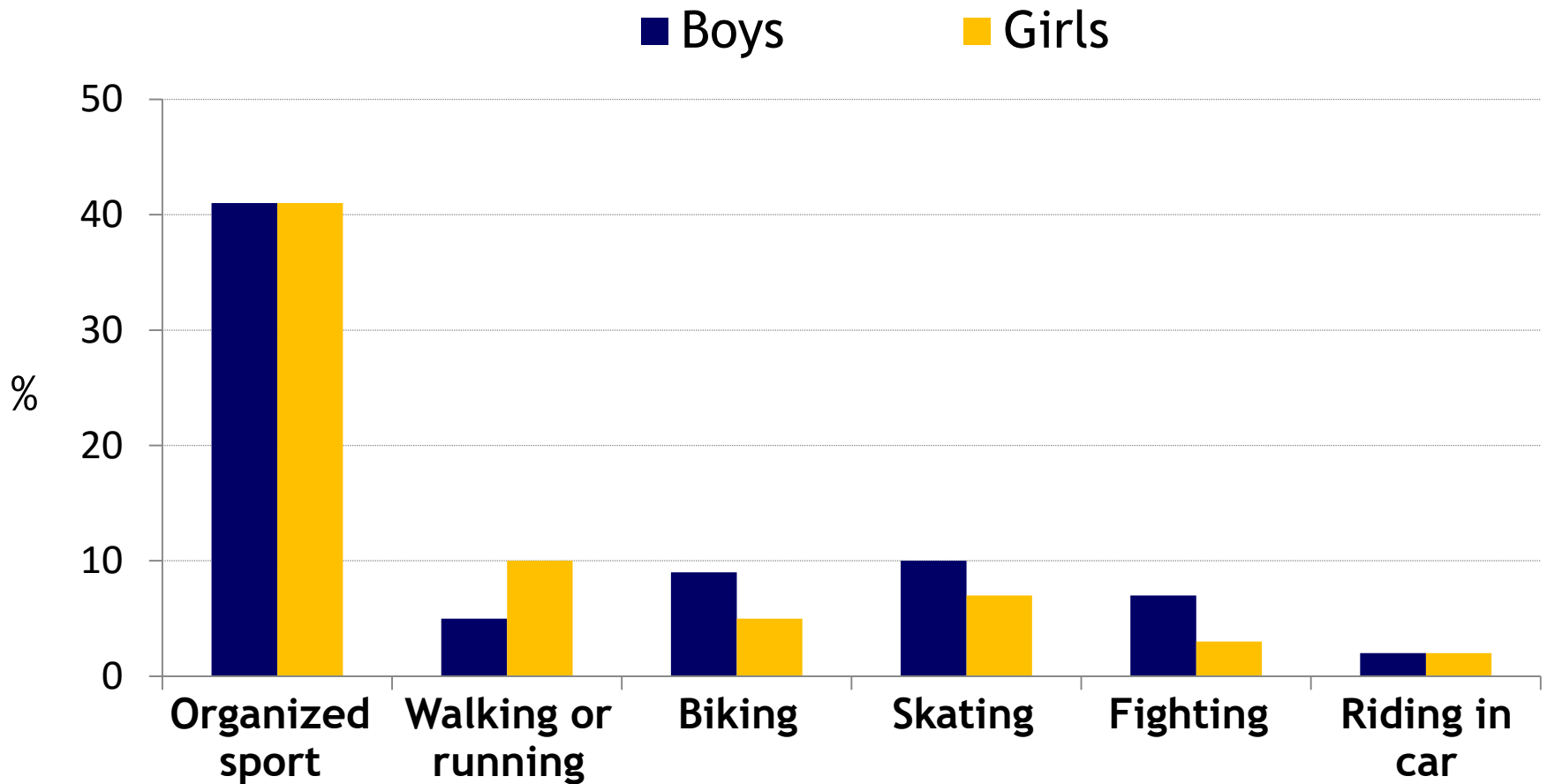
A 12 year old is the most likely to suffer a medically treated injury when....

A) playing organized sports (2.8 per 10,000 hours)

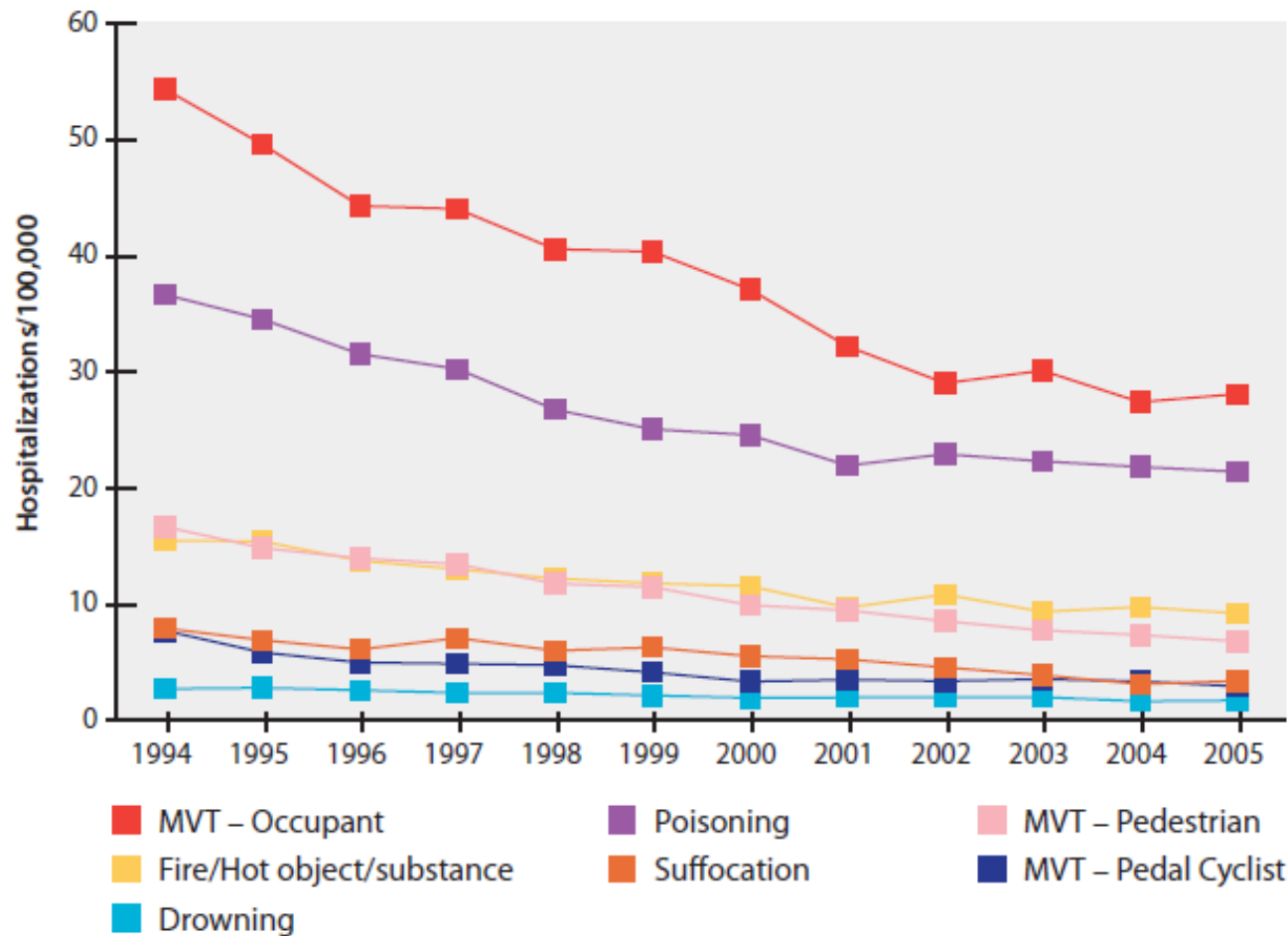
B) walking or bicycling (1.5 per 10,000 hours)

C) playing outdoors (1.5 per 10,000 hours)

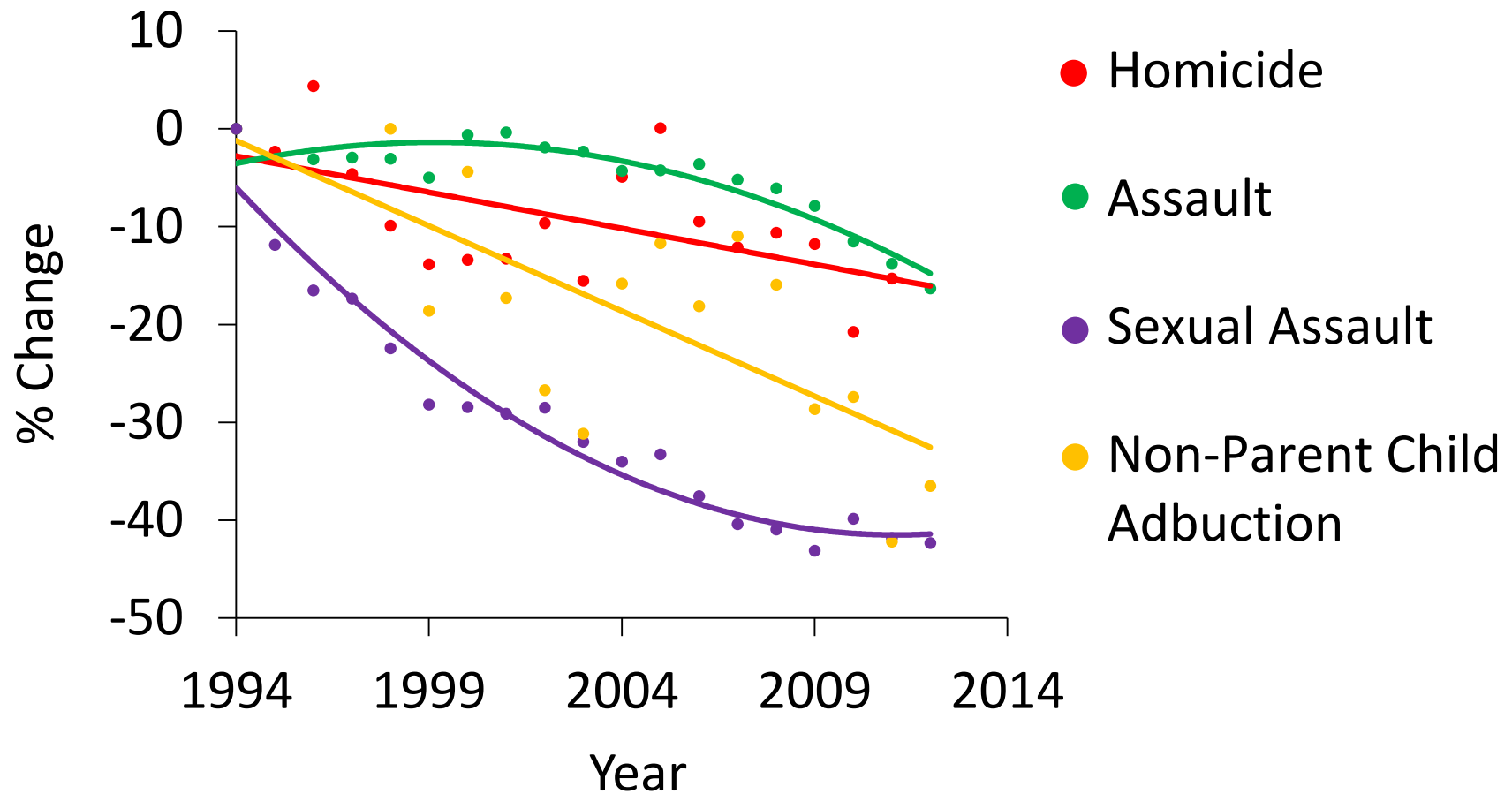
Activities that Caused Medically Treated Injuries in Grade 8 Students



Unintentional Injury Hospitalizations in 0-19 Year Old Canadians, 1990-2005



Reduction in Crimes Rates in Canada Since 1994





The outdoors is being promoted as being a dangerous place for other reasons, as illustrated in the next few slides.

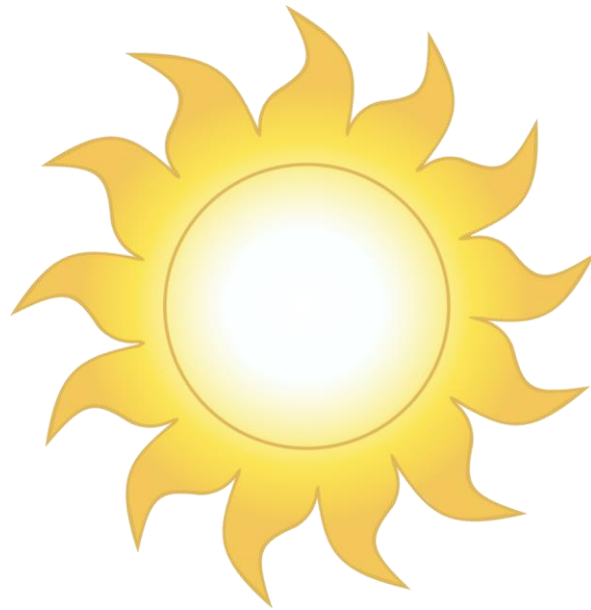
Avoid going outside at dawn or dusk



Avoid going outside in early morning,
late afternoon, or early evening



Avoid going outside in late morning
to late afternoon



Surplus Safety



CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

RULES FOR A SAFE AND FUN TIME

SLIDES

- NO HEAD FIRST
- NO TWO TOGETHER
- NO SLIDING ON BACK
- NO STANDING OR CLIMBING
- NO KNEELING OR JUMPING
- NO DANGLING ARMS OR LEGS
- NO SLIDING BACKWARDS
- NO SPINNING AROUND
- NO SLIDING ASKEW
- NO DRAGGING FEET

SWINGS

- NO STANDING ON SWINGS
- NO SWINGING WITH MORE THAN ONE PERSON AT A TIME
- NO SWINGING WITH ONE HAND
- NO SWINGING EMPTY SWINGS
- NO TWISTING SWINGS
- NO JUMPING OFF WHILE SWINGING
- NO WALKING OR STANDING CLOSE TO A MOVING SWING

PLAY STRUCTURES

- NO CLIMBING UP OR DOWN IF ANYONE IS IN THE WAY
- NO BUMPING ANOTHER CLIMBER
- NO JUMPING OFF PLAY STRUCTURES
- NO ONE HAND CLIMBING
- NO PUSHING, SHOVING, OR CROWDING

ROCKING DEVICES

- NO PULLING OR PUSHING
- NO DOUBLING UP
- NO STANDING NEAR
- NO PLACING FEET OR HANDS NEAR MOVING PARTS
- NO STANDING OR SITTING ON HANDLES AND FOOT REST

1. PLEASE REPORT DAMAGED OR INOPERABLE EQUIPMENT TO THE OFFICE, USE PLAY EQUIPMENT PROPERLY AND ONLY WHEN DRY
2. WALK DON'T PUSH OR SHOVE
3. PLAYGROUND WILL BE CLOSED WHEN SURFACE IS UNSAFE

More rules, regulations, and supervision equals less active children.



Many of these regulations are ridiculous!



These kids are breaking the law



These kids are breaking the rules





The Biggest Risk is
**KEEPING KIDS
INDOORS**

2015

The ParticipACTION Report Card on
Physical Activity for Children and Youth



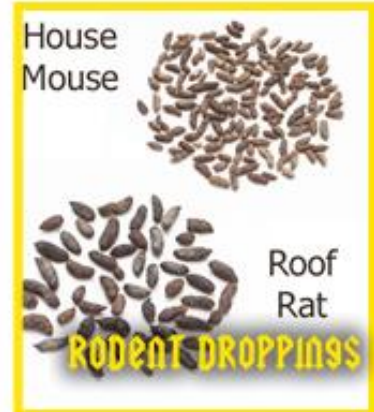
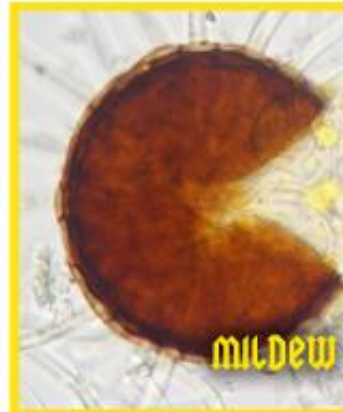
**Too much
screen time is
bad for your
health!**



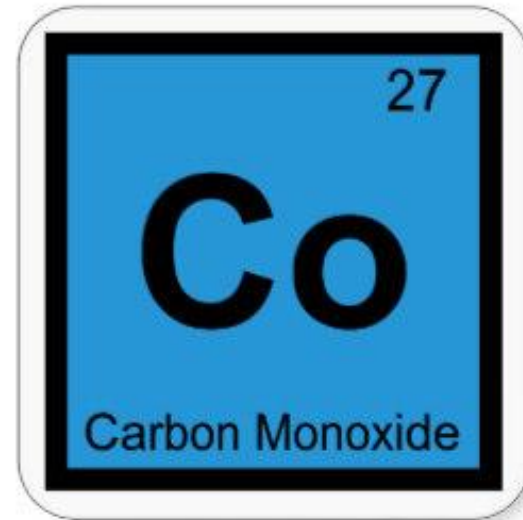
543 cases of luring a child through the internet in 2012



air quality indoors is often worse than air quality outdoors



air quality indoors is often worse than air quality outdoors



2nd and 3rd leading causes of lung cancer are Radon gas in the home and second hand smoke

POSITION STATEMENT ON ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY

Position



Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.

www.participaction.com/report-card-2015/report-card/

Evidence based, Developed by 14 organizations, Supported by 1600 stakeholders

BC INJURY research and prevention unit



best start
meilleur départ
by/par health **nexus** santé



We need to recognize the difference between risk and danger



**When children are outside they
move more, sit less and play longer**



**There are consequences to keeping
kids indoors — is it really safer?**



**Find a balanced approach to health that
considers the long-term dangers of a
sedentary lifestyle along with the acute
potential for injury**



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Citation: *Thompson v. Corp. of the District of
Saanich,*
2015 BCSC 1750

Date: 20150930
Docket: S107282
Registry: Vancouver

**The Position Stand is being used successfully as a defense
in frivolous and ridiculous lawsuits made against
municipalities.**

Thank you

