

Supervision of Young Children

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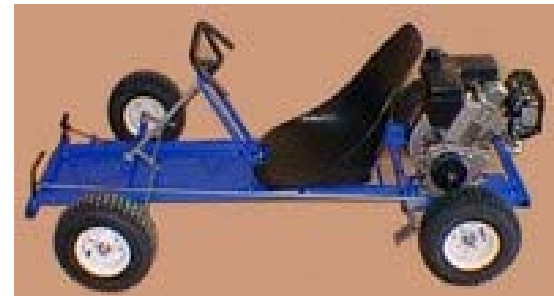
“Supervise Use”

- Numerous products instruct parents to “supervise use” or not to leave child unattended
- Exactly what does that mean?
 - Direct eye contact
 - Within hearing distance
 - Somewhere in the house

Infant/Toddler Products Recommending Supervision



Products for Older Children Advising Supervision



What is “appropriate” supervision?

- Lack of supervision often noted in incident reports
- “Appropriate” Supervision = moving target
- Variables Affecting (Perceived) Appropriate Supervision:
 - child’s age
 - personality
 - play environment (i.e., place, products, people)
- Perceptions drive behavior

Supervisory Neglect

- “When a parent fails to provide the child with adequate protection from harmful people or situations.” (Coohey, 2003 cited by Saluja, et. al., 2004)

Supervision & Injuries

- Two erroneous assumptions:
 - Properly supervised children do not get hurt
 - Improperly supervised children do get hurt
- Injuries are due to a myriad of causes other than supervision - e.g., product design, play behavior, play environment
- “Appropriate” Supervision - can impact the likelihood and ultimately the severity of injuries

Research Studies re: Supervision

- Bring together industry expectations for parental supervision & actual consumer behavior
- Use this information to anticipate consumer use patterns, modify designs and use instructions, as needed

Peterson, Ewigman & Kivlahan 1993

- Asked parents, medical professionals & social workers how long children of different ages could be left unsupervised in given environments
- Found:
 - Time increased with age
 - Clear consensus when hazard level was high & age was young
 - Increased variability as degree of hazard reduced, and as child's age increased
 - Outliers - allowed much larger amounts of time than the rest of the group

Garling & Garling (1993)

- Surveyed mothers of 1-, 2-, & 3 y.o. to rate the perceived risk when children in different rooms of home & under different degrees of supervision
- 4 locations in home: BR, LR, Kitchen, Bathroom
- 9 pt scale: (1) no risk...(3) rather low risk...(5) rather high risk...(7) very high risk...(9) very,very high risk

Condition of Least supervision Parent in different room from child:

	»	<u>1 y.o.</u>	<u>2 y.o.</u>	<u>3 y.o.</u>
• BR		3.4	3.3	3.0
• LR		4.9	3.6	3.4
• Kitchen		4.5	4.8	3.9
• Bathroom		4.8	5.2	4.2

Supervision of Children Ages Two Through Six

Pollack-Nelson, C. and Drago, D.
Injury Control and Safety Promotion
2002, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 121-126

Methods

- Self-administered questionnaire to parents of children aged 2-6 years
- 59 respondents
- Survey questions re:
 - interpretation of the word “supervise”
 - actual supervisory behaviors
 - perceptions of injury risk to children in the home

How do you *actually supervise*
your child's use of a toy
if instructed to do so by a label?

- Choices: Direct supervision; Being available; Other
- Who Supervises directly?
 - 75% of parents with 2 y.o.
 - 50% of parents with 3 y.o.
 - 58% of parents with 4 y.o.
 - 17% of parents with 5 y.o.
 - 18% of parents with 6 y.o.

Out of Sight...

Out of Mind?

- Are there times when your children play out of your sight? 98% = yes
- How often do you check on them?
 - 2 & 3 y.o. - Every 5-15 minutes (85%)
 - 4 & 5 y.o. - Every 15 - 30 minutes (73%)
 - over 5 years - Within 30 minutes or within an hour
- Why check? Certain amount of time elapsed, heard crying, fight, something fall, or *too quiet*

I Can't Hear You...

- Beginning at what age, is it okay for a child to play in another room from which parent...
 - *could hear* what was going on?
 - mode: 3 years*
 - youngest age: <2 years*
 - *could not hear* what was going on:
 - mode: 5 years*
 - youngest age: 3*

Early Risers

- Do Your Children Get Up in the Morning Before You Do?

76% of children get out of bed in morning before a parent

- Describe your child's risk of getting hurt on something in the house if the child gets up in the morning before you:

95% - no or slight risk

"Safe" Rooms

- Which rooms do you consider safe for children to be alone in while playing, reading, watching TV or doing something other than sleeping?
 - *Bedroom & Family room considered safe for 90% of children of all ages.*
 - *Note: Hu, Wesson and Kenney found that 2/3 of home injuries to children occur in the living room or bedroom (1993).*

Conclusions

- Supervision practices differ by child's age and circumstances.
- Children routinely awaken before parents.
- Parents don't perceive this to be risky.
- Parents perceive homes to be relatively safe, particularly bedroom & family room.

Implications for Product Design & Instructions

- Where possible, design products so they can be used safely without direct supervision.
- When supervision is needed, be clear as to why & when.
- Align expectations for consumer behavior with actual & likely supervisory practices.