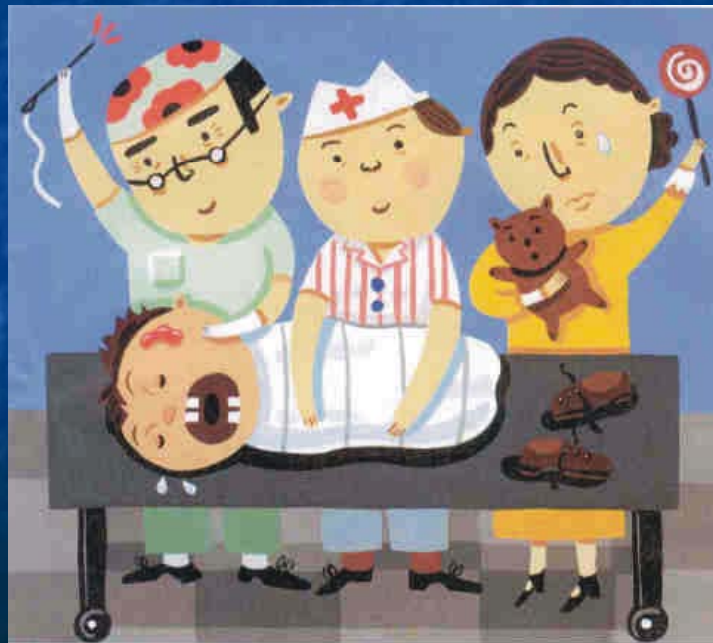


Childhood Injuries Are No *Accident*: Parent & Child Factors Influence Risk

Barbara A. Morrongiello

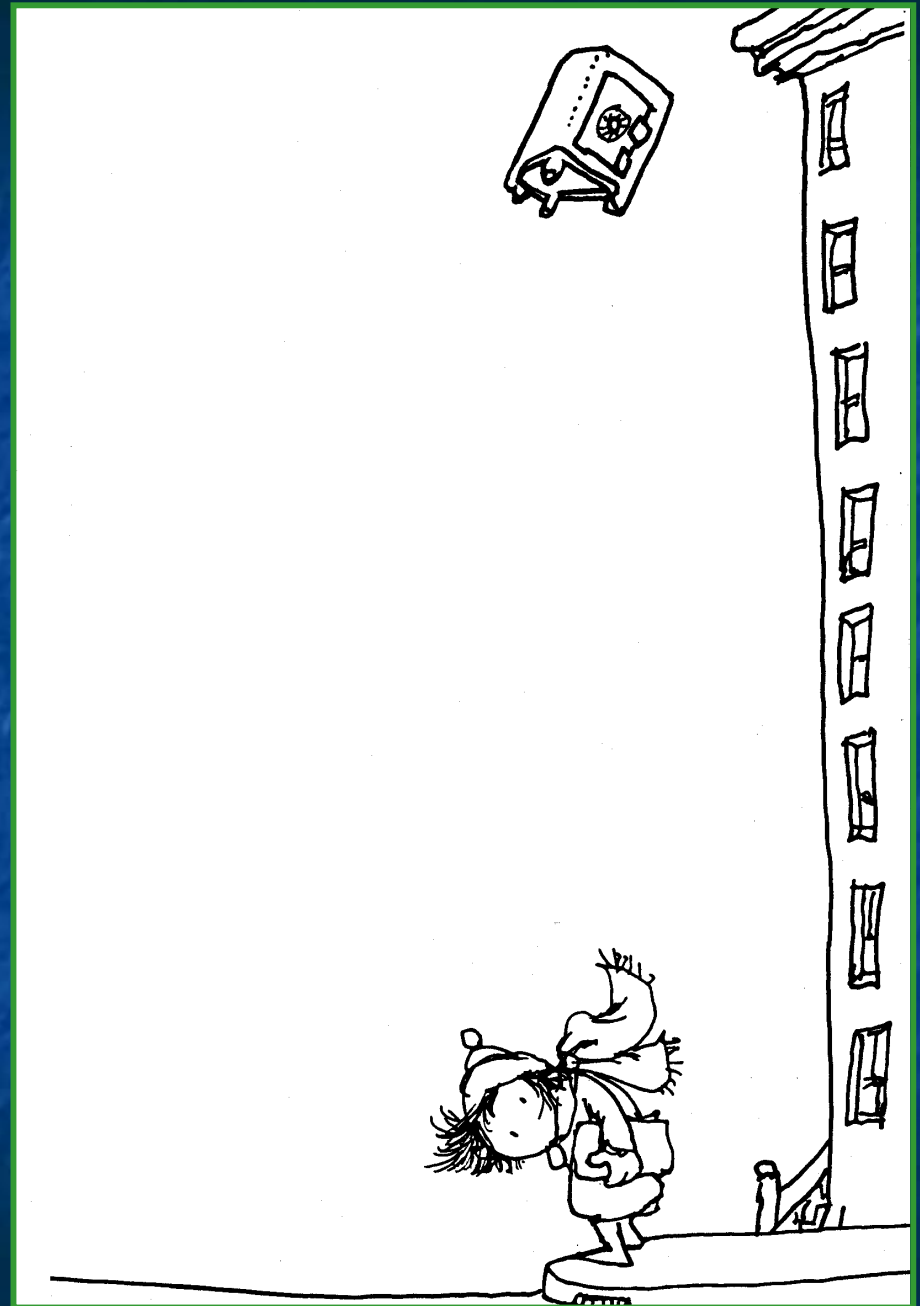
Psychology Dept.



UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

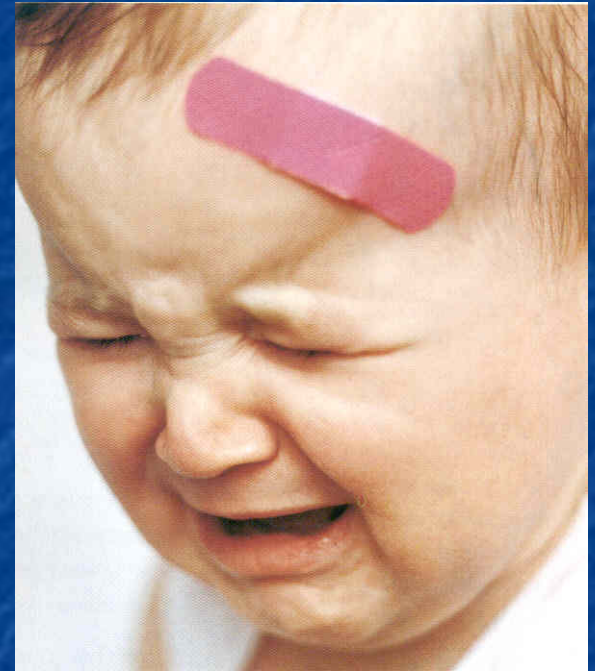
Safe?

I look to the left,
I look to the right,
Before I ever
Move my feet.
No cars to the left,
No cars to the right,
I guess it's safe
To cross the street . . .



Risk of Unintentional Injury in Three Age Groups

- Toddlers
(2 + 3 year olds)
- Preschoolers
(4 + 5 year olds)
- School-age children
(6-12 year olds)

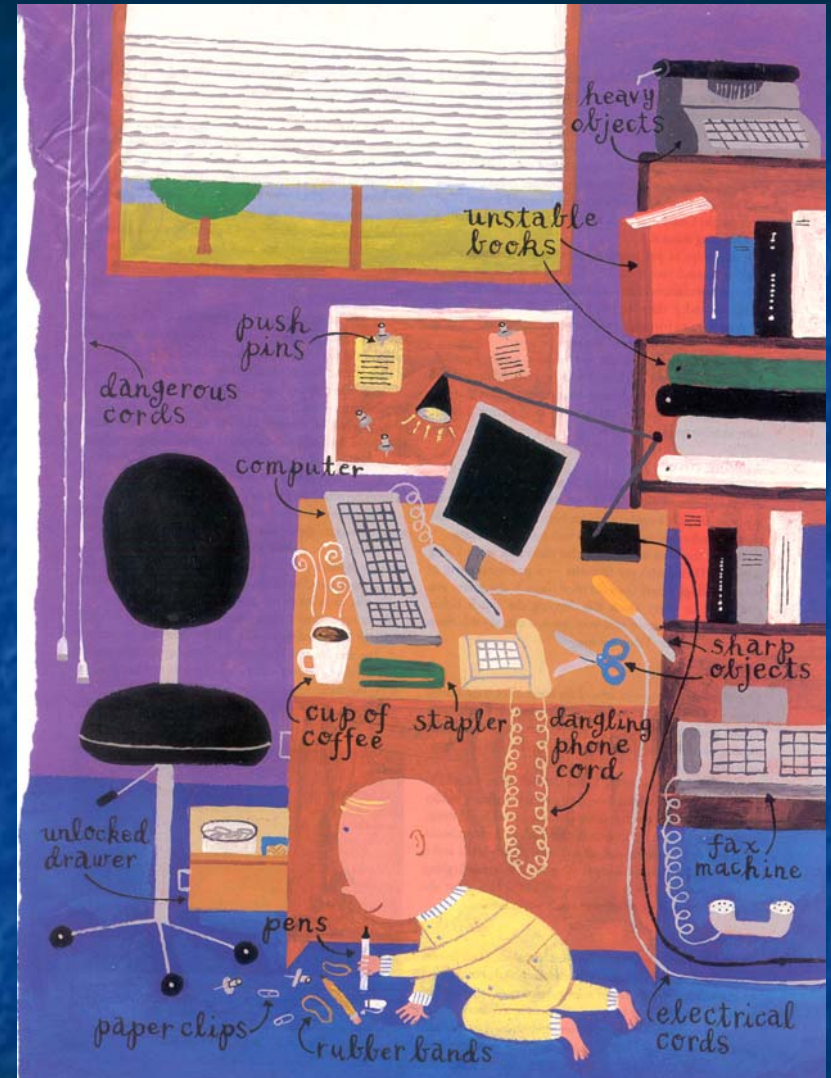


To a 2 year old . . .



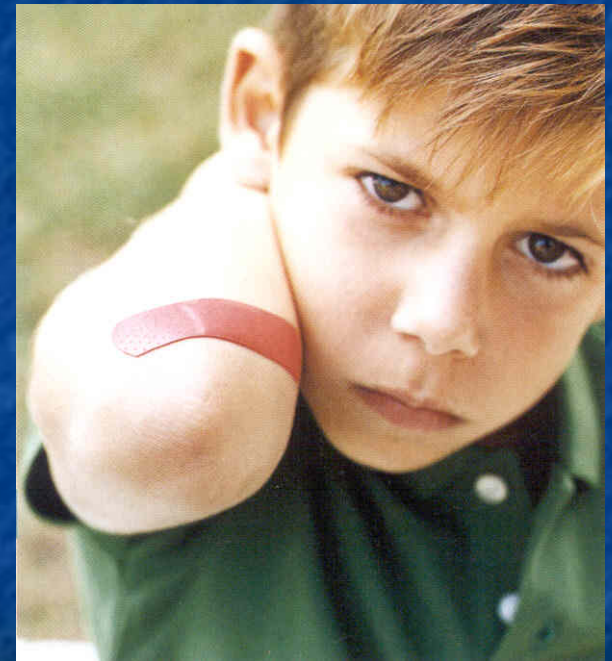
there are four toys in this picture

How do parents routinely supervise young children at home AND how well does this work to prevent injury to young children?

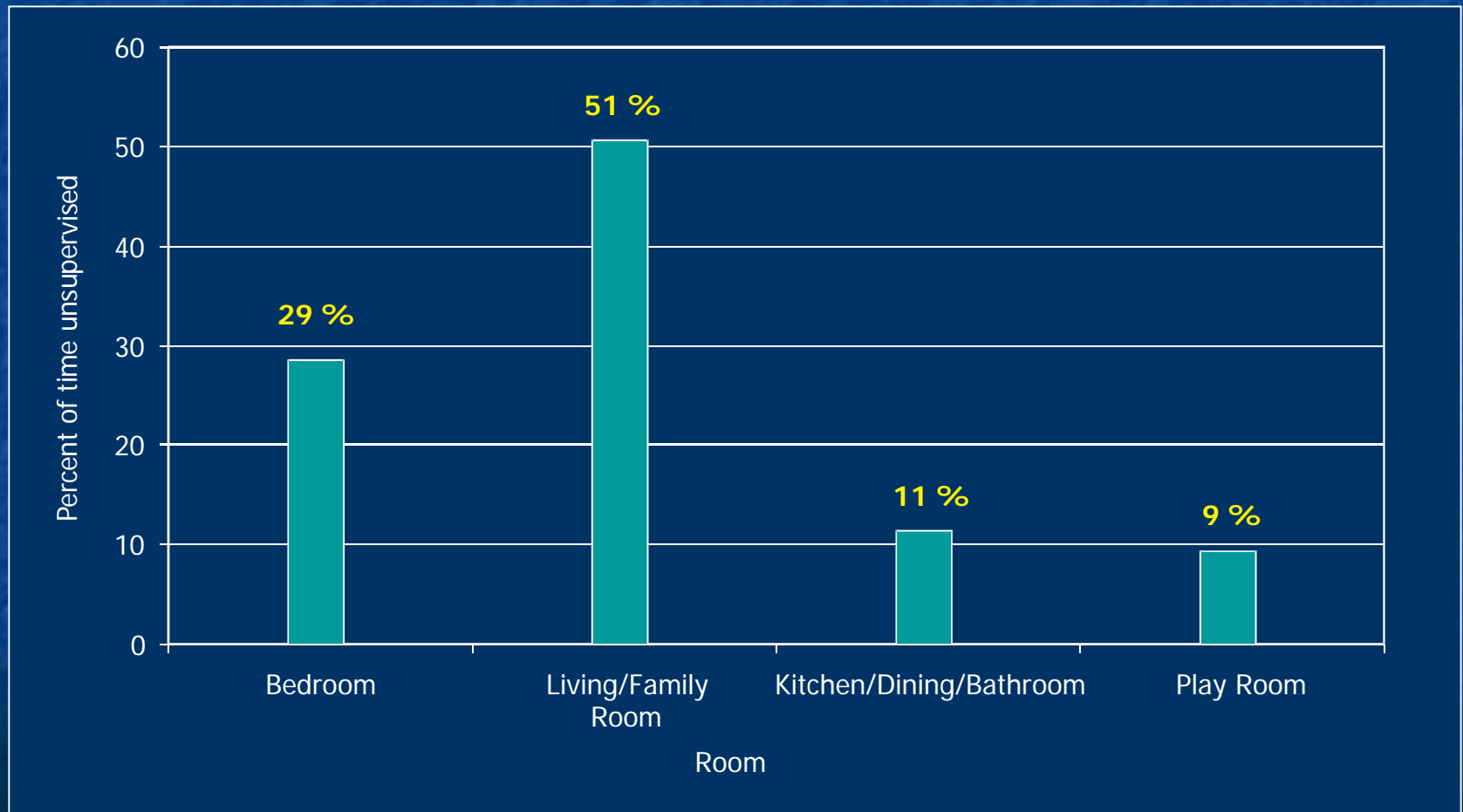


- Children were left completely unsupervised about 4% of their awake time.

(not supervising = parent was not listening to or watching the child and was not engaging in any intermittent checking, thus, s/he was uncertain of the child's activities or whereabouts)



Rooms Where Children Were When Left Unsupervised



The child was out of view of the supervisor about 20% of the time.

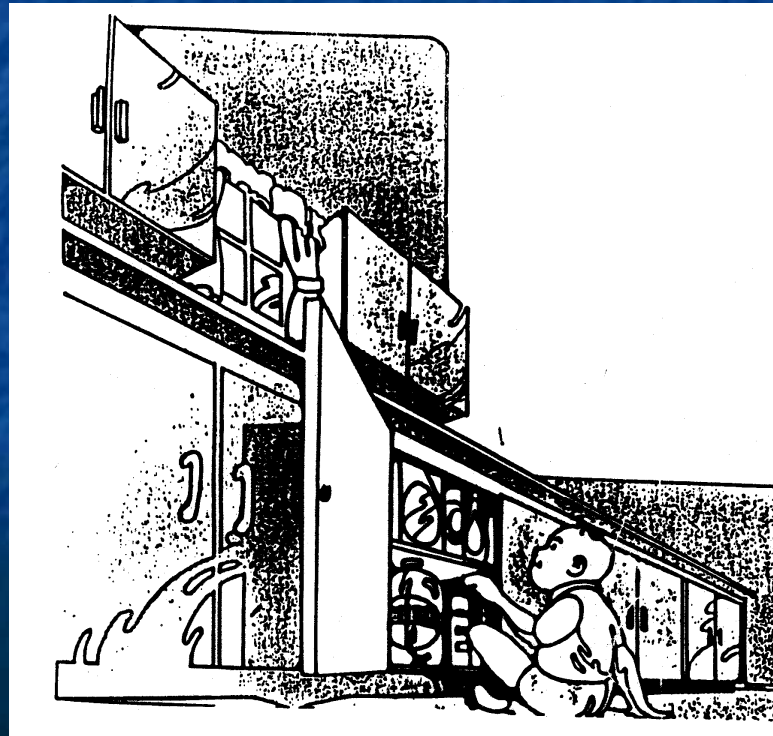


Level of Supervision

(range possible: 0-9)

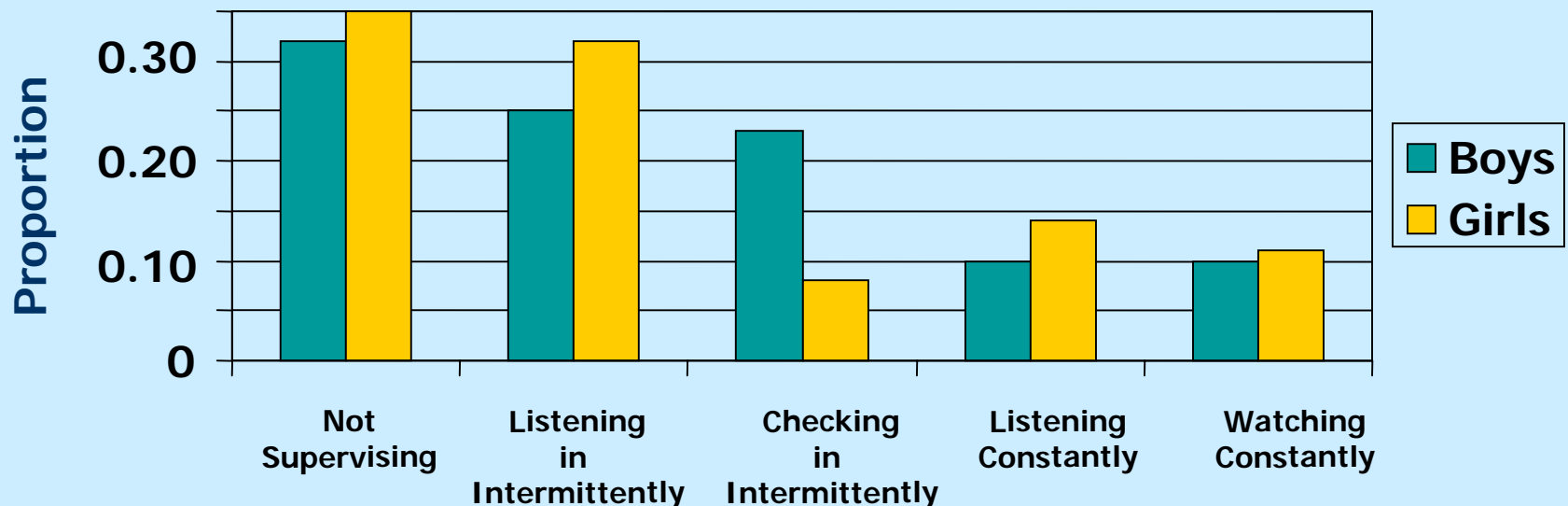
- In view = 8.4
Out of view = 5.2
- Note:
 - 5 = checking every 6-7 minutes
 - 6 = checking every 4-5 minutes

Parents do **NOT** usually
provide **CONSTANT**
supervision to young children
in the home.



Parents utilize different types of supervision strategies and their effectiveness varies for boys vs girls.

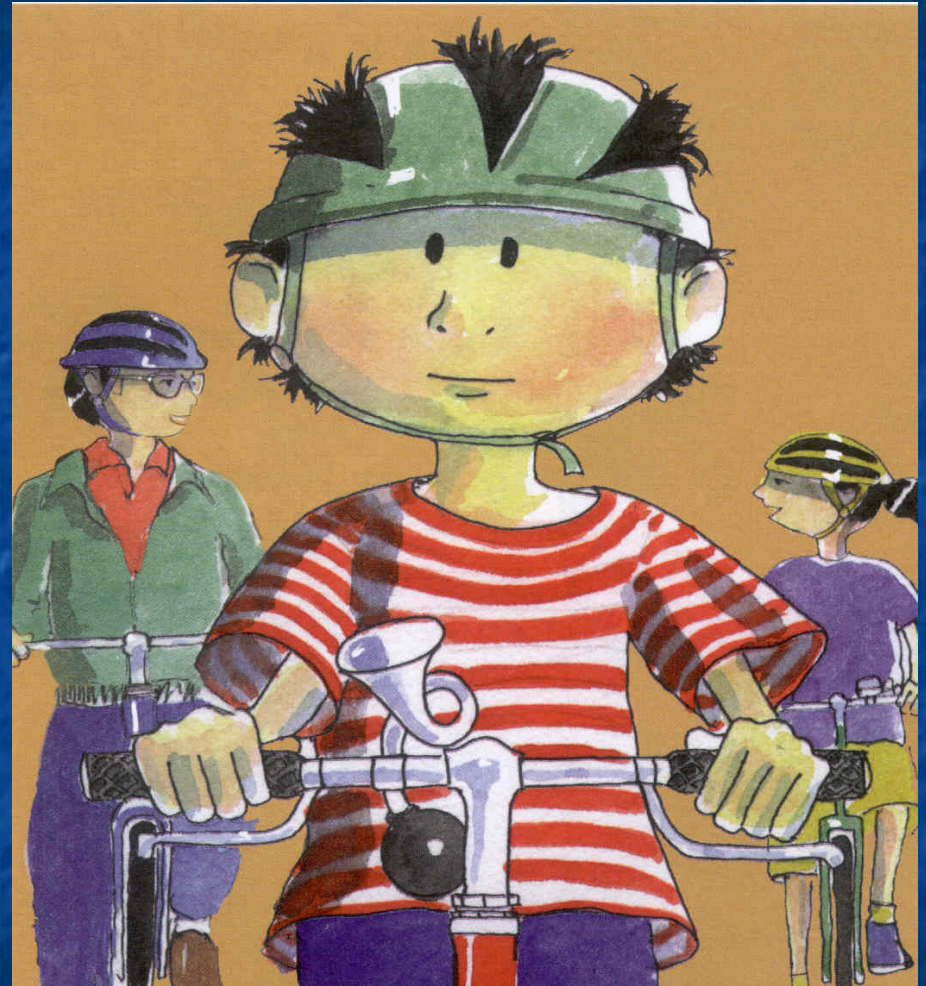
Proportion of Injuries Occurring to Boys (N=428 total injuries) and Girls (N=137 total injuries) as a Function of Level of Supervision





Boys require constant supervision to ensure their safety and girls do not.

A common strategy that parents use to prevent injuries to preschoolers = teach them safety rules that they are expected to follow.



Injury Risk in Preschoolers

1. Do preschool children **KNOW** the rules for home safety that their parents assume they do?
2. Does knowledge of such rules actually serve a protective (risk reducing) function such that those who know more rules have fewer home injuries?

Parents had 30 rules they believed children knew about home safety BUT children reported only about half of these rules

**** Parents are *over-estimating* preschool children's knowledge of home safety rules!**

Best predictors of home injuries for preschoolers?

- Children's compliance with safety rules
- Parental supervision to ensure compliance
- **NOT** children's knowledge of safety rules



Parents who assume that children are safe if the children know lots of rules about safety may be placing their children at risk of injury if they are then not closely supervising to ensure the rules are followed.



Why do school-age children do the risky things they do?







WE'RE READY TO ROLL

Determinants of School-age Children's Risk Taking

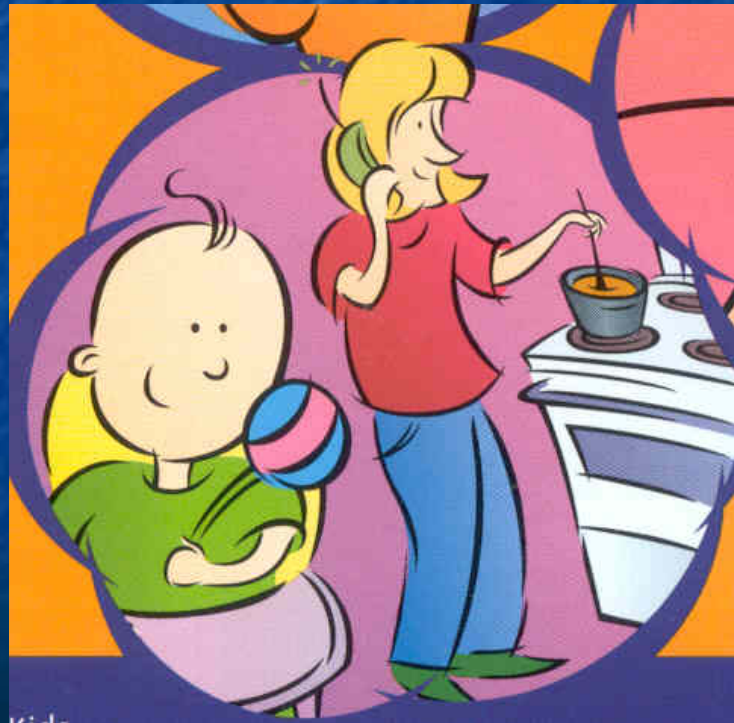
- Cognitive Predictors
 - Perceived vulnerability for injury
 - Perceived injury severity
 - Attributions for injury (self vs. fate)
- Emotion-based Predictors
 - Anticipated feelings of fun/exhilaration and fear

Children's risk taking can be **RATIONAL** (based on cognitions) and **IRRATIONAL** (driven by emotions)



Summary & Implications?

**Parents multi-task at home
and do not typically constantly
supervise young children.**



Manufacturers may assume “supervision” means **watching** the child but parents assume a lower standard in defining “supervision”.

For parents, **monitoring** behaviors (periodic checking, listening in from a distance) constitute “supervision”.

Preschool children can fool parents into believing they don't need to be supervised and can manage to keep themselves safe, when in fact knowing about rules won't keep them safe at all.



At all ages:

Boys are more likely than girls to 'get into things' in ways that can lead to injury.



Children's risk taking is not necessarily rational and 'group' dynamics can lead to greater risk taking.



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