

Parents Need to Help Their Children Take Risks

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Today's children and teenagers seem to be taking fewer risks. The trend has had some good effects, like decreases in teenage pregnancy, drug use and even accidents. On the other hand, there has been an equally dramatic increase in anxiety in children and teenagers.

If life is less risky, why are young people more fearful? A new study in the journal *Nature Human Behavior*, by Nim Tottenham at Columbia University, Regina Sullivan at New York University and their colleagues, suggests an answer. Young people are designed to take risks and avoiding them too much may lead to anxiety. But productive risk-taking depends on having a sense of safety—knowing that a parent is there in the background to take care of you.