

# Beverly Cleary on Why Today's Kids Aren't Free to Roam

There's lots of talk these days about how children's lives are far too structured. Children (the narrative goes) need time to run, play, imagine, and have freedom to do things on their own.

Beverly Cleary, famous author and creator of Ramona Quimby & Co. agrees. She recently made several comments on the state of childhood in a [Washington Post](#) article celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Cleary's comments about the sad state of confined childhood aren't necessarily new, but her reasoning on how we have come to this state is a message we don't often hear:

*"I think children today have a tough time, because they don't have the freedom to run around as I did – and they have so many scheduled activities."*

*In her youth, she points out, 'mothers did not work outside the home; they worked on the inside. And because all the mothers were home – 99 percent of them, anyway – all mothers kept their eyes on all the children.' This is part of the reason, she says, that the children in her books were so often out tromping through the neighborhood without adult chaperones."*

In the last several years, the idea of ["free-range parenting"](#) has grown in popularity. The concept encourages parents to back off and let their kids go to the park, store, and many other places without supervision – just like "the old days."

But while many of us love the idea of letting our children roam free, Cleary's words bring up a good question: Is the concept of free-range parenting [an ill-advised tactic](#) in an age where so many adults are away at the office during the

day?

If we want to give children more freedom, are more parents going to have to give up dual incomes?

*Image Credit: Library of Congress*