

A Formula for Creating Wimpy, Unimaginative Kids

Have you ever compared your childhood with that of your own kids?

Clint Edwards recently did that in an article for [The Washington Post](#), and what he found was rather alarming.

For Edwards, childhood meant riding bikes extensive distances and having pick-up playtimes with any other children who were mutually roaming the neighborhood. For Edwards' son, childhood play is pre-arranged and almost always supervised by an adult.

The reason for this change, Edwards explains, is the fact that parents are scared to let their children roam for fear that something will happen to them or that other parents will judge them for their methods.

And it's true. It is scary to let children roam around without knowing what harm could come to them.

But in the process of protecting them, we harm them in other ways. Most noticeably in the lessons they fail to learn from being on their own:

"But what I do know is that I learned how to make my own friendships by wandering. I learned how to get in and out of trouble. I learned how to skip a rock. I learned how to fall down and get back up without help from an adult. I learned how to make decisions on my own, sometimes on the fly. And like the Goonies, I found a lot of treasures. None of them were valuable in the tangible sense, like a pirate ship full of gold. They were new friendships and life skills that really can only be learned from being unsupervised as a child."

Author Anthony Esolen would concur with Edwards' statement. According to Esolen, one of the [best ways to destroy a child's imagination](#) is by removing any opportunity he has to play a pick-up game of, say, baseball and replacing it by adult-organized and supervised activities. As Esolen describes, placing everything under adult-supervision hinders a child's ability to think for himself and practice the responsibilities that are a natural part of the adult life:

"People who can organize themselves and accomplish something as devilishly complicated as a good ballgame are hard to herd around. They can form societies of their own. They become men and women, not human resources. They can be free."

Every parent wants their child to be safe. But in keeping them safe now, are we setting them up to be taken advantage of as adults who cannot think or act responsibly on their own behalf?

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