

## THE RISK PARADOX IN PLAY

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## OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

- Introduction
- What is the risk paradox
- Discussion
- Some results from this study
- Conclusions



## INTRODUCTION

- Undertaken to compare and gain an added understanding of the risk paradox in relation to children at play
- Children aged between 5-11 years of age
- Data-set was from a church community
  - Good cultural diversity
  - Good micro representation of multiculturalism in Australia



## THE RISK PARADOX

- The extent to which people's compensating behaviour is counterbalanced by a safety measure
- Behavioral adaptation to a perceived lower risk situation, especially when the lower risk is brought about by an accident countermeasure
- Risk is evident in many facets of society including infrastructure such as bridge and building design
- Engineers measure, evaluate and mitigate these risks
- The risk paradox for children at play is simply another type of risk management in society





## THE RISK PARADOX

- The risk paradox states that one will take greater risks as a result of one's perception of a risk being lowered. This paradox is very much as applicable to children as it is to adolescents and adults
- Many applications of this risk paradox in society including:
  - Adults driving cars or on roadways that have imbedded safety systems installed
  - Children playing sport whilst wearing safety equipment
  - Children playing on impact attenuating surfaces where they perceive the surface to be safer therefore taking greater risks



## DISCUSSION

- Risk is not all negative
- Numerous benefits of risk in play
- Children learn to appreciate, assess and take measured risks
- Problem – risk benefits are not easily substantiated by accepted scientific methods
- Result – a risk averse society



## DISCUSSION

### Risk Compensation

#### Need to consider the external factors

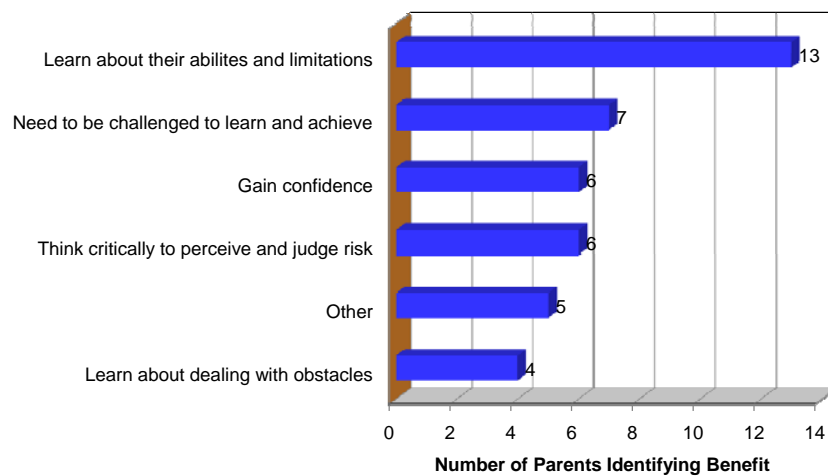
- One's cognitive development
- Age
- Gender
- Social and psychological state



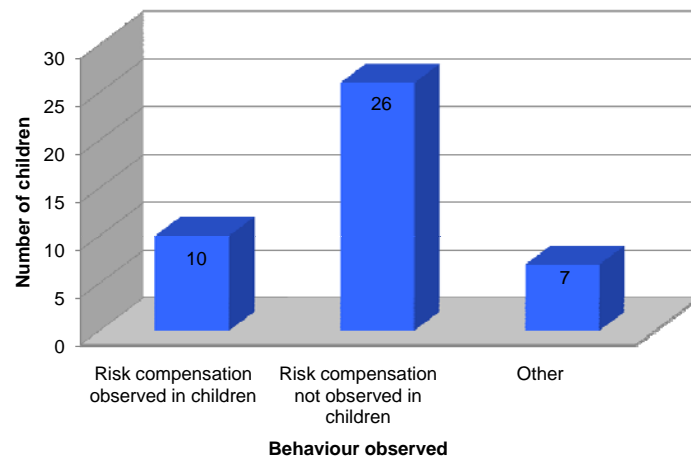
### Role of Parents

- #### Perceived fear has increased and led to less risk taking

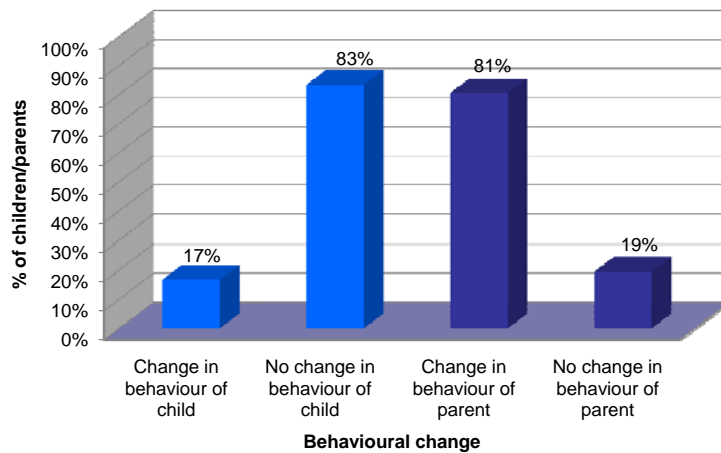
## BENEFITS OF RISK IN PLAY



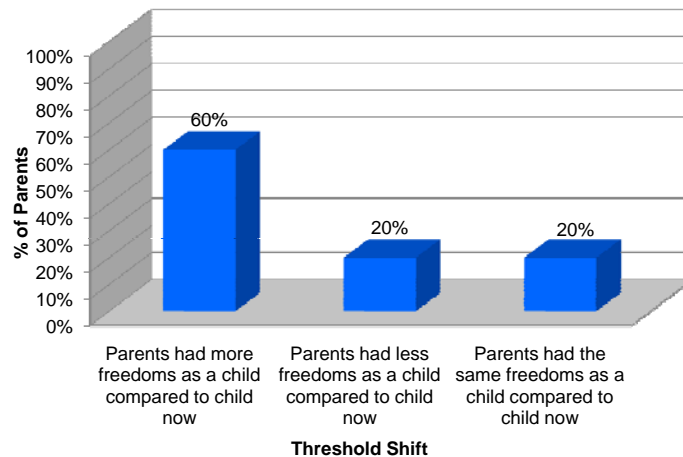
## RISK COMPENSATION



## IMPACT ATTENUATING SURFACES



## PARENTIAL THRESHOLD TO RISK



## CONCLUSIONS

- A framework for future studies has been established
- Further empirical studies are required
- Risk in play should not just be viewed for the developmental role it offers children, but rather for the here and now 'life's training for the unexpected'
- Risk is a contentious issue
- Children need to be given frequent opportunities to engage in activities where they will be able to learn from their mistakes



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