

Free the Children

Wellness Lifestyle – Charles Eisenstein
Pathways #47, page 56



Talking Points

Why does it seem that more and more parents are having their children taken away from them because their kids are playing outside unsupervised? What is happening in society to make this an issue? Kids used to be able to explore and play unsupervised with no problems not too long ago.

Has there has been a decline in community? Do our neighbors feel more comfortable taking issues up with the authorities rather than us? Our society has become accustomed to control and is uncomfortable with uncertainty.

Safety has taken priority above everything else. Is safety really more important than freedom? More important than fun? What is childhood without adventure? “Unfortunately, without an element of danger or uncertainty there is no such thing as an adventure, and therefore no opportunity for children to explore their boundaries, develop self-confidence, and become comfortable with uncertainty.” How does constant supervision affect a child’s development? Does it send the message that they’re not worthy of trust?

Do we trust our children to make decisions and recognize risks? Isn’t it important for kids to make mistakes and feel their natural consequences? Does overprotection lead to recklessness?

“The mantra “safety first” reflects a society that is addicted to control and bereft of its sense of purpose. Transposed onto politics, it appears as the security state enslaved to an irrational and hyperbolic fear of terrorism, and a compulsion to “supervise” the world through electronic surveillance.” (p. 58) Is this how we really want to raise our children? I’m reminded of a quote by Peter Gray, Ph.D. that appeared in Pathways issue 39, “For only when children grow up free can we hope for a society in which adults know fully how to handle freedom and the responsibilities that come with it.”

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

“Schoolhouse, Rocked” by Peter Gray <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Inspirational/schoolhouse-rocked.html>

Charles Eisenstein’s web site: <http://charleseisenstein.net/>

“Child Protective Services Took an 11-Year-Old Boy Because He Played in His Own Yard Alone For 90 Minutes” by Alessia Santoro <http://www.popsugar.com/moms/Boy-Taken-CPS-Playing-Alone-90-Minutes-37688500>

Free-Range Kids: <http://www.freerangekids.com/>