

People often contemplate whether they should ride the scariest roller coaster at an amusement park, and such decisions become increasingly difficult as the level of risk rises in pursuit of enjoyment. This raises an intriguing question about whether safety outweighs the fun. Fun plays a significant role in safety, as evidenced by adventure playgrounds, horror films, and sports. This essay aims to define the boundaries of "safety" and "fun" to provide clarity regarding the factors that influence these decisions. Additionally, it will offer examples of how safety and fun intertwine in adventure playgrounds, horror movies, and sports. Lastly, it will analyze the implications of prioritizing fun over safety and explore the potential benefits and impacts associated with this choice.

Defining the boundaries of the term safety poses a challenge. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, safety refers to being protected from danger or harm (Cambridge Dictionary). However, these definitions lack clarity when it comes to determining what is truly dangerous or harmful. This interpretation can vary among individuals and lead them to different perspectives on the matter. What may be considered a minor paper cut to one person could be seen as a cancer risk to another. For the purpose of this essay, the term "safety" will be defined as any injuries or harm that result in permanent or long-term physical and mental effects, including conditions such as cancer, spinal injuries, or brain trauma.

The second term that requires clarification is "fun." Fun can be understood as an act of enjoyment, amusement, or lighthearted pleasure (Cambridge Dictionary). Yet, this definition fails to establish specific boundaries for the terms "enjoyment," "amusement," or "lighthearted pleasure." The experience of enjoyment in an activity varies from person to person. For instance, one individual may find pleasure in playing video games, while another may derive enjoyment from reading a book. Therefore, for the purpose of this essay, "fun" will be defined as an activity that brings about a sense of mental satisfaction, triggers the release of chemicals such as dopamine in the body, and helps alleviate stress.

Coming back to the idea of whether safety is more important than fun, some argue that prioritizing the safety of individuals is paramount, as engaging in activities solely for the sake of fun can pose risks and hazards. However, it can also be argued that fun holds greater significance than safety, as the enjoyment derived from these activities can be highly rewarding, as demonstrated in adventure playgrounds. Furthermore, certain adverse effects resulting from the disregard of safety measures can be mitigated by the benefits gained, such as the thrill and entertainment experienced while watching a horror movie. Lastly, in the realm of sports, the value lies in finding happiness and fulfillment through the activity, even in the face of potential injuries. Thus, fun should be regarded as a more crucial factor than safety.

Initially, an adventure playground may appear as nothing more than a cluttered junkyard. Unlike traditional playgrounds equipped with slides, bridges, and climbing structures, adventure playgrounds lack predefined play equipment and consist instead of materials such as tires, wooden planks, and hammers. While this unconventional setup may seem odd, adventure playgrounds are intentionally designed to encourage children to take risks and foster their development (Vox). The concept of adventure playgrounds was pioneered by Marjory Allen, a British landscape architect who introduced this innovative approach to play. During a visit to Copenhagen, Allen met Carl Theodor Sorenson, an architect who had observed children playing in construction sites and bombed buildings.

Inspired by their resourcefulness, Sorenson transformed a vacant lot by adding building materials, tools, and discarded objects, allowing children to engage in building, inventing, digging, and designing their own play environment. Upon her return to England, Allen established similar adventure playgrounds across London, which led to their subsequent global expansion (Holman, 2013).

These playgrounds exemplify the concept of controlled risk. Risk and hazard are distinct phenomena. A hazard is an unexpected and uncontrollable danger, while risk refers to manageable effects. Ultimately, a person's decisions hinge on the likelihood of a safety issue (Vox). For instance, when a child constructs a wooden house, a damaged or rotten plank poses a hazardous risk. However, the height of the house represents a controlled risk. The child has agency in deciding its height, and while a taller structure entails greater risk, the child can opt for a safer height. This illustrates that fun holds more importance than safety, as children prioritize the enjoyment that comes from activity over potential injuries or bruises. It also implies that safety does not need to be a determining factor because their well-being is related to the risks they are willing to take for the sake of fun (Central Park Conservancy).

Present-day architectures place greater emphasis on safety rather than fun. However, this value can have unintended consequences in playgrounds. When children are presented with overly cautious and normalized structures, they may engage in riskier behavior to compensate for the lack of enjoyment and fun provided by the structure. Conversely, when children encounter a risky item in an adventure playground, they become more cautious while still experiencing the same enjoyment and fun. This highlights children's willingness to pursue enjoyment regardless of the level of danger associated with an activity (Vox).

Measures of safety not only encompass physical injuries but also extend to mental injuries, such as trauma or fear. These can have lasting and profound effects on individuals. Scary movies employ elements like music, visuals, and action to induce fear in the audience, potentially impacting their mental health. This can lead to symptoms like depression and sleep disturbances, and make existing anxiety issues worse. However, these effects are typically short-term and can be resolved through rest or engaging in daily activities. (Brady)

Nonetheless, horror movies do offer some positive benefits. They can help burn calories, serving as an alternative to indoor workouts (Francis). Each movie can burn approximately 184 calories, which is equivalent to a walking session or workout. This calorie burn contributes to stress relief (Varrati). Additionally, watching scary movies triggers the release of dopamine and serotonin, resulting in feelings of fun and pleasure, and these chemicals keep the brain active and strengthen the immune system (Vinall).

Another major example in favor of fun pertains to safety in sports. Various injuries occur in sports, including those resulting from rough behavior and accidents. These injuries can range from bruises to bone damage. However, sprains and strains are among the most common sports injuries that affect muscles. These injuries become more prevalent when muscles are overused. To minimize the risk of such injuries, there are multiple methods that can be employed (The Victorian Department of Health). One method is to take time off to allow the muscles to rest and recover from any minor injuries. Additionally, wearing protective gear such as shin guards in soccer or helmets in football can help reduce damage (NIAMS). Shin guards, for instance, can help prevent muscle strains in the leg and protect against tackles. Goalies wearing long-sleeved clothing can minimize scratches and reduce the

force applied to the arm when diving to save the ball (Brooks). Athletes are trying to minimize injuries, however, they still have to jeopardize their safety, regardless of these injuries. This is done to stop life-threatening or permanent injuries, whereas athletes will still suffer from injuries. However, these injuries only highlight the fact that countless individuals engage in sports willingly, knowing they may get injured, all for the enjoyment they derive from it.

Engaging in physical activity releases endorphins, among other chemicals that contribute to a sense of well-being. This is one of the main factors that lead many people to prioritize fun over safety when playing football. During sports, there are numerous situations where the amygdala is stimulated, which triggers a fight-or-flight response due to sudden attacks or movements. This response is akin to experiencing the effects of stress, leading to stress relief. That is why individuals who are stressed or dealing with depression often turn to sports to seek these effects (Mayo Clinic).

In conclusion, the assertion that safety is more important than fun is an interesting and debatable topic. However, based on multiple reasons, it becomes evident that fun holds greater importance. This is demonstrated by adventure playgrounds and the positive benefits that drive architects to build them. Furthermore, many individuals intentionally risk their mental well-being by watching scary movies, finding enjoyment in the stress relief they provide. Lastly, numerous young athletes willingly put themselves at risk of injury to experience the fun and stress relief achieved through the release of dopamine. So, why not take a calculated risk to have some fun?

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