

German playgrounds designed to teach kids how to handle risk

Vocabulary Match

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|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. perilous | 4. competence | ___ repercussions | ___ to regard |
| 2. motor development | 5. to deem | ___ physical growth | ___ full of danger |
| 3. consequences | | ___ capability | |

Article

New German playgrounds are built to be dangerous, forcing children to negotiate perilous obstacles while risking injury if they fall, according to a professor of motor development.

Professor Rolf Schwarz of Karlsruhe University of Education, argues that 'safe' playgrounds prevent kids from learning how to handle risk in the early stages of their development. 'If we want children to be prepared for risk, we need to allow them to come into contact with risk,' said the professor who works with councils and playground designers to develop challenging obstacles.

It comes as Rebecca Faulkner, an executive from New York based non-profit researcher play:groundNYC, said soft landing areas and spongy floors don't help kids to learn that their actions have consequences. 'What the spongy surface playgrounds don't do is teach kids that there is a consequence to falling, and they won't learn anything from it,' said Faulkner. 'The spongy surface really just teaches them that the ground is soft, which, of course, it's not.'

The news comes after a group of accident insurance companies last year called on German town planners, councils and playgrounds to develop structures that help children to cultivate 'risk competence', as many of Germany's kids were spending so much time inside amid the pandemic. Insurance companies in the UK have taken a different approach by refusing to insure playgrounds deemed too 'high-risk' to avoid the cost of paying out on accidents.

Based on an Oct 25th, 2021 article from Mail Online (All Rights Reserved) [dailymail.co.uk]

Quiz

1. According to Professor Rolf Schwarz, what is the problem with 'safe' playgrounds?
2. From an insurance point of view, what is the advantage of risk-competent children?

Conversation (A: daughter-in-law, B: grandmother)

- A: Johnny! You be careful on that rope bridge. You'll break your neck if you keep that up!
- B: That boy just doesn't know what's good for him. He takes after his father.
- A: Don't I know it! They're like two peas in a pod. And neither will listen to a word I say!
- B: Well, I wouldn't worry about Johnny. A few broken bones might do him good!

Discussion

1. What are your thoughts on 'safe' playgrounds? How do they compare to those in Japan?
2. Do you have children? What modern challenges do parents face raising kids?
3. Have you ever filed an insurance claim? What things should and shouldn't be insured?