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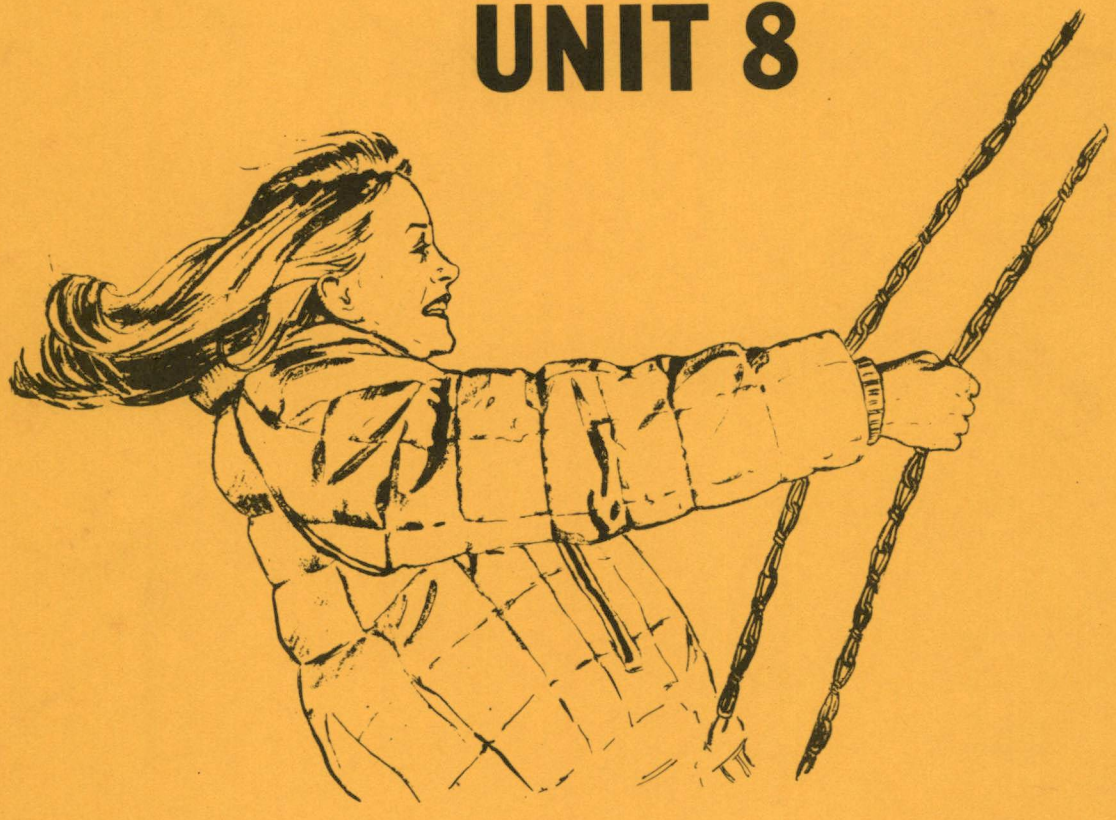
Folder Title:
"Parental Skills Program Handicapped Children Unit 8: Risk Taking" [1975]

Stack: **Row:** **Section:** **Shelf:** **Position:**

SELF INSTRUCTION

RISK TAKING

UNIT 8



PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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SELF-INSTRUCTION WORKBOOK

UNIT VIII

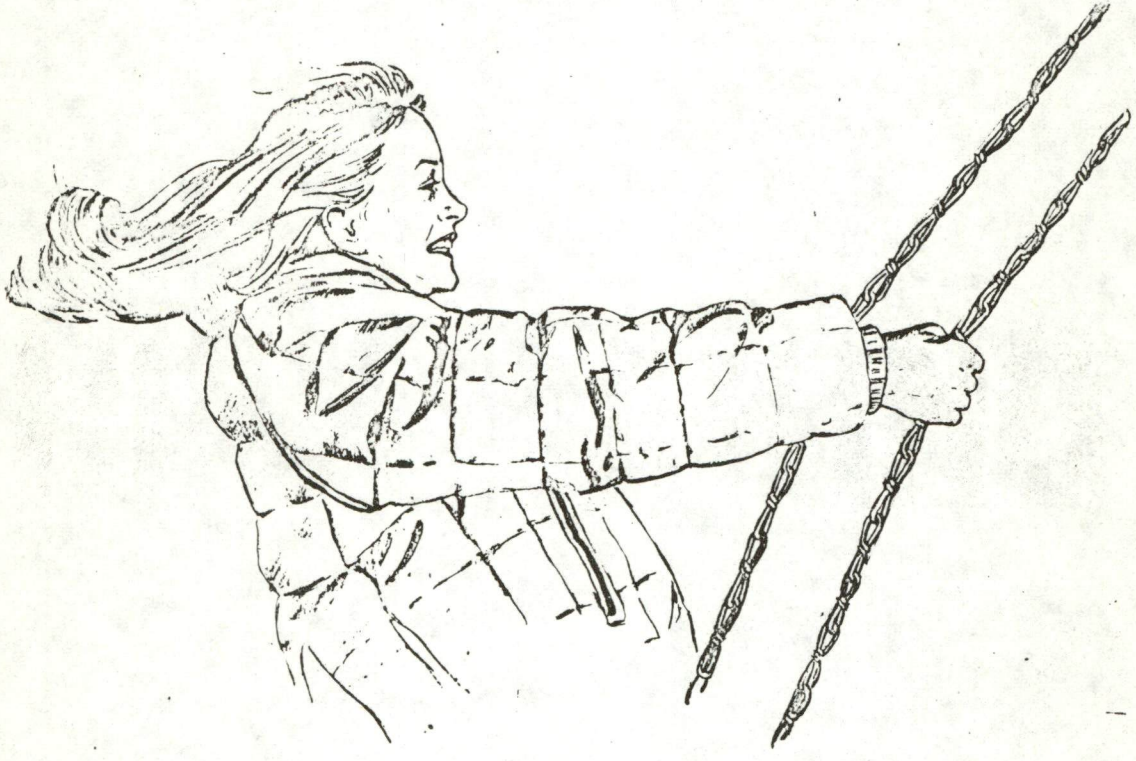
RISK TAKING

PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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RISK TAKING



INSTRUCTIONS: Turn the page and begin reading. Take a sheet of paper and slide it down the page as you read. Throughout the unit, you will come to exercises marked with a big circle. You should complete each exercise as you come to it. Then slide the paper down and check your answer with the answer provided immediately following the exercise. If you are not satisfied with your answer, go back and read the part just before the exercise and then redo the exercise. When you are satisfied with your answer, proceed with your reading.

UNIT 8

THIS IS THE EIGHTH UNIT IN THE PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM. THIS UNIT DEALS WITH RISK TAKING BEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

RISK TAKING

RISK TAKING IS THE WILLINGNESS OF PARENTS TO ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO EXPLORE, EXPAND OUT AND TAKE REASONABLE CHANCES IN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES.

CHANCE TO:

- LEARN
- FEEL
- INTERACT

ALL CHILDREN MUST TAKE REASONABLE CHANCES IN ORDER TO GROW. TO GROW, CHILDREN MUST HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN, FEEL AND INTERACT WITH OTHERS. TO DO THIS THEY MUST TAKE SOME RISKS.

SET LIMITS

WITHOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO TRY NEW THINGS AND TEST THEMSELVES, CHILDREN CAN NEVER REALISTICALLY KNOW THEIR LIMITS AND CAPABILITIES. CALCULATED RISK TAKING PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE DONE AND TO EXPAND SKILLS.



Check (✓) the statements below which are true about risk taking.

___ 1. A parent should not allow his child to take risks.

___ 2. Calculated risk taking is a willingness of parents to let their child explore, expand out and take reasonable chances.

___ 3. Risk taking is an important part of growing.

___ 4. Children learn about their capabilities by taking risks.

(Statements 2, 3, and 4 should be checked.)

OVERPROTECTION	SOME PARENTS OVERPROTECT, AND THUS LIMIT RISK TAKING AND EXPLORATION ON THE PART OF THEIR CHILDREN. THEY WILL NOT RISK ALLOWING THEIR CHILDREN TO TAKE CHANCES IN ORDER THAT THEIR CHILDREN MAY EXPERIENCE NEW THINGS AND EXPAND SKILLS.
HANDICAPPED RISK TAKING . NO GUIDELINES . FACE GREATER RISKS	FOR THE PARENT OF THE HANDICAPPED CHILD, THE TENDENCY TO AVOID RISKS IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT, BECAUSE THE PARENT DOES NOT HAVE GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING THE CHILD'S CAPABILITY IN A RISK TAKING SITUATION. THE PARENTS OF THE HANDICAPPED CHILD ALSO MUST DEAL WITH HEALTH AND INJURY RISKS NOT FACED BY NORMAL CHILDREN.
SPREADING EFFECT PHYSICAL SAFETY	WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN THE HANDICAPPED CHILD'S SITUATION IS THE SPREADING EFFECT. PARENTS MAY BE SO CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S PHYSICAL SAFETY THAT THIS CONCERN SPREADS TO RESTRICTING THE CHILD'S SOCIAL EXPERIENCES. THUS, THE CHILD HAS LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO FEND FOR HIMSELF IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS. AS A RESULT HE MAY BECOME SOCIALLY HANDICAPPED AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

EFFECTS OF OVERPROTECTION

ALTHOUGH PARENTS MAY BE GENUINELY CONCERNED AND REALLY FEEL THEY ARE HELPING THEIR CHILD, THE EFFECT OF OVERPROTECTION MAY BE JUST THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THE PARENTS WANT FOR THEIR CHILD.

REDUCES EXPERIENCE

ONE EFFECT OF OVERPROTECTION IS THAT IT REDUCES EXPERIENCE AND THEREBY PREVENTS THE CHILD FROM GROWING, LEARNING AND EXPANDING HIS INTERESTS AND SKILLS.

DISTORTS REALITY

ANOTHER EFFECT OF OVERPROTECTION IS THAT IT DISTORTS REALITY. THE CHILD BEGINS TO LIVE IN AN ARTIFICIAL WORLD AND DOESN'T DEVELOP SKILLS FOR THE "REAL WORLD".

INCREASES ISOLATION

OVERPROTECTION ALSO INCREASES THE ISOLATION OF THE ALREADY ISOLATED CHILD. THE CHILD MAY TEND TO BECOME MORE INWARD AND PASSIVE AND MORE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CHILDREN.

EMPHASIZES HANDICAP

A FINAL EFFECT OF OVERPROTECTION IS THAT IT TENDS TO EMPHASIZE THE CHILD'S HANDICAP AND PROVIDE THE CHILD WITH A CRUTCH TO CONSTANTLY FALL BACK UPON. THE LONG TERM EFFECT OF OVERPROTECTION IS TO RESTRICT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY ON THE PART OF THE CHILD, OFTEN LEAVING HIM DEPENDENT AND IMMATURE.



Write in four negative effects of overprotection on a handicapped child.

1. _____

2. _____

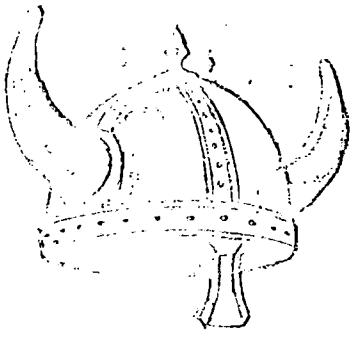
3. _____

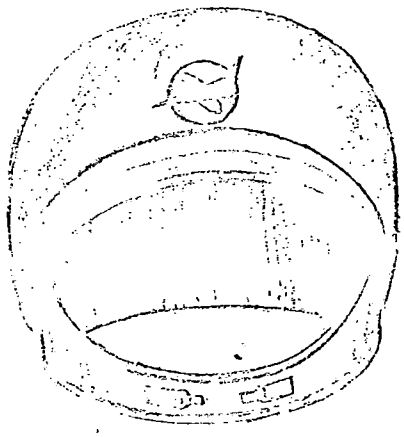
4. _____

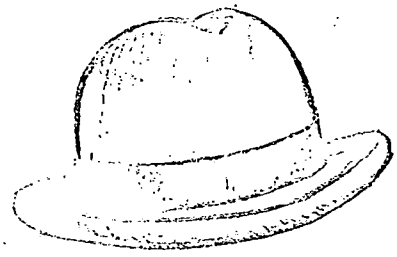
(Overprotection tends to 1. reduce the experiences a child should have if he is to grow. Overprotecting a child may 2. distort his view of reality by making him think that he will always be protected. Overprotecting tends to 3. increase a child's isolation and 4. emphasize his handicap.)

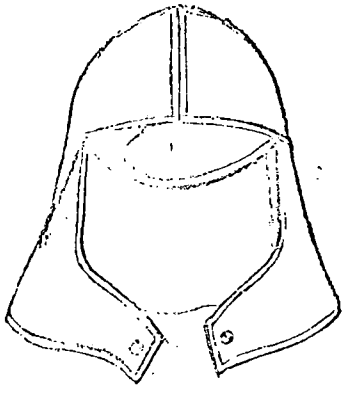
NEED TO EXTEND CHILD

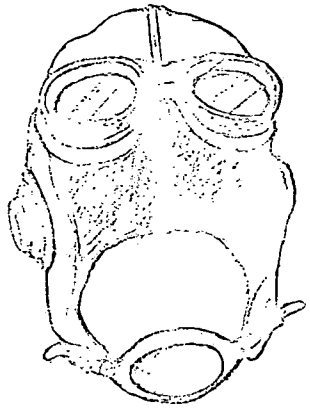
IN THE HANDICAPPED CHILD SITUATION THERE IS PROBABLY A GREATER NEED FOR PARENTS TO EXTEND THE CHILD THAN IN THE NORMAL CHILD SITUATION. HANDICAPPED CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL SKILLS AND COPING SKILLS IN ORDER TO LEAD A FULL LIFE.











RISK
TAKING
STYLES

FOR THE MOST PART, PARENTAL RISK TAKING IN THE HANDICAPPED FAMILY SITUATION CAN BE SCALED INTO FIVE TYPES, OR RISK TAKING STYLES. THESE ARE THE FIVE HATS PARENTS CAN WEAR AS RISK TAKERS.

RISK TAKING STYLES:

- AVOIDER
- INSURER
- CALCULATOR
- ADVENTURER
- DAREDEVIL

THESE FIVE STYLES OF RISK TAKING PARENTS ARE: THE AVOIDER, THE INSURER, THE CALCULATOR, THE ADVENTURER AND THE DAREDEVIL. INSIGHTS INTO THESE FIVE TYPES OF RISK TAKERS CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE KIND OF RISK TAKER ONE MAY BE AND THE KIND OF RISK TAKER ONE SHOULD BE IN ORDER TO HELP A HANDICAPPED CHILD DEVELOP.



AVOIDER

THE FIRST TYPE OF RISK TAKER IS THE AVOIDER. OF ALL THE RISK TAKING STYLES THE AVOIDER PARENT IS THE MOST CAUTIOUS.

AVOIDS RISKS

THE AVOIDER PARENT WILL GO TO ANY EXTREME TO AVOID RISK. SUCH A PARENT HAS MANY FEARS. LIFE IS THREATENING TO HIM. EVERYTHING APPEARS TO BE A RISK TO THE AVOIDER:

LIMITS MOBILITY

THE AVOIDER LIMITS MOBILITY. BECAUSE THE AVOIDER SEES EVEN ORDINARY SITUATIONS AS INVOLVING RISK, HE LIMITS THE MOBILITY AND EXPERIENCE OF HIS CHILD. THE PARENT DOES NOT ALLOW HIS CHILD TO MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE. BY RESTRICTING MOBILITY, THIS PARENT SEEKS TO AVOID THE UNKNOWN AND TO PREVENT SOMETHING "BAD" FROM HAPPENING.

HIDES CHILD

THE AVOIDER HIDES HIS CHILD FROM THE WORLD AND THE WORLD FROM HIS CHILD. CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS SO RESTRICTED THAT THE CHILD LOSES TOUCH WITH REALITY AND BECOMES HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THE PARENT. THE CHILD HAS FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW AND DEVELOP.

AVOIDER PARENT

THE AVOIDER PARENT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THAT A DEGREE OF RISK TAKING IS REQUIRED IN THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE. THIS TYPE OF PARENT, IN AVOIDING SO MANY SITUATIONS, PREVENTS HIS CHILD FROM HAVING EXPERIENCES WHICH WILL STIMULATE, INVOLVE AND DEVELOP HIM. THE LONG RANGE EFFECTS ON THE CHILD ARE A LACK OF ABILITY TO COPE, AN UNREALISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD, A RELUCTANCE TO TAKE A CHANCE, AND DEPENDENCE ON THE PARENT.

Check (✓) the statements below which are true for the Avoider risk taker.

____ 1. Avoiders allow their child to go many places and do many things.

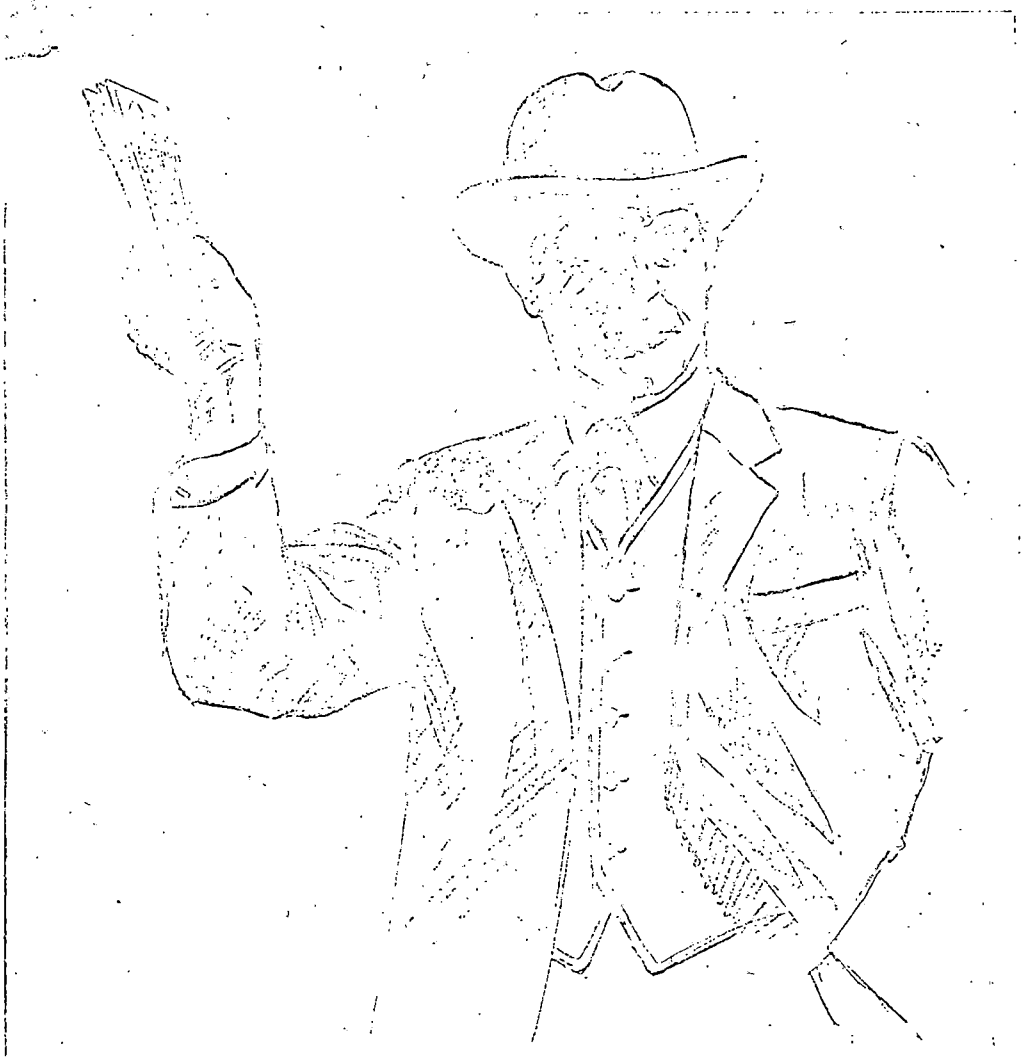
____ 2. Avoider's children tend to develop their independence.

____ 3. Avoiders hide their children from the outside world.

____ 4. Everything appears to be a risk to the Avoider.

____ 5. Avoiders realize that risk taking is important for a child's development.

(Statements 3 and 4 are true and should be checked.)



INSURER

THE SECOND TYPE OF RISK TAKER IS THE INSURER. THIS IS THE TYPE OF PARENT WHO WILL NOT ALLOW A CHILD TO TAKE A RISK UNLESS THERE IS ALMOST COMPLETE ASSURANCE THAT THERE IS NO RISK. CONSEQUENTLY, VERY FEW RISKS ARE TAKEN.

OVERCAUTIOUS

THE INSURER IS OVERCAUTIOUS IN EVERYTHING THE CHILD IS ALLOWED TO DO. IN TERMS OF ALLOWING ACTION OR NEW ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF THE CHILD, THE INSURER IS ONLY SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE AVOIDER.

OVERANALYZES

THE INSURER PARENT OVERANALYZES THE RISKS INVOLVED IN ALLOWING HIS CHILD TO EXPLORE AND EXPAND OUT. THE PARENT TRIES TO ANTICIPATE EVERY DANGER. SOMETIMES THE INSURER WILL SPEND SO MUCH TIME IN ANALYZING UNLIKELY COMPLICATIONS THAT THE TIME FOR ACTION AND LEARNING PASSES.

OVERRESTRICTS

IN THE LONG RUN THE INSURER PARENT OVERRESTRICTS THE CHILD. THE PARENT WATCHES OVER THE CHILD AND CONTROLS EVERY THREAT. BECAUSE THE PARENT OVERRESTRICTS, THE CHILD LEARNS TO BE HESITANT IN EVEN LIMITED RISK TAKING SITUATIONS.

INSURER PARENT

THE INSURER PARENT IS SO SUPER CAUTIOUS AND MAKES SUCH A SUPER ANALYSIS OF EVERY RISK AND SITUATION THAT THE PARENT NEVER REALLY ALLOWS THE CHILD TO TAKE A CHANCE. THE INSURER PARENT REALLY WANTS TO TOTALLY PROTECT HIMSELF AND HIS CHILD FROM UNNECESSARY PROBLEMS EVEN THOUGH SUCH PROBLEMS ENABLE THE CHILD TO GROW AND DEVELOP. THE INSURER LIMITS THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS CHILD.



Check (✓) those items below which are true for the insurer risk taker.

_____ 1. The Insurer parent is overly cautious.

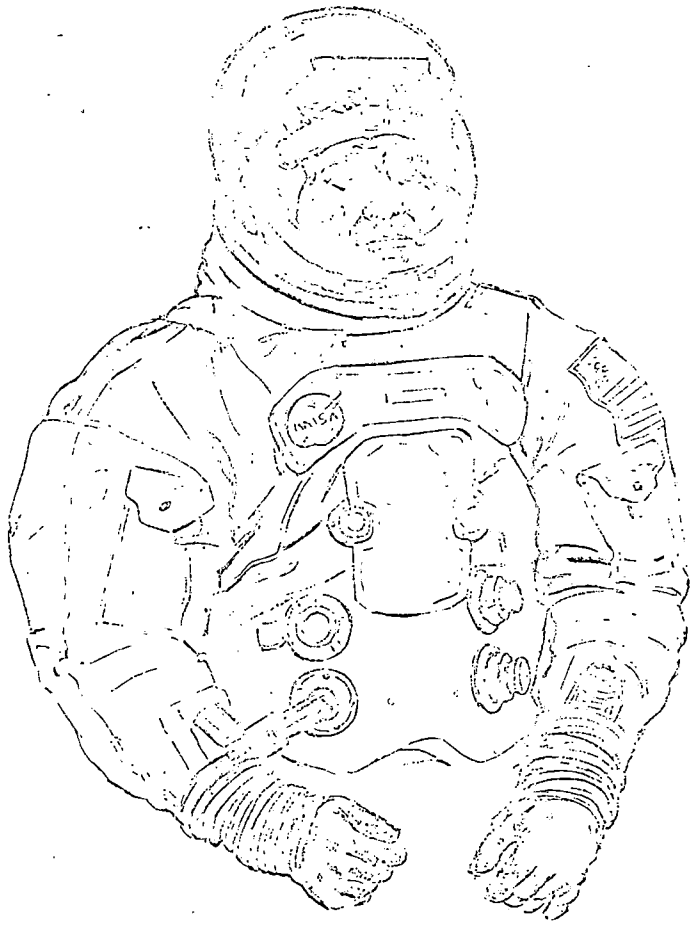
_____ 2. Insurers fail to analyze risks.

_____ 3. The insurer's child tends to be sure of himself in new situations.

_____ 4. Insurers do not restrict a child's activities.

_____ 5. An Insurer limits the development of his child.

(Statements 1 and 5 are true.)



CALCULATOR

THE THIRD TYPE OF RISK TAKER IS THE CALCULATOR. THE CALCULATOR UNDERSTANDS THAT WE ALL LIVE IN A WORLD REQUIRING RISK TAKING AND THAT CHILDREN LEARN AND GROW FROM NEW SITUATIONS.

FORECASTS RISKS

THE CALCULATOR PARENT FORECASTS THE RISKS THAT HIS CHILD FACES IN A NEW SITUATION. IN SO DOING, THE CALCULATOR PARENT GATHERS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SITUATION AND ANTICIPATES THE OUTCOME BASED ON INFORMATION GATHERED. THE CALCULATOR ALSO REALIZES THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME IN EVERY SITUATION WITH COMPLETE ACCURACY.

ANALYZES ODDS

AFTER FORECASTING RISKS, THE CALCULATOR ANALYZES THE ODDS ON SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN TERMS OF THE CHILD'S CAPABILITY. IN ANALYZING THE ODDS, THE PARENT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THAT THE CHILD CAN EXTEND HIS RESOURCES AND THAT SOME INTERVENING EVENTS MAY OCCUR THAT WILL AFFECT THE RISK ACTION.

RELEASES CHILD

IF THE ODDS FOR SUCCESS ARE GOOD, THE CALCULATOR RELEASES THE CHILD TO TAKE THE RISK. THAT IS, THE PARENT ALLOWS THE CHILD TO MOVE AHEAD. IF THE ODDS ARE BAD, THE CHILD IS NOT ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITY. THE CALCULATOR PARENT EXPLAINS TO HIS CHILD THE PROCESS HE USED IN CALCULATING THE RISK.

CACULATOR PARENT

THE CALCULATOR PARENT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE CHILD LEARNS AND GROWS THROUGH RISK TAKING. KNOWING THIS, THE PARENT FORECASTS RISKS, ANALYZES THE ODDS AND ALLOWS THE CHILD TO MOVE ON TO THE NEW EXPERIENCES WHERE THE ODDS ARE FAVORABLE. THE CALCULATOR TEACHES HIS CHILD TO CALCULATE RISKS FOR HIMSELF.



Check (✓) the items below which are true for the Calculator risk taker.

_____ 1. Calculator parents know that children learn by taking risks.

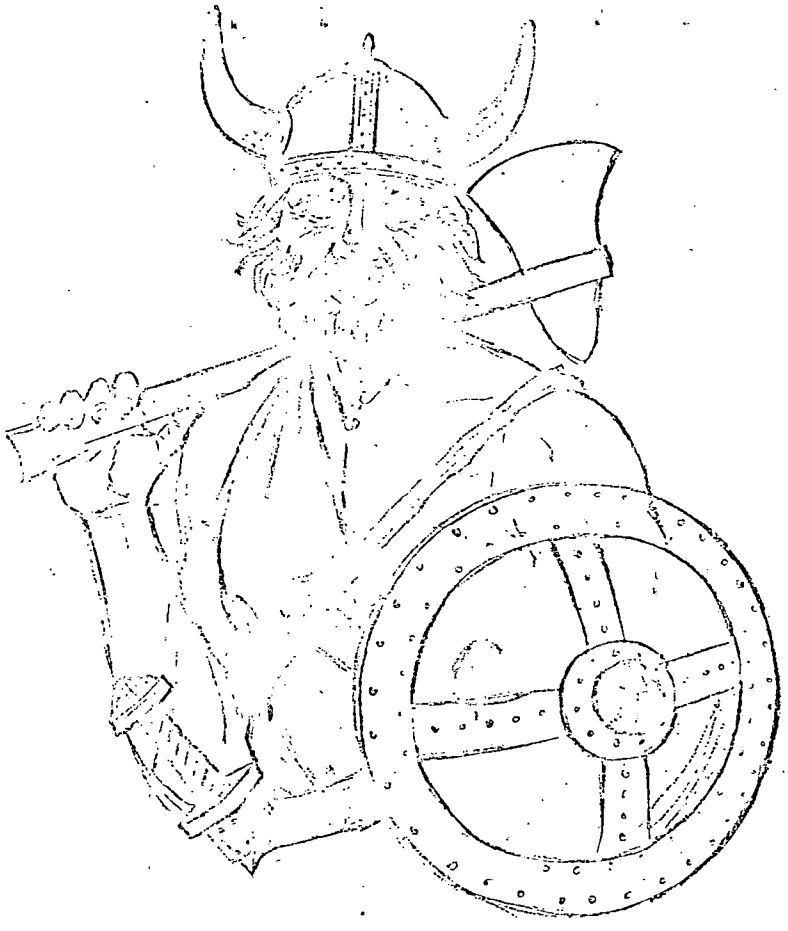
_____ 2. They believe it's possible to predict the outcome of every situation.

_____ 3. The Calculator analyzes the odds on success or failure.

_____ 4. A Calculator tends to overprotect his child.

_____ 5. The Calculator teaches his child when to take risks.

(Statements 1, 3 and 5 are true.)



ADVENTURER

THE FOURTH TYPE OF RISK TAKER IS THE ADVENTURER. THE ADVENTURER TENDS TO ENJOY RISK TAKING, BOTH ON THE PART OF THE PARENT AND ON THE PART OF THE CHILD. TO THE ADVENTURER PARENT, RISKS ARE FUN.

MYTH MAKES

THE ADVENTURER TENDS TO MYTH-MAKE OR IMAGINE THINGS TO BE MORE EXCITING AND LESS THREATENING THAN THEY ARE. THIS PARENT TENDS TO MYTH-MAKE THAT EVERYTHING ALWAYS COMES OUT ALL RIGHT OR THAT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WILL TAKE CARE OF HIS CHILD. HE IS NOT REALISTIC CONCERNING WHAT IS AND IS NOT A RISK. CONSEQUENTLY, THE CHILD EXPERIENCES MANY FAILURES BECAUSE OF THE UNREALISTIC GOALS HIS PARENT SETS FOR HIM.

ENCOURAGE MOBILITY

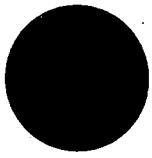
THE ADVENTURER PARENT ENCOURAGES MOBILITY ON THE PART OF THE CHILD. THAT IS, THE PARENT ENCOURAGES THE CHILD TO MOVE AROUND AND TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD. ADVENTURE IS EXPLORING AND IN ORDER TO EXPLORE ONE MUST MOVE ABOUT.

CHALLENGES CHILD

FINALLY, THE ADVENTURER RISK TAKER TENDS TO CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE THE CHILD: "YOU CAN DO IT," OR "DON'T BE A SISSY". BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR OF SOME ADVENTURER PARENTS THERE IS OFTEN A NEED TO PROVE SOMETHING---ONE'S MANHOOD OR ONE'S SUPERIORITY OR TO DENY THE HANDICAP OF HIS CHILD.

ADVENTURER PARENT

THE ADVENTURER PARENT ENCOURAGES HIGH MOBILITY ON THE PART OF THE CHILD. IN SO DOING THE PARENT MYTH-MAKES CONCERNING SAFETY. THE ADVENTURER CONSTANTLY SEEKS A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHILD AND IS MORE CONCERNED WITH ACTIVITY THAN GROWTH. MANY ADVENTURER PARENTS SET UNREALISTIC GOALS, OVERSTIMULATE AND EXHAUST THEIR CHILDREN. BECAUSE OF THIS THE CHILD EXPERIENCES MANY FAILURES WHICH AFFECT HIS SELF-IMAGE.



Check (✓) the items below which are true for the Adventurer risk taker.

_____ 1. Restricts mobility for his child.

_____ 2. Creates many situations in which the child fails.

_____ 3. Never challenges the child.

_____ 4. Sees risk situations in unrealistic ways.

_____ 5. Does not enjoy risk taking.

(Statements 2 and 4 are true.)



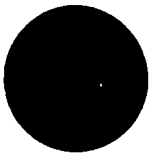
DAREDEVIL

THE FIFTH TYPE OF RISK TAKER IS THE DAREDEVIL. THE DAREDEVIL PARENT TENDS TO TAKE UNNECESSARY CHANCES WITH THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY. THE DAREDEVIL PARENT OPERATES IN A RISK SITUATION AS IF HE SECRETLY WISHED FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN TO THE CHILD.

IGNORES RISKS

THE DAREDEVIL IGNORES RISKS BOTH TO HIMSELF AND TO HIS CHILD. SOME DAREDEVILS MAY BE WHAT IS CALLED FATALISTIC. THAT IS, THEY BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER WILL HAPPEN WILL HAPPEN WHETHER ONE TAKES PRECAUTIONS OR NOT.

FOOLHARDY	THE DAREDEVIL PARENT IS QUITE OFTEN FOOLHARDY IN THE RISKS HE TAKES WITH HIS CHILD AND HIMSELF. IN BEING FOOLHARDY THE PARENT THREATENS THE SECURITY NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND THE CHILD MAY TEND TO WITHDRAW.
ENDANGERS CHILD	THE DAREDEVIL ENDANGERS HIS CHILD'S SAFETY. THE DAREDEVIL PARENT MAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THROW A CHILD INTO A POOL OF WATER IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT LEARN TO SWIM, OR MAY LEAVE A HELPLESS CHILD HOME ALONE.
DAREDEVIL PARENT	IN TERMS OF ALL OF THE RISK TAKING STYLES, THE DAREDEVIL PARENT IS THE MOST EXTREME RISK TAKER WITH THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY. THE DAREDEVIL IGNORES RISKS, IS FOOLHARDY IN PARENTAL BEHAVIOR AND ACTIVELY ENDANGERS HIS CHILD.



Check (✓) the items below which are true for the Daredevil risk taker.

_____ 1. Daredevil parents set realistic goals for their child.

_____ 2. The child tends to experience many successes.

_____ 3. Daredevil parents are fatalistic.

_____ 4. Daredevil parents threaten security needs of their child.

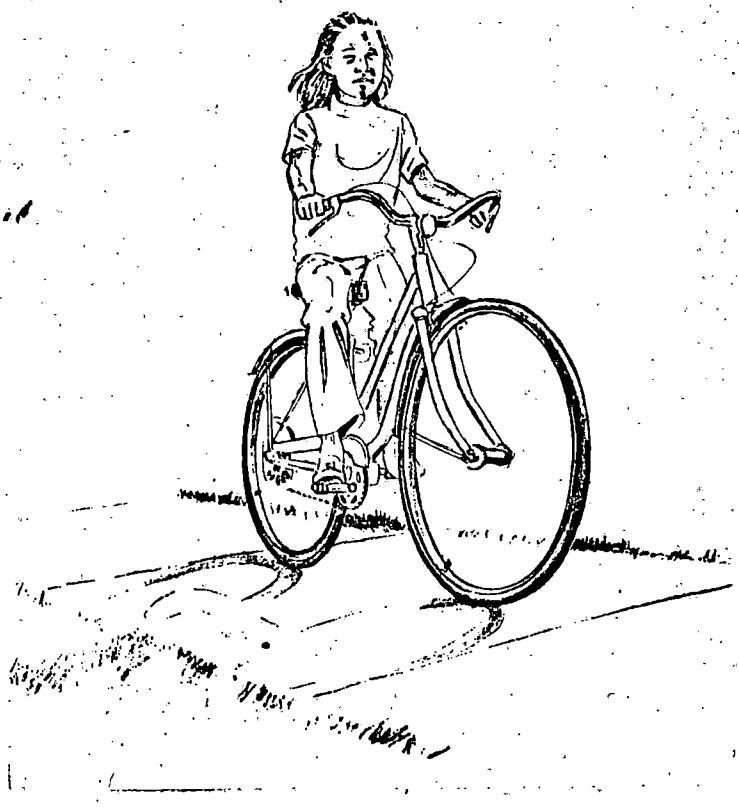
_____ 5. Daredevil parents endanger their child's safety.

(Statements 3, 4 and 5 are true.)



CALCULATOR

LOOKING AT THE FIVE BASIC RISK TAKING STYLES, THE ONE THAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST STYLE FOR PARENTS OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD IS THE CALCULATOR. THE ACTIVATOR PARENT IS A CALCULATOR IN TERMS OF RISK TAKING. HE BELIEVES THAT HIS CHILD MUST BE INVOLVED IN A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES TO GROW AND DEVELOP, BUT HE LOGICALLY TRIES TO CALCULATE THE RISK INVOLVED.



RISK TAKING EXAMPLE

ONE WAY TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO RISK CALCULATING IS TO TAKE A CONCRETE EXAMPLE. CONSIDER A NINE YEAR OLD DEAF CHILD WHO WANTS TO RIDE A BICYCLE TO A COMMUNITY POOL AND GO SWIMMING. THE POOL IS THREE BLOCKS AWAY AND THE CHILD HAS NEVER ATTEMPTED GOING ALONE BEFORE.

5 QUESTIONS?

IN CALCULATING THIS RISK SITUATION PARENTS SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES FIVE QUESTIONS.

1. IDENTIFY RISK

THE FIRST QUESTION CONCERNS THE RISK INVOLVED IN THE SITUATION. THE PARENT MUST IDENTIFY THE RISKS WHICH ARE ACTUALLY PRESENT. HE MUST SEEK TO DETERMINE IF THE RISKS ARE REAL OR IMAGINED. THAT IS, WHAT MAKES THE SITUATION A RISK IN THE FIRST PLACE? THE RISKS IN THIS SITUATION ARE TRAFFIC, SWIMMING AND GETTING LOST.

2. SKILL

THE SECOND QUESTION RELATES TO SKILL. THE PARENT CAN ASK, "DOES MY CHILD HAVE THE SKILLS TO DO THE ACTIVITY ALONE?" THAT IS, IS SHE SKILLED AT RIDING A BICYCLE? IS SHE SKILLED AT SWIMMING? DOES SHE KNOW THE WAY TO THE POOL? ARE THE ODDS FAVORABLE ON THE CHILD'S SKILLS?

3. CONDITIONS

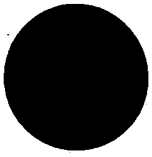
QUESTION THREE RELATES TO CONDITIONS. THE PARENT MUST ASK, "ARE THE CONDITIONS GOOD FOR ACCOMPLISHING THE ACTIVITY ALONE?" THAT IS, ARE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS LIGHT? ARE THERE LIFE GUARDS WHO KNOW MY CHILD?

4. PAST EXPERIENCE

THE FOURTH QUESTION DEALS WITH THE CHILD'S PAST EXPERIENCE. HAS SHE DEMONSTRATED THE ABILITY TO HANDLE SIMILAR SITUATIONS IN THE PAST? CAN SHE BE TRUSTED IN THE SITUATION? DOES PAST EXPERIENCE REVEAL THAT THE ODDS ARE GOOD?

5. "HIDDEN" MOTIVES

THE FINAL QUESTION DEALS WITH THE "HIDDEN" OR SECRET MOTIVES OF PARENTS THEMSELVES. THAT IS, DO THEY HAVE ANY HIDDEN MOTIVES FOR HOLDING THE CHILD BACK? DO THEY DENY THE CHILD AN OPPORTUNITY JUST TO AVOID THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF A PROBLEM THEY MAY HAVE TO DEAL WITH? DO THEY DISLIKE THEIR CHILD AND SECRETLY PUNISH BY LIMITING EXPERIENCE? OR ARE THEY PUSHING?



Below is a list of factors involved in a risk situation. Pick the number of the factor which corresponds to the question asked on the left and write it on the line.

QUESTIONS		FACTORS
Identify risk	_____	1. Parents are secretly punishing their child by limiting his experience.
Skill	_____	2. A parent knows he can trust his child to look after his brother.
Conditions	_____	3. A parent knows his child has the capabilities needed in the situation.
Past experience	_____	4. Deciding whether the risk is real or imagined.
Hidden motives	_____	5. Deciding whether the time is right for doing the activity.

(Identify risk, 4; skill, 3; conditions, 5; past experience, 2; and hidden motives, 1.)

CHILD'S + FACTOR RESOURCES

ONE REASSURING FACTOR PARENTS SHOULD CONSIDER IN ALLOWING A CHILD TO TAKE A CALCULATED RISK IS THE + FACTOR. THIS IS THE CHILD'S HIDDEN RESOURCES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OR HANDLE RISK TAKING SITUATIONS. ALL OF US HAVE HIDDEN RESOURCES, UNKNOWN ENERGIES AND ABILITIES THAT TEND TO COME INTO PLAY WHEN WE ARE IN A PROBLEM SITUATION. THE PARENT SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE CHILD HAS A + FACTOR RESOURCE.

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, YOU WILL FIND PRACTICE ACTIVITIES. THESE ACTIVITIES WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN THIS UNIT TO PROBLEM SITUATIONS WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THE PROBLEMS PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN FACE.

"THE RISK TAKERS"

THIS EXERCISE PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF RISK TAKING STYLES TO A REAL SITUATION.

It is a sunny Saturday afternoon in a small town. Tommy Tompson, an 11 year old educable mentally retarded boy, wants to go to the movie with some neighborhood children who are younger than he is.

He walks into the kitchen and says, "I am going to the movies with Joe and that other girl."

His mother, becoming frightened, says, "You can't go to the movies. I know you have gone before, but you might get lost. You might lose your money, and it might cloud up and rain. I don't want you to go."

Tommy replies, "Nothing ever happens to me, I always have good luck. I never have to worry."

About that time, Tommy's father comes in and enters into the conversation. Tommy's father is a calculator risk taker.

1. How will Tommy's father handle this situation?

2. What kind of risk taker is Tommy's mother?

3. What kind of risk taker is Tommy?

4. There are two kinds of risk takers not covered in the case history above. Determine what these two are and discuss how each of these two other risk takers would handle this situation.

(The answers appear on the next page)

ANSWERS

1. As a Calculator risk taker, Tommy's father will forecast the risks and analyze the odds. If the odds are good, he will allow Tommy to go to the movies. In identifying the risks he will take in consideration the weather, the possibility of getting lost, or Tommy losing his money, the distance, the method of getting to and from the movie, etc.

   In analyzing the odds he will take into consideration Tommy's maturity level, previous experiences, whether Joe and the other person are responsible, and the things he needs to do to reduce risks. If the odds are good, he will let Tommy go to the movies.

2. Tommy's mother is an Avoider risk taker. She focuses entirely on avoiding any risks.

3. Tommy seems to be an Adventurer in this situation. If he were a Daredevil, he would probably want to go alone.

4. There are two other types of Risk Takers:

   THE INSURER

   One kind of risk taker not covered in the case history is the Insurer. The Insurer may allow her son to go to the movies but would have walked some distance behind him to make certain he did not get lost. She would buy his ticket and one for herself so that she could sit a few seats behind him. When the movie was over, she would walk him back home. The Insurer would insist that Tommy wear a raincoat, just in case it starts to rain.

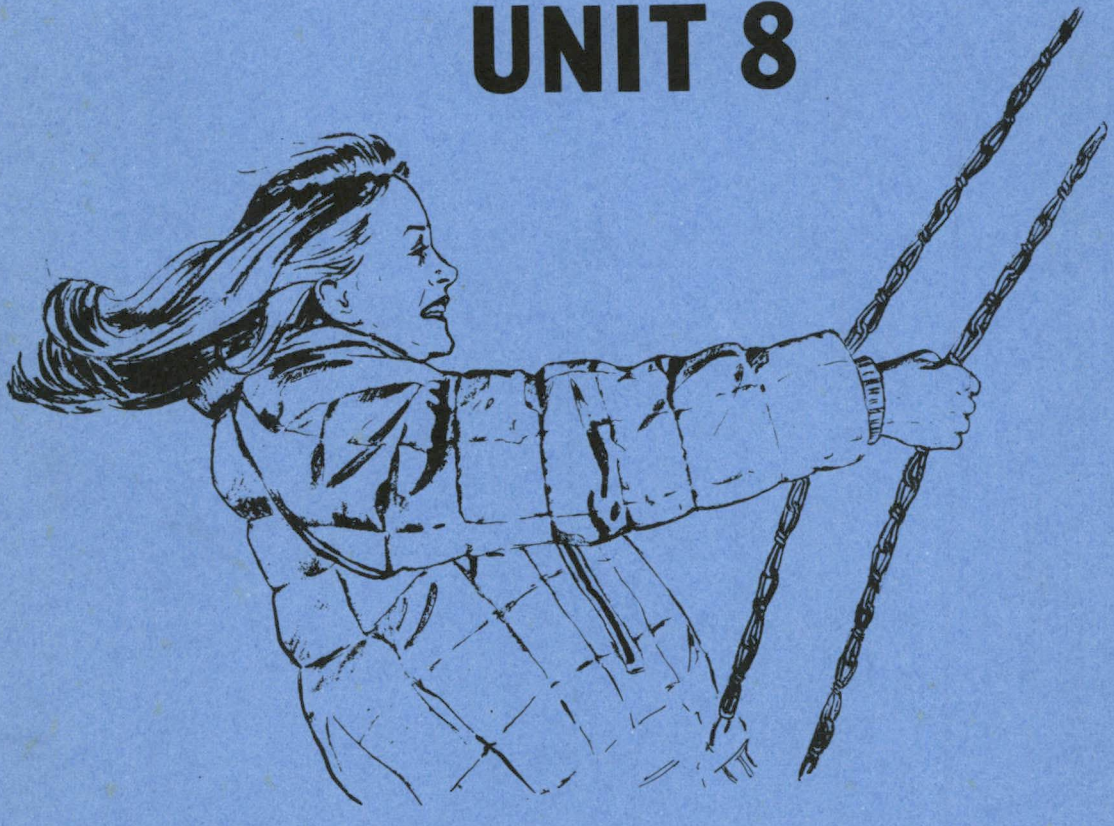
   THE DAREDEVIL

   The other kind of risk taker not covered in the case history is the Daredevil. The Daredevil would probably not hesitate to tell the child to take off. He would give the child money and tell him to have fun. Nothing would be mentioned about the time Tommy should return. Daredevils never consider the possibility of danger.

TEXT

RISK TAKING

UNIT 8



PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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FIRST DRAFT

TEXT

UNIT VIII - RISK TAKING

PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN PROGRAM

By

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UNIT VIII

RISK TAKING

In other units of this text we have emphasized that overprotection and the resulting lack of experience often prevent handicapped children from reaching their potential, from being involved in life, or from being able to become self-sufficient to the degree possible. We have discussed the isolated handicapped child who has few skills, particularly social skills, who is dependent on others because he has not had a chance to develop his skills or to find out what he is capable of doing on his own.

This unit is concerned with parental behaviors and ideas regarding risk taking when a child is handicapped. Risk taking is allowing a child to explore, expand out, and take some chances.[a] All of us must take some risks every day. We must all take chances. For example, just getting on a freeway to go to work involves some risk, as do many activities which all of us perform each day. It is virtually impossible to be involved in life without taking risks. People are unable to predict with complete accuracy the outcome of their activities. We all must take risks.

With handicapped children, however, there seems to be a very strong pattern of parents trying to avoid risks when it comes to their child. Parents appear to be so concerned for their child's physical safety, that they overprotect their child and restrict his opportunities to explore, expand out and take the ordinary risks that most other people take. It is interesting to talk with handicapped youth as the project

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(a) See 2, 9, 10.

staff did before developing the Parental Skills Program. When these youth were asked what created the most difficult problems between them and their parents, there was a common theme: "Our parents overprotected us; they misjudged the things we would be able to do. Too often they said no, or that is impossible." Many of these youth told us that as they became older they had very real problems because they had more faith in themselves than their parents did. They wanted to go places, they wanted to do things, but they knew they would frighten and threaten their parents. Often they had to make a choice between doing something for themselves or making their parents happy.

It was interesting that these handicapped youth, who had a variety of disabilities, reported similar experiences. One might think that the nature of a child's handicap would have some effect on a parent's willingness to allow his child to expand out and take risks. But it did not seem to matter a great deal whether the handicap was severe or minor, whether it limited mobility or not. According to these handicapped youth, their parents tended to hold them back and placed barriers before them. These youth felt it was a serious problem.

In light of these reports from handicapped youth, it was even more interesting to talk with parents of handicapped children about how they felt and what they did when their child wanted to do something where some risk was involved, or where there was some unknown element or a new situation. Many parents revealed that they had very real fears that something would happen to their child if he took a chance. Some parents talked as if they expected something bad to happen if they were not with their child every minute. Other parents told of sometimes failing to allow their child to do

something because they were worried about how others would judge a parent of a handicapped child who, for example, allowed his mentally retarded child to walk to the corner store alone.

It was evident that many parents have so much concern for their child's physical safety and his health, that they often restrict their child's activities. It was also evident that this concern for physical safety prevented the parents from considering the fact that the restrictions on activities might be direct threats to their child's psychological safety. There seemed to be little recognition of the results of over-protection on a child's mental health. Somehow, over-concern for their child's physical safety prevented parents from being concerned about their child's psychological safety: mental health, social needs, and their needs for esteem and self-expression.

There were other parents who allowed their handicapped children to take calculated risks and do many things on their own. Interestingly, the parents who tended to allow a fair amount of risk taking often had more than one handicapped child. In one case the parents had five handicapped children. It was surprising how much freedom the youngest blind child had, and how extremely capable and self-confident she was. Other parents who allowed their handicapped children to have freedom were parents who had had some parent training, and who firmly believed that it was extremely important for children with handicaps to do things on their own, to have a wide range of experience.

There were also some parents who seemed to allow their handicapped child to roam around the neighborhood with no supervision by the parents. Somehow in these cases, one got the impression that the parents were unrealistic. In contrast to the extreme of being overprotective, these parents were underprotective and apparently did not sense the real risks their child was taking. Some other parents told us of deliberately pushing their child into extremely risky situations. For example, one parent related having pushed a child, paralyzed from the waist down, into a pool so she would learn to swim. This kind of action is foolhardy and threatening to a child.

EFFECTS OF OVERPROTECTION

Although parents who restrict their child's activities by overprotection may be genuinely concerned and feel they are helping their child, the effects of overprotection may be the opposite of what the parents want for their child. The major effects of overprotection are:

- Reduced experiences
- Distorted reality
- Increased isolation
- Emphasized handicap

By reducing experiences,[b] overprotection deprives the child of opportunities for growing, learning, and expanding his interests and skills.[c] Overprotection distorts reality,[d] in that the child lives in an artificial world. It is a small world in which

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(b) See 10.

(c) See 2, 4, 9, 10.

(d) See 10.

he acquires only limited knowledge and does not develop skills for the "real" world. Overprotected children are often undeveloped in terms of abilities and cannot cope in a larger world. They experience stress with any new experience or with even minor changes in routine.

Overprotection also increases the isolation[e] of a child who, because of his handicap, might already be somewhat isloated. Social isolation compounds the child's handicap. Although the child's lack of mobility, for example, may be the observable handicap -- the child soon becomes "socially handicapped".[f] At this point the whole child becomes disabled, that is, he is a handicapped person and not just a person with a handicap. Such a child may tend to become more inward and passive and even more "different" from other children. Overprotected children may develop a habit of withdrawing mentally in order to escape the underload or boredom of their existence, or they may physically withdraw in order to avoid uncomfortable and embarrassing social encounters. A final effect of overprotection is that it tends to emphasize the child's handicap and provide the child with a crutch to constantly fall back upon. It tends to create a self-image in which the handicap looms larger. The child thinks of himself as a handicapped child rather than simply as a child with a handicap.

(e) See 6, 10.

(f) See 10.

The long term effect of overprotection is to restrict the development of self-sufficiency,[g] often leaving the child dependent and immature. It was pointed out in the chapter on stress, that children who feel inadequate to manage on their own seemed to experience far greater amounts of stress than handicapped children who come to learn that they are capable of managing many things, capable of making decisions and choices, and able to have influence over their own lives. There will be many occasions where the overprotected child will experience stress in situations that would not be stressful to a child who is not so overprotected. Such children often grow into extremely handicapped adults, not only physically handicapped, but socially and emotionally handicapped as well.

In the handicapped child situation there is probably a greater need for parents to extend their child, to encourage his involvement in many activities, than in situations with a non-handicapped child. Handicapped children need to lead a full life, and it probably will take more effort on their part to achieve it than for non-handicapped children. Life to a handicapped child is often quite a challenge, with many obstacles to overcome. It will take greater courage and self-confidence for a blind child to walk down the street than a sighted child. It may well take greater courage and feelings of worth for a disfigured child to participate with a group of strong, healthy, children, than it does for a non-disabled child.

(g) See 8, 9, 10.

Unfortunately, however, the fears of parents often prevent them from allowing their children to participate in experiences involving an element of risk. Therefore, such parents are obstacles to their children expanding out and extending themselves.[h] Parental behaviors toward their child in circumstances where the child wants to do something or needs to do something in which there is a risk involved, dramatically affect the child. Not only do the parental risk taking behaviors serve as a model for the child to copy, but they also affect the exposure a handicapped child will have to the world, to ideas, to places, and other people. They will affect how far the child can develop along the maturity scale and how self-sufficient a child can become.

WHAT IS A RISK ?

Some people seem far more willing to take chances or risks than others. The same situation might appear as very risky to one person while another person would consider that there was little, if any, risk involved. Most often what makes something appear risky is often in the mind of a person - it is a very individual thing.

What kinds of things cause one person to sense a risk, while another may see no risk at all? We learn by our past experiences and from our own parents and during our lives to identify situations which we believe to be risky or threatening to us. When we personally have successes in a situation or have our physical needs for safety and our psychological needs met in this situation, we usually do not think

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(h) See 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.

of it as involving any risk at all. Our past experience with the situation indicates to us that it and other similar situations are fairly safe situations to be in.

On the other hand, in situations where we have personally experienced a failure or where something or someone has harmed us physically or hurt us psychologically, we tend to judge this or similar situations by our past experiences and by what we have been taught, and we see a situation in terms of what we think it will do to us. We think of a situation as a risk if we think it will threaten any of our needs: our physical safety, or social needs for approval or acceptance, or needs for esteem, or our need for self-expression. We see a situation as involving little risk if we think of it as fulfilling any of our needs.

As parents we are put in the position of judging the risk involved in situations that our children will be involved in. Because any harm which will come to our child is very threatening to us as parents, we not only judge these situations it terms of what they will do to our child, but we judge the situation in terms of what it will do to us it something happens to our child. Again, our judgments of what is or is not a risk is very personal. Often the parents of a child will have widely different ideas about what is a risk or isn't. However, there seems to be a strong pattern among parents of handicapped children to overprotect them, to limit their chances to explore, expand out, and take some risks. But not all parents of handicapped children are overprotective, some permit their children to take very dangerous chances.

PARENTAL RISK TAKING STYLES

To repeat an old theme that you may be tired of hearing by now, you probably have a risk taking style. Your risk taking style was more than likely first formed by how your parents handled risks and was further shaped by your own experiences. We suggest that as you read the descriptions of the five most common parental risk taking styles, try to decide which style is more like the risk taking style you use. You might like to see if you have one style for yourself and one for your child - some parents do. For the most part, parental risk taking in a family with a handicapped child tends to fall into one or the other risk taking styles. These are the five hats parents tend to wear as risk takers.

Risk Taking Styles

- Avoider
- Insurer
- Calculator
- Adventurer
- Daredevil

Let us take these one at a time and look at their major characteristics and at the effect each style tends to have on a handicapped child.

THE AVOIDER

Of all the risk taking styles, the Avoider parent is the most cautious. His most common characteristics are:

- Avoids Risks
- Limits Mobility
- Hides Child

Avoids Risks

The Avoider parent will go to any extreme to avoid risks. Such parents have many fears. Life is very threatening to them. Everything appears to involve a risk. Often the Avoider parent isn't coping well with his life and his responsibilities. He may feel that if anything more happens, even if it isn't much, he will not be able to manage. Consequently, the Avoider sees even the most insignificant change or break in his routine as a threat. Such parents feel a great need to keep everything predictable. The Avoider parent let's his own personal needs dramatically influence and take command of others who are around him. Such parents overprotect, overrestrict (not only their child but themselves and perhaps their spouse's activities), and they always fear for and expect the very worst.

Limits Mobility

Because Avoiders see even ordinary situations as threatening and involving risks, they limit the mobility and experience of their child. Avoiders need to know where their child is every minute so they can be sure he is safe. This type of parent does not allow his child to move freely from place to place. By restricting mobility, this parent seeks to avoid the unknown and to prevent something "bad" from happening. Children of Avoiders are rarely allowed time alone, or time and opportunity to explore and try their own skills. They also learn from their parents to fear a great many things, and because of their limited experience, many things are unknown to them and frightening. Having learned to see everything as threatening, Avoider's children learn to become avoiders themselves. They learn to fear taking even the slightest chance.

Hides Child

The Avoider parent really hides his child from the world and the world from his child. Contact with the outside world is so restricted that the child loses touch with reality and becomes highly dependent on the parent. The child has few opportunities to grow and develop.

THE AVOIDER AND THE HANDICAPPED CHILD

The Avoider parent does not recognize that a degree of risk taking is required in the world in which we live. He fails to realize that none of us can predict with complete accuracy what's coming up next. The Avoider parent fails to realize that avoidance of new situations, avoidance of change, and avoidance of opportunity, prevent his child from living anywhere near a full life. The Avoider parent is extremely short viewed. He takes it hour by hour, avoiding many situations because they may involve a risk. He will say such things as "My child couldn't possibly do that; he might get hurt" or "We can't do that; we have to do thus and so and keep on our schedule". It is possible that parents who are extreme Avoiders need some help professionally. Perhaps they need to sort out the real fears and threats from those that are unreal. Perhaps they need to learn how to set priorities so they won't be so overloaded.

Let's take a few examples of Avoider parents. An Avoider parent would be one who goes to school during recess and has the child come and sit in the car with the parent. Another example of an Avoider would be the parent who would absolutely,

under no circumstance, let a child miss a medication by an hour or two. The Avoider keeps to schedules and routines for fear that if the schedule is not kept to the minute something terrible might happen. Avoiders would never let their handicap go to summer camp. Other Avoiders are parents who would not let their child ever go out into their own back yard alone, or perhaps be around other children for fear of contagious diseases. You can probably think of many more examples of Avoider behaviors in people you know.

INSURER PARENT

The second type of risk taker is the Insurer. This is the parent who will allow a child to do something only if there is almost complete assurance that there is no risk involved. Consequently, the child gets to do very few things and his experiences are limited. The major characteristics of the Insurer are:

- Overcautious
- Overanalyzes
- Overrestricts

Overcautious

The insurer is super cautious in everything the child is allowed to do. In terms of allowing action or new activity on the part of the child, the insurer is only slightly ahead of the Avoider parent.

The insurer does not think quite so many things are threats and he is probably less afraid than the Avoider parent. He "checks it out" thoroughly and needs to feel very sure that there is no chance for anything to happen; whereas, the Avoider

assumes that something bad will happen. While not as extreme as the Avoider, the Insurer is still overly cautious, and the net effect is that Insurers fail to allow their children to take many ordinary risks involved in life.

Overanalyzes

When their child wishes to do something, Insurers must analyze every possible thing that could even remotely happen. Sometimes Insurers spend so much time analyzing unlikely complications, that the time for action and learning passes. Insurers tend to try to gather every possible fact or bit of information about whatever their child is to do.

Overrestricts

Insurer parents severly restrict the activities and learning opportunities of their handicapped child. This parent watches over the child constantly and tries to control every threat. Because the Insurer parent overrestricts, his child learns to be hesitant in even limited risk taking situations. The Insurer is so super cautious and makes such a super analysis of every situation that the parent never allows his child to take even ordinary risks. The Insurer needs to protect himself and his child from all problems, even though some problems enable the child to grow and learn on his own.

CALCULATOR PARENT

A third type of risk taker is the Calculator. The Calculator understands that we all live in a world requiring risk taking and that if children, handicapped or not,

are to learn and grow, they need to experience a wide variety of new situations. This requires some risk taking by the child. The major characteristics of the Calculator parent are:

- Forecasts Risks
- Analyzes Odds
- Releases Child

Forecasts Risks

The Calculator parent tries to logically and reasonably forecast the risks that his child faces in a situation. In so doing, the Calculator parent gathers information concerning the situation and anticipates the outcome based on the information. The Calculator also realizes that it is not possible to predict the outcome in every situation with complete accuracy. The Calculator tries to realistically determine if there are any serious risks involved in an activity his child wants or needs to do. The Calculator identifies the risks, if any, and looks at them one at a time. He asks himself: "Is this a real threat that could occur to my child, or is it something that just might bother me? Am I keeping my child from doing something simply because I might be a little uneasy about it? Is my fear simply an overreaction to a past experience of my own, or am I just predicting a highly unlikely event?"

Analyzes Odds

The Calculator tries to analyze the odds on any of the hazards or risks occuring, and the odds on his child being able to do what is required in the situation. In analyzing the odds, the parent takes into account the child's level of skills and the child's past experience, as well as the outside circumstances. The parent also

realizes that children usually can handle themselves with some degree of creativity in a pinch, and that some unanticipated event may occur that will affect the situation. The Calculator parent tries to bring to bear a realistic and logical weighing of the odds on success or failure.

Releases Child

If the odds for success appear good, the Calculator releases the child to take the calculated risk. That is, the parent allows the child to move ahead. The Calculator parent explains the process he used in calculating the risk to his child so that the child learns the process of looking at risk taking situations in a logical and unemotional manner.

The Calculator parent understands that a child learns and grows through risk taking. Some parents who were interviewed said: "I have to weigh the risk. I know it might make me feel better if I restricted my child almost totally. Then I'd know where he was all the time and wouldn't have to worry . . . I know for my child's sake I have to learn to let him go . . . let him try, let him make his own mistakes, let him learn for himself. So I just grit my teeth and say go ahead. I've already calculated the odds and looked at the situation and things look good for him being able to manage okay. While he's gone sometimes I'm miserable and nervous, but now that I've done this for some time, everything is getting better. I'm learning to trust my child, and he is learning about his limits and capabilities. We are both much happier. I know I've got to let my child grow and develop."

Many parents talk of making this kind of conscious decision, knowing that there is always some risk involved no matter what you do. They also talk about a greater risk they would be taking with their child's future if the child is denied the chance to grow and develop. Then the child might face even greater risks as he grows up and is incapable of handling himself very well.

ADVENTURER PARENT

The fourth kind of parental risk taking style is that of the Adventurer. The Adventurer enjoys risk taking; thinks it makes life exciting and that risks are fun. The major characteristics of the Adventurer are:

- Makes Myths
- Pushes Mobility
- Challenges Child

Makes Myths

The Adventurer tends to myth-make and believes things will be more exciting and less threatening than they actually are. These parents tend to myth-make that everything always comes out alright or that someone or something will take care of their child. Adventurers are not realistic concerning what is and is not a risk. Consequently, their children experience many failures and get hurt more often than other children. Unlike the Calculator, the Adventurer does not try to identify risks involved in a situation. Instead he fails to see the risks and denies that they are there. "Nothing will happen", or "We are lucky", or "The fun is worth the risk", are typical comments of the Adventurer.

Pushes Mobility

Adventurers think people, including handicapped children, should be out in the action. Consequently, this type of parent constantly pushes and encourages the child to move around, to go out in the world. Often the handicapped child will be more realistic about sensing a risk than the parent and will come to mistrust the parent's judgment. If he does as the parent wants and gets hurt, either physically or psychologically, the child can become very threatened. On the one hand he wants to please his parent; and the other, he is afraid. Such children often are in great stress.

Challenges Child

Adventurer parents often challenge the child. "Don't be a sissy", or "Don't be afraid, silly", are the kinds of things Adventurers say to a child. Adventurers often have a very personal motive behind their desire to take risks or to have their children do so. Sometimes such people have something to prove: their manhood . . . their womanhood . . . or some parents of handicapped children simply are denying their child's handicap and acting as if it doesn't exist.

An Adventurer parent who encourages risk taking where there is danger or almost certain failure, can create a failure backlog in his child. He can also bring about a conflict with the child as the child begins to fail and is constantly pushed to do things that are frightening to him. Obviously children often need to be encouraged or challenged to try something different or new, but not when there is a real chance

that the child might fail or be hurt. The Adventurer parent is more concerned with activity than growth in his child. Many Adventurer parents overstimulate, overexcite and exhaust their children.

DAREDEVIL PARENT

There is still another style of parent, the Daredevil. The Daredevil parent tends to take absolutely unnecessary and uncalled for chances with a child's physical and emotional safety. The Daredevil parent operates in risk situations as if he secretly wished for something to happen to the child. The major charcteristics of the Daredevil are:

- Ignores risks
- Foolhardy
- Endangers child

Ignores Risks

The Daredevil ignores risks both to himself and to his child. Some Daredevils may be what is called "fatalistic". That is, they believe that whatever will happen will happen, whether one takes precautions or not. Their basic assumption is that they have little control over their own destiny. They often believe, however, that they are lucky, probably because in the past they have taken extreme risks and nothing happened to them. Some Daredevils believe in such things as "when it's your time to go, you go". Such beliefs place responsibility on other than their own shoulders. Not feeling responsible for themselves, they often do not feel responsible for their children.

Foolhardy

The Daredevil parent is quite often foolhardy in the risks he allows his child to take. He in no way calculates the odds, but merely thinks the odds are in his favor, or that he has no control over what happens. In being foolhardy, such a parent may threaten the security needs of the child, and the child may tend to withdraw; or he may learn to be foolhardy himself when it comes to risk situations.

Endangers Child

The Daredevil parent obviously endangers his child's safety, both physical and psychological. A Daredevil parent may, for example, throw a child into a swimming pool in order that the child might learn to swim, or leave a helpless child home alone. A daredevil parent would show little concern for where his child is or what may be happening to him. For example, a Daredevil parent would merely assume that his child is alright and would not bother to check occasionally.

In terms of all of the risk taking styles, the Daredevil parent is the most extreme risk taker with a child's physical and emotional safety. The Daredevil ignores risks, he is foolhardy in parental behavior, and through disregard for risks, he may actively endanger a child.

BASIC DIFFERENCES

There are basic differences in how people with the various risk taking styles identify and analyze risks:

	Basic Ideas
Avoider	Everything is a risk; the worst will happen
Insurer	Many things are a risk; the worst probably will happen
Adventurer	Very few things are risks, so there's no problem
Daredevil	Very few things are risks because nothing will happen to me or my child that isn't destined to happen
Calculator	Risks must be determined for each situation separately. Risks depend on the conditions now, the skills of the child, how the child has handled things in the past. There is always some risk and you can't predict with 100% accuracy

The Avoider makes a basic assumption that everything is a risk, that the worst is bound to happen, and his analysis stops with this basic assumption. Avoiders don't analyze risks because they already feel sure something awful will happen. Insurers don't see as many threats as Avoiders, but they analyze a situation by seeking out only negative possibilities. They fail to see positive aspects. Insurers overemphasize risks because they are blind to possibilities that lessen risks in a situation. For example, they fail to take into account their child's resources, skills, and past experience as positive factors. Adventurers may see risks, but operate under the foolish assumption that nothing can happen to them or their children. Daredevils do not see basic threats. They don't analyze the risks, but simply jump in or thrust their child into the situation.

The Calculator goes much further than any other risk taker in analyzing risks. This is because Calculators don't operate under so many faulty ideas. Calculators have the idea that each situation is different and must be analyzed to calculate the risks involved.

Quite often parents of handicapped children tend to be Avoider or Insurer risk takers. This results in overprotection. There are several possible reasons why so many parents of handicapped children tend to be Avoiders or Insurers. One reason may be that these parents begin to think that because a tragedy (their child's handicap) has happened to them once, tragic things are very probable and will happen to them again. Consequently, they expect the worst and are often very afraid.

Another possible reason for Avoider and Insurer risk takers is overreaction. Parents of handicapped children, just as all parents, have mixed feelings toward the child. That is, sometimes they may wish they didn't have the child so they would not have such problems. Failing to realize that it is only human to feel this way off and on about children, handicapped or not, some parents overprotect the child out of guilt feelings and a fear that their thoughts might come true. Thinking negative thoughts about a person does not mean we actually want something to happen to that person. It is merely our mental speculation or daydream used to avoid stress. In this way we can temporarily wish ourselves out of a stressful situation, and everyone does this at times.

CALCULATOR IS BEST

In looking at these five basic risk taking styles, the one that is undoubtedly the best style for parents of a handicapped child is the Calculator.[(i)] The Activator parent is a "Calculator" in terms of risk taking. He believes that his child must be involved in a wide range of activities to grow and develop. He tries logically to calculate the risks involved in his child's activities, and he tries to develop within his child the skills for calculating risks. The Activator parent, in having a Calculator risk taking style, avoids "giving more protection that the reality of the situation demands" (Ross, 1964, p. 16). He stresses the "positive aspects of the child's potential, emphasizing the need for (his) handicapped (child) to learn independence to whatever measure (he) can . . ." (Warnick, 1969, p. 299).

The Calculator risk taking style of the Activator parent allows a child to do as much as he can for himself. As the Early Childhood Learning Center (no date) has reported, such a parent does ". . . not limit (a child's) growth toward independently doing things for himself just because it is easier, quicker, neater or safer for the (parent) to do it for him"(p. 3).

In being a Calculator risk taker, the Activator parent is looking toward the future as well as the present. He wants his child safe today, but growing and developing for tomorrow. He does not compromise his long term goals for his child's development by avoiding reasonable risks that will enable his child to grow and develop.

(i) See 9, 10.

Instead he calculates the risks and allows his child to participate actively in the world.

The Calculator parent tries to avoid the pitfalls of (1) assuming tragedy will strike again and again, and (2) overreacting with overprotection because of negative feelings toward the child. Calculators do this by understanding how parents of handicapped children easily fall into such mental pitfalls and by consciously trying to avoid them.

HOW CALCULATORS HANDLE RISKS

While parents with other risk taker styles essentially fail to analyze situations, the calculator is concerned with identifying the risks and calculating the odds of the dangers occuring. Calculators realize that you cannot predict with 100% accuracy, but that you can do a reasonable job of analyzing risks.

There is a five - step method of analyzing risks:

Step I	Identify the dangers
Step II	Look at prevailing conditions
Step III	Analyze child's skills
Step IV	Analyze child's past performance
Step V	Analyze own hidden motives

For each different or new situation in which his child may participate, the Calculator analyzes the situation:

Step I	What could possibly happen in the situation? What are the threats, the dangers to my child?
Step Ii	How likely is it that these threats and dangers will actually happen today? What are the conditions at this time?
Step III	Does my child have the skills to successfully avoid the possible dangers?
Step IV	Can my child be trusted to manage this situation? Has he managed himself well in other similar situations?
Step V	Do I have any hidden motives that are influencing my decision:

1. Am I overreacting because of some negative feelings I've had toward my child lately?

2. Am I assuming tragedy will strike again?

3. Am I punishing my child because I'm mad at him (her) and don't want him to go?

4. Am I avoiding this because it's too much trouble? What would happen to my child in the long run if he never did anything because it's too much trouble?

5. Is it important enough to my child that it's worth the bother? Will it be fun? Will it help him grow or relieve stress?

6. Am I overloaded and feeling I just couldn't manage one more thing in case a slight problem did occur?

7. Am I just worrying about how miserable I'll be while my child is gone, and trying to avoid a stressful situation for myself?

8. Am I letting my child do this just because I've had enough and want him out of my way? Am I overlooking some real threat?

9. Am I being unrealistic about what my child can and can't do because I'm hoping he can do it?

10. Am I looking through rose colored glasses and not seeing some threat or danger?

11. Am I taking a fatalistic viewpoint and thinking what will be will be, and that I have no power or responsibility in what happens?

One way to gain insight into risk calculating is to take a concrete example. Consider a nine year old deaf child who wants to ride his bicycle to the community pool and go swimming. The pool is three blocks away and the child has never attempted going alone before. Let's analyze this situation using the five - steps above:

Step I - What are the risks involved?

1. The traffic on the way to the pool
2. Getting lost
3. Swimming

Step II - Does the child have the skills to go alone?

1. Is he skilled at bicycle riding?
2. Can he swim well?
3. Does he know the way to the pool?
4. Does he know how to get someone to call home in an emergency?

Step III - Child's past experience

1. Is he always careful when crossing streets on his bicycle?
2. Does he always follow directions when at the pool?
3. Is he careful while swimming?
4. How many times has he gone to the pool with someone else?
5. Does his past experience reveal that the odds are good that he can manage this?
6. Does he always come home at the time he is supposed to?

Step IV - Prevailing conditions

1. Will the lifeguard be at the pool and does he know the child is deaf?
2. How is the traffic coming and going at the times the child will be traveling?
3. How is the weather?
4. How about the other children who will be at the pool?

Step V - Hidden motives

1. Is parent unduly concerned?
2. Are there personal motives for the child not going?
3. Is parent overlooking any potential problems, or failing to recognize some?

If the risks become less threatening because a child has adequate skills, if his past experience indicates he can likely handle the situation, if the prevailing conditions indicate that the likelihood of problems is minimal, and if the parent is not overlooking some potential problem, the child should be able to successfully ride to the pool and swim.

In calculating risks, parents can use this five - step method as a quick check to help overcome the tendency to overprotect and to be overly concerned when a handicapped child begins something new or ventures forth on his own.

Child's Plus Factor

One reassuring factor parents should consider in allowing a child to take a calculated risk is the plus factor. This is the child's hidden resources to solve problems or handle risk taking situations. All of us have hidden resources, unknown energies, and abilities that tend to come into play when we are in problem situations. Parents should

take their child's plus factor into account as a positive resource in situations involving calculated risks.

SUMMARY

Here is a summary of the major characteristics of the various styles of risk taker parents:

Avoider	Insurer	Calculator
· avoids risks	· overcautious	· forecasts risks
· limits mobility	· overanalyzes	· analyzes odds
· hides child	· overrestricts	· releases child

Adventurer	Daredevil
· myth makes	· ignores risks
· encourages mobility	· foolhardy
· challenges child	· endangers child

Some parents of handicapped children have a tendency to be overly protective of their handicapped child, and thereby they limit the experiences and chances for the child to become self-sufficient. Such parents usually have the risk taking style of the Avoider or Insurer. Other parents of handicapped children tend to expose their children to unnecessary risks. This not only endangers the child's physical safety, but often puts the child in situations where he is expected to do more than he is able, causing the child to develop a backlog of failure. There is a balanced position parents of handicapped children can take. This position is that of the Calculator risk taker. Calculator risk takers tend to measure the risks in any situation against the child's level of skills, his previous behavior in similar situations, and

the current or prevailing conditions under which the activity will occur. Calculator risk takers also consider their own motives in encouraging or discouraging their child to engage in an activity, thereby trying to be as objective as a parent can be. Calculator risk takers try to balance the child's skills against his need for exposure to a variety of situations and a large number of learning experiences. They try to create circumstances where the child can succeed and develop a success backlog in a wide range of situations. Their long range goal is good mental health, self-sufficiency, and maturity.

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