

# Kids Who Aren't There

Before the 90s, kids first started going out to play unsupervised at some point between 5-8 years old. Today this has changed to 10-16 years old.

I was just considering how this happens. You probably don't need 100% of people to agree on the change. In fact, you probably only need a small minority. The reason the change happens to most kids lead by small percentages is because kids need other kids to go outside and play. If 15% of kids are pulled from the available outside playing options from over-worried and -controlling parents, playing outside with friends has less appeal. For some kids this removes their available friend or two to play with and this forces them inside by default. For others, it takes their group from 7 down to 6. However, reducing a friend group makes that group less appealing.

Once you make entertainment in the home better, this makes it so it starts pushing another small fraction in the home. Eventually, there aren't kids outside to play with and we arrive at a new normal where kids playing unsupervised outside appears irregular, and eventually appears like bad parenting.

The problem is, I don't see how to rewind. I can't let my 5 year old out to play with kids who aren't there. So, we have to bring them to parks and play dates. It's a pretty sad situation.