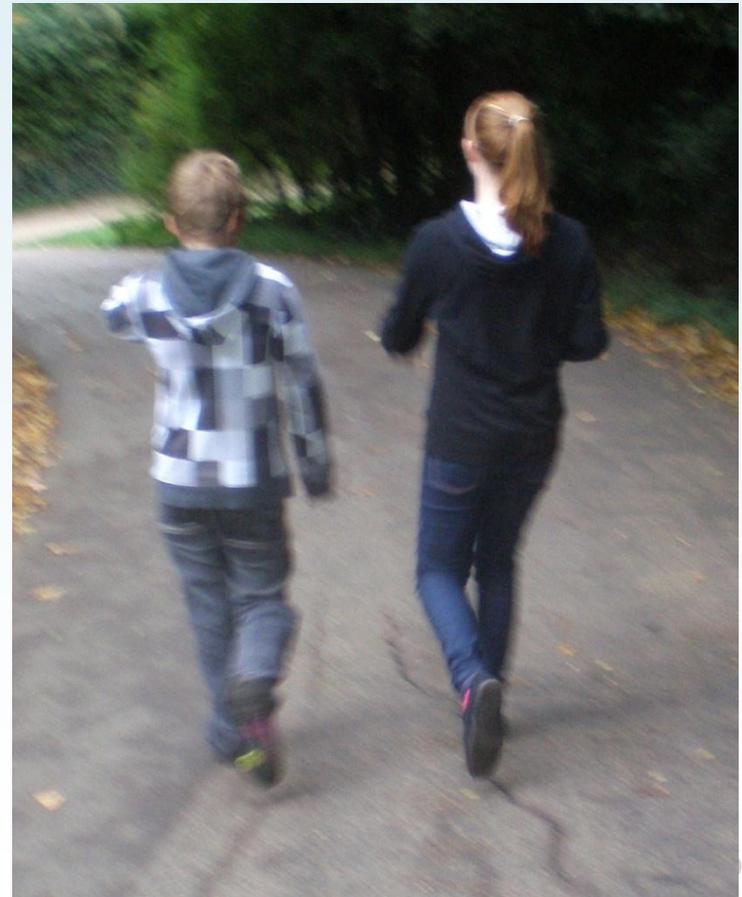


Independent mobility: children's development and quality of life

Roger Mackett

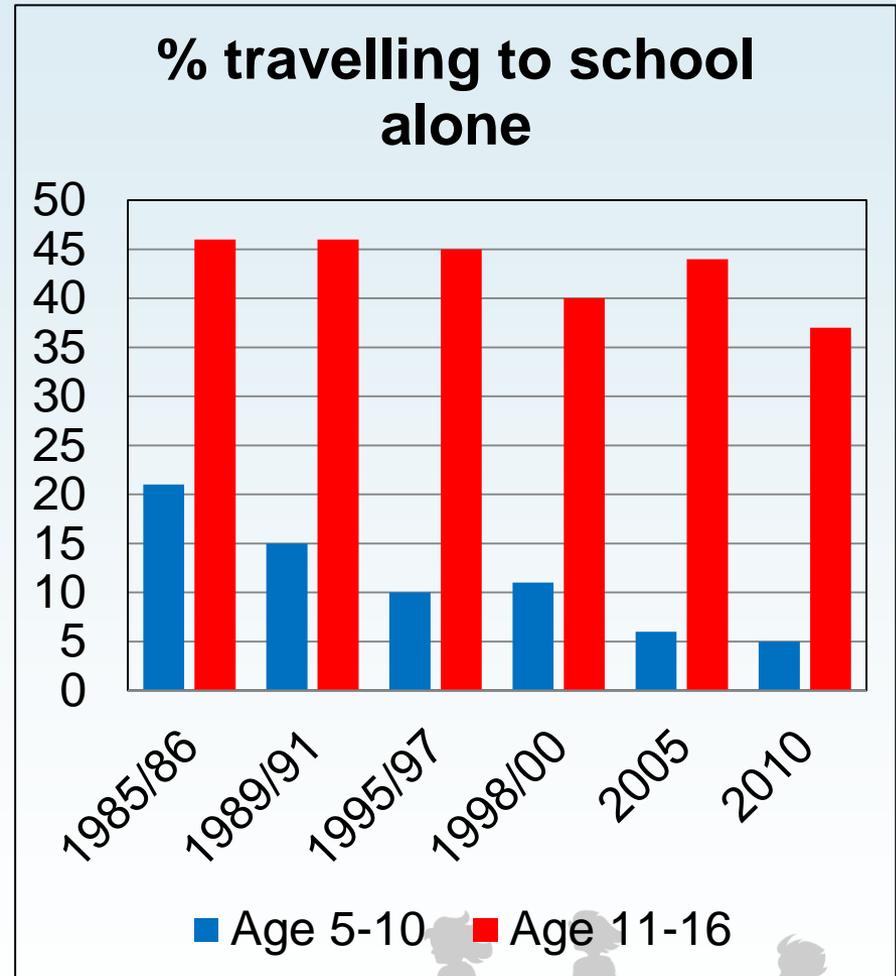
Centre for Transport Studies

University College London



Fewer children are going out alone in GB

- Fewer children are allowed out without an adult than in the past
- The graph shows the decrease in the numbers travelling to school alone
- This may reflect changes in parental attitudes, but also reflects the growth in children's car use



Why parents say they walk to school with their children aged 7-13 in GB (%)

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2009
Traffic danger	53	60	55	56	56
Fear of assault/molestation	45	44	38	27	29
Convenient to accompany child	-	-	24	26	28
School too far away	20	15	16	16	16
Child might not arrive on time	12	20	14	19	19
Child might get lost	8	10	10	16	14
Fear of bullying	11	9	9	6	7
Other	27	22	13	12	9

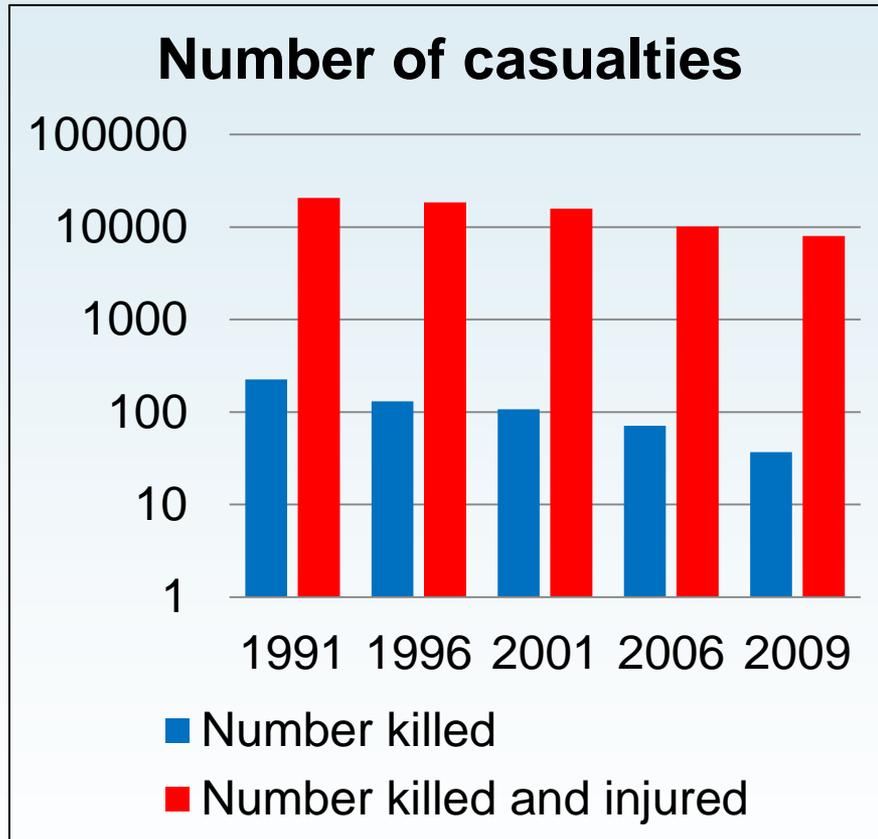
Are these the real reasons, and are the perceptions correct?

Note: Parents could give more than one reason; 'Convenient to accompany child' was not an option before 2005

Source: National Travel Survey



Pedestrian casualties for children under 16 in GB



The risk is decreasing but the streets have more traffic than in the past: this may influence perceptions of the risks



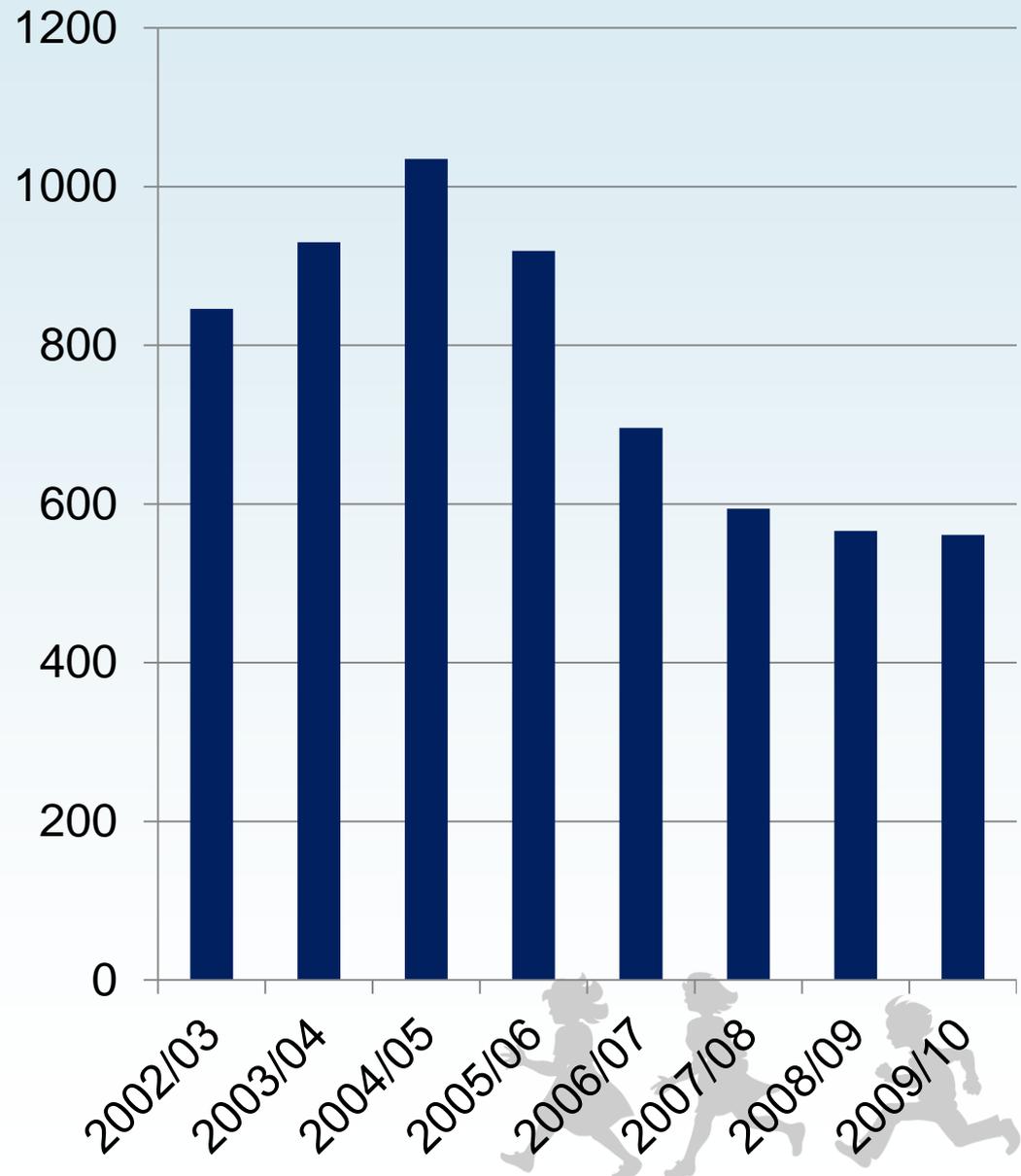
Fear of assault/molestation – ‘stranger danger’

- Disproportionate coverage in the newspapers
- Some current cases (not all a function of IM but likely to influence attitudes to letting children out)
 - April Jones (5 year old in Wales abducted on 1 October; assumed to have been murdered by a family friend)
 - Megan Stammers (15 year old who absconded to France with her 30 year old married teacher)
 - Jimmy Savile
 - Maddie McCann (abducted in May 2007 in Portugal)
- Note – assaults on teenage boys by gangs in large cities are relatively common
- Where did ‘stranger danger’ start in GB? Possibly in the mid 1960s with the ‘Moors murders’



Child abductions in Great Britain

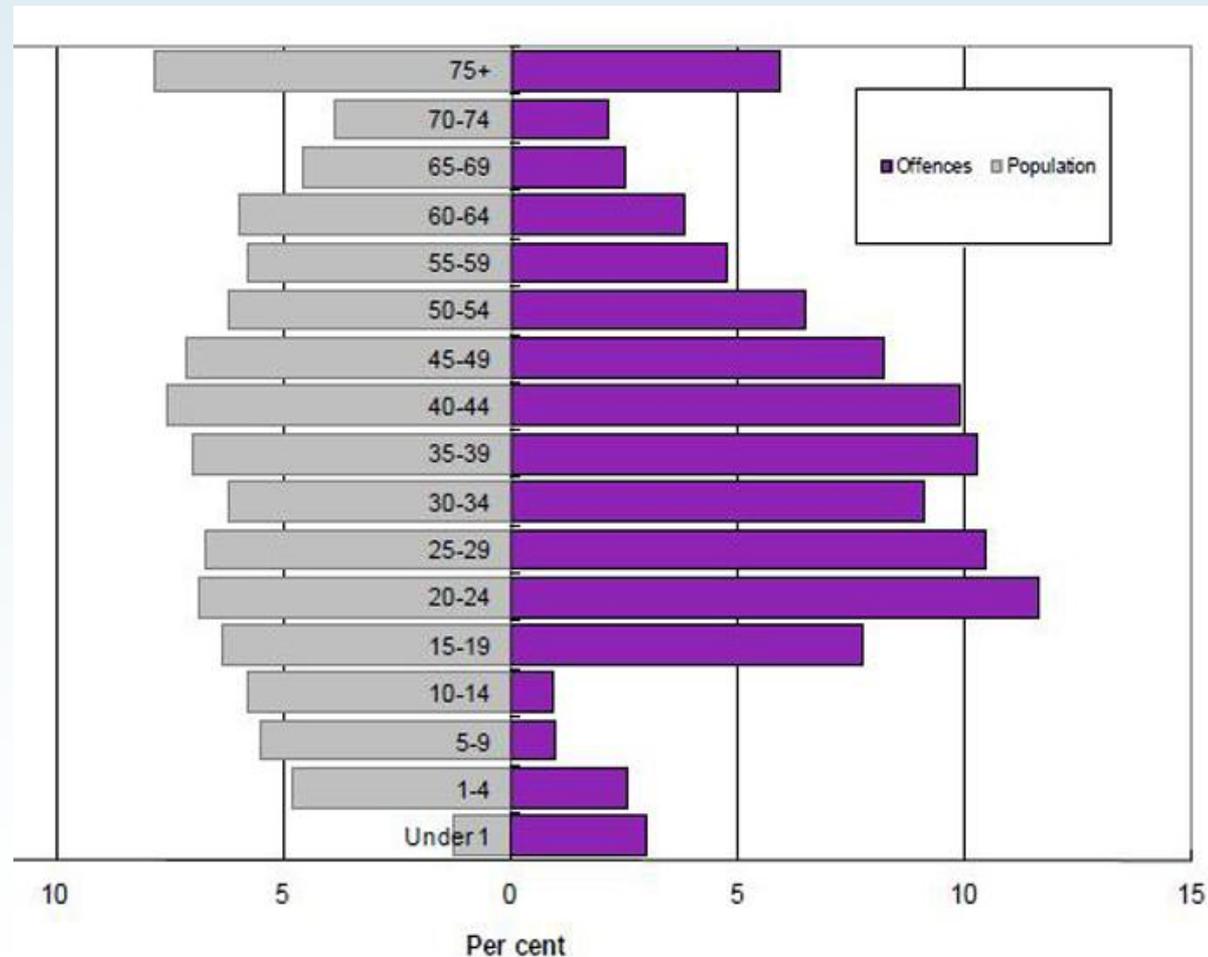
The figures include both successful and attempts that failed. In 2002/03 68 (9%) of these abductions were actual abductions by strangers. Of these 12 had a 'clear sexual motive'. 23% of abductions were parental but some should not have been included in the statistics (child not being taken overseas).



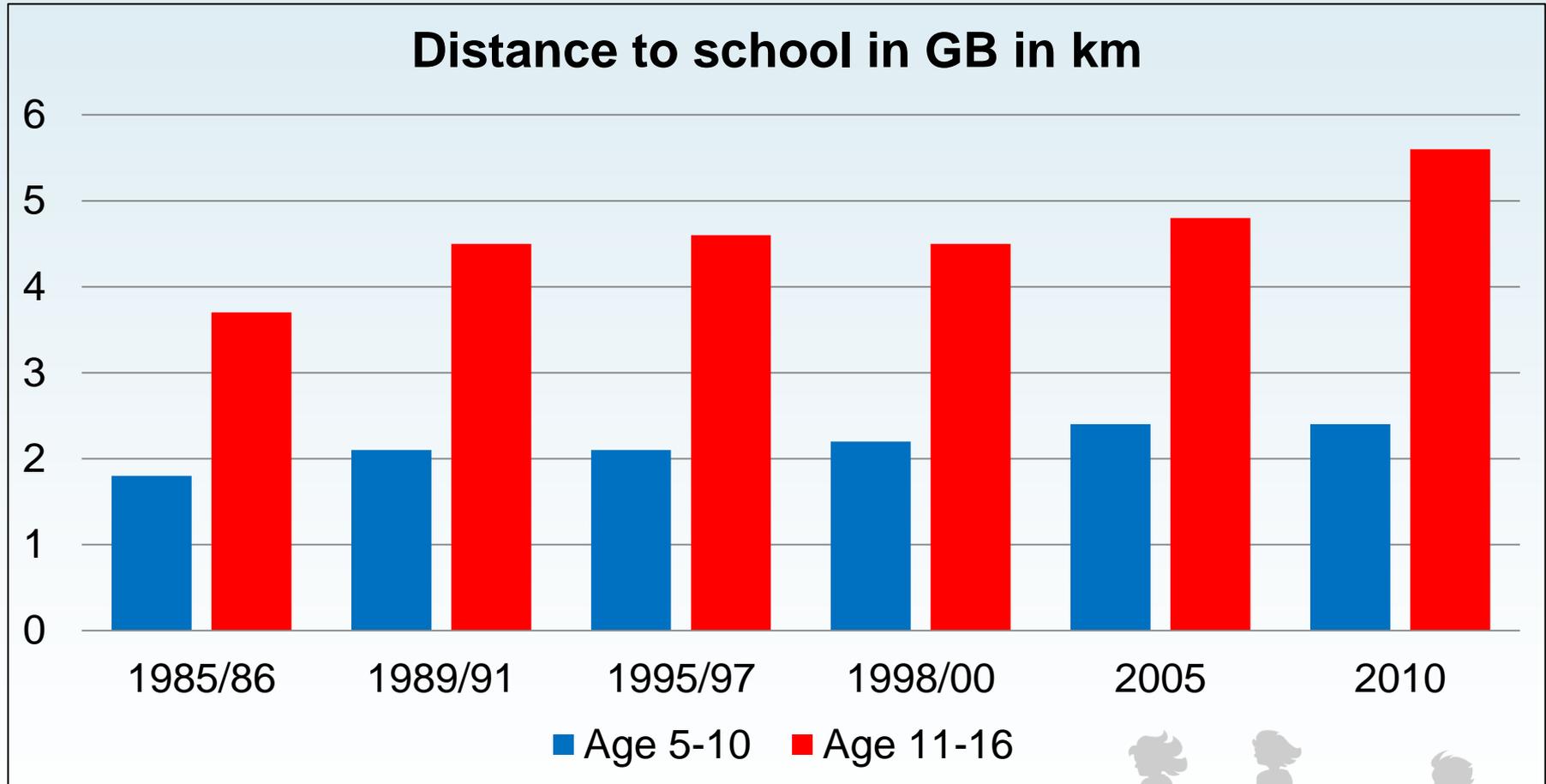
Homicide rates by the age of the victim

- In about 75% of cases the killers were known to the victim
- In 62% of cases the killer was a parent or step-parent.
- In 12% of cases the culprit was definitely a stranger.

Age profile of homicide victims for 2008/09 to 2010/11 combined.



‘School too far away’: distances to school are increasing in GB



The growth is related to both policy on school admissions and increasing car use

Modern family life

- Increasing incomes
- More women in employment
- Increased availability of personal electronic home entertainment
- Shift from free play to organised activities
- Policy on school choice



Modern family life

- Increasing incomes
 - More women in employment
 - Increased availability of personal electronic home entertainment
 - Shift from free play to organised activities
 - Policy on school choice
- Less walking by children



Modern family life

- Increasing incomes
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- Shift from free play to organised activities
- Policy on school choice

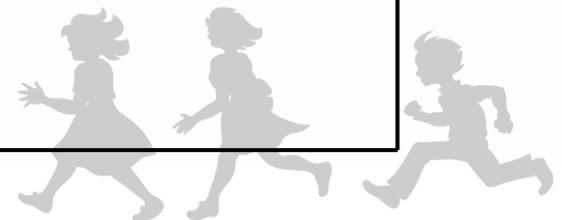
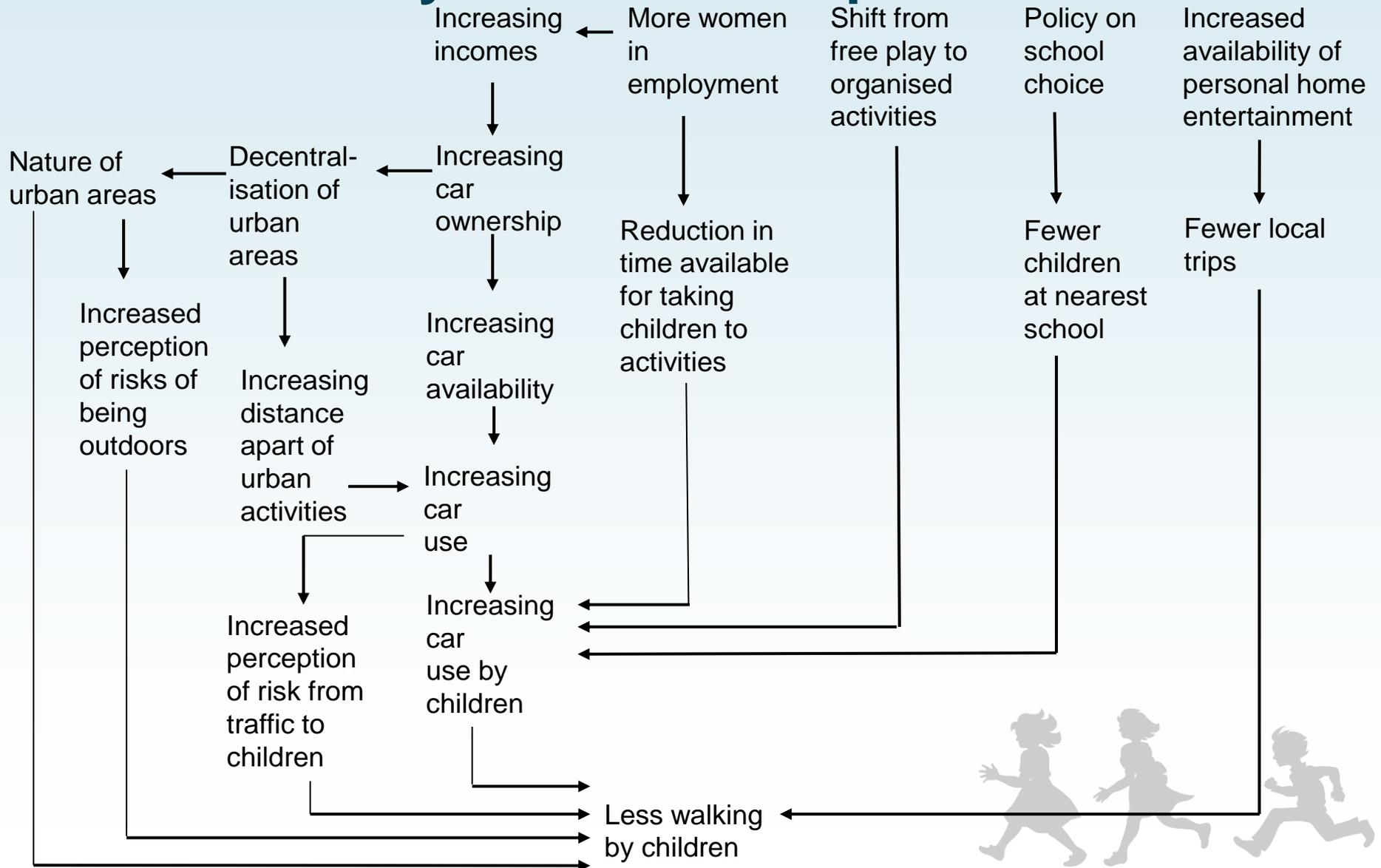
Less walking by children

Reduction in physical activity

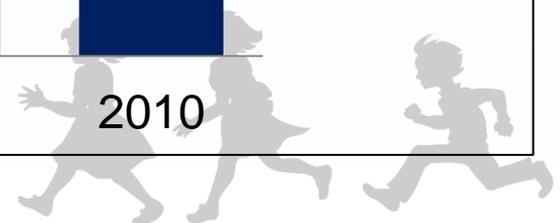
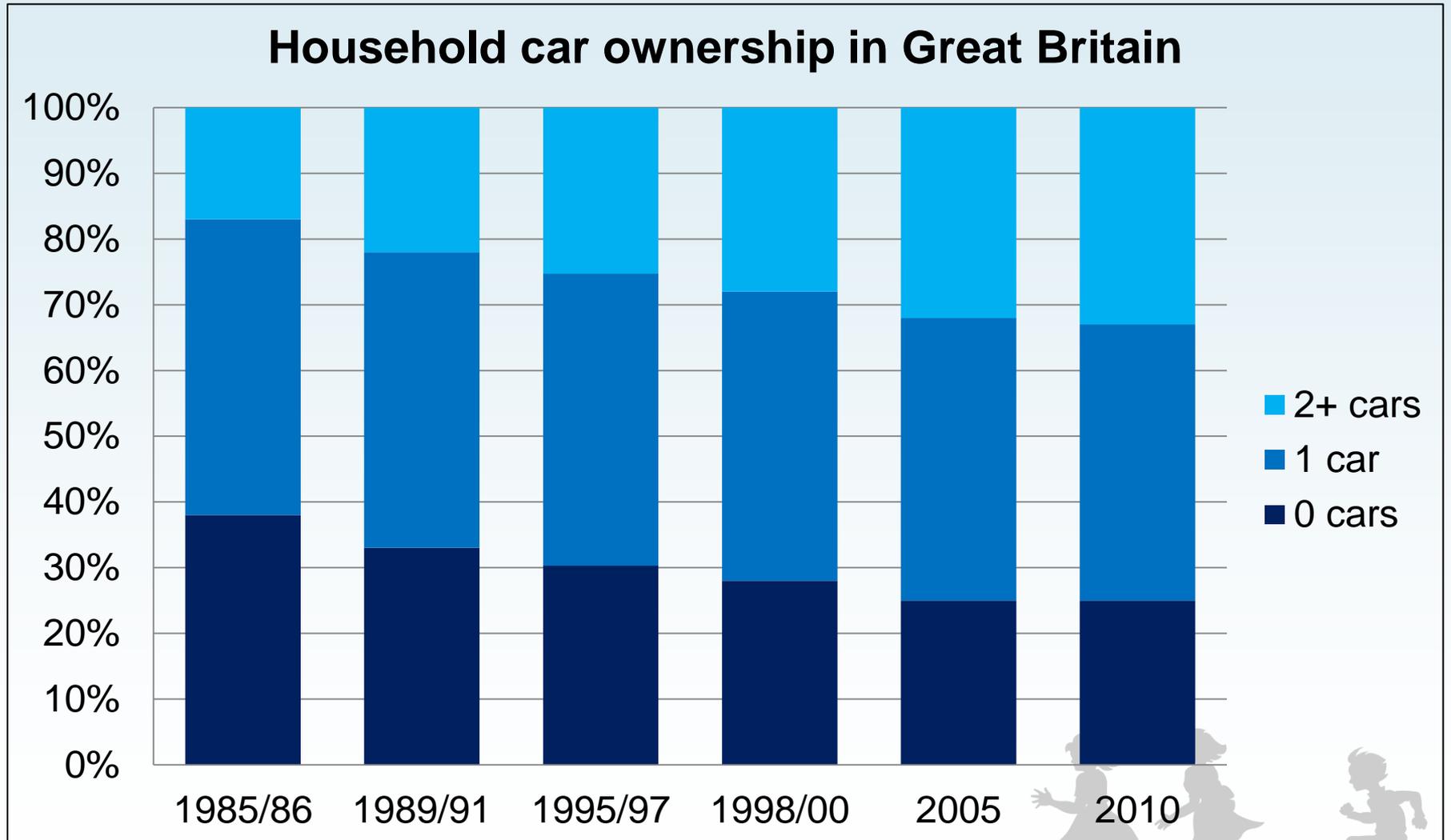
Loss of opportunity for acquiring skills and developing social networks



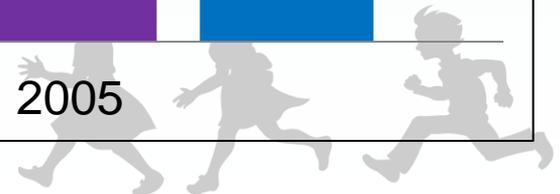
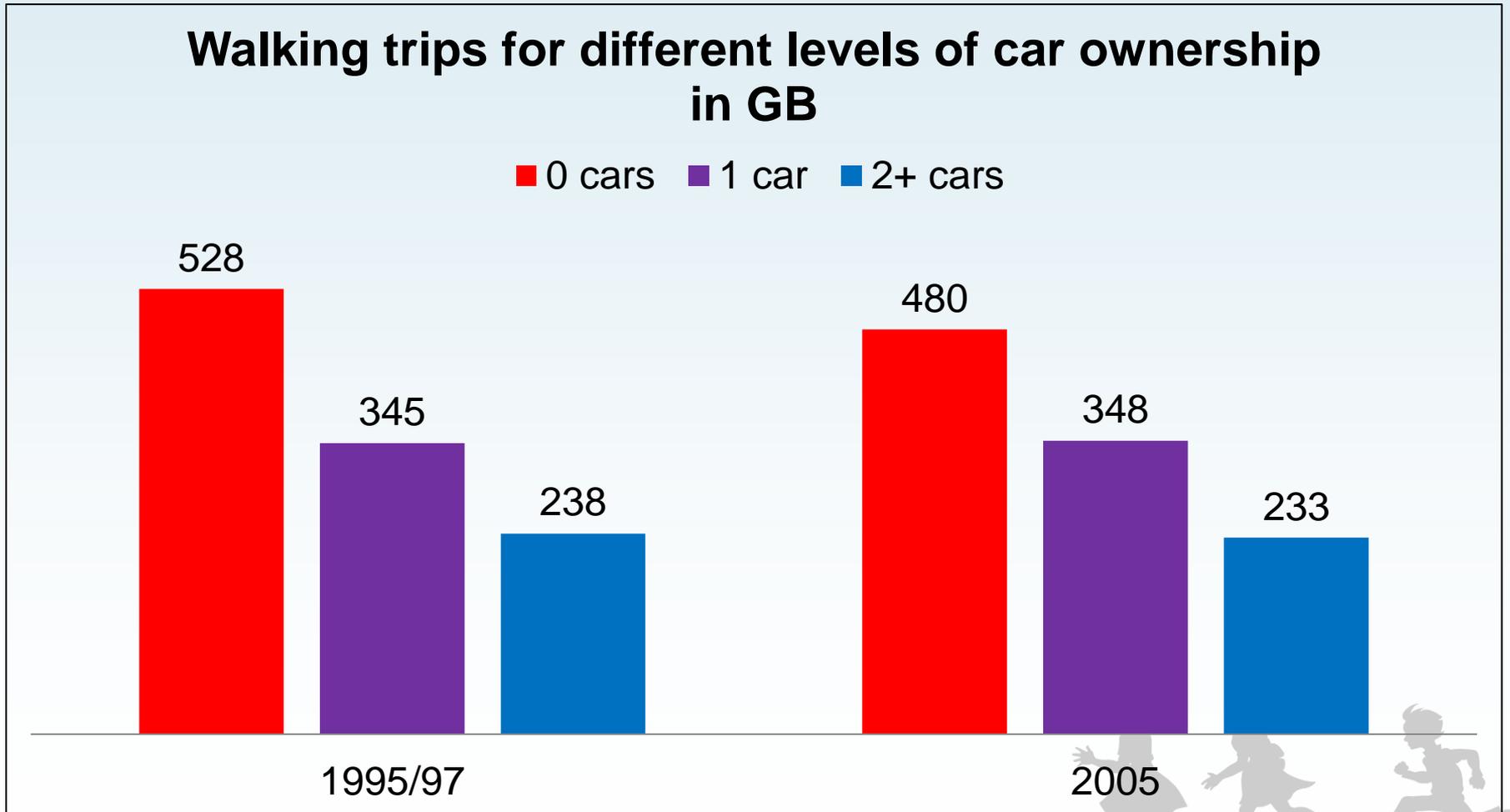
Modern family life – it's complicated



The main cause of the problem – the car



Children walk less the more cars in the household and so have less independence



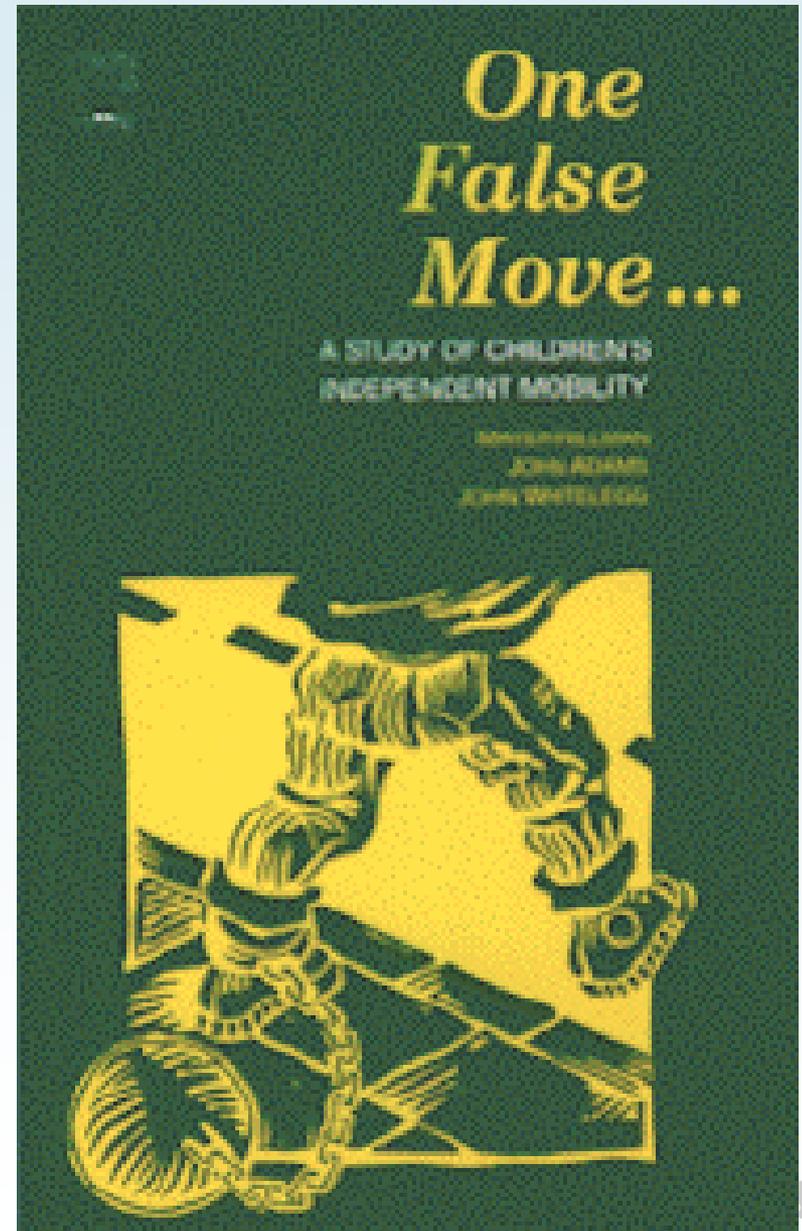
The convenience of the car – how cars are used to take children to or from school

	To school	From school
Part of a journey to or from work	50	35
Combined with another school/nursery trip	8	10
Combined with a trip to or from somewhere else	10	10
School journey sole purpose of trip	32	44
Total	100	100



Children's independent mobility

In 1990 Mayer Hillman, John Adams and John Whitelegg wrote 'One false move...', looking at change in CIM in England in 1971 and 1990, and comparing it with CIM in Germany in 1990. We have repeated the study in England and Germany in 2010.



CIM study methodology (1)

- Questionnaires were used in 1971, 1990 and 2010 with children aged 7-15 years old in England and Germany as part of the school day.
- A second questionnaire was given to a parent or guardian to fill in.
- The children and their parents were surveyed in five areas in England and five areas in Germany, chosen to give a cross-sectional snapshot of the country.



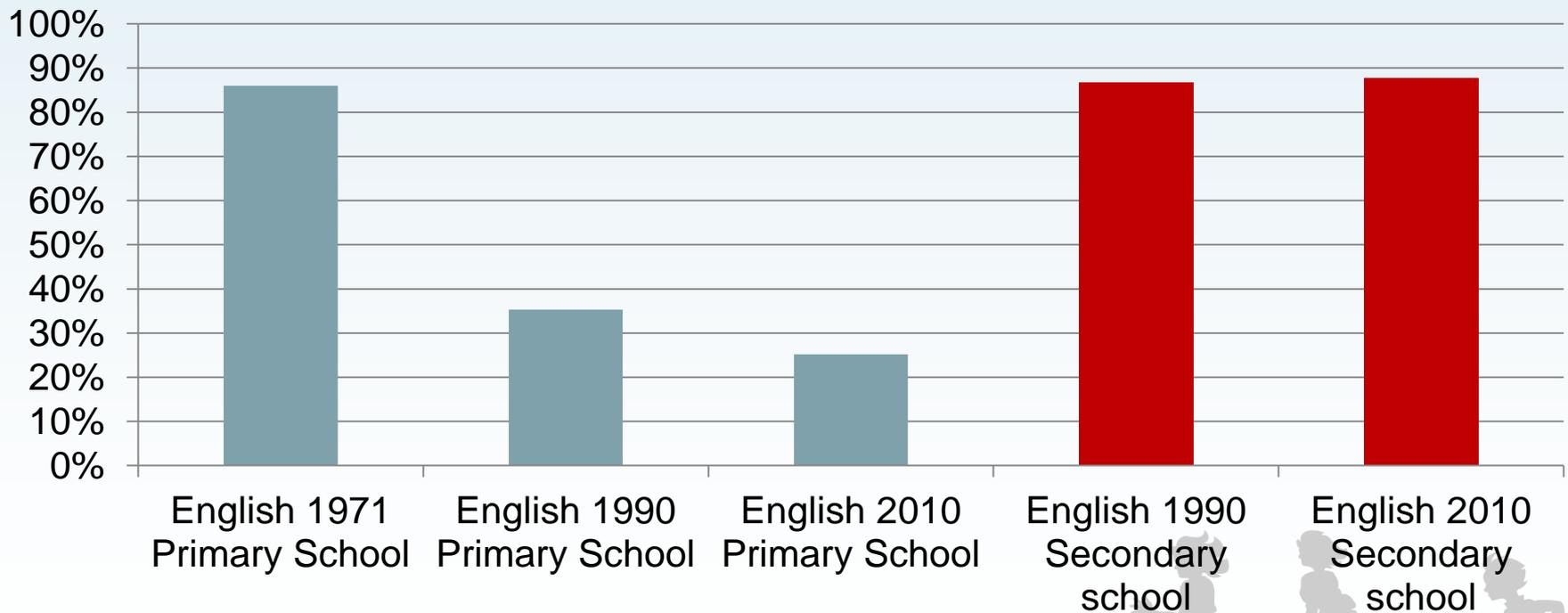
CIM study methodology (2)

Permission to travel independently was assessed by recording whether children were granted six 'licences' of independent mobility:

- Licence to cross main roads alone;
- Licence to go out alone after dark;
- Licence to travel home from school alone;
- Licence to cycle to places alone;
- Licence to use local buses alone;
- Licence to travel to places other than school alone.



Percentage of parents reporting that their children are allowed to travel home from school alone, by type of school, 1971 - 2010



Source: Children's independent mobility study, PSI, London



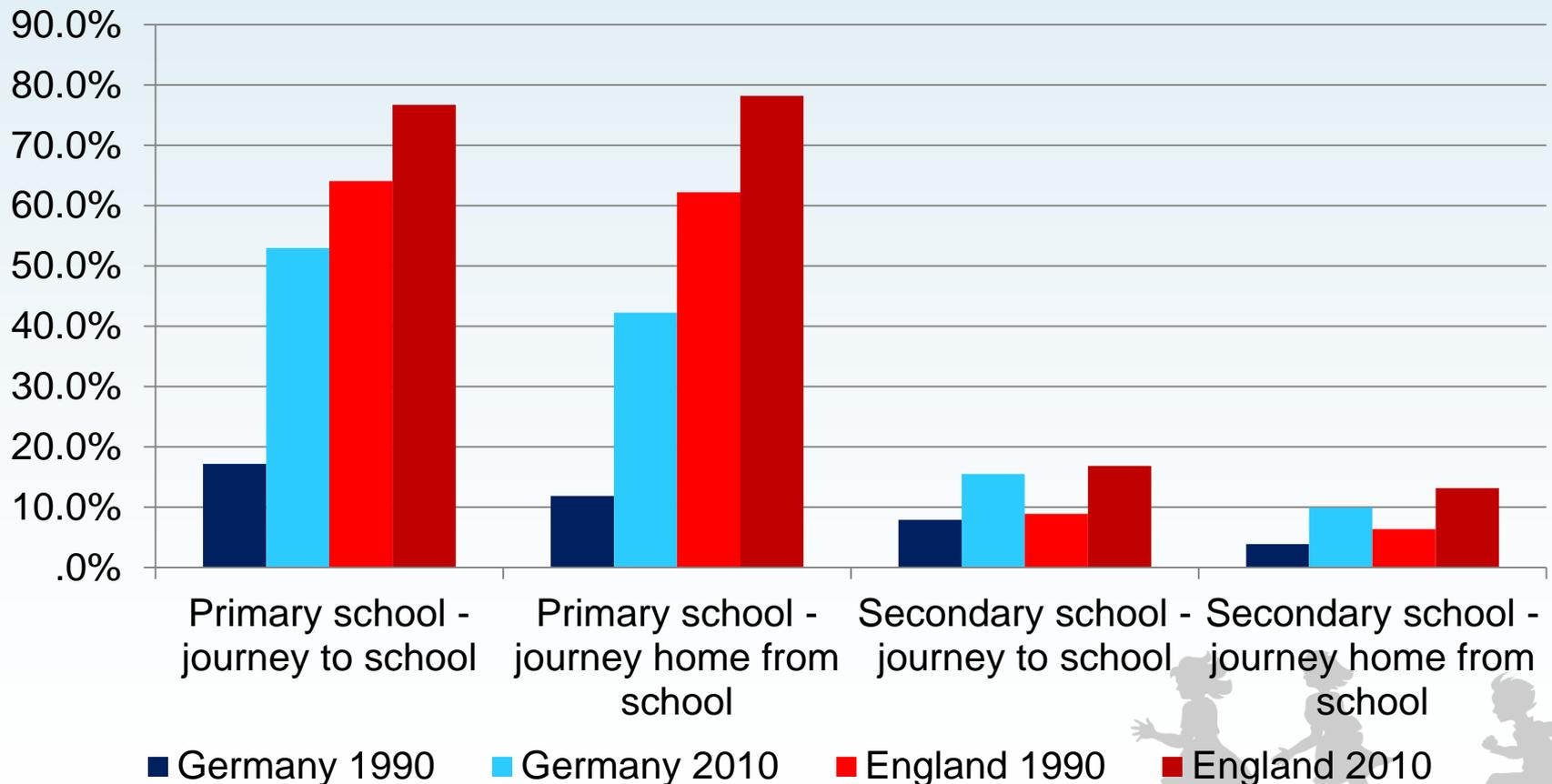
Average number of weekend journeys to activities per child for primary school children in England 1971-2010

	England 1971	England 1990	England 2010
Mean no. of activities at weekend	5.8	4.1	4.1
Mean number of activities accompanied	2.4	1.9	2.5
Percentage of total activities accompanied	41%	46%	62%

Source: Children's independent mobility study, PSI, London



% of children reporting being accompanied to and from school by a parent or other adult on the day of the survey, 1990-2010.



Source: Children's independent mobility study, PSI, London

Countries taking part in the international comparative study of CIM

UK

Australia

Brazil

Denmark

Finland

France

Germany

Ireland

Israel – Arab and Jewish populations

Italy

Japan

Norway

Portugal

South Africa

Sri Lanka

Sweden

Tanzania



Children's Activities, Perceptions and Behaviour in the Local Environment (CAPABLE)

- August 2004 – December 2006
- Children in Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 (aged 8-12)
- Fieldwork in Hertfordshire and Lewisham



In the first project we asked them to keep travel and activity diaries and wear accelerometers

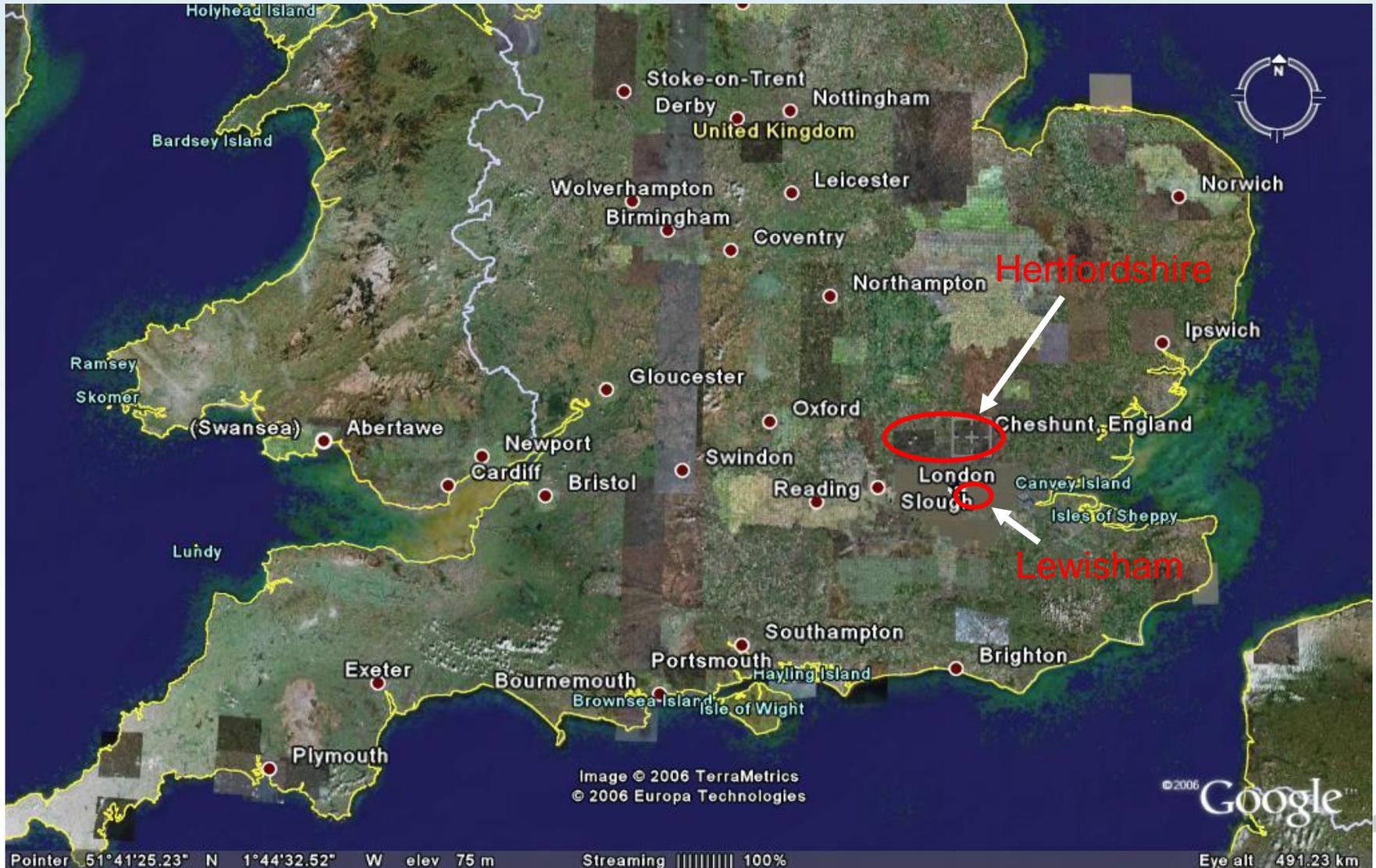
Location		What did you do there?
Morning	I began the day at Home <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Please say where	I woke up at [] : [] I put my sensors on at [] : [] I left at [] : []
	Then I went to []	I got there at [] : [] I travelled by [] I travelled: • by myself <input type="checkbox"/> • with an adult <input type="checkbox"/> • with other children <input type="checkbox"/> I left at [] : []
	Then I went to []	I got there at [] : [] I travelled by [] I travelled: • by myself <input type="checkbox"/> • with an adult <input type="checkbox"/> • with other children <input type="checkbox"/> I left at [] : []



In CAPABLE we added GPS monitors



The study areas – Hertfordshire and Lewisham



% of children in Years 4, 5 and 6 in Cheshunt allowed out independently

	Boys	Girls
Allowed out alone	63	48
Allowed out with friends	22	33
Total allowed out without an adult	85	81



% of children aged 8-11 allowed out alone

	Hertfordshire	Lewisham
Boys	52	41
Girls	39	8
All	46	31

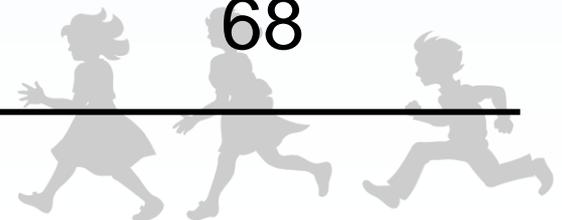
Source: CAPABLE Children's questionnaires



Effect of independence on after-school activities

			% who go to a friend's house often	% who go to somewhere outdoors
Boys	Allowed out alone?	Yes	77	77
		No	58	60
Girls	Allowed out alone?	Yes	76	76
		No	73	68

Source: CAPABLE children's questionnaires



Children's walking behaviour: accompaniment (based on use of GPS)

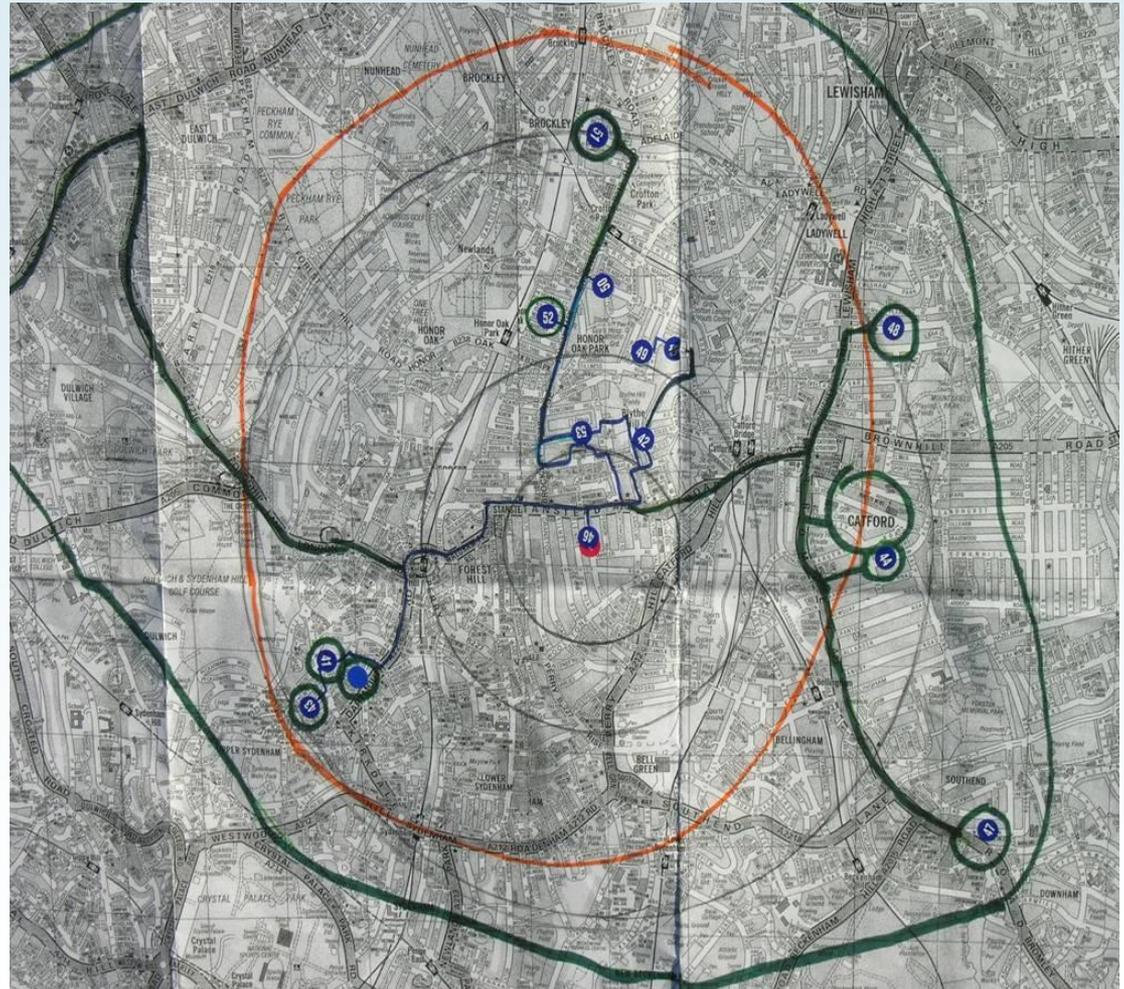
- When walking with an adult children walking faster and straighter
- Without an adult they are about as energetic, but meander about more

	Without an adult	With an adult
Speed	0.7	0.9
Intensity	6.2	6.5
Angle	52	39



The annotated sketch map activity

- Children marked people and places they visited on the map.
- Using colours and a key, they indicated how they travelled there.
- Further details of the visits were provided in tables.



Main places where children aged 11-12 spend time with a friend

	Boys	Girls
Playing outside	39	16
In the park	27	15
In their homes	39	55
Shopping	5	42



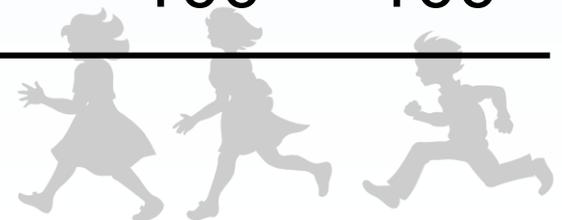
Destinations visited when boys and girls travelled the furthest distance without an adult

	Boys	Girls
Friends	30	48
Relatives	17	10
Shops	18	28
Other	35	14



How children made their friends (%)

	Boys	Girls
At present school	45	48
At previous school	19	23
In the neighbourhood or local area	25	8
Social connection such as church	4	2
Through mother or family connection	8	19
Total	100	100



Numbers of friends seen outside school (%)

	Boys	Girls
0-1	11	25
2-3	25	26
4-5	31	22
6 or more	33	28

Source: CAPABLE children's mapping exercises



Spatial patterns of friends (%)

	Boys	Girls
A predominantly clustered pattern	53	33
A predominantly scattered pattern	47	67



The picture that emerges

Boys

- Appear to be allowed to do more without adults.
- Play outside more.
- Spend time with friends outside.
- They are more likely to walk to places than girls and, perhaps for this reason, do not tend to travel further than them by foot.

Girls

- Appear to be allowed to do less without adults.
- They play outside much less preferring to spend their time with friends either in their homes or in shopping centres.
- They travel just as far (possibly further than boys) and are more likely to use public transport.



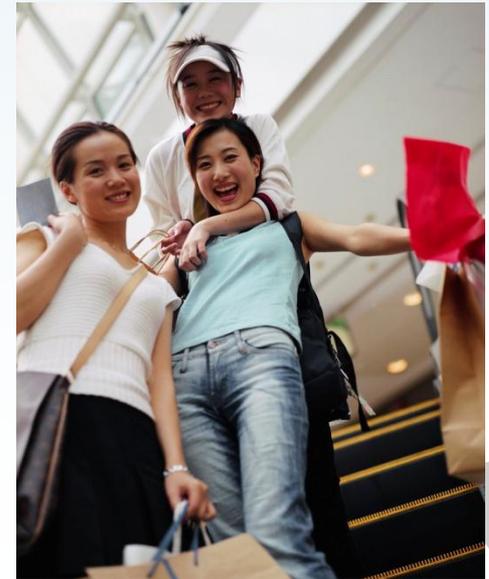
What accounts for the differences?

- When we spoke to parents they said they were more concerned about girls.
- However they also said they made more of an effort with girls to encourage their independence.
- Many spoke of the equal vulnerability of boys.
- Evidence from the parents questionnaires actually suggested that in the younger years girls were allowed to do more than the boys.
- The evidence also suggested that what children said they were *allowed to do* was actually a description of what they did rather than what their parent's permitted.



Iconic activities

- Boys – football in the park
- Girls – wandering round shopping centres with their friends
- These activities provide relatively controlled environments where children interact with one another in ways that reflect their gender characteristics.



Further information

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Websites:

- <http://www.cts.ucl.ac.uk/research/chcaruse/>
- <http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/capableproject/>

