

Kids at the Skatepark

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The target audience, parents, have children. Parents want their children to be safe. They don't want bad things to happen to them. They assume that others will treat their children with respect and deference. They also bring their children to skateparks and let them play like it's a normal park. Sure, it's called a *skatepark*, but it's definitely not a *park*. It is an inherently dangerous place with people much larger than children moving rapidly. It is a danger that we take upon ourselves when we go to skate. We wear pads and helmets. We know how to bail so that we don't get too hurt. But children aren't familiar with these concepts. They are too young to understand. In fact, pre-teens at the skatepark are too young to understand social cues and frequently skate in the wrong areas — dangerous areas. Everyone is skating a certain line and children are playing around on that line. A gentle nudging can help, but anywhere outside of Utah and this can end in violence.

People who might find this claim initially unacceptable are, obviously, the parents who continue to bring their children to the skatepark. It's not like it's skaters bringing their kids, it's random moms bringing their children. People who have no idea about skate culture and etiquette. The people who would care about this issue are skaters, parents, and the general community. No one in any of these groups wants to hurt children. Skaters want to skate. Running into a child not only hurts the skater, but skaters trying to not hit a child runs the risk of getting seriously injured. I do not personally know anyone who disagrees with this stance because I'm part of the skate community, but I've had plenty of experience having to coach children and parents on skatepark etiquette. It is generally well-received because I try to present it in a calm way, but some skaters have been physically attacked by angry parents.

What are the consequences of having children at skateparks on their safety?

Pros: safer children, safer skaters, skaters not getting hit by angry moms, more freedom to skate (in a skatepark), community better understands skateboarders.

Cons: community parks busier, parents might be frustrated at skaters, skateboarders "hogging" the skatepark, skaters not being sensitive to giving children a turn.

Having children at skateparks (A) increases (v1) the risk of hurting children (B) because having children at skateparks (A) increases (v2) the likelihood of a child being hit by a skateboarder.