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Risk-taking in young chimps and teens is similar – 15th January 2026

Level 0

Teenagers do crazy things. They take more risks. Some cause injuries. A study of chimpanzees may explain risky behaviour in children. Researchers studied 100 chimpanzees in Uganda. The researchers looked at how the chimps moved through trees. The youngest chimps did more dangerous things.

Children and young chimpanzees take risks. However, parents stop children from doing risky things. Teenagers have more freedom. They want to try risky things. Researchers want children to play more in parks. This will help children to develop motor skills. It will also make them stronger.

Level 1

Teenagers do crazy things. When a child becomes a teenager, they take more risks. Some are dangerous and cause injuries. A study of chimpanzees may explain risky behaviour in children. Researchers studied over 100 chimpanzees in Uganda. The chimps were between 2 and 65 years old. The researchers looked at how the chimps moved through trees. The youngest chimps did more dangerous things. Older chimps took fewer risks.

Children and young chimpanzees take risks. Children are at an age when parents stop them from doing risky things. However, teenagers have more freedom. They want to try risky things. The study shows risk-taking was the same for male and female chimps. A website said researchers want children to have "access to thrill-seeking play". This will help them to develop motor skills and make them stronger.

Level 2

Teenagers often do crazy things. Once a child becomes a teenager, they take more risks. Some of these are dangerous and lead to injury, or worse. A study of chimpanzees may explain risky behaviour in children. The study is from researchers in the USA. They studied over 100 chimpanzees in a park in Uganda. The chimps were between 2 and 65 years old. The researchers looked at how the animals moved through trees. The youngest chimps did more dangerous things, like letting go of branches and letting themselves fall. Older chimps took fewer risks.

The lead researcher suggested why children and young chimpanzees take risks. They are at an age when people control them less. Parents often stop young children from doing risky things. However, young teens have more freedom and want to try risky things. The researcher said the risk-taking was the same for male and female chimps and humans. A website said some researchers want children to have "access to thrill-seeking play, including the old-fashioned monkey bars, as a way to help them develop motor skills and skeletal strength".

Level 3

Teenagers are well known for doing crazy things. It seems that once a child becomes a teen, they take a lot more risks. Some of these are dangerous and lead to injury, or worse. A new study of young chimpanzees may explain risky behaviour in children. The study is from researchers at the University of Michigan in the USA. They studied over 100 wild chimpanzees in a national park in Uganda. The chimps ranged in age from 2 to 65 years. The researchers looked at how the animals swung through trees. The youngest chimps seemed to do more dangerous things, like letting go of branches and letting themselves fall. Older chimps took fewer risks and made sure they gripped branches firmly.

Lead researcher and anthropologist Laura MacLatchy suggested why children and young chimpanzees take more risks. She believes it is because they are at an age when parents supervise them less. Parents and carers often stop very young children from doing things that might cause injuries. However, young teens have more freedom and want to try new and risky things. Professor MacLatchy said the risk-taking was the same for male and female chimps and humans. The website ScienceAlert said that "some anthropologists argue for increasing children's access to thrill-seeking play, including the old-fashioned monkey bars, as a way to help them develop motor skills and skeletal strength".