



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2008 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Leah J. Gunn	Project Number J0310
Project Title Fear FACTor: Why Are Kids So Scared?	
Objectives/Goals The objective was to determine if children's fears of on-line predators, child abductions, and school shootings would decrease when the children were presented with the statistical likelihood of those events occurring. My hypothesis states that when faced with the statistical facts about these events, the children's fears would decrease.	
Abstract Methods/Materials The statistical likelihood of death through a child abduction, school shooting and interaction with on-line predators in the United States was researched and documented. Approximately 900 respondents, male and female, ranging in ages from 11 to 14 were asked to rate their level of concern regarding these events on a scale from 1 (no concern) to 5 (terrified). Subjects rated these events by completing two surveys. The first survey was done with no statistical information given. The second survey was taken after the subjects had read the statistical likelihood of these events occurring. The results were derived by showing the average percentage increase in the "no concern" ratings and decrease in the "terrified" ratings between the first and second survey. These findings were presented by separating the male and female results.	
Results The results show that after presenting the children with the statistical likelihood of these events occurring, their overall fear level regarding these events decreased. The results also indicate that females are more easily influenced by such information because the difference between their first and second surveys had greater ranges and than that of the males.	
Conclusions/Discussion My hypothesis was proven correct. When presented with the statistical likelihood of these events; child abductions, interaction with on-line predators, and school shootings, childrens' fear levels regarding these events decreased. The applications of these findings are significant. Clearly, they show that children are inappropriately frightened of these rare events. Research shows that fearful or stressed kids don't focus well in school. They typically have health issues, less energy and feel isolated and sad. Most importantly, unless the cycle is broken, the fear we instill in our children will be passed down from generation to generation.	
Summary Statement Fear FACTor experiment was designed to decrease childrens' fears of school shootings, on-line predators and child abductions.	
Help Received Dad helped with photos for display board; Brother came up with the title; Mom helped proofread	