

# Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

## Reducing Playground Injuries – One Supervisor at a Time By Derek Neubauer

As the snow begins to melt and temperatures start to rise, the students itch with excitement about possibly getting outside to run around at recess. This is a good time of year for a reminder that proper supervision of the playground area can make a difference when preventing injuries. While not all injuries can be prevented, attentive playground supervisors can help reducing the possibility of such injuries.

About 70% of all school and child-care center injuries happen during recess or physical education setting. The data has revealed that a lack of proper supervision is a contributing factor for injuries more than 40% of the time.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission's *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* provides a one-stop shop for information regarding the setup and maintenance of a school playground. All staff members that are performing the duties of playground supervisor should have knowledge of the handbook and be able to use it as a reference material should a question or an issue be presented.

According to the *Handbook*, all playground supervisors should understand the basics of playground safety such as the following:

- Checking for broken equipment and making sure children do not play on it.
- Checking for and removing unsafe modifications, especially ropes ties to equipment, before letting children play.

- Checking for properly maintained protective surfacing.
- Making sure children are wearing proper footwear.
- Watching and stopping dangerous horseplay, such as children throwing the surfacing material, jumping from heights, etc.
- Watching for and stopping children from wandering away from the play area.

The CPSC's *Handbook* can be found at <http://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/122149/325.pdf>.

Accidents can and do happen, but they can be reduced with proactive supervision. Research suggests that people can make a difference on the playground. However, the difference occurs when the supervisors are properly trained and rules are established and followed for safe play.

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For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or [sorr@cmregent.com](mailto:sorr@cmregent.com).