



SCHOOL PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Playground injuries are the leading cause of injury to children ages 5 to 14 in schools.

Lack of supervision is associated with 40 percent of playground injuries. A recent study found that children play without adult supervision more often on school playgrounds (32 percent of the time) than playgrounds in parks (22 percent). Approximately 58% of playground injuries requiring medical attention occur in Schools and are most common among children between 5-9 yrs girls and 10-14 yrs boys. Most common injury times occur between 12pm -4pm.

The most common causes of medical attention from playgrounds is injury suffered from falling – Approximately 70 percent of playground equipment-related injuries involve falls to the surface, and 10 percent involve falls onto equipment. Either to inadequate surfacing or onto hard objects. The most common injury is long-bone fractures (arms & legs) which are most common from

upperbody overhead activities such as monkey bars, monorails etc. This is generally due to the height of the bars and the quality of the surface below.

Protective surfacing under and around playground equipment can reduce the severity of and even prevent playground fall-related injuries. The risk of injury in a fall onto a non-impact absorbing surface such as asphalt or concrete is more than twice that of falling onto an impact-absorbing surface.

Much emphasis and effort is being placed on increasing physical activity among children as it promotes good health and prevents obesity. Play is also important in the development of social behaviour, enabling children to interact with their peers. However, with this increase in physical activity and play, there is also an increase in the risk of injury. It is therefore necessary to ensure that safety measures are taken to prevent these injuries.

Playsafe's aim is to ensure children enjoy themselves, grow and develop through safe play.



The following are 8 very effective injury reduction prevention measures for your school.


8 Effective Playground Injury Prevention Measures:

1. Equipment - Purchase age & demographic appropriate play equipment
2. Fall Height - Ensuring correct play equipment heights (fall height of max 3.0mtr for climbers and 2.2mtr max handle height for upperbody overhead activities)
3. Surfacing - Use an impact absorbing (attenuating) safety surfacing such as certified loose fill (bark or woodchip) or synthetic surfaces (rubber matting)
4. Supervision – Establish and maintain daily supervision procedure
5. Daily Inspection – Daily/ weekly inspection by school property manager (checklist template example can be found on our website)

6. Yearly Inspection - Annual comprehensive safety inspection / compliance audit by RPII Level 3 Play Inspector
7. Surface Test - Head Impact Surface (HIC) test every 2 years for synthetic surfaces (rubber matting only) not required for loosefill
8. Maintenance – Regular preventative maintenance, usually following comprehensive yearly inspection.


Playsafe Consulting Ltd is a professional services provider that specialises in providing playground safety inspections, design consultation and standards training throughout New Zealand. Our inspectors are internationally accredited to the Register of Playground Inspectors International (RPII). ▲

Contact us for a safety & compliance audit of your playground at www.playsafe.co.nz





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