



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Playground Injuries: Fact Sheet Overview

Each year in the United States, emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related injuries (Tinsworth 2001).

Occurrence and Consequences

- About 45% of playground-related injuries are severe—fractures, internal injuries, concussions, dislocations, and amputations (Tinsworth 2001).
- About 75% of nonfatal injuries related to playground equipment occur on public playgrounds (Tinsworth 2001). Most occur at schools and daycare centers (Phelan 2001).
- Between 1990 and 2000, 147 children ages 14 and younger died from playground-related injuries. Of them, 82 (56%) died from strangulation and 31 (20%) died from falls to the playground surface. Most of these deaths (70%) occurred on home playgrounds (Tinsworth 2001).

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Cost

In 1995, playground-related injuries among children ages 14 and younger cost an estimated \$1.2 billion (Office of Technology Assessment 1995).

Groups at Risk

- While all children who use playgrounds are at risk for injury, girls sustain injuries (55%) slightly more often than boys (45%) (Tinsworth 2001).
- Children ages 5 to 9 have higher rates of emergency department visits for playground injuries than any other age group. Most of these injuries occur at school (Phelan 2001).

Risk Factors

- On public playgrounds, more injuries occur on climbers than on any other equipment (Tinsworth 2001).
- On home playgrounds, swings are responsible for most injuries (Tinsworth 2001).
- A study in New York City found that playgrounds in low-income areas had more maintenance-related hazards than playgrounds in high-income areas. For example, playgrounds in low-income areas had significantly more trash, rusty play equipment, and damaged fall surfaces (Suecoff 1999).

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