



The National Training Institute
for Child Care Health Consultants

Injury Prevention in Child Care: Playground Safety and Outdoor Learning



- Your name
- Your agency
- Date of training



Introductions

- Please share with the group
 - Your name
 - Your agency
 - Your favorite playground activity



Training Objectives

- Understand the role of the CCHC in promoting playground safety and outdoor learning
- List hazards most common to playground structures
- Provide suggestions for how an outdoor environment can be optimized for children



Opening: Take a Guess

- Find a partner.
- Take 5 minutes to brainstorm with your partner 3-6 facts about playground safety and outdoor learning.
- During the presentation, listen and circle the facts that are shared.



The Role of the CCHC

1. Preventing playground-related injuries
2. Working with child care staff to make the outdoor environment engaging



Child Care Injury Statistics

- More than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger are treated in emergency rooms each year due to a playground-related injury (CDC, 2004).
- Nearly half of the injuries sustained are considered severe and include fractures, concussions, dislocations, and amputations (Tinsworth and McDonald, 2001).



Child Care Injury Statistics (continued)

- There are about 90,000 playground-related injuries each year (Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1999).
- A 1999 study found
 - 24% of the child care settings did not have safe playground surfacing, and
 - 27% of the child care settings did not keep the playground surfacing well-maintained (CPSC, 1999).

Child Care Injury Statistics (continued)



- About 15 children die each year from playground-related injuries (CPSC, 1999).



CFOC Recommendations

- An inventory of equipment once at time of purchase and when changes are made,
- An audit of active play areas by an individual with specialized training in playground inspections once a year,
- Monthly inspections to check for CPSC recalls or hazard warnings, broken equipment, or equipment in poor repair that needs attention. ^{9.2.6.1}



CFOC Recommendations (continued)

- Daily safety check for hazards such as broken bottles, insect nests and packed surfacing under swings and slides, and
- An inspection to examine deterioration of structures and to initiate correction or removal of hazards once a month and whenever injuries occur. ^{9.2.6.1}



Site Specific Safety Assessment Checklist

- Every child care facility should have daily and monthly safety checklists in place that are specific to their own facilities and environments.



Supervision

- Being alert and attentive
- Being aware of age-appropriate equipment
- Evaluating and inspecting hazards
- Observing signs



Supervision (continued)

- Knowing and applying safe playground rules
- Training the children on how to use the playground equipment correctly
- Being consistent with the indoor adult-child ratio



Supervision (continued)

- Intervening when inappropriate behavior occurs
- Ensuring safe clothing for children
- Having injury prevention and response plans



Effective Supervision

- Assign staff members to a “zone.”
- Rotate staff to help relieve monotony and/or fatigue.
- Maintain, at minimum, the same staff-child ratio that is used in the classroom.

Effective Supervision (continued)



- Review the playground rules with children before outdoor play.
- Be prepared for an emergency by having a detailed plan and a fully equipped first aid kit that is easily accessible.
- Always arrive at the playground ahead of the children.

Effective Supervision (continued)



- Check playground for hazards.
- Report broken or dangerous equipment immediately and prohibit children from playing on it.
- Be alert; delay adult conversation.



Effective Supervision (continued)

- Plan and explain teacher-organized games with children while indoors to avoid distraction when outside.
- Move around the playground so the children (and staff) can be seen, and they can see you.
- Make sure children are using play structures appropriately.



Effective Supervision (continued)

- Stay in close proximity of a child who is challenged or is trying out an activity for the first time.
- Discourage rough play.
- Follow cold and hot weather temperature and air quality advisories from the National Weather Service in evaluating suitability for outdoor play.



Design of the Outdoor Play Area

Appropriately designed playgrounds have:

- Natural elements, vegetation, trees, land forms, topography
- Sand, water
- Soft surface material (Ex: sand, wood chips, rubber, or pea gravel for children age 3 and over)
- What else?

Other Design Considerations



- Proximity of pathways, emergency equipment storage, restrooms, water fountains, exits
- Location away from parking areas and roads
- Shade covering for sun protection
- Equipment appropriate for the size and age of the child
- Drainage



Accessibility

- The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that all public accommodations be accessible to people with disabilities.
- Child care centers are considered public accommodations and must be accessible.
- Reasonable modifications must be made to the building and outdoor space to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities.



The Role of the CCHC

- Routinely assess playgrounds for potential risk of injuries.
- Recommend that all structures be repaired in order to comply with CPSC standards.
- Recommend that all structures that cannot be changed to comply with CPSC standards be removed.
- Periodically check structures to make sure hazards do not exist.



The Role of the CCHC

- Periodically review daily and monthly playground safety checklists and supervision plans with child care staff.
- Distribute safety information to child care caregivers/teachers and parents.
- Link child care staff with local playground safety consultants for more in depth guidance.



Activity: Playground Hazards Puzzle

- Divide into four groups.
- Work with your group to put together the Playground Hazards puzzle.
- After 10 minutes, compare your puzzle to the Playground Hazards handout.
- Be prepared to share one new fact that you learned about playground hazards.



Value of Outdoor Play

- Observing the natural habitats of animals and plants can contribute to a child's understanding of science and nature.
- Exploration of the natural environment through play can aid in the development of problem-solving skills and promote sensory learning.
- Outdoor games and activities promote physical growth.



Value of Outdoor Play (continued)

- Working in teams and exploring the outdoors as a group are important for creative thinking and social skills.
- Solitary play, role-playing, fantasy play, and group participation in outdoor settings can contribute to emotional growth (McGinnis, 2000; Moore, Golstman, Iacofano, 1992).



Physical Health Benefits

- Allows children to develop large muscle groups and overall positive physical development.
- Lets children breath fresh air, which is relatively free of germs.
- Exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of vitamin D.
CFOC 3.1.3.2



Mental and Emotional Health Benefits

- Lets children express themselves.
- Can be an outlet for pent-up energy.
- Let children practice and master skills.
- Can help prevent depression and reduce stress among children, parents, directors, and teachers.



Quality Learning Time

- Play should not follow a set schedule. Children need time to play without being rushed.
- Outdoor play time should be viewed as an extension of classroom activities.
- Try bringing reading, art, dramatic play, and block areas into the outdoors.



Quality Learning Time (continued)

- The outdoor environment must comprise a minimum of seventy-five square feet for each child using the playground at any one time . CFOC 6.1.0.1
- It is important that the learning environment frequently change.



“Loose Parts” Theory

- The amount and type of materials in any setting determine the level of creativity and the possibilities for discovery.
- “Loose parts” can include: paper goods; tools for writing, drawing, and painting; materials for construction and collages; or sculpting materials.
- Larger materials may be collected also. Include wheelbarrows, foam blocks, balls, tires, parachutes, etc.



Natural Elements

- Including natural elements can contribute to outdoor learning and play experiences.
- This encourages more constructive play using hypothesizing and building (Hestenes, Shim, and Debord, 2007).
- Children who interact with the natural environment are more likely to display constructive play and less likely to display functional or repetitive play.



Types of Outdoor Play

- Active Play
 - Requires space to move around and participate in large muscle activities
 - Can be child-initiated or organized by a teacher/leader
- Observing and Resting Outdoors
 - Time for children to sit quietly and observe nature/activities



Types of Outdoor Play

- Quiet Play
 - Reading, art projects and nature study can be done outside as well as inside
 - Supports needs of children who do not want to, or are unable to, participate in more physically active play
- Dramatic Play
 - Allows for creative use of natural elements as props



Overcoming Obstacles to Outdoor Learning

- Children should play outdoors when the conditions do not pose a safety risk, individual child health risk, or significant health risk of frostbite or of heat related illness. CFOC 3.1.3.2
- The outdoor space should be adaptable and support various types of play and weather conditions.



Overcoming Obstacles to Outdoor Learning (continued)

- Children should be protected from the sun when playing outdoors. CFOC 3.1.3.2, 3.6.3.1
- A covered-outdoor space should be available for playtime during inclement weather. Shade should also be available. CFOC 6.1.0.7



CFOC Standard 3.1.3.2

“Children should play outdoors when the conditions do not pose a safety risk, individual child health risk, or significant health risk of frostbite or of heat related illness. Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service (NWS).”



POEMS

- Preschool Outdoor Environment Measurement Scale (POEMS)
 - Is a comprehensive scale for assessing the quality of an outdoor learning environment in a child care center
 - Focuses on 5 domains
 - Physical environment
 - Interactions
 - Play and learning setting
 - Program
 - Teacher/caregiver role



The Role of the CCHC

- Emphasize the importance of outdoor settings as learning environments.
- Ensure that adequate space, materials, and time are devoted to outdoor learning.
- Ensure that outdoor learning environments comply with *CFOC* standards.



The Role of the CCHC (continued)

- Encourage the use of a variety of outdoor projects and activities that promote social, physical, emotional, and cognitive growth.
- Promote the use of a variety of outdoor activities that accommodate all ages, sizes, and abilities.
- Collaborate in planning for and creating an appropriate outdoor learning environment.



Activity: “Loose Parts”

- Find the “Loose Parts” worksheet in your Participant’s Packet.
- Work with a partner to complete the worksheet.
- After 5 minutes, we will come back together to share ideas.



Take a Guess

- How many facts did you think of that were shared during the presentation?



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Ticket Out

- You must create your own “ticket” to get out the door!
- On a sticky note, write:
 - One thing you will do with the information you learned
 - What you liked best about the session
- Hand your sticky note to me or stick it to the wall by the door on your way out.



Evaluation

- Please take 5 minutes to complete the evaluation in your Participant's Packet.
- Thanks for coming today!