

## **Key Points to Providing Safe Playground Supervision**

- **Nationwide 200,000** children visit the emergency room each year due to injuries sustained on the playground (Consumer Product Safety Commission, 2006).
- **Nationwide 80%** of elementary school injuries every school year happen on the playground (Thompson & Bruya, 1995).
- **84%** of all playground accidents could be avoided through two activities: adult supervision and proper playground maintenance (National Playground Safety Institute).

**Portland Public Schools is committed to the safety of every child we serve, mentor, and educate. While the majority of this education occurs in the classroom, the playground serves as a tool for activity and learning.**

**The likelihood of injury is dramatically increased once a student enters the playground. In reported accidents, Portland Public Schools had 391 reported student injuries on playgrounds in 2010. We see a gamut of injuries from slips, trips and falls, to fractures, concussions, and even in one case the ingestion of poisonous berries!**

**Included below is a list of characteristics found in highly effective playground supervisors. These tips can help us to avoid injuries and mishaps, while maintain the enjoyment and spirit that these activities are meant to inspire. As a playground supervisor, you should:**

- Communicate any changes to common procedures in order to make certain that all involved in playground supervision receive the same information.
- Constantly move throughout the play environment, visually scanning – moving with your eyes, and not spending much time focusing on one area of the playground.
- Observe children’s behavior to anticipate dangerous situations.
- Position supervisors near challenging areas of playground equipment and maintain a close proximity to the equipment.
- Establish sight lines. Sight lines are imaginary lines that describe the areas a supervisor can clearly see when positioned on the playground. Discuss areas that are difficult to see into, through, and/or around.
- Set areas of the playground as “off limits”, if they cannot be supervised due to their lack of visual access.

- Develop playground rules. Example: Tag games should be played in the grassy area away from the equipment; children can use slides by going down feet first; fences, trees, lampposts, and other site amenities should not be used as climbing equipment.
- Develop playground rules. Example: Tag games should be played in the grassy area away from the equipment; children can use slides by going down feet first; fences, trees, lampposts, and other site amenities should not be used as climbing equipment.
- Report injuries: playground supervisors should know how to properly complete the student injury form in a timely manner so that proper notifications and documentation can be ensured.

Source: GameTime, a Playcore Company (2009)  
"Playground Supervision Guide"