

### TEST YOUR SAFETY I.Q.

**Q** How much more likely is it that a child will suffer an unintentional injury at school than be a victim of violence?

**A** It is nine times more likely that a child will suffer from an unintentional injury at school.<sup>1</sup>

**Q** What piece of playground equipment is so dangerous that experts recommend it be removed?

**A** Monkey bars, climbing equipment is responsible for 40% of playground injuries.<sup>2</sup>

## ThinkFirst about...

### DEATH AND INJURY STATISTICS

- Over 200,000 children visit emergency rooms each year due to playground-related injuries.<sup>3</sup>
- 15 child fatalities occur each year from playground equipment.<sup>4</sup>
- 79% of ALL playground injuries involve falls. Falls also account for 90% of the most SEVERE playground injuries.<sup>5</sup>
- 58% of all playground fatalities are due to strangulation.<sup>6</sup>

### WHEN AND WHERE INJURIES ARE MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR

- 62% of organized sports injuries occur during practice, and 75% of all school-related spinal cord injuries happen during sports activities.<sup>7</sup>
- Football is responsible for the highest injury rate among school-organized sports.<sup>8</sup>
- Home injuries on playground equipment account for 23% of the annual injury rates.<sup>9</sup>
- 76% of all injuries take place on public playgrounds.<sup>10</sup>

### WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO INCUR THIS TYPE OF INJURY?

- Males account for 62% of all playground deaths.<sup>11</sup>
- Males are three times more likely to incur a school-related injury.<sup>12</sup>
- 46% of school-related injuries are to those ages 10-14.<sup>13</sup>
- 49% of injuries to the head and face are to children age four and under.<sup>14</sup>

### HEALTH COSTS

- School-related medical costs for children age 14 and under account for more than \$2 billion in medical spending each year.<sup>15</sup>
- The total annual cost of school-related injuries to children ages 14 and under exceeds \$74 billion, which includes medical spending, loss in quality of life and future earnings.<sup>16</sup>

### PREVENTION TIPS

- Playground equipment is designed for different age groups and should be used accordingly.
- Equipment under four feet tall is suitable for children under 5, equipment under eight feet tall is suitable for those ages 5-12.
- Never leave children unsupervised.
- To better absorb shocks from falls, make sure 12 inches of loose fill such as wood chips, pea gravel, shredded tires, double shredded bark mulch, fine gravel or sand completely covers the playground floor.
- Make sure any "S" hooks that are used are closed as much as possible and that anything a child may become caught on is removed to eliminate the threat of strangulation.
- A bar should be present at the top of a slide so children will have to sit before going down.
- Make sure guardrails surround elevated platforms.
- Maintain playground equipment.
- Hoods or drawstrings can get caught on equipment. Remove them before children are allowed to play.

## FAST FACTS

# ThinkFirst about...

### STILL NOT CONVINCED?

Thirty eight percent of playgrounds in the year 2000 had dangerous equipment, 34% of equipment had openings that posed a serious risk for head entrapment that can lead to strangulation.<sup>17</sup> Kids are out to have fun and are unaware of the risks present on playgrounds. A playground is a place where a child should be free to play and take a break from worries, but this is not always the case. Over 40% of playground injuries are associated with inadequate supervision of children.<sup>18</sup> Help keep playgrounds a place where children can have fun, not a place where the fun stops, sometimes forever.

## ThinkFirst

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#### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> [www.safekids.org/tier2\\_rl.cfm?folder\\_id=177](http://www.safekids.org/tier2_rl.cfm?folder_id=177)

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> [www.nsc.org/library/facts/plgrdgen.htm](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/plgrdgen.htm)

<sup>5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13</sup> [www.safekids.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=342&folder\\_id=177](http://www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=342&folder_id=177)

<sup>9, 10, 14</sup> [www.uni.edu/playground/resources/statistics.html](http://www.uni.edu/playground/resources/statistics.html)

<sup>15, 16</sup> [www.safekids.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=1170&folder\\_id=540](http://www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=1170&folder_id=540)

<sup>17</sup> <http://pirg.org/reports/consumer/playground2000/>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.uni.edu/playground/tips/SAFE/supervision\\_guidelines.html](http://www.uni.edu/playground/tips/SAFE/supervision_guidelines.html)

