

Let's Talk about...A NAC Accreditation Standard: *Safety practices are followed on the playground.* By Lois Gamble

The National Program for Playground Safety reports that more than 40% of playground injuries are related to inadequate supervision. See www.uni.edu/playground.

Practices that may minimize injuries on your playground include:

- Maintain a consistent ratio of children to adults. At minimum, keep the same ratio required in an indoor classroom environment.
- Establish policies for dealing with injuries. Keep first aid supplies on hand and train staff members in first aid.
- Document and track injuries that occur on the playground. Knowing the time of the accidents, age groups most involved, and the location of staff in relation to the site where the injury occurred can enable you to make adjustments that reduce future injuries.
- Develop and implement policies that include a detailed supervision plan for the playground. Include that teachers position themselves so children can be observed in all areas at all times. Distribute the plan, review it at least annually, update as needed, and hold staff accountable for the plan's implementation
- Train staff in your center's philosophy of supervision, conflict resolution, playground rules, the training of children in using equipment, playground inspection procedures and the maintenance of grounds and equipment.
- Demonstrate your diligence in playground safety by enforcing written policies and procedures, documenting the training of playground supervisors, and evaluating staff performance on the playground.
- Conduct regular safety inspections of the playground and equipment. The CPSC Handbook for Public Playground Safety presents safety information for public playground equipment in the form of guidelines: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf> or search for a Certified Playground Safety Inspector on the National Recreation and Park Association website, www.nrpa.org There may be resources in your community. Check with the City Parks and Recreation Department to see if they have someone qualified and available to inspect your playground.

Prepare now for fun and safe playground experiences for the children in your care.