



# RISK SIMPLIFIED

## Reducing Staff Injuries During Recess and Yard Activities

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Schools are active, fast-moving environments where play, movement, and social connection happen every day. Many staff members enjoy joining students in games, whether it's a quick basketball shot, a running game during recess, or jumping into a lively soccer match. These activities may help build trust, strengthen relationships, and support a positive school environment.

However, these interactions can create situations in which staff are more likely to be injured. These injuries often happen during recess or other high-energy, physically demanding times, when play moves quickly and the environment is less predictable. Fast-moving games, uneven playground surfaces, wet grass, loose gravel, and sudden changes in direction can be challenging for anyone, but the unexpected physical demands of these conditions often place adults at greater risk of strains, sprains, falls, or other injuries.

Staff may also be more vulnerable to injury than students. Adults are often not physically prepared for abrupt, athletic movements. Work clothing or shoes may not be designed for running or rapid changes in direction. An injury can impact both the employee and school operations, requiring modified duties or time away from work. Schools, as employers, are responsible for maintaining a safe workplace, which includes identifying and reducing injury risks during recess and other unstructured times.

A practical approach to injury prevention is to encourage adults to stay involved in play without physically participating. Staff can continue building strong, positive relationships with students by taking on supportive roles that maintain visibility and engagement, such as:

# RISK SIMPLIFIED

- Cheering students on to promote teamwork and confidence
- Organizing teams so games start smoothly and all students feel included
- Reinforcing rules to keep play fair and safe
- Rotating players so everyone has a turn
- Helping resolve minor disagreements before they escalate
- Encouraging hesitant students to join in and feel welcomed and supported

These types of involvement keep adults visible, attentive, and able to supervise effectively while avoiding the quick, high-risk movements that most often lead to injuries. They allow staff to stay connected with students in meaningful ways while keeping themselves and the play environment safe.

When expectations are reinforced in a positive and supportive way, focusing on staff well-being and overall school safety, employees understand the purpose behind these practices and are more likely to adopt them. These small shifts help create a safer environment for both staff and students while keeping play enjoyable and active.

For support or guidance on promoting and reducing staff injuries during recess or yard activities, contact [Risk Control](#).