

This Issue:



Start Your School Year with Effective Strategies for DEALING WITH PLAYGROUND DISCIPLINE

Do you dread the day that your name appears on the duty chart for recess duty?

Recess duty doesn't need to be a painful task for anyone in your school if you plan ahead as a collaborative team to address the issues and uniqueness of your play areas. Effective playground supervisors know that a playground discipline plan must have all the same components contained in a strong school wide and classroom behavior plan. The complete playground plan must consist of rules, or expectations, that are specific to your play areas, and includes a strong concentration of positive behavior lessons. Additionally, a strong plan must contain well-defined systems for behavior correction in the event that severe behavior infractions occur.

An excellent plan begins with a survey of what is currently occurring.

The first step a school staff needs to take is to identify the present physical, psychological and emotional dangers of the playground area. While clearly inventorying the play fields, play activities and the equipment as well as noting the number, placement and movement of supervisors, staff must establish what is working well and what must be addressed in the new plan to ensure peace and safety.

The plan should be spelled out and agreed upon by all staff.

Keep it simple! Your new design should have four areas of concern: expectations, encouragements, enforcement, and a severe clause.

Expectations: will include such things as "follow directions the first time given," "keep hands and feet to self," "no teasing, put downs or foul language" and others.

Encouragement: is the section where you outline the positive things staff will do or say when things are going well.

Enforcement: outlines clear consequences for "expectation infractions," such as "verbal reminder," "five minutes out of recess" or parent contact, and lastly, an administrative referral.

Severe Clause: this section should outline what will happen if a student violates a rule such as fighting, overt defiance, leaving school grounds, or weapons offenses.

Also In This Issue:

- "Recess Rodeo"
- When Best Intentions Fail

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Eighty to ninety percent of your students will follow the rules.

Research indicates that nearly all of your students will follow the rules if you teach them the rules, demonstrate correct procedures, provide time and guidance in practice, and then reteach and maintain those behaviors. To ensure that students understand staff direction:

Define definitions used in each of the games played on recess. For example, do you know what a cherry drop is as it relates to a playground?

Document rules for each piece of equipment used by students (e.g., tetherball, the monkey bars, the big toy);

and

Document and demonstrate procedures for each activity (e.g., wall ball, kick ball, basketball or four square).

An efficient and fun way to introduce children to the “expectations of the playground” is to instate a Recess Rodeo during the first few days of the new school year. Students spend ten minutes at stations on the playground where the staff teaches rules of the games, equipment, lingo of the game and any other elements through demonstration, role-play, modeling and coaching. Rotation to other stations within the forty-five minute instructional recess allows kids to become familiar with staff, equipment, and procedures in a supportive environment where students are encouraged to ask questions and try new skills. The culmination of Recess Rodeo invites students to sign a Sportsmanship Contract so that they are able to receive recess privileges.



When best intentions fail, students offer solutions to their peers.

Student directed conflict resolution programs are very successful on elementary playgrounds.

Mediation techniques taught to a select group of responsible children can be extremely effective for behavior change. Saving staff time and encouraging self-directed play, “managers” are taught to ask a series of questions designed to highlight the specific issue of contention, then to follow a set of procedures to mediate/resolve the conflict. The truly adventurous staff may try other student-led programs such as Kids Court. Or they may choose to conduct Developmental Recess, or start a Noon Sports League.

Total Behavior Management’s newest book, *The Ultimate Guide to Playground Discipline (Grades K-6)* lays out a simple plan for schools to critique present playground procedures and systematically design an effective new pro-social playground plan. The book walks educators through the development of a school wide safety plan that encourages growth and learning, teaches conflict resolution skills, while continually cross checking for student compliance and educator effectiveness. Specific tools, charts and questionnaires are included in the manual. Click on the BUY BOOKS tab on our website for more information about this one-of-kind critical resource on student behavior management.



**CHILDREN NEED
A SAFE PEACEFUL
ENVIRONMENT
IN WHICH TO
EXPLORE WITHOUT
FEAR OF RIDICULE
OR OSTRACISM**

Playground accidents occurring in our nation’s elementary schools account for over 200,000 hospital visits per year. Forty percent of the total mishaps are said to occur due to poor supervision. According to a study by the California State Health Department, two thirds of the K-6 accidents occur during the noon recess.