



Injury Prevention: Playground Fall-Related Injuries

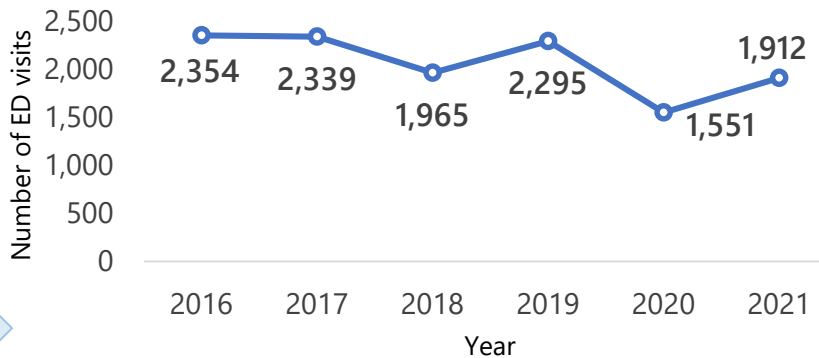
Playgrounds are fun and provide a great opportunity for exercise and family togetherness. But did you know that youths age 17 and younger are at risk for falls on the playground? These falls can result in injuries, like bruises, scrapes, and some that may even require a trip to the emergency department (ED).

Kentucky youths¹ averaged **2,069 annual visits to emergency departments** due to **playground falls** from 2016-2021.

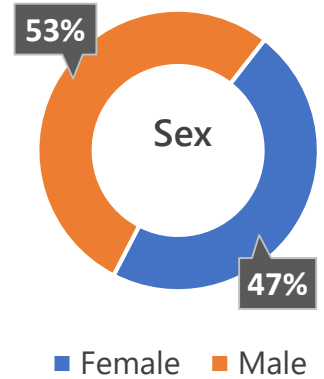
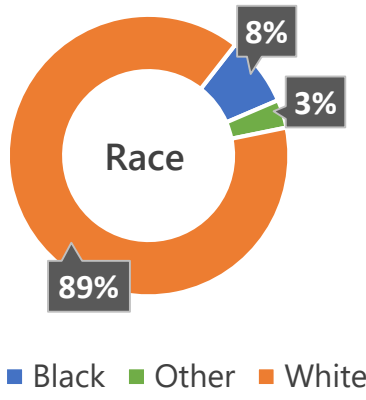
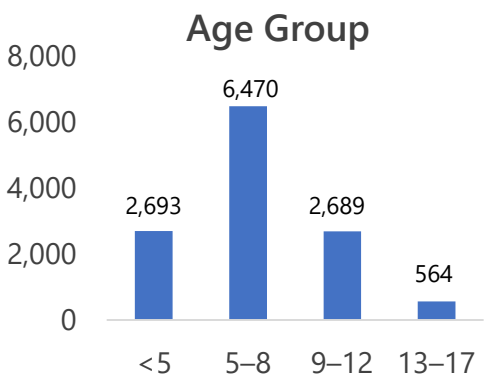
The median cost of an ED visit was **\$1,800**.

¹The term "youth" is limited to Kentucky residents 17 years of age and younger.

Playground Fall-Related ED Visits² among Kentucky Youth¹ by Year, 2016–2021³



Playground Fall-Related ED Visits² among Kentucky Youth¹ by Age Group, Race, and Sex, 2016–2021³



Quick Stats

Kentucky youth ED visits for playground fall-related injuries:

- **52%** occurred among youth aged 5-8
- **53%** were male
- **89%** were white



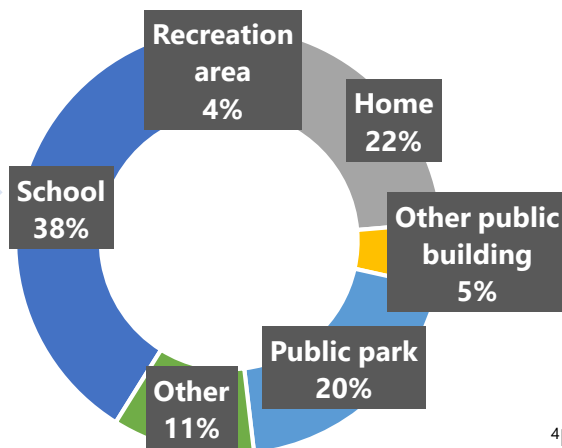
²ED visits represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in Kentucky.

³The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020 should be considered when interpreting data and trend analyses.

Data source: Kentucky Outpatient Services Database, Office of Health Data and Analytics. February 2023. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Playground Fall-Related ED Visits² among Kentucky Youth¹ by Place⁴ of Injury, 2016–2021³

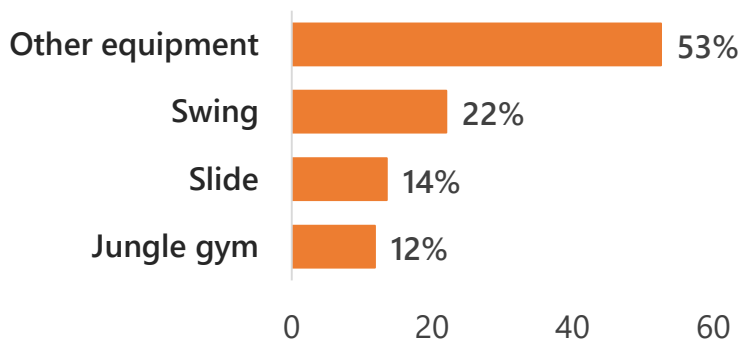
School are the most common location for playground fall-related injuries resulting in ED visits.



⁴Details on place of injury were available for only 31% of ED injury visits.

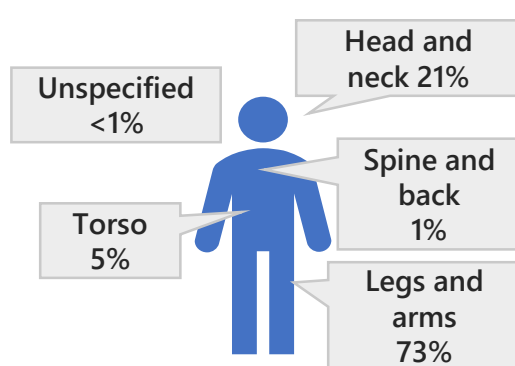
Playground Fall-Related ED Visits² among Kentucky Youth¹ by Playground Equipment Type and Injured Body Region, 2016–2021³

Playground Equipment



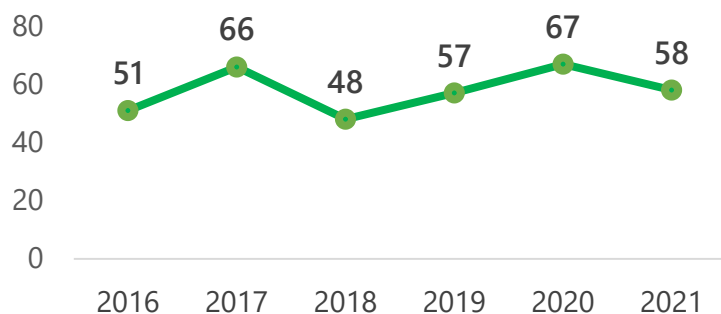
Note: Percentage may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Body Region



The most common playground fall-related injuries seen in the ED among youth were fractures (**56%**), and superficial injuries or contusions (**15%**).

Playground Fall-Related Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) ED Visits² among Kentucky Youth¹ by Year, 2016–2021³



Every year from 2016 to 2021, Kentucky averaged **58** ED visits for playground fall-related TBIs.

Playground Safety Checklist⁵



Does the surface surrounding the playground equipment have at least a foot of materials (mulch, sand, wood chips, etc.) to protect against injuries from falls?

Make sure the protective surfaces extend at least 6 feet in all directions from the playground equipment.



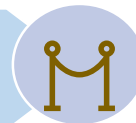
Make sure that playground equipment that is more than 2.5 feet tall is spaced at least 9 feet from any other equipment.

Look for protruding fasteners (bolts), sharp points and edges, and other hardware that can pose dangers to kids.



Look for tripping hazards! These can include raised surfaces, exposed concrete footings, rocks, and tree roots.

Make sure that all elevated surfaces have guardrails to help prevent falls and injuries.



Regularly check playground equipment and surfaces.

Supervise your kids when they are on the playground.



Additional Resources

- ⁵Consumer Product Safety Commission Playgrounds: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/outdoors/playgrounds>
- Children's Safety Network: <https://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/injury-topics/playground-safety>
- National Program for Playground Safety: <https://playgroundsafety.org/>

A parent's role at the playground:

- ✓ Teach kids to safely and properly use equipment
- ✓ Supervise other kids
- ✓ Provide first aid if an injury does occur