



# Injury Prevention: Playground Fall-Related Injuries

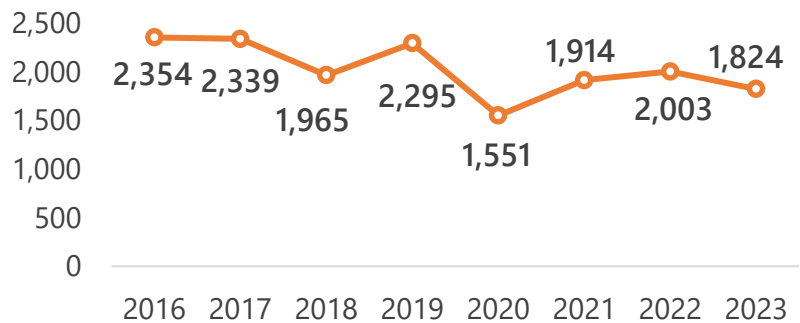
Playgrounds are fun and can provide a great opportunity for exercise and family togetherness. But youths aged 17 and younger are at risk for falls at the playground that can result in injuries like bruises, scrapes, and some that may even require a trip to the emergency department (ED).

From 2016 to 2023, Kentucky youths<sup>1</sup> made an average of 2,031 visits to EDs due to playground falls.

The median cost of an ED visit was \$1,924.

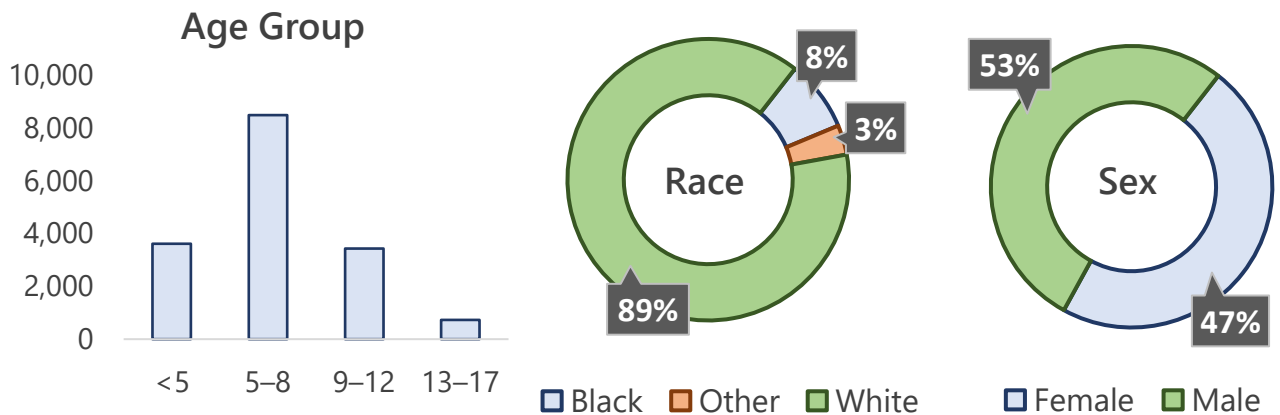
<sup>1</sup>The term "youth" is limited to Kentucky residents 17 years of age and younger.

## Playground Fall-Related ED Visits among Kentucky Youths by Year, 2016–2023<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup>The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020 should be considered when interpreting data and trend analyses.

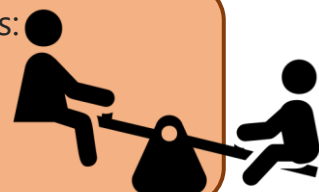
## Playground Fall-Related ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Age Group, Race, and Sex, 2016–2023



### Quick Stats

Of Kentucky youth ED visits for playground fall-related injuries:

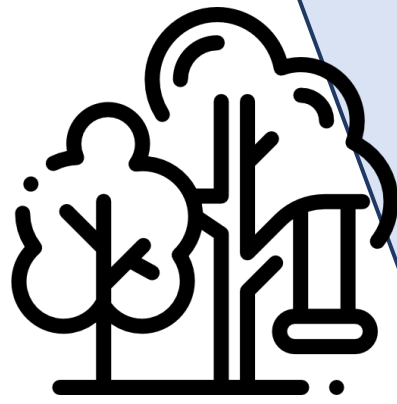
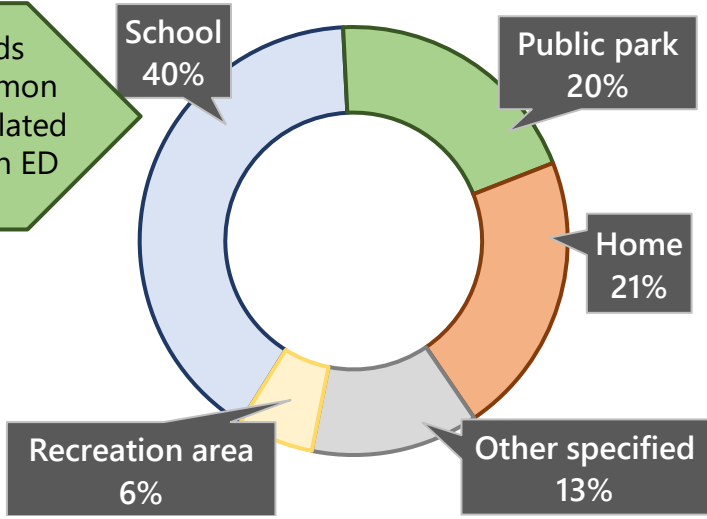
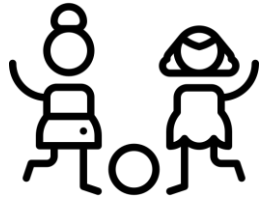
- **52%** were between the ages of 5 and 8
- **53%** were male
- **89%** were white



ED visits represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in Kentucky. Data source: Kentucky Outpatient Services Database, Office of Data and Analytics. October 2024. Data are provisional and subject to change. Icons made by Freepik and Pixel Perfect from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com).

## ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Place<sup>3</sup> of Playground Fall-Related Injury, 2016–2023

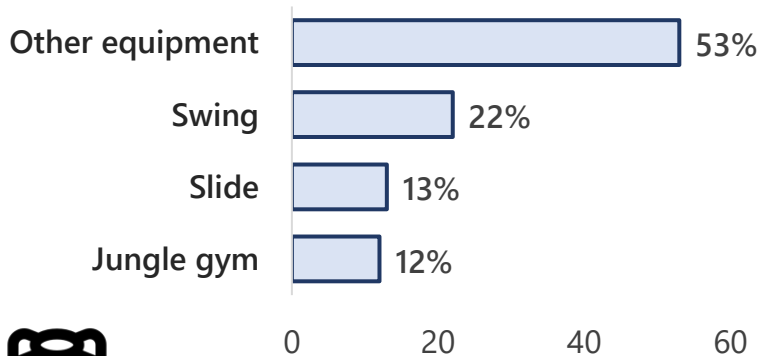
School playgrounds are the most common location for fall-related injuries resulting in ED visits.



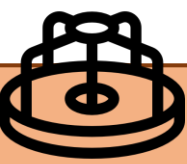
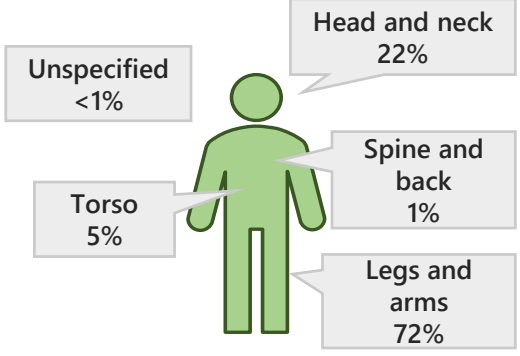
<sup>3</sup>Details on place of injury were available for only 30% of ED injury visits.

## Playground Fall-Related ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Type of Equipment and Injured Body Region, 2016–2023

### Playground Equipment

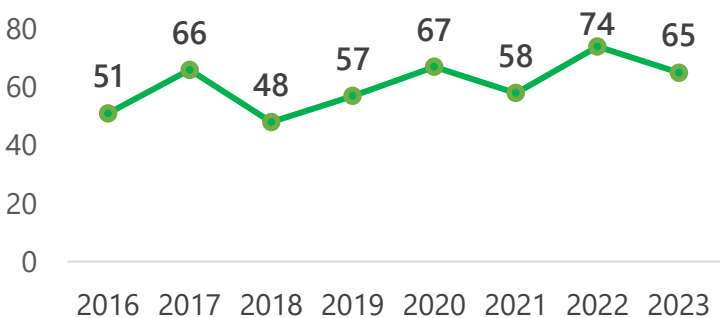


### Body Region



The most common playground fall-related injuries seen in the ED among youth were fractures (**55%**), superficial injuries or contusions (**14%**), and open wounds (**8%**).

## Playground Fall-Related Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Year, 2016–2023



Every year from 2016 to 2023, Kentucky has averaged **61** ED visits for playground fall-related TBIs.

# Playground Safety Checklist<sup>4</sup>



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.



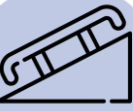
Make sure that playground equipment that is more than 2.5 feet tall is spaced at least 9 feet from any other equipment.

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

- <sup>4</sup>Consumer Product Safety Commission: Playgrounds: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/outdoors/playgrounds>
- Children's Safety Network: <https://www.childrensafetynetwork.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

This brief is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of cooperative agreement 5NU17CE010064 totaling \$1,000,000 with 0% financed with nongovernmental sources and by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) as part of cooperative agreement PON2 728 2200003056. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CHFS, CDC, HHS, or the U.S. government.