



# Injury Prevention: Playground Fall-Related Injuries

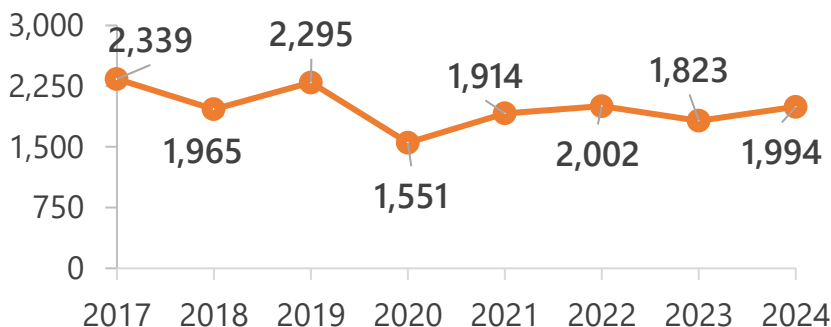
Playgrounds are fun and a great opportunity for exercise and family togetherness. But did you know that youths age 17 and younger are at risk for falls at the playground? These falls can result in injuries, like bruises, scrapes, and some that may even require a trip to the emergency department (ED).

From 2017 to 2024, Kentucky youths<sup>1</sup> made an average of 1,985 visits to emergency departments (ED) due to playground falls.

The median cost of an ED visit was \$2,091.

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

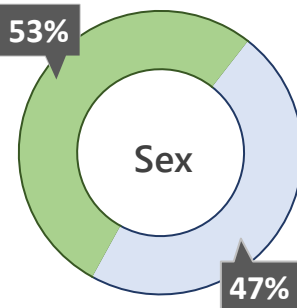
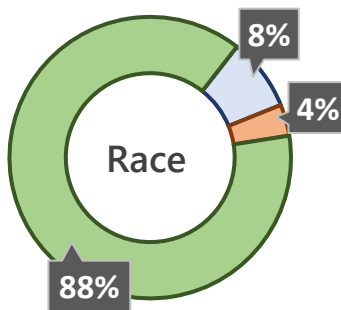
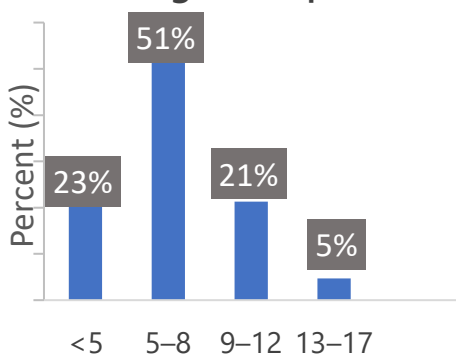
## Playground Fall-Related ED Visits Among Kentucky Youth by Year, 2017–2024<sup>2</sup>



<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, 2017–2024

### Age Group



■ Black ■ Other ■ White ■ Female ■ Male

### Quick Stats

Kentucky youth ED visits for playground fall-related injuries:

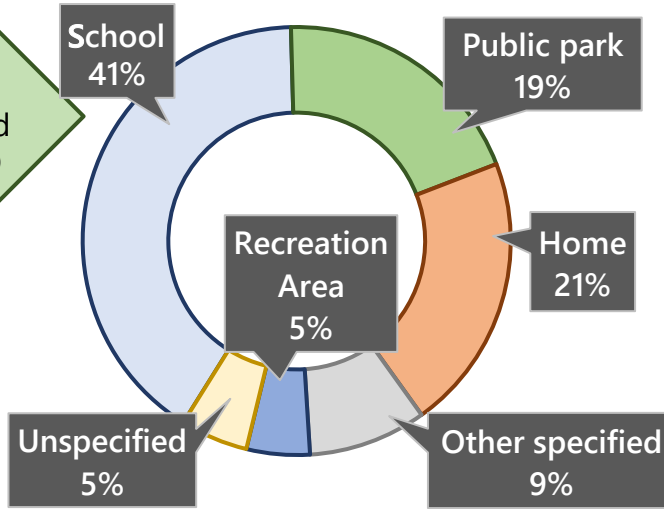
- **51%** were between the ages of 5 and 8
- **53%** were male
- **88%** were white



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 Health Data Analytics. February 2026. 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, 2017–2024

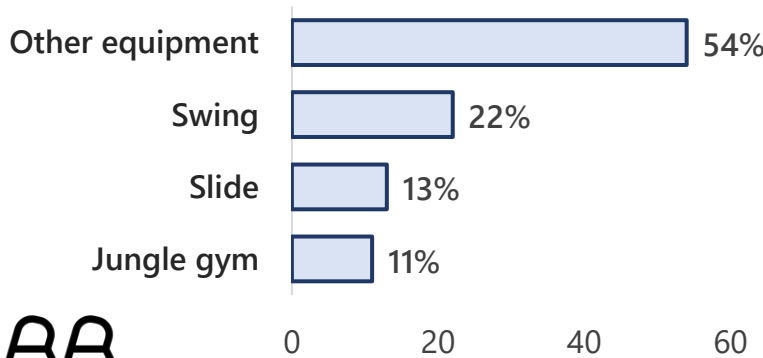
School playgrounds are the most common location for fall-related injuries resulting in ED visits.



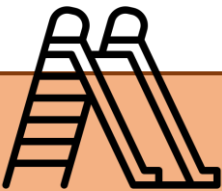
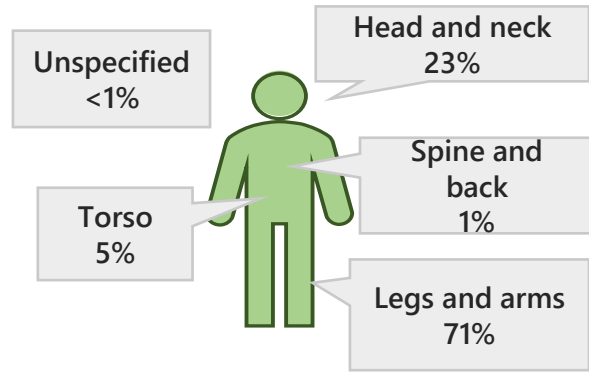
<sup>3</sup>Details on place of injury were available for only 29.5% of ED injury visits.

## Playground Fall-Related ED Visits Among Kentucky Youth by Playground Equipment and Injured Body Region, 2017–2024

### Playground Equipment

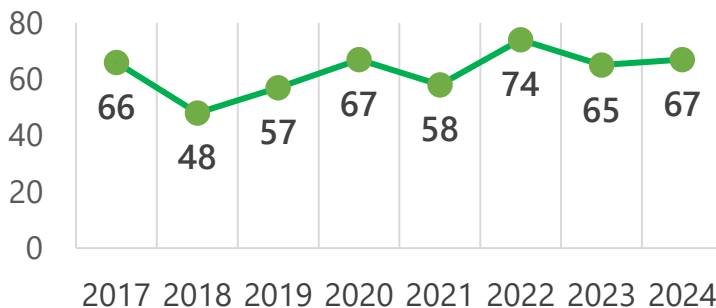


### Body Region



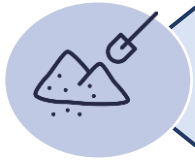
The most common playground fall-related injuries seen in the ED among youth were fractures (**55%**), superficial injuries or contusions (**14%**), and open wounds (**9%**).

## Playground Fall-Related Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) ED Visits Among Kentucky Youth by Year, 2017–2024



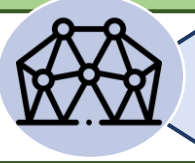
Every year from 2017 to 2024, Kentucky has averaged **63** ED visits for playground fall-related TBIs.

# 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 you just checked off the list 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 Public Playground Safety Handbook: <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>
- 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

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