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A Playground Plan for South Shore Prek-8 School

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**A PLAYGROUND PLAN FOR
SOUTH SHORE PREK-8 SCHOOL**

A PROJECT REPORT

PRESENTED TO

THE GRADUATE FACULTY

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

BY

BARBARA J. MANN

MAY 2013

ABSTRACT

A Comprehensive Playground Manual

For South Shore PreK-8 School

By

Barbara Joy Mann

May 2013

The purpose of this project was to create a comprehensive playground safety manual of procedures for South Shore PreK-8 School, that can possibly be implemented at other K-5 schools. The manual will make it clear to both students and staff playground safety procedures for students and instructions for staff in supervision.

The information gathered finds that when students play in safe manners with specific rules and expectations, that the number of incidents from injury and conflict are reduced. Children need to be taught rules for games, instead of expected to figure out rules for games they do not know how to play. Safe play includes students who have learned how to take turns, and handle conflict or ask for help when needed. Lessons need to be taught to achieve the above objectives, as well as timelines to have in place for lessons or trainings to occur. Statistics and effective studies are included in this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support of my family, CWU School Administrative Faculty, colleagues of South Shore PreK-8 School, and several friends who have supported me this past year with my graduate studies. I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Pappas, who has encouraged me through this graduate path. The sense of a personal connection he has given to me has given me a special sense of pride in choosing Central for my graduate studies. The program is one where I feel I am an individual, and not a number. I would also like to thank Dr. Williams, Stephanie Harris, and Ayla Lewis for responding to my many inquiries via email and phone. Again, the personal connection with the university gives me great pride to have been part of this program. I would like to thank Dr. Szal, for his many responses to my work as a Seattle Schools professional.

I would like to give special thanks to my husband, John Paloy. His support of me this past year in time and encouragement has kept me going. He understands and respects me professionally as a colleague. My children, Della Anne and Henry, I also give special thanks to. They both understood the time I needed for completing my degree and this project.

Special thanks to my dear friend and fitness trainer, Alisher Bazarov. Alisher knew this was a very difficult year for me with working full time, being in graduate school full time, and being a mother. He stuck with me and was flexible in my training schedule. He and his wife Cindy both knew my journey as an athlete. They understood that balance can be difficult, but I must never give up my life of healthy living.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

Accidents naturally will happen on school playgrounds. As educators, we are obligated to make sure all precautions are taken to prepare students for safe play. This includes several areas of planning: training of students in basic safety rules, training of students in conflict management and mediation, training of students of how to assist a student when injured, training of students in transitions to and from recess (lining up before and after), training of staff/playground supervisors in basic expectations for playground supervision, training staff in protocol if an injury, training of staff for how to handle conflict management, etc. The bottom line is, children are most important and student safety counts.

If staff members and students are equipped with skills for playground safety prevention, fewer injuries and peer conflicts will happen on a school playground. According to www.safekids.org, playground injury is the most common school related injury among children ages 5-14, with many injuries related to falls. Another reference, the CDC website, www.cdc.gov states that approximately 75 percent of injuries that are nonfatal and related to playground equipment in some way occur mostly at schools and daycare centers (Tinsworth 2001, Phelan 2001). As a school, we are obligated to ensure all plans for playground safety are in place. We must have written policies in place that are followed by both students and staff.

Statement of the Problem

This school year, the first ten weeks, the author was Interim House Administrator at South Shore PreK-8 School. Part of the duties of House Administrator includes overseeing playground safety and supervision. The author noticed there was a need for both staff and students to have a better understanding of expectations. Staff members needed intervention and coaching on how to properly supervise. Students needed assistance with expectations of safety rules and conflict management. The author approached fellow administrators and other staff, and posed the question, "Will having a school-wide playground safety manual reduce the number of injuries and conflicts that begin on the playground?"

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to create a possible playground safety manual of procedures for South Shore PreK-8 School for grades K-5. This manual will make clear to both staff and students the playground safety procedures for students in play for staff in supervision. The manual will include timelines for training involved, as well as timelines for phasing in the procedures. The plan should assist in decreasing the number of injuries and administrative referrals that take place.

Limitations of the Project

This project was developed to create a playground plan in writing specific to South

Shore PreK-8 School. As a disclaimer, there could be unforeseen events that could happen. While some of the plan may assist other schools, this plan is written specific to South Shore. The playground space and staffing may not be specific enough for other schools to use this plan.

The plan is designed for student and staff expectations; it is not designed for gross motor playground equipment purchases/decisions or for determining surface inspections. The facilities department of Seattle Public Schools oversees the built-in playground equipment and surface safety. The building custodial engineer will report to our facilities department when there are problems with any equipment.

Research

The research gathered for this project was taken from other sources found from online, as well as from other sources from journal articles. Other model playground programs were reviewed from other schools across the United States. The most comprehensive plan the author found was from the ESD 112, locally in Washington State. The plan is posted online, and states what individual districts and buildings should include in their playground plans. Another plan the author found that shows a concrete plan is from a school in Wichita, Kansas. This plan includes rules including playground etiquette and equipment rules. Another thorough plan is published by the Alaska Association of School Business Officials (AASBO) on their website, [alasbo.org/downloads/playgroundsafety.pdf](https://www.alasbo.org/downloads/playgroundsafety.pdf), includes general information for a district handbook. It also lists specific examples of what playground supervision means, as well as has an accident procedure. This site mentions rules for specific types of structures.

According to the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS), between 2001-2008, an average of 218,851 preschool and elementary aged children received emergency department care for injuries that occurred on playground equipment, (Playground Safety.org). While reviewing available literature regarding playground and recess practices, the author saw a need for creating a specific playground plan that could be adapted for other buildings. There were limited sources available, as few states regulate having written policies regarding playground safety rules and training.

CHAPTER TWO

A Review of Literature and Information Gathered From Selected Sources

Introduction

The author, for the sake of this project created, believes a safe playground results from several areas of concern. These areas include: peer interactions, child-to-adult interactions, expectations of a child (code of conduct as well as safety rules, physical safety on the playground, as well as training staff and students in playground expectations.

Children have the need for outdoor play. Outdoor play is an extension of the classroom indoors. Outdoor learning builds on what children learn inside a classroom (Sommerset 2000). Playground and outdoor learning assist the child in cognitive, social, and physical development. For healthy growth, children need to have a balance of all these growth areas (Burriss and Foulks-Boyd, 2005).

Recess is a time when creativity and movement are allowed. It allows children to have both unstructured social time, as well as participate in more guided, organized games of large groups or small groups.

Cognitive

Recess time allows the child to grow cognitively. For some, this time may be a choice activity with peers, choosing to play with one or two peers, or a group activity. It provides a child recovery time from a highly structured day (Pellegrini and Bohn, 2005). Children need this time to be both structured and unstructured. Burriss et. al state in their article, "Outdoor Playground Learning: Policy and Practice" in the International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership that balancing structured and unstructured play can be beneficial; that there is a balance between Piaget's (1983) developmental stage theory (Pellegrini and Bohn, 2005), and distributed effort (Pellegrini and Bjorkland, 1996). Recess is a time when children can problem solve. This involves interactions with peers and use of playground equipment. Communication skills are also learned (Katz and McClellan, 1997).

Social and Emotional

Children learn and develop socially from outdoor play (Rubin, 1980). Children learn how to understand situations from the views of others, (Kostelnik, et al, 1993). Adults should assist, as needed in modeling problem solving. Children come to their own conclusions, and learn from their peer interactions, but at times, adults may need to assist in coaching through certain situations.

A school must have established expectations of students for general code of conduct.

These expectations should carry over onto the playground. The climate that is expected in the areas of trust and respect should be established and be in order for discipline, peer-to-peer

relationships, and student-to-teacher relationships (Leff et al., 2003). Adults should monitor students for peer-to-peer interactions. This will assist in decreasing aggression and increasing cooperative play, (Leff at al., 2003). When school-wide intervention programs are in play, the number of bullying incidents decreases (Hall, 2006). School staff can assist children by coaching children in peer-to-peer interactions.

Positive social interactions can result in positive emotional development of a child. These social interactions can result in being more satisfied later in life with having more quality relationships (Kostelnik, et al., 1993).

Physical

Physical activity is necessary for the body and mind to develop properly. Movement causes natural bodily chemicals to connect and increase the number of connections of neurons (Healy, 1998). Recess and outdoor play support the development of a child in all areas of development to make these connections. Structured activities after school do not replace the necessary unstructured recess time. Some of these activities include sports and dance. A study showed that children who show greater physical activity during the day show greater after school activity (Dale, Corbin, & Dale, 2002).

Peer Mediation in Conflict

Children need to be trained in safety concerns for code of conduct. There are times when programs such as conflict managers can assist students on a playground. Conflict managers (peer mediators) can assist students with minor playground conflicts. They are

trained to assist classmates, and support in mediation through certain playground conflicts, to de-escalate situations before they become situations where physical fights develop. This process can assist in playground safety before children reach the point of physical harm being inflicted on peers. When a social altercation has become a physical fight, it should immediately be handled by adults, and not conflict managers. Social altercations include verbal arguments, rumors, disagreements, and verbal offenses directed toward other students. Most often, conflict managers are intermediate students trained (grades 4-5).

Peer mediation for students who have been arguing is encouraged. Organized play can be supported by adults, however, peers can support cooperative play that is supported by peers when children are arguing, (Preventing Violence by Elementary School Children, Schwartz, 1999).

Playground Regulations

Districts, schools, and educators have an obligation to provide a safe playground. Safe playgrounds include facilities, as well as supervision. The author upon conducting available literature reviews found that only 17 states have some sort of regulations regarding school playground facility safety. Of these 17 states, only four included expectations regarding teacher/student conduct: Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, and Rhode Island. Of these states, it is not stated there should be a written manual regarding child behavior or safety expectations. Kentucky does state that supervisors must hold pupils accountable for their conduct (National Association of School Boards of Education, NASBE, updated 2006).

Washington State (Washington State Administrative Code, WAC 246-366-140) states it requires the “Secretary in cooperation with the state superintendent of public instruction to review potentially hazardous conditions in schools which are in violation of good safety practices. They must jointly prepare a guide for use by department personnel during routine school inspections in identifying violations of good safety practices.”

The Washington State Health and Safety Manual for Schools, (WSHSMS) includes a checklist of playground safety management requirements, and of recommended areas. A written manual regarding child behavioral safety expectations and staff training regarding supervision is only *recommended*. The manual (WSHSMS) has categories for and states the following verbatim:

*The school has a written policy/procedure: on playground supervision that ensures adequate supervision on the playground whenever it is occupied during the school day. To determine adequate supervision the school conducted an evaluation considering all relevant factors.

*Playground supervisors are selected, trained, and equipped according to written guidelines.

*There are written plans for and employees have been trained in how to handle emergencies on the playground.

*The school has written playground rules that are taught to students and posted at school, sent to parents, and reviewed periodically.

In conducting this literature review of research and playground best practices, one of the most concise and thorough plans of expectations was found from the ESD 112 (Educational Service District) in The State of Washington. The ESD has in writing what every district within its zone should include in playground safety plans. The expectations are of facility design, replacement, maintenance, as well as including a written manual. The written manual must include expectations of supervisors and students on the playground. It also states districts must have a protocol in place in case of injury.

Injury Statistics

Playground injuries occur regularly. Schools should have safety plans in writing and should be followed. Most often, schools do not have plans written out. According to an article published in the Open Access Journal of Sports Medicine, "Playground Injuries in Children," several partners reviewed together 182 articles together. Of the 182 articles, only 86 articles were found relevant to the topic of playground safety. Of the 86 articles, only 14 articles were used by these analysts to review playground safety. Of these 14 articles, only one study was found to include a "practical safety plan." The analysts stated that safe engineering approaches were also ignored. The recommendation of the authors that reviewed all the literature was to have a "systematic safety approach based on the 'safety cycle' which includes three main areas: equipment, environment, and children, (Naeini, Lindqvist, et al., June 2011).

International groups and organizations addressed the concern of high annual rates of child injury and adolescent injuries or violence. Resulting from this, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission developed some recommendations for injury prevention for

children at play (Powell et al., 2005). The “World Report on Child Injury Prevention” has brought this to global attention to address strategies to include playground safety injury prevention.

Of all the 14 articles, the analysts concluded in this summary article, (Open Access Journal of Sports Medicine, June 2011) that only four of the articles concluded that the characteristics of children themselves are a key component to consider in playground safety prevention. Three key areas in injury prevention according to the OAJSP (June 2011) are: environment, equipment, and children (behavioral and somatic characteristics).

Playground injury statistics in a 2005 study by the “Keep Schools Safe (KSS)” publication states that 200,000 children a year are taken to emergency rooms each year due to playground injuries. The most common form being when children fall from playground equipment. The report of injury can be decreased when a combination of equipment being well-maintained, children being well instructed, and staff being well trained (KSS, 2005).

Children need to be monitored in safe play. Supervisors should be well trained and children taught rules of safe play and use of equipment. Playground supervisors should be aware of peer conflicts, signs of bullying, as well as monitor for safe play to avoid injury.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC, Oct. 2009) states that between 2001-2008, an average of 218,851 preschool and elementary-aged children received emergency room care for playground equipment injuries. Of these injuries, 51 percent were from public playgrounds. The average age of injury was six. The top four pieces of equipment associated with injury are: climbers (23%), swings (22%), slides (17%), and overhead ladders (9%), [Center

of Disease Control (CDC), Oct. 2009]. The most common injuries are: fractures (36%), contusions/abrasions (20%), lacerations (17%), strains and sprains (12%), internal organs (5%), concussions (2%), other (3%), [National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS Database, May 2009)].

Most injuries on public playground (NEISS, May 2009) are associated with climbing equipment (53%), swings (19%), and slides (17%). Resulting from the aforementioned reported statistics, the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) recommends the following:

- *Active adult supervision while children are on the equipment.
- *Equipment is chosen to be developmentally appropriate.
- *Safety surfaces are carefully selected.
- *Equipment and surfaces are well maintained.

The Center of Disease Control (CDC) mentions on its website several playground injury statistics:

1. Children ages 5-9 have higher rates of visits to emergency rooms for playground injuries than any other age group. Of these injuries, most occur at school (Phelan, 2001).
2. Emergency rooms treat annually in the United States more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger due to playground injuries (Tinsworth, 2001).
3. Girls have a slightly higher rate of injury (55%) compared to boys (45%), (Tinsworth, 2001).

The Educational Service District (ESD) 112 in its playground safety manual defines negligence as “The unintentional doing or not doing of something which causes injury to another. Negligence is the failure to use that degree of reasonable care which is considered to be a reasonable precaution under the given circumstance. It is the unintentional doing (commission) or not doing (omission) of something which causes injury to another.”

The ESD states that negligence includes four categories, and that all four must occur to be found in a court of law to be negligent: duty, breach of duty, proximate cause, and damages. Schools have the duty to “warn and inform,” to provide safe equipment, and to provide prompt care when a child is injured, (ESD 112 manual).

The ESD manual is a specific guide that goes into thorough detail regarding supervision expectations, child expectations, training of supervisors, emergency procedures, sample playground rules, equipment rules, acceptable games, equipment maintenance, etc.

Summary

Based on the literature reviewed, the author recommends that all playground safety plans include the following:

1. Protocol in top-down for who oversees supervision and staffing of a playground. This should include the order from the administrator in charge

to the lead playground supervisor to the daily supervisors. A backup order should be made in case of absences.

2. Specific training of the lead playground supervisor (LPS) in First Aid/CPR, student conflict management, emergency procedures, and other building expectations should occur.
3. Training of students in safe playground play should occur. Students should learn specific playground rules, as well as general school rules, district code of conduct, etc.
4. Classes should create class charters of playground conduct. These charters are an extension of expected rules, but are student-created, and therefore increase student buy-in for following safe rules, as well as cooperative play amongst peers.
5. Training of all playground supervisors in conflict management, safe supervisory practices, and emergency protocols.

CHAPTER THREE

Procedures

The purpose of this project was to create a possible playground safety plan for South Shore PreK-8 School. To accomplish this, a review of available playground safety plans and playground injury statistics were analyzed. Additional information was gathered from administration, counselors, and the school nurse of South Shore.

The need to address playground safety is essential. A limited number of states across the nation require written playground procedures for student and staff expectations and procedures. According to the National Association of School Boards of Education, only 17 states have some sort of written requirement for playground safety. Most of these requirements are of facility care and maintenance, and not of written policies and procedures of requirements of training supervisors. Many states have requirements regarding equipment and fall surfaces, but not actually of school or district expectations of students and staff.

Washington State does not require schools or districts to provide written procedures regarding student and supervisor expectations. When the author researched what plans are in place in Washington State, the only available published plans were from The ESD 112, the Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools in Washington, and the guide for Supervision of Students for Toppenish School District.

The State of Washington Health and Safety guide includes a checklist of suggested and required expectations of playgrounds. It is only recommended that:

-“Schools have a written policy/procedure on playground supervision that ensures adequate supervision of the playground whenever it is occupied during the school day.”

-It is also only recommended that “There be written plans for, and employees have been trained in, how to handle emergencies on the playground.”

-“The school has written playground rules that are taught to students and posted at school, sent to the parents and reviewed periodically.”

-“The school/district has written procedures and a process for selecting and placing playground equipment appropriately.”

All the other playground components on the checklist were regarding installation of and approval of new equipment or plans. The required actions stated in the manual for districts are for approval of new playground plans to be reviewed by the school district’s local health district [WAC 246-366-030 (1)]; and that new playgrounds must meet the “Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990” requirements (ADA).

South Shore PreK-8 School Serves Preschool-aged children through grade eight. This plan is specifically being developed for grades 1-5 only. The preschool and kindergarten programs are their own entities, and have their own separate play areas. The middle school recess is at a separate time, and types of play choices are different than grades 1-5. The nurse and school administrators see a higher number of injuries and incidents in grades 1-5.

South Shore is located in the Rainier Valley of the City of Seattle. It is a school in the Seattle Public School system that includes 77 staff members and 368 students. The demographics are diverse both culturally and socio-economically. Here are the demographics:

- * 38% Black
- * 32% Asian/Pacific Islander
- * 14% White
- * 7% Hispanic
- * 8% Multiracial
- * 1% American Indian
- * 54% Free/reduced Lunch
- * 18% ELL (English Language Learners)
- * 8% Special Education

While South Shore does have written expectations of policies and procedures for students, there is no specific written plan for the playground. After the author conferred with administrators at South Shore, and spent the first quarter as the administrator in charge of playground supervision at South Shore, the author took her observations and input from colleagues and conducted a literature review to create a plan of action to create, **“A Possible Playground Plan for South Shore PreK-8 School.”**

The plan is a specific plan to extend the code of conduct expected of students at South Shore. This code is called "The Big Four." Students are expected to be **Safe, Kind, and Respectful Learners**.

Procedures of the Project

The writer undertook the following procedures to develop a playground manual for South Shore PreK-8 School:

- *Extensive review of recent related literature.
- *Interviews with staff were conducted to gather feedback of areas of need.
- *Current unwritten procedures were reviewed.
- *Current administrators, counselors, and the nurse gave their input and stated common concerns they have observed.
- *Reviewed unwritten trials and enforcements of change in procedures that have happened in the 2012-2013 school year
- *Analyzed the Seattle Public Schools Code of Conduct
- *Analyzed playground safety/student supervision plans for the following schools and/or districts: ESD 112, Toppenish School District, Chicago Public Schools, Alaska Association of School Business Officials, and Wichita, Kansas.

Planned Implementation of the Project

Upon completion, the playground management plan will be presented to the administrative team of South Shore PreK-8. The goal would be to present the plan to the staff for approval. The timeline for implementation would be to train the staff at the August professional development (PD) days. Training of students of expectations and in safe play would occur in phases beginning the first week of school.

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CHAPTER FOUR: THE PROJECT

A PLAYGROUND SAFETY PLAN FOR SOUTH SHORE PREK-8 SCHOOL

For the sake of this plan, this playground safety plan will be written only for grades 1-5.

LEAD PLAYGROUND SUPERVISOR

The lead playground supervisor is the main support staff person or hourly employee who shall oversee playground supervision. The assistant principal is the administrator who will oversee this person, and ultimately, the assistant principal is responsible for playground supervision.

The lead playground supervisor (LPS) shall in the morning before going out to duty before school for the playground determine the absences for assigned playground staff for the day. He/she should bring to the attention of the assistant principal names of any unfilled positions for support staff (including instructional assistants), hourly employees, certificated staff, or any other absent staff where positions have not been filled for the day. The assistant principal is responsible for finding substitute coverage for playground posts that need to be filled for safety.

When the lead playground supervisor is absent, the assistant principal will appoint a designee who will assume the role for the day of lead playground supervisor. The lead

playground supervisor is trained in expected duties, but an additional support staff person should also be trained, and assume the duties of the LPS, in his/her absence.

When normally assigned staff members are absent for playground duty, the LPS should make sure any substitutes are aware of assigned location and time for duty. A brief explanation of what South Shore expects in supervision should be made clear to the substitute by the LPS. It should also be explained the protocol in case assistance is necessary when on duty.

The lead playground supervisor shall carry at all times the playground emergency backpack, walkie talkie, cell phone, clipboard/pen, and whistle. On the clipboard should be included the staffing list of who is assigned to duty and their locations. If a staff member is not present for duty, the LPS will radio the main office to let the office know who is not present. The office will contact the staff member. If the staff member does not respond, the assistant principal will be notified. With the radio call to the main office, the assistant principal or other administrators will hear the call, and should be aware of the staff member who did not report.

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Instructional assistants assigned to accompany specific students to the playground (IEP or 504 students) cannot be assigned to substitute for general playground duty to replace absent staff.

PLAYGROUND INSPECTION

The custodial engineer is ultimately the person who oversees safe playground facilities. Part of the duties of the custodial engineer includes:

- A. Before or during morning school hours, the custodial staff will check within the playground boundaries for litter or other debris or hazards. Daily, the playground will be cleaned during these morning hours of litter or other debris.
- B. If unsafe conditions or items are present on the playground before school, the lead playground supervisor will notify the office immediately to notify the custodial engineer.
- C. All hazards or potential hazards should be immediately reported to the custodian. Staff noticing such a hazard should notify the office staff to contact the custodian. Any action necessary by the custodian to remove or repair a hazard should be reported to the assistant principal in the most timely and necessary method.

*Unsafe hazards could include broken tree branches, broken equipment, or foreign items brought onto the playground after school hours. During school hours this can include bodily fluids including blood or vomit.

DUTIES OF GENERAL PLAYGROUND SUPERVISORS

Playground supervisors must show proper supervision. When children are properly supervised, the total number of injuries decreases and reports of bullying and student conflict also decrease.

Proper supervision includes:

1. Visibility and attentiveness: Supervisors must report on time for assigned duty.

Supervisors must stand in assigned zones and have full visibility of all students within that zone. Supervisors must stand on the perimeter of that zone to be able to

monitor student safety and management. When standing in the middle of an assigned zone, not all students are able to be safely monitored. Attentive supervision includes scanning and glancing of the entire assigned area. The eyes must operate as a lifeguard, and view from left-right-left in a suggested 10-second scan each direction. The exception to being on the perimeter is when a supervisor must leave his/her post to attend to a safety situation. After addressing a concern, the supervisor must return to his assigned post on the perimeter, unless in the case of injury or physical altercation. Safe supervision includes keeping eyes on students at all times. Use of cell phones or texting while on duty is not allowed. Reading of any materials including grading of papers or any other task except supervision is not allowed. Staff members need to refrain from chatting while on assigned duty time, and must remain in their assigned zones unless assistance is needed in another zone.

2. Monitoring of student behavior: Supervisors must enforce school and playground rules, as well as mediate when student conflict. Small conflicts must be handled by the playground supervisor. When larger conflict occurs, and there is no resolution, the situation is brought to the attention of the lead playground supervisor. The adult who intervened must make sure the bigger conflicts are passed onto the grade level administrator and/or the grade level counselor. There must be follow-through to report these problems such as bullying or fighting.
3. Emergencies: In the case of an emergency, it must be immediately handled. The supervisor must attend to the injured child and immediately assess the situation. If

the child has a possible head/neck/back injury, the child should not be moved. The supervisor must immediately send for assistance. The lead supervisor or designee should radio the office via walkie talkie to have the nurse sent out immediately, and if reported that it is a head/neck/back injury. The office should upon hearing the page immediately send any available administrator out to the playground. In a situation that radio communication is not working, the main office line should be called immediately for assistance. Other supervisors on the playground should have all other students leave the particular play area. The whistle should be blown, and students told to line up, and then sent into the lunchroom to clear out the area for the nurse and/or medics.

If there is a physical altercation on the playground, our due diligence is to at the least attempt to verbally stop the fight. A supervisor should not place himself/herself or others in harm's way of physically attempting to stop the fight. Notifying an administrator is required.

Playground supervisors will need to prioritize needs by order of importance. Situations and risks need to be ranked in order of importance. If assistance is needed, another adult on duty can assist.

HOW MUCH SUPERVISION IS ENOUGH ON THE PLAYGROUND?

Kindergarten staff will supervise the kindergarten play area to include west of the concrete basketball wall to include the kindergarten play structure area, as well as the play area just outside the kindergarten classrooms.

Grades 1-5 play zones should have at least four supervisors at all times. Zones for supervision include:

- A. Blacktop area
- B. Basketball Court
- C. Four Square Area (East of basketball court wall)
- D. Tetherball area

*The only additional play space is only during the grades 4-5 recess for an organized game such as soccer and the grass is needed from the park. In the case that a group of students is taken to this space, this must be pre-approved by the assistant principal. Supervision will not be based on ratio, but on zone. If too many students for safe play are present in one zone, or an activity or game produces a hazard for space or another activity, a decision will need to be made by the supervisor to safely move students to another activity or zone.

TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS

*Each recess, at least one supervisor, including the lead playground supervisor or designee in his/her absence, should be First Aid/CPR certified. It is strongly encouraged that all supervisors have first aid/CPR training.

*A brief presentation to staff during the August professional development days will address how to handle small student conflicts.

*A prospective training can occur of staff in conflict mediation.

*All staff, including hourly staff will have training in the use of the "Metamoment" process. The "metamoment" process is a thinking process about decision making South Shore uses for making safe and kind choices.

*A brief presentation to staff will occur of the playground safety plan by an administrator at the August professional development time of the playground safety plan. During this time, if conflict managers have been put into place, information will be presented about how these grade 4/5 students will assist during lunch recess time.

*A brief explanation by administration to staff will occur to explain our due diligence in case of assault or fight on the playground.

*A presentation will occur from the school nurse to explain how to assess an injury situation, especially a head/neck/back injury.

*The physical education department may make a brief presentation to explain rules of play for such games as Hop Scotch, Four Square, Tetherball, Kickball, and other allowed games that are safe for the playground.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

South Shore students will at all times follow all school rules while on the playground. School rules include the BIG FOUR: TO BE SAFE, KIND, RESPECTFUL, and LEARNERS while at play. The BIG FOUR rules are the guiding principles and values of South Shore School. Students also will follow the Seattle Public Schools Code of Conduct, as well as any school policies mentioned in the South Shore Student Handbook. Students must exhibit good citizenship while on the playground. Good citizenship includes not bullying.

SPECIFIC PLAYGROUND RULES

- A. Children must remain away from classroom windows on playground when classes are in session.
- B. Tag is not allowed in either play structure area where the wood chips are.
- C. The basketball court may have only one activity per side simultaneously, such as two half court games being played at once. If one large activity is for the entire court, children must either be running in the same direction, or there must be one full court activity. Obstacles such as backpacks should be set to the perimeter of the court near the fence to avoid creating a tripping hazard.

- D. There must be a nice flow of activities on the blacktop area. Each activity should not cause a traffic problem of children running through large organized games.
 - E. Children should not sit on top of the painted fence structures near the kindergarten rooms or the first grade rooms.
 - F. Children should not climb fences or walls, even if to retrieve a ball on the other side of a fence. To retrieve a ball on the other side of a fence, permission must be asked of a playground supervisor. When playground equipment is stuck on top of a high structure, students may not retrieve the ball.
 - G. Students must never sit on top of the metal frame of the climbing structure that is east of the basketball court. At all times, the feet must be on the ropes of the structure (feet closest body parts to the ground), with at least one hand holding on at all times.
 - H. Any organized games that leave the playground must have a staff member present for direct supervision (such as soccer). Once a group has left the playground accompanied by this staff member, no additional students may leave the main playground to join the group, and students who are part of this organized activity must stay until accompanied back by the staff member.
 - I. Football is prohibited.
 - J. Upon lineup, students are to line up in an orderly manner, and wait in line for the classroom teacher.
- *At any time, a staff member can move a group of students, cancel or change an activity, etc. due to space or safety.**

EQUIPMENT

All playground equipment such as jump ropes and balls will be color-coded by grade level, and will be sent out by individual classrooms.

PEER MEDIATORS

Fourth and fifth graders can earn a nomination from a staff member to become trained as a conflict manager (peer mediator). Conflict managers can assist students when students have a minor conflict on the playground. They must undergo training, wear a bright-colored vest to be easily recognized, and they must carry a clipboard with conflict manager notes. Duties include mediation among peers. Conflict managers work in pairs, and not alone.

CLASSROOM CHARTERS

Each classroom/grade will come up with a playground charter. A playground charter is an agreed upon set of rules a class agrees upon and each student promises to follow. Students during class meetings the first week of school will agree to how they will participate in safe, kind, respectful play. The charters will be reviewed at least monthly to remind students of safe, kind, respectful play. If the charters need to be reviewed more often, the classroom teacher

makes this decision. A great time for creating these charters would be during class meetings. Teachers can incorporate playground discussions as an extension of “Metamoment” discussions already taking place within the classroom.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THE PLAYGROUND

LOCKDOWN OR SHELTER IN PLACE: An announcement will come across the loudspeaker and a radio call will occur to the LPS to inform about the immediate action necessary. The LPS will blow the whistle, and will immediately line the students up, and have them enter into their necessary locations to enter into the building. The plans already in place for both lockdown and shelter-in-place will take place.

OUTSIDE PLAYGROUND GATES: The outside playground gates will remain unlocked unless the administrative team decides they should be locked during the day, or at certain days or hours.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the case of extreme weather, the assistant principal can call “rainy day recess” and students follow the plan for remaining inside. This can include icy conditions. If the playground has some snow or slippery surfaces due to a prior heavy rain or snowfall, the assistant principal will make an announcement to explain special rules such as not throwing snow, or remaining off the climbing structure, etc.

TEACHING OF GAMES, RULES, AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Classroom teachers, ASB officers, conflict managers, and the physical education department can all team up in teaching how to play certain games, and how to display good citizenship at play, as well as taking turns.

The P.E. department can at the beginning of the year teach rules of playing specific games such as the games the playground has the painted lines for. These games include Hop Scotch and Four Square.

The ASB officers or conflict managers can demonstrate to the first graders how to climb on the climbing structure that is located east of the basketball wall. The first graders did not play in this zone during their kindergarten year. The first grade staff will plan along with the P.E. department and assistant principal safety lessons on how to play in the 1-5 zone. First graders, especially, will need to be shown each area and told how to safely play, and it explained how to play in each area.

The administrative team or a designee shall create a video to model safe playground play, or Power Point slides to explain at the beginning of the year "Habit of the Heart" grade level meetings to be held in the individual pods. During this time, a question/answer period will occur for students regarding special circumstances. The focus grade of concern will be the first grade, as they are new to play on the main playground. Kindergarten staff will also teach lessons of structured expectations and teach the play zone, so the kindergarten students understand the rules and boundary area.

**ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR QUESTIONS REGARDING PLAYGROUND
EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF OR STUDENTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL.**

METAMONENT posters will be copied and laminated and posted throughout the playground by either the counselor or assistant principal. Since students are being taught in each class the process of communicating their emotions and are being coached through conflicts at South Shore, the playground will extend this onto the playground, and the supervisors also be trained in this process.

MISCELLANEOUS

The school nurse will at the beginning of the school year compile a list of those staff members who are already trained in first aid and/or CPR.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to develop a comprehensive playground management plan in writing for both playground supervisors and students to be used at South Shore PreK-8 School. This written plan was meant to list expectations of playground code of conduct, as well as safety rules and expectations for students. It was also to explain the role of the playground supervisor and expectations, as well as how to complete these duties. This manual took into consideration unwritten practices and policies currently happening at South Shore for current recess times, as well as reviewed other building plans that were available and published. Upon review of available literature and other plans available as models, the author created a plan specific to South Shore. Input was taken from current staff to include: administrators, the nurse, grade level counselor, and primary certificated teachers. This plan is to create written guidelines, and expectations for students and staff. The plan also assumes students will continue to follow the Seattle Public Schools code of conduct, South Shore Big Four motto, as well as any other rules stated in the student handbook of South Shore. The playground manual will serve as a tool for establishing playground norms at the beginning of the year, and will be referred regularly as needed by both staff and students. The idea is that this plan will be utilized daily, and is meant to establish a norm for what both students and staff expect regarding playground supervision, as well as child play. The student expectations will be established into the daily routine for children, and will be implemented into class meeting time to discuss

metamoments, which is an extension of South Shore's emotional coaching for children to assist in conflict management.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, the following conclusions have been made:

1. The implementation of a playground management plan will need to have the support of the entire school community. Students, staff, and families must support and understand that a playground with specific guidelines will result in fewer injuries and conflicts of peers.
2. The understanding of appropriate and safe play is not something all children understand. Clear understanding of expectations and rules must be reviewed and taught. These expectations must be reviewed, modeled, and reinforced regularly. Younger children new to a play area will not understand these rules unless they are made clear.
3. Playground expectations from a manual will not be followed if there is no accountability system. Job specifications need to be made clear, and specific titles of who oversees certain duties must be in writing. Those who hold these positions must follow through on their duties.
4. Research shows children need to have play time. They need to have a balance of free play, as well as structured play. Children play games more safely and in a more orderly way when they know the rules of a game, and understand cooperative play.

Children need to be taught game rules, and need to be coached through when there is a disagreement in a play or game conflict.

5. There must be consistency in enforced rules and play on a playground. When different supervisors are present, children need to know that the rules and expectations of play are the same on a daily basis.
6. The expectations of student behavior should be an extension of the classroom. Any existing school and district rules should also be followed on the playground. The addition of rules would be specific to allowed games, climbing structure rules, as well as other playground safety rules.
7. Playground plans should be updated as needed. When changes are made, these changes must be announced and re-written into the manual, as well as be enforced. The school safety committee, as well as the assistant principal should be involved in this process.
8. When opportunities exist for new teaching moments into class meetings regarding safe and cooperative playground play, these moments of opportunity should be taken.
9. The time taken at the beginning of the year to teach safe and cooperative playground play will save time later on from reported student conflicts, bullying, and will reduce the number of students who have playground injuries.
10. The inconsistency in implementation of the plan can result in a higher number of injuries. It can also result in higher need of referrals to administrators from incidents, as well as the counselor needing to assist in mediation of peer conflict.

11. Training of all supervisors will be required in order for staff to understand the definition and role of the supervisor. Coaching in conflict management will be necessary, as well as clear expectations of the role of the supervisor.

Future Recommendations

1. A uniform grades 1-5 approach will need to happen in order to effectively teach and manage student playground activity and behavior.
2. The written plan will need to be reviewed on a regular basis by the safety committee. Student input should also be taken into consideration.
3. All staff: certificated, classified, and hourly must agree to use the playground management manual when working with children. The manual is being established to reinforce safe and cooperative play.
4. The manual must be made available on the S-Drive to all staff, and hard copies available in the front office in case of need for staff.
5. Classrooms should have access to hard copies of the manual for student reference, when needed.
6. Class meeting time should be used to discuss playground code of conduct and safety rules. Each class/grade level should create a charter to agree on playground conduct.
7. Students need to be held accountable for playground code of conduct.
8. Conflict manager should be trained and utilized to assist when there are minor conflicts among peers on the playground.

9. If South Shore updates any rules or expected guidelines for student behavior, these should be implemented into the playground expectations.
10. A timeline needs to be agreed upon by the administrative staff for implementing staff training as well as student training.
11. Professional development days early in the year should include specific staff training in what is expected of the playground supervisor. Rules should be explained of what is expected of students while on the playground.
12. Professional development should be made available to train playground staff in First Aid/CPR, or a basic training by the nurse in assessing injury situations.

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