

Safe Play and Recreation

Burden

Sports and recreation injuries account for one third of all child and youth injuries treated in Manitoba emergency departments. The leading causes of sports-related emergency department visits are hockey, cycling, and skateboarding in boys, and soccer, cycling and playground injuries in girls. Manitoba data suggest that half of these injuries are associated with informal recreational activities, rather than organized sporting competitions or practices.

Fractures and other orthopedic injuries account for 76% of all sports and recreation injury hospitalizations, and head injuries account for 13% of all injuries. Sports and recreational activities are the third leading cause of traumatic brain injury admissions to Canadian hospitals.

Each year in Canada, over 28,000 children are treated in hospital for playground injuries, with 75% of these injuries caused by a fall. The most common injuries are fractures (40 %) and head injuries (10%).

Evidence

Playground injury: adequate surfacing, compliance with safety standards, reducing fall height.

Cycling: helmet use, reduce vehicle speed, bike lanes, intersection controls, avoid distractions and substance use.

Inline skating, skateboards, scooters: promote use of helmets (education, incentives, policies, free or low-cost equipment), skate park design. Promote wrist guards for inline skating and skateboarding.

Ice Skating: promote use of helmets and wrist guards (education, incentives, policies, free or low-cost equipment).

Swimming: pool fencing, swimming lessons, touch supervision, PFDs for boating and playing near water.

At IMPACT

IMPACT collaborates with many partners such as Safe Communities Winnipeg and the City of Winnipeg on playground fall prevention projects. We also advocate on behalf of families to correct hazards identified in Winnipeg playgrounds. IMPACT is a founding member of the Active and Safe Kids coalition, which developed family and community resources to reduce fractures, head injuries and drowning related to outdoor play, cycling, roller sports, ice skating and swimming.

Advocate

- Advocate for CSA playground standard compliance by playground owners/operators.
- Advocate for safe recreation policies (ie. Ice helmet, wrist guards, public and residential pool regulations).
- Advocate for access to free or low cost equipment.

Triax Loan Program

Prior to 2009, Manitoba playground operators did not have access to a Triax, a device that measures the impact absorbency of playground surfaces. Measurements from the Triax help playground operators maintain a safe level of surface material. The University of Manitoba, along with several other local partners, provided funds to purchase a Triax and training. The City of Winnipeg now operates a loan program where trained staff from outside organizations can borrow the Triax to test their playgrounds.

Safer Playground Workshops

Since 2009, Safe Communities Winnipeg along with the Manitoba Association of School Boards has offered a one-day Safer Playground Workshop to child care workers, community clubs, parent councils and others who have a responsibility for playground safety. To date, 150 people have attended one of the six workshops to learn about Canadian Standards Association (CSA) guidelines and playground safety.

Home Playground Safety

With Safe Communities Winnipeg, IMPACT developed a buyers guide and poster for parents who are looking to purchase play equipment. These were distributed in 2011 to Winnipeg retailers who sell play equipment and/or landscaping and surfacing materials, and in 2012 to child care providers attending their provincial conference.

Wrist Guard, Ice Helmet and PFD Loan Programs

Wrist guards, ice/hockey helmets and PFDs were given to community groups wanting to operate a loan program for children as a part of the Active and Safe Kids project.

Develop Resources for the public, community, and professionals

For example:

- www.Activesafekidsmanitoba.ca (family and community guides, training materials)
- PFD and other equipment loan program resources
- Home Playground Safety – poster and buyers guide
- Bike safety resources

