



# DISCIPLINING CHILDREN ON THE PLAYGROUND

*How to discipline children  
on the playground*

Articles

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## How to Respond to Discipline Issues on the Playground

Most schools strictly enforce classroom rules and procedures in order to maintain a safe classroom environment for students. When students go to the playground for recess the classroom rules are not adequate for some playground behaviors. For this reason, playground supervisors or paraprofessionals sometimes find themselves without a protocol for handling discipline issues unique to the playground.

When a child misbehaves on the playground the following suggestions may serve as a blueprint for “how to discipline” students in the outdoor less structured environment.

The playground supervisor should:

1. Get in close proximity to the child misbehaving. If a child’s safety is being compromised request that the behavior cease immediately. It is best to move toward the child so as to avoid shouting at the student. The tone of your voice can be used to emphasize the urgency of the change in behavior on the part of the student.
2. When a playground rule is broken then it is appropriate to question the student about which playground rule was broken. The response should indicate an understanding of the rule broken.
3. Issue a warning that informs student that subsequent inappropriate behavior will result in a behavior citation (playground report above).
4. On the second offense the child is issued a Playground Report for any of the violations listed. The Playground Report should be handed to the student’s classroom teacher so that he/she is aware of the problem and the supervisor is supported in disciplining student.

<b>Playground Report</b>	
Name _____	_____
Aide _____	Teacher _____
Grade _____	Where _____
Date _____	Time _____
What happened?	
<input type="checkbox"/> In an area that is off limits	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not keep hands, feet, objects to self	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting or play fighting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Playing in restrooms	
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not stop playing when bell rang	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rude language	
<input type="checkbox"/> Running	
<input type="checkbox"/> Throwing rocks or sand	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<b>Suggested Consequence:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Office referral	
<input type="checkbox"/> Note home	
<input type="checkbox"/> Detention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
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5. On the third offense the Playground Report should go home with a note explaining the difficulty the child is having on the playground and explains the warnings issued previously.
6. The next step could be to prohibit the child from playing the same game or activity that the child is having difficulty with. If the student is having issues with a particular student then assigning different areas to play in may be necessary. Typically this is a new area for 1 school day.
7. Once the child is successful with out any further infractions in the new play space then allowing him/her back into the preferred game or activity is appropriate.

**\*Please note-** Eliminating recess altogether is typically not necessary or appropriate as a physical activity break is important to student success. Restricting the playing area is a more appropriate approach. Additionally, some School Boards and Education Codes have policies in place requiring recess breaks.