

**July 2005**

## **Watching children fall down in playgrounds**

If we are to give our children independence and allow them to make friends and experience play it is inevitable that we spend a fair bit of time watching them fall down. Many schools and parents provide a watcher for this important activity. The watcher either keeps hold of the child the whole time thereby preventing communication, play and interaction from taking place, or stands and watches the fall then rushes over to pick the child up.

Although some children need close adult support in the playground this is not usually the case. Even when we stand next to children we are usually powerless to prevent the fall. In most cases, it is not productive to use valuable support time to watch children in playgrounds over and above the normal supervision given to the whole group.

How do we then allow our children to have access to play and keep them safe?

- Carry out a risk assessment – if the child is using a chair to access the playground and is strapped in the risk is very low. If the child has brittle bones and could break a bone if bumped the risk is pretty high.
- Remember a risk assessment is all about helping the child to get out there and play as normally as possible.
- Where the child is walking teach him to move around the outside of the area rather than trying to cross it.
- If necessary, use really up to the minute knee and elbow pads to cut down the risk of injury.
- Buddy up the child with other who will either help him back up or run to get help. The child should choose these not have a buddy picked for him.
- Remember ALL children fall – it's part of growing up!

**This document is for information purposes only.**

## **For more information about cerebral palsy and Scope's services**

Contact Scope's Cerebral Palsy Helpline for information, advice and support. Copies of all Scope's information sheets can be downloaded from the website or obtained from the Helpline. Referrals to Scope's Community Teams and services can be made through the Helpline.

**The Helpline hours are:**

**Monday - Friday 9 am to 9 pm. Weekends 2 pm to 6 pm**

**Cerebral Palsy Helpline**

**PO Box 833**

**Milton Keynes**

**MK12 5NY**

**Tel: 0808 800 3333**

**Fax: 01908 321051**

Email: [cphelpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:cphelpline@scope.org.uk)

Scope's website address is [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Scope acknowledges the help and support of everyone who has been involved in the production of this information.

This information can be made available in other formats if required, eg. large print or tape. We also have information about Scope and cerebral palsy available in 13 languages on audiotape and can offer a telephone interpreting service to people whose preferred language is not English.

Please contact Scope's Cerebral Palsy Helpline on telephone number 01908 321049 for more details of these services.

© We are happy for you to make photocopies of any part of this document. However, we would be grateful if you would attach an acknowledgement of the source to any copies.

Scope is a registered charity.