

The Most Common Injuries Children Suffer at Daycare

When a Normal Day Ends With Your Child in the Emergency Room

No parent drops their child off at daycare imagining they'll get a call from the hospital a few hours later. But daycare injuries happen far more often than most people realize, and the consequences can range from minor scrapes to life-altering conditions that follow a child for years. Georgia parents who know what these injuries look like and what causes them are in a much stronger position to recognize when a facility failed their child and when someone should be held responsible.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), we've represented families across Georgia whose children suffered serious harm in places that were supposed to be safe. The injuries we see most often are preventable. They happen because someone wasn't watching closely enough, because equipment wasn't maintained, or because a child wasn't protected the way the law requires.

Falls Are the Leading Cause of Daycare Injuries

Falls are by far the most common way children get hurt at daycare facilities, and the injuries they produce are anything but minor. A child who falls from a climbing structure, a changing table, or an elevated surface can suffer broken bones, lacerations, dental injuries, and traumatic brain injuries that affect cognitive development and behavior long after the physical wounds heal.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) identifies falls as the leading cause of nonfatal injuries among children, and daycare environments create unique fall risks because of the combination of active young children and equipment that must be properly maintained and age-appropriate to be safe. When a daycare fails to inspect playground equipment, allows children near structures they're too young to use safely, or leaves a child unsupervised near an elevated surface, a fall that causes serious injury stops being an accident and starts being negligence.

Georgia parents should pay close attention to where and how a fall occurred. A tumble on a flat surface is very different from a fall off a structure that was broken, improperly anchored, or placed on a hard surface without adequate cushioning underneath.

Head Injuries and Traumatic Brain Injuries

Head injuries deserve special attention because their consequences are often invisible at first. A child who hits their head during a fall or collision at daycare may appear fine initially, only for symptoms to emerge hours or days later. [Traumatic brain injuries \(TBIs\)](#) can affect memory,

speech, emotional regulation, and learning in ways that don't become fully apparent until the child reaches developmental milestones they can no longer meet.

Signs that a child may have suffered a head injury at daycare include:

- Unusual drowsiness or difficulty staying awake
- Vomiting after the incident
- Persistent crying or irritability that isn't easily explained
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns in the days following the injury

When a daycare fails to report a head injury, downplays its severity, or doesn't seek immediate medical attention for a child showing these symptoms, that failure compounds the harm and can have serious legal consequences for the facility.

Choking and Suffocation Hazards

Young children, particularly those under three years old, are at serious risk of choking because of how they explore the world. They put things in their mouths constantly, and it's the responsibility of daycare staff to ensure that the environment is free from small objects, improperly cut food, and any other materials that could cause a child to choke or suffocate.

Choking incidents at daycare are often the result of inadequate supervision, age-inappropriate food being served without proper preparation, or toys and materials left within reach of children who are too young to use them safely. In the most tragic cases, a child suffers permanent brain damage or death because no one was watching closely enough or because staff weren't trained in pediatric first aid and couldn't respond effectively when the incident occurred.

[Georgia's DECAL regulations](#) require staff to be trained in emergency response procedures, including choking. When a facility can't demonstrate that its caregivers were prepared to handle this kind of emergency, that gap in training becomes a critical piece of evidence in a negligence claim.

Burns and Scalding Injuries

[Burns](#) are another injury type that signals a serious breakdown in supervision and facility safety. Children in daycare settings can suffer burns from:

- **Hot Liquids And Food:** Beverages or meals served at unsafe temperatures, or liquids left within reach that a child pulls down onto themselves.

- **Kitchen And Cooking Equipment:** Inadequately secured appliances or unsupervised access to areas where heat sources are present.
- **Sun Exposure:** Extended outdoor time without adequate shade or sunscreen application, particularly during Georgia's long, hot summers.
- **Chemical Burns:** Cleaning products or other chemical substances left accessible to children who don't understand the danger.

Burns can cause [permanent scarring](#), nerve damage, and severe psychological trauma, particularly in young children who can't understand what happened to them. A facility that allows a child to be burned through inadequate supervision or unsafe conditions has failed in one of its most basic obligations.

Physical Abuse and Neglect by Staff

Among the most difficult injuries to uncover are those caused by the people who were supposed to be caring for your child. Physical abuse by daycare staff does occur, and it often goes unreported because young children can't always communicate what happened to them and because facilities have an obvious interest in keeping incidents quiet.

Warning signs that a child may have been abused or mistreated at daycare include:

- Unexplained bruises, marks, or injuries that the facility can't clearly account for
- A child who suddenly becomes fearful, withdrawn, or anxious about going to daycare
- Behavioral changes at home, including regression to earlier behaviors like bedwetting
- A child who flinches at sudden movements or becomes upset around certain adults
- Staff who are evasive, inconsistent, or reluctant to explain how an injury occurred

Georgia law requires daycare workers to be background-checked before working with children, but a clean background check doesn't guarantee safe behavior on the job. Facilities have an ongoing obligation to supervise their staff, respond to complaints from parents, and remove anyone who poses a risk to the children in their care. When they fail to do that, they can be held accountable for the harm their employees cause.

Playground Equipment Injuries

Beyond falls, playground equipment creates additional injury risks that are directly tied to how well a facility maintains its outdoor spaces. Defective or poorly maintained equipment can cause children to suffer cuts and lacerations from sharp or broken edges, finger and hand injuries from equipment with pinch points, strangulation risks from drawstrings or ropes near climbing structures, and fractures from collapses or failures of improperly anchored equipment.

Georgia's DECAL regulations require facilities to inspect and maintain playground equipment on a regular basis. When an injury occurs because a facility ignored that obligation, the maintenance records, or lack thereof, become central evidence in any legal claim.

What These Injuries Mean for Your Family's Legal Case

The type of injury your child suffered matters in a daycare negligence case because it shapes the evidence, the medical documentation needed, and the damages your family may be entitled to recover. A Georgia daycare injury lawyer will look at the nature and severity of the injury, the circumstances that caused it, the facility's compliance history with DECAL, and the long-term medical and developmental consequences your child may face.

Compensation in these cases can include:

- **Emergency And Ongoing Medical Expenses:** Hospital visits, surgery, follow-up care, and any specialized treatment the injury requires.
- **Therapy And Rehabilitation Costs:** Physical, occupational, or speech therapy needed as a result of the injury.
- **Future Medical Care:** When injuries carry long-term consequences, the cost of future treatment is part of what your family can pursue.
- **Pain And Suffering:** The physical pain and emotional trauma your child experienced as a result of the facility's failure.
- **Loss Of Quality Of Life:** When a serious injury changes what a child is able to do or experience, that loss has real legal value in Georgia courts.

No amount of compensation undoes the harm your child suffered. But holding a negligent daycare accountable sends a message that the safety of children matters, and it helps your family cover the real costs of what happened.

Georgia Families Deserve Answers

If your child was hurt at a daycare in Georgia, the Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C. is ready to help your family get the answers and accountability you deserve. Our daycare negligence attorneys in Georgia have been standing up for injured families since 1993, and we know how to build the kind of case that gets results. [Contact us today](#) for a free consultation. You pay nothing unless we win.