<http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/09/living/parents-middle-school-bans-balls-recess/index.html>

 JOURNAL 19

**School bans most balls during recess: Smart move or going too far?**

*By Kelly Wallace, CNN*

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**(CNN)** -- Is it an extreme case of helicopter parenting or a smart move to keep kids safe?

That's what parents are asking after hearing about a Long Island middle school's decision to ban most balls during recess and also require supervision of tag, even cartwheels, due to safety concerns.

No longer allowed at the Weber Middle School in Port Washington, New York: footballs, baseballs, soccer balls, lacrosse balls and any other hardballs that could injure a child. Also off limits: rough games of tag and cartwheels unless an adult supervisor is on hand.

"We want to make sure our children have fun but are also protected," Dr. Kathleen Maloney, superintendent of Port Washington Schools, said in a local television interview, noting how playground injuries can "unintentionally" become very serious.

The school district, in a press release, said that due to construction going on at the school, there is "limited space" for the children to play during their 20-minute recess period. "With children in close proximity to each other, it is not safe for them to be engaged in unstructured play with hardballs," said the district.

It's not clear when the construction project will come to an end at the school and if kids will be able to resume normal ball-playing after it wraps up. A call to the superintendent's office for confirmation has not yet been returned.

Soft nerf balls will be provided during recess, and kids can play with hardballs during gym and intramural athletics.

Not suprisingly, when we asked what people thought about this school's policy on [CNN's Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/cnn), we got a ton of comments, the majority outraged by the school's decision.

"There are rational precautions (helmets for bikers) and then there is ridiculous. This is over the top," said

Erika Hathaway Stockton on Facebook.

"This isn't smart. It's actually counter-productive," said Donna Daniels in an e-mail to CNN. "It saddens me to think that children no longer experience the joy of kickball, tag, dodgeball and simple outdoor games I remember so fondly when I reflect on my childhood. Our kids don't experience physical activity unless it involves downloading an app."

"Without opportunities to learn how to navigate space with their bodies, and to negotiate rules, risks, and experimentation of cooperative play, how are children going to ever be able to handle themselves in any society as adults?" said Alex Martin, an associate director at a Manhattan nursery school.

On the other side, there were some people who thought the school's actions were warranted. "Freedom is great until the parents sue the school district," said Tyllor Parker on Facebook.

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"I don't think kids should have their fun pasttimes discontinued, but head trauma can be serious," said Marilyn Decker on Facebook. "Helmets can lessen that. Even pro sports issues protection. Nothing wrong with that. They are now much more enlightened about wearing helmets while skateboarding and riding a bike, as well."

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1. What do you think of this rule?
2. What are the pros and cons of such a rule?
3. Describe a way to make recess safer without enacting this rule.
4. Do you think we as a society are “wimping out” or just trying to be safe by making these types of rules? Give other examples to back up your view.