


**POMS** RISK CONTROL & INSURANCE  
SMARTER INSURANCE FOR SMARTER BUSINESS.

## The Role of Ergonomics in Special Education Programs



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## Presenter

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## Upcoming Webinars

### Human Resources

- **Effective Interviewing: Behavioral/Competency-Based Interviewing Techniques That Work!**
  - March 14, 2024
- **Hiring and On-Boarding New Employees for Success**
  - April 4, 2024
- **Employee Motivation and Engagement: Methods to Get the Best from People**
  - April 18, 2024

### Risk Control

- **Artificial Intelligence: Safety Solution or Fools Gold?**
  - March 27, 2024

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## Agenda

- Our Approach to Ergonomics/What is Ergonomics?
- School Injuries and Risk Factors
- Implementing Ergonomics
- Ergo Techniques for Feeding, Toileting, Transferring
- Be an Ergo Champ!
- Questions

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## Disclaimer

- This training is an introduction to basic guidelines and procedures. It is not meant to replace any training provided for specific students.
- Students have individual needs that must be assessed. All equipment must be reviewed prior to use and its operating procedures understood fully to prevent injury to both the student and operator. This training is not all inclusive and should not replace classroom and practical training.**
- This presentation has been prepared by Poms & Associates Insurance Brokers, LLC to provide information on areas of interest to our clients. It is not intended to offer legal or regulatory advice for any situation.

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## The Poms Approach to Ergonomics

- Continuous ergonomics risk improvement process
- Injury prevention
- Musculoskeletal disorders and rehabilitation process
- Partner in safety programming
- Client centered
- Healthy employees are your most valuable asset




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## What is Ergonomics?

- Fitting the job to the worker
  - Task/Job
  - Tools
  - Environment
  - Person




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## Goals - Ergonomics

- Prevent soft tissue injuries and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) caused by sudden or sustained exposure to force, vibration, repetitive motion, and awkward postures.
- Assess job tasks, identify hazards, and implement strategies or modifications to minimize the risk of injury.
- Raise awareness in neutral postures and adaptive approaches.



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## What is the cost of an injury?

- **Direct cost to your district**
  - Workers' compensation payments
  - Medical and legal costs
- **Indirect cost to your district**
  - Loss of employee and expertise
  - Finding and training replacement worker
  - Investigation time
  - Repair or replace equipment or make environmental modifications
  - Loss of morale/team impact
  - Program and student impact
- **Impact on the employee**

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

**13** AVERAGE DAYS AWAY PER MSD  
PER STRAIN ON THE FOREARM WORKS OF SKILLED WORKERS

**\$69,594** AVERAGE COST OF ONE MSD INJURY

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## School injuries and risk factors

**Common Injuries for School Employees**

- Slip, trip, or fall
- Strain (lifting or repetitive motion)
- Struck or injured by

**Sped Risk Factors**

- Increased physical demands
- Work in awkward postures
- Always on high alert
- Responding to aggressive behaviors

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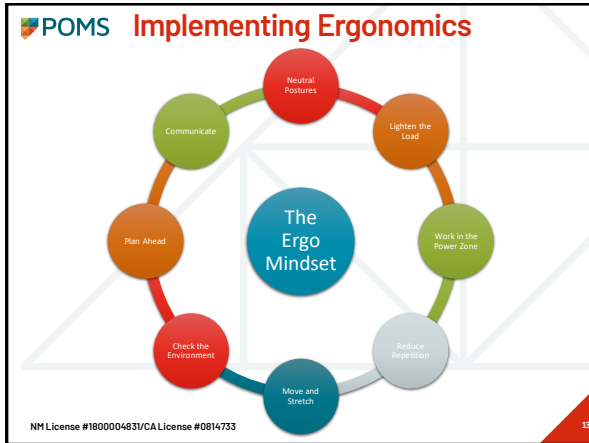
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### Considerations:

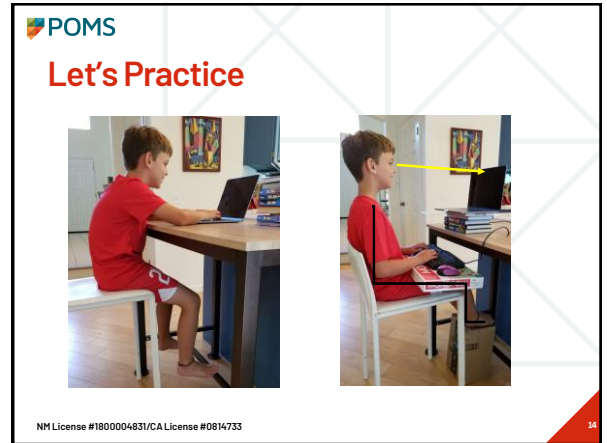
- Repetition
- Equipment/Training
- Past practice
- Body proximity
- Employee-specific tasks vs job share
- Student behaviors
- Ergo breaks and stretching before lifting

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**High Risk Tasks vs. Strategies**

- Feeding
- Transfers/Transporting
- Toileting/Diapering
- Aggressive Behaviors

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**Ergonomics with Feeding**

- Leaning, sitting, or standing
- One or multiple students?
- Do you feed from the same side or use the same hand?
- Check your body placement.
- Adjust for neutral work postures

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**Ergonomics with Transfers and Equipment**

- Establish transfer method.
- Train in proper lift techniques and equipment.
- Encourage student engagement.
- Conduct equipment checks.
- Communication is key.



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**Ergonomics with Transfers and Equipment**



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- Prepare the environment.
- Seek parent input.
- Encourage participation.
- Keep instructions short.
- Work in the Power Zone.
- Be consistent.
- Conduct regular training.



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**Ergonomics with Toileting**



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### Ergo Considerations

- Training, planning, and maintenance schedules
- School equipment vs student equipment
- Documentation
- Individual Education Plan, Health Plan, Behavioral Intervention Plan, Functional Behavior Plan
- Who is part of the team?
- The handoff...

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### Be an Ergo Champ

- Use your ergonomic mindset
- Environment
- Postures/body mechanics
- Use the right tool for the job
- Ergo Breaks
- Communication and teamwork
- Take care of yourself so you can take care of others

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### Questions?

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