

Safe Playgrounds = Healthy Kids



Outdoor play offers unique experiences for children providing opportunities for physical fitness while promoting cognitive, exploratory, and social

development. However, not all playgrounds are safe and most injuries to children happen on the playground. Each year nearly 200,000 children need emergency care for such accidents! Falls and chokings have even resulted in some deaths. The good news is that there are no-cost easy ways of making outdoor play safer.

Supervision

- Keep close watch to ensure proper use of equipment. Every child **MUST** be in sight at all times.
- Adults should position themselves in different areas of the playground so they can view all the children.

Age-appropriate Activities

- Make sure little ones do not use things meant for bigger children—post signs at their height with picture messages.
- Safe heights on play equipment are 1 foot per year of child's age.

Daily Playground Check List:

- Equipment firmly anchored with **NO** sharp/broken/loose/hanging/missing/projecting parts or loose paint/splinters.
- All openings smaller than 3 ½" (soda can end) or bigger than 9" (soccer ball).
- Grounds/sandbox free of trash/food/poison plants/chemicals/animal waste.
- Fall-area protective material provided and raked back to required depths around equipment/footers/ landing zones.
- Age limits/simple rules posted at each piece of equipment.
- The air quality is good. The heat index is not above 90 degrees F or the wind chill is not below 15 degrees F.

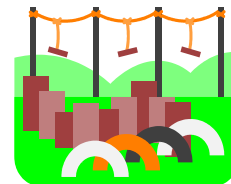
Daily Kids Check List

- Clothes right for weather and sunscreen applied with parent permission.
- Bike helmets worn using riding toys.
- **NO** drawstrings on clothes.
- Review/repeat/sing playground rules.
- Children have water to drink.

Equipment Warnings!

The Consumer Product Safety Commission advises that some items **NOT** be in pre-school play areas:

- Chain or cable walks
- Free-standing arch or flexing climbers
- Old-fashioned fulcrum seesaws
- Log rolls
- Slide-down poles or loose ropes/loops
- Swinging gates
- Metal animal-figure swings
- Parallel bars or overhead rings
- Trampolines



Talking Points for Parents

- Share your playground rules with parents.
- Remind parents how important it is to supervise children at play.

Social and Learning Opportunities

- Fine and gross motor skills develop in ways not possible indoors.
- New interests, abilities and relationships can be found in a varied environment.

Resources:

National Program for Playground Safety:
www.uni.edu/playground or 800-554-PLAY.

US Consumer Product Safety Commission:
www.cpsc.gov or 800-638-2772.

Riley Children's Hospital: 800-248-1199 or
www.rileyhospital.org/kids1st

Information consistent with Caring for Our Children 2002:
<http://nrc.uchsc.edu>