

# Safe Playgrounds = Healthy Kids



Outdoor play offers unique opportunities for children to engage in physical fitness and experience cognitive,

gross motor, and social development.

Unfortunately, playground safety is a big issue, because children are more likely to experience accidents and injuries on playgrounds than anywhere else in the child care setting. The good news is that there are no-cost, easy ways to make outdoor spaces safe for children.

## Supervision

- Keep close watch to ensure proper use of equipment. Every child **MUST** be kept 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 must be firmly anchored with no sharp, broken, loose, hanging, missing, or projecting parts or loose paint or splinters.
- Certain openings could present an entrapment hazard if the distance between any interior opposing surfaces is greater than 3.5 inches and less than 9 inches. All openings should be less than 3.5 inches or greater than 9 inches.
- The grounds (including spaces like sandboxes) are free of trash, food, poison, plants, chemicals, and animal waste.
- Fall-area protective material is provided and raked back to required depths around equipment/footers/ landing zones.

- Age limits/simple rules are 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 are weather-appropriate and sunscreen is applied with parent permission.
- Bike helmets are worn when riding toys.
- NO drawstrings on clothes.
- Review/repeat/sing playground rules.
- Children have water to drink.

## Equipment Warnings!

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) advises against the use of the following equipment:

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



## 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.playgroundsafety.org](http://www.playgroundsafety.org) or 800-554-PLAY.

US Consumer Product Safety Commission:

[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or 800-638-2772.

Information consistent with Caring for Our Children 2012: [www.nrckids.org](http://www.nrckids.org)