



Safety in ... the Playground!

Every year, more than 200,000 children in America are rushed to the Emergency Room because of playground-related injuries. Many of these accidents can be prevented. Here are some things you can do to make your playground safer for the children who visit.

Evaluate your playground's surfaces. Falls account for most injuries. Using soft, forgiving materials under and around playground equipment can help prevent trips to the ER.

- Use wood mulch (not CCA-treated), wood chips, shredded/recycled rubber mulch, sand, and pea gravel.
- Hard surfaces, such as asphalt, concrete, and even grass, are unsuitable under any playground equipment.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for proper installation, spacing between equipment, and maintenance.

Conduct routine inspections and maintenance of equipment throughout the year. Exposure to the elements, along with daily use by children, can take a toll on playground equipment.

- Look out for: loose, damaged, or missing fasteners or components; depleted or displaced surfacing; exposed bolts, sharp edges, anchors, or fallen tree limbs; and deterioration from rust, rot, insects, or weather.
- Conduct necessary repairs immediately.
- Never modify playground equipment without using approved processes and materials.
- Make sure there are no openings or gaps on playground equipment that measure between 3.5 and 9 inches, as they could be an asphyxiation hazard.
- Periodically schedule a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) to perform an inspection of your playground.
- At the time of new equipment installation, schedule an inspection by the manufacturer's representative.
- Ensure that equipment and ground surfaces are free of potential hazards, such as broken glass and other dangerous objects.
- Keep records of purchase, installation, inspections, maintenance, repair, and injury data.

Provide adequate supervision for children on the playground.

- About 45% of playground injuries occur from a lack of supervision.
- Steer children to age-appropriate play areas and monitor proper use.
- Spaces for preschoolers should be located away from areas where older, more active children play.

Do not have trampolines, rope swings, heavy metal swings, multiple occupancy swings, unsecured climbing ropes, swinging gates, or giant slides at playgrounds.

For more detailed specifics about the above and related topics, please visit playgroundsafety.org.