

Playground Safety

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to the emergency room with injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment. Many backyard play sets are placed on dirt or grass surfaces that do not protect children when they fall. Below is a handout for parents. Please copy and distribute as needed.

Playground Safety Tips

► Watch Your Children When They Are Playing.

Adult presence is needed to watch for problems that arise. Never attach ropes, jump ropes, or pet leashes to play equipment. Strings on clothing or ropes used for play can cause accidental strangulation if caught on equipment.



► All Children Should Play On Age-appropriate Equipment.

Children are developmentally different and need different equipment located in separate areas to keep the playground safe and fun for all.



► Falls Should Be Cushioned

Playground surfaces should not be concrete, asphalt, grass, blacktop, packed dirt or rocks. Nearly 70 percent of all playground injuries are related to falls to the surface. Acceptable surfaces include hardwood fiber/mulch, pea gravel, sand and synthetic materials such as poured-in-place, rubber mats or tiles.

► Make Sure Equipment Is Safe

Check to make sure the equipment is anchored safely in the ground, all equipment pieces are in good working order, S-hooks are entirely closed, bolts are not sticking out, there are no exposed footings, etc. Also check for spaces that could trap children, like guardrails or between ladder rungs; these spaces should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches. Make sure platforms and ramps have guardrails to prevent falls. Remove tripping hazards, like tree stumps or rocks. Check for sharp points or edges.



Adapted from www.playgroundsafety.org and www.cpsc.gov.
For more information visit these websites.