

Playground Safety Checklist

Each year, approximately 150,000 American children are treated in emergency rooms for injuries that occurred on public playground equipment.

Here are 10 important tips for parents and community groups to keep in mind to help ensure playground safety.

- 1** Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or area mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
- 2** Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- 3** Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.
- 4** Check for dangerous hardware, like open “S” hooks or protruding bolt ends.
- 5** Make sure spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- 6** Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.
- 7** Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps and rocks.
- 8** Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls.
- 9** Check playgrounds regularly to see that equipment and surfacings are in good condition.
- 10** Carefully supervise children on playgrounds to make sure they are safe.

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