
WARNING!

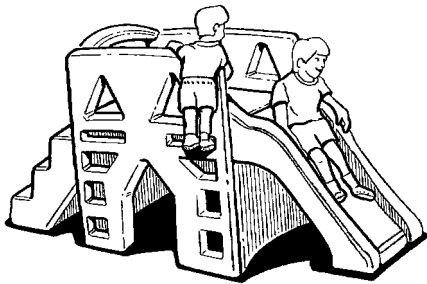
The leading cause of playground related deaths is strangulation.

Never dress a child in loose or stringed clothing if they will be on playground equipment. Clothing strings (hoods, drawstrings, & attached mittens), loose clothing (scarves and ponchos), or stringed items placed around the neck (necklaces, binoculars, jump ropes, purses, & backpacks), can catch on playground equipment and strangle children.

Parents or caregivers should check for hot surfaces on metal playground equipment before allowing young children to play on it. In direct sunlight, metal surfaces, such as slides, platforms, & steps, may reach temperatures high enough to cause serious burn injuries in a matter of seconds.

Children should always wear helmets while riding bikes, rollerblading, or skateboarding. But, helmets should not be worn around playground equipment. There is a "hidden hazard" of strangulation if a child wears a helmet while playing on playground equipment.

Children's plastic climbing equipment (see below) should not be used indoors on wood or concrete floors even if covered by carpet. Carpet does not provide adequate fall protection needed to prevent injuries. Parents and childcare providers should put all climbing equipment outdoors on surfaces such as sand or mulch to prevent head injuries. Never place plastic climbing equipment on concrete, asphalt, wood, or other hard surfaces.

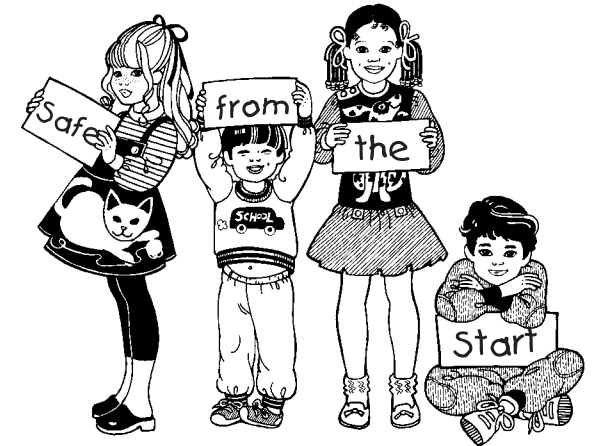


For more information contact:

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Playground Injury



Playground injuries are the leading cause of injury to children in childcare centers and to school age children age 5-14.

Each year more than 200,000 children are injured on playgrounds, injuries that require emergency room visits.

4 out of 5 playground injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground.

2 out of 5 playground injuries are due to lack of adult supervision.

Home Playgrounds

Many backyard play sets are placed on dirt or grass. Grass and dirt are not considered a protective surface because they do not provide adequate protection if the child falls.

Use this simple checklist to help make sure your home playground is a safe place to play.

- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface around the play equipment using between 9-12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or shredded rubber.
- Install protective surfacing at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in front and back, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines, or pet leashes to play equipment—children can strangle on these.

- Check for hardware, like open “S” hooks (generally found on swings) loose fasteners or protruding bolt ends that stick out more than 2 threads past the nut. Items can catch on these and cause strangulation.
- Check for spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs. These spaces should either measure less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Make sure platforms and ramps have guardrails to prevent falls.
- Check for sharp points or edges on equipment.
- Remove tripping hazards like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
- Regularly check play equipment and surfacing to make sure both are in good condition.
- Carefully supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe.

Public & School Playgrounds

Age separation of public playground equipment: Public playground equipment is designed for two distinct age groups in order to serve their **developmental levels**; preschool age children (2-5 years) & school age children (5-12 years). Therefore, the following playground equipment is not recommended for preschool age children (2-5 years):

- Chain or cable walks
- Free standing arch climbers

- Log rolls
- Tall spiral slides
- Overhead rings
- Parallel bars
- Swinging gates
- Track rides
- Sliding poles

The intended user age group should be obvious from the design and scale of equipment.

Children should always be **supervised** when using playground equipment.

Before allowing children to play on equipment:

- check for hazards such as debris (**broken glass**) and vandalized or damaged equipment.
- avoid areas with **displaced or compacted surfacing materials**.
- **Teach** children proper playground behavior; no pushing, shoving or crowding. Tell them what equipment is appropriate for their age level.

For more information on playground safety, refer to: Consumer Product Safety Commission Hotline at 1-800-638-2772 or their web site at www.cpsc.gov. You may also contact Safe Kids Grand Forks as we have a certified playground inspector on our Coalition.
