



# Playground Safety



## Know the facts:

- Playgrounds and outdoor play equipment can provide your child with fun, fresh air, and exercise, but they can also pose some safety hazards. Faulty equipment, improper surfaces, and careless behavior are just a few of the dangers that cause children on playgrounds to visit hospital emergency departments.
- Each year, more than 200,000 kids are treated in hospital ERs for playground-related injuries. Many of these injuries could have been prevented with the proper supervision.
- You can make the playground a place that's entertaining and safe for your child by checking equipment for potential hazards and following some simple safety guidelines. In addition, teaching your child how to play safely is important: if your child knows the rules of the playground, it's less likely he or she will get hurt.

## Playground Safety Checklist:



Here are some things to consider prior to allowing children to play on a playground:

- Concrete, asphalt, and blacktop are unsafe and unacceptable surfaces. Grass, soil, and packed-earth surfaces are also unsafe because weather and wear can reduce their capacities to cushion a child's fall. The surfaces may be loosely filled with materials like wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or shredded rubber. Surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials are also safe. Rubber mats and wood chips allow the best access for people in wheelchairs.
- Equipment that is too high (taller than 6 feet), and equipment that doesn't have guardrails to protect children from falling. Keep in mind that even proper surfacing can't prevent all injuries. Also, the greater the height of the equipment, the more likely the child is to get injured if he or she falls from it.
- Most playground injuries can be avoided by making sure playground areas are safe, and by teaching kids to play on playground equipment correctly and safely.
- No surfacing materials are considered safe if the combined height of playground and the child (standing on the highest platform) is higher than 12 feet (3.7 m).
- The cushioned surface should extend at least 6 feet (1.9 m) past the equipment. Additional coverage may be needed, depending on how high a slide is or how long a swing is.
- The playground surface should be free of standing water and debris that could cause a child to trip and fall, such as rocks, tree stumps, and tree roots. Look for dangerous materials, like broken glass or twisted metal.



## Playground Rules:

- Take turns on the equipment.
- Play gently - pushing and roughhousing on equipment can lead to falls.
- When getting off the seesaw, work with your seesaw partner to get off about the same time - when the seesaw is flat and in the middle, nobody will crash. Don't get off when you are at the bottom and your partner is fully up in the air.
- Always swing sitting down, with one person on the swing at a time. Walk far away from a swing with someone on it. Allow yourself lots of room - remember the person swinging may jump off.
- Wait your turn on the slide until the person in front of you has slid all the way down to the bottom and gotten off. Slide sitting down, feet-first.

## Keep Our Children Safe!!!

Brought to you by the **West Paterson Volunteer Fire Department**

