

**Build playgrounds right:** If you are involved with a community group or school that is building a new playground ( or making sure an existing one is safe ), you can find detailed guidelines on every aspect of equipment installation and maintenance from the Consumers Product Safety Commission's ( CPSC ) Handbook for Public Playground Safety.

# Playground Safety

*Each year about 200,000 children are treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for playground related injuries. About 15 children die each year as a result of playground related incidents. Most deaths are due to strangulation, but some are due to falls.*



## PREVENTION WEB SITES

Consumer Product Safety  
Commission  
Fairfield County Safe Kids  
The National Program for  
Playground Safety

American Academy of Pediatrics



1. Make sure all surfaces around the playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or mats made of safety tested rubber or rubber like material.
2. Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions for the play equipment. For swings, be sure that the protective surfacing extends, in back & front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
3. Make sure that play structures more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.
4. Make sure that 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.
5. Check for dangerous hardware, like open " S " hooks or protruding bolt ends.
6. Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.
7. Look out for tripping hazard, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps and rocks.
8. Make sure that all elevated platforms and ramps have guardrails.
9. Check playgrounds regularly to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition.
10. Carefully supervise children on playground equipment to ensure their safety.

The U.S. Consumers Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns that children should never wear bike helmets when playing, especially on playground equipment. CPSC has reports of strangulation deaths due to helmets becoming stuck on playground equipment, resulting in hanging.

\* Children should always wear their helmets when riding bikes, roller blades or scooters. But, when the child gets off the bike the helmet should come off.

Guard rails or other protective barriers should be used on all platforms.

No strings attached:  
Clothing strings, loose clothing and string items strung around the neck can catch on playground equipment and strangle children.

Cargo Nets—check that the net openings are either too small for the child's head to fit through or that the child's head can fit through the opening easily.

Protection from traffic:  
It only takes a second for a child to dart out from a playground in pursuit of a ball or to chase a squirrel or another child. Make sure that there is adequate fencing or a distance between cars and play areas.

Because many injuries are associated with inadequate supervision on playgrounds, the National Program for Playground Safety highly recommend that parents become proactive in playground supervision. Visually inspect the equipment for potential safety problems and make sure that children do not play on any unsafe equipment.

1. Make sure adult supervision at all times while children are playing on the playground (40% of the injuries occur due to inadequate supervision).
2. Children should play on age appropriate equipment. Equipment designed for ages 5-12 is too big for children 2-5.
3. Survey the play area each time you visit. Hazards range from broken glass to damaged equipment.
4. Protect your child from both sun burns and hot metal burns. Be aware that metal slides, swings and other metal equipment can easily burn children.
5. Provide plenty of fluids—prevent dehydration and heat stroke.
6. Be a good neighbor:
  - report problems to the administrator of the play area.
  - Have children help to redistribute any loose surfacing that may have been pushed aside.
  - Close any gates that may be open.

Use caution: Hot metal surfaces can burn!