

## Playground Safety

The playground is a wonderful place. It is a setting that can positively foster the social and intellectual growth of children and serves as the background for many fond childhood memories.

However, playgrounds can also be full of hazards. Each year, there are approximately 200,000 injuries and 15 deaths related to faulty equipment or inadequate fall zones at playgrounds across the country.

### Swings

- Swing seats should be made of soft materials, not wood or metal.
- Younger children should use only full-bucket seats.
- Each framework should have only two swings and be securely anchored.
- Swings should be at least eight inches apart; farther apart is even better.
- Swings should be far enough away from other play equipment so children don't get struck.
- Clearance under the swing should be at least eight inches.

### Slides

- Make sure the slide and handrails are securely anchored.
- Steps should have good traction to avoid slips and falls.

### Seesaws

- Seesaws should have something underneath the seat to prevent it from hitting the ground.
- Be cautious of adjustable seesaws with chains at the fulcrum, as the chains can crush a child's hands.

## Monkey Bars

- Be sure the equipment is age-appropriate for your child. Proper use requires significant upper body strength. Younger children may not be capable of stabilizing themselves.
- Check to make sure steps and handrails are securely anchored.
- Make sure the fall zone is appropriate for the inevitable slips and falls.

## Fall Zones

- Concrete, asphalt, grass, and dirt are too hard for fall zone areas. Use "loose fill" items such as wood chips, bark mulch, wood fibers, sand, pea gravel, or rubberized mats.
- Fall zones should extend at least six feet beyond the outer edge of the support structure for stationary equipment, and a distance of at least twice the height of a swing when measured from the ground to the swing hanger on the framework.



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