

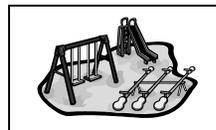


POOL SAFETY

- Never leave a child alone near water -- a tragedy can occur in seconds. If you must leave, take your child with you.
- Always use approved personal floatation devices, rather than inflatable toys, to keep your child afloat.
- Beware of neighborhood pools -- be it your own or your neighbors. Remove toys from in and around the pool when not in use. Toys can attract children to the pool.
- For pools, barriers can offer added protection against drowning. Power or manual covers will completely cover a pool and block access to the water, however, be sure to drain any standing water from the surface of the pool cover as a child can drown in very small amounts of water.
- Enroll children over age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."
- Older children risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate the water depth.
- Teach your children these four key swimming rules:
 - Always swim with a buddy.
 - Don't dive into shallow water and in all above-ground pools. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
 - Don't push or jump on others.
 - Be prepared for an emergency.
- Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).



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PLAYGROUND SAFETY

SOFT SURFACE

Because nearly 70 percent of playground injuries are caused by falls to the ground, improper surfacing is the first thing parents should watch for when they inspect a playground. Wood chips, bark mulch, wood fibers, sand, pea gravel, shredded tires and rubber mats cushion falls well. Avoid concrete, grass and dirt, they're too hard. A minimum depth of 12 inches of material surrounding each piece of equipment in a 6-foot fall zone is recommended

SWINGS

Swings are the pieces of moving equipment that are most likely to cause injuries to children. Swings should be set far enough away from other equipment so that children won't be hit by a moving swing. Only two swings should be in each supporting framework, and they should be at least 24 inches apart. Full-bucket seats are recommended for younger children. Half-bucket seats are dangerous because babies and toddlers can slide out of them.

SMOOTH SLIDING

Slides should be well-anchored, have firm handrails and good traction on the steps. There should be no gaps between the slide itself and the platform. There should also be a bar at the top of the slide so that children have to sit before they go down. One of the greatest dangers with slides occurs when drawstrings on children's clothes get caught at the top of the slide.

SAFE SEESAWS AND MERRY-GO-ROUNDS

Spring-loaded seesaws are best for young children. Avoid adjustable seesaws with chains because children can crush their hands under the chains. A traditional type seesaw should have a tire or some other object under the seat to keep it from hitting the ground. Merry-go-rounds, or "whirls" or "roundabouts", are best for school-age children. They should have good hand grips, and the rotating platform should be level, free of sharp edges and have adequate clearance to prevent crushing or severing limbs.

CLIMB CAREFULLY

Forty percent of all playground injuries are related to climbing equipment. More children are injured falling off climbing equipment or horizontal ladders than anything else on the playground. Children under 4 shouldn't play on this equipment. However, climbers are great for encouraging upper body strength. Watch older children when they're climbing, check that steps and handrails are in

good condition, and make sure a guardrail or barrier surrounds raised platforms. Any climbing ropes should be secured at the top and bottom.

TOP 10 CHECKLIST FOR PLAYGROUND SAFETY:

- Surfaces around playground equipment should be filled with at least 12 inches of loose fill, such as wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel.
- Most stationary equipment should have at least a 6 foot use zone in all directions.
- Any openings that can trap children (in guardrails or between ladder rungs) should be less than 32 inches apart or more than 9 inches.
- Guardrails should surround all elevated platforms and should be at least 29 inches high for preschool-age children and 38 inches high for school-age children.
- Look for exposed concrete footings, tree roots or rocks that could trip children.
- Check for sharp edges and dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolts.
- Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment.
- Playgrounds should be maintained regularly. Report any problems.
- Remove hoods or drawstrings that can get caught on equipment.
- Supervise children while they play.

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