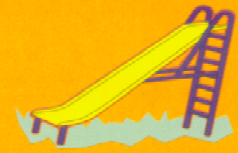




Keep Your Kids Safe At The Playground



Playgrounds are fun! Your child gets the chance to explore, test his or her skills and meet other children.

But playgrounds can also be dangerous! Most kids get hurt when they fall from equipment.

You can help keep your child safe by doing these three things:

1. Before you go, check your child

- ✓ **Take off anything that could strangle your child.** Take off any strings or drawstrings on your child's clothing. In winter, use clips instead of strings to hold the mittens. And make sure your child wears a neck warmer instead of a scarf. Do not let your child take skipping ropes or bike helmets onto playground equipment.

2. Check the playground before your child plays

- ✓ **Choose a playground with a deep, soft surface or a rubber surface instead of one with a dirt or grass surface.** The ground should have soft rubber mats or lots of sand, pea gravel, or wood chips. These will help protect your child when he or she falls. If the surface in your playground is not deep and soft, keep your child on equipment that is close to the ground.
- ✓ **Dig the heel of your shoe into the surface to see how deep it is.** It should be at least 6 inches (15 centimetres) deep. If the surface has worn away at the bottom of a slide or under a swing, push more of it into place with your shoe.
- ✓ **Before you let your child use any equipment that he or she might fall off, make sure it has good handrails, barriers and railings to prevent falls.**
- ✓ **Watch out for areas where your child's head or neck should get stuck.** Spaces might be big enough for your child's body but might trap his or her head or neck. This could strangle your child. Safe spaces are smaller than 3.5 inches (9 centimetres) and larger than 9 inches (22.5 centimetres). Places to check include the spaces between the steps on a slide, and spaces between railings. Watch your child closely.
- ✓ **Check for broken glass, garbage, sharp edges and bolts that stick out.** Pick up any glass or garbage before your child plays. If your child is old enough, teach him or her to stay away from sharp edges or bolts. Watch a young child closely to prevent him or her from bumping into sharp edges.

3. Supervise your child closely

- ✓ **Teach your child these rules of playground safety:** Wait your turn. Slide down feet first. Don't go up the slide ladder until the other person has gone down the slide. Hold onto railings. Sit down on swings and slides. Keep away from moving swings and the bottom of slides.
- ✓ **If your child is between 5 and 9 years, watch what he or she is doing.** Children this age like to take chances. Make sure your child uses equipment safely.
- ✓ **If your child is younger than 5 years:**
 - ◆ **Keep your child off equipment that is higher than 5 feet (1.5 metres).** Five feet is about as high as most adults can easily reach. Do not let your young child go any higher than that.
 - ◆ **Stand right beside your child when he or she is climbing, riding in a swing or playing on equipment above the ground.** You should be able to reach your child easily at all times. You should be able to prevent him or her from falling.
 - ◆ **Stay close at all times.** Follow your child as he or she moves around the playground.
 - ◆ **Keep your child off equipment that is meant for older children.** Playgrounds often have equipment for two different groups of children: children younger than 5 years, and older children from 5 to 12 years. If your child needs help to climb on a piece of equipment, then he or she should not use it. It is meant for older children.

Is your playground safe?

Your playground may not meet Canada's standards for safety. Many playgrounds do not, because these standards are fairly new. It may take some time before your playground is safer. So use this information to help keep your children safe at the playground.



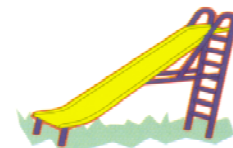
Why is supervision so important?

Many playground injuries happen when children are not watched closely enough. Stay close to your child and teach him or her how to play safely.



How high is the equipment at your playground?

Children are most likely to be seriously injured if they fall from equipment higher than 5 feet (1.5 metres). Children under 5 should not be allowed on equipment higher than 5 feet. If your older child uses equipment that is higher than 5 feet, make sure it has good barriers to prevent falls and a deep, soft surface under it. And watch closely while he or she plays.



What should you do if there are problems at your playground?

If your playground does not have a deep, soft surface or if you think some of the equipment is unsafe, call the group that looks after the playground to let them know.



Do you have a home playground?

Check the Safe Kids Canada Web site (www.safekidscanada.ca) or call us at 1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847) for more information about making your home playground safe.



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Injuries are the number one cause of death and disability among children and youth in Canada. Safe Kids Canada, in collaboration with community partners across the country, raises awareness about injury prevention, educates families on how to keep kids safe and advocates for safer environments to protect children.