# Playgrounds

**SafeTips from the Naval Safety Center**

Quick and easy summaries to find out about something new you're doing or as a refresher for something you haven't done in a while. They're a great training tool to pass around at meetings, through e-mail, or post on bulletin boards.

Some 200,000 children are treated in emergency rooms every year for injuries they suffered on playgrounds. About 70 percent of the injuries are from falls. When you bring your child to a playground, here are some things to look for.

- ♡ Is there a fence or hedge that will keep kids from running into traffic or parking lots?
- ♡ Is any of the playground equipment broken? If so, does that pose a hazard? Check for sharp corners or edges, as well as missing pieces or guards. If so, find out who is responsible for the playground and report the problem.
- ♡ Is the ground in the playground area cushioned with wood chips, pea gravel or sand? It should be loose and at least 12 inches deep. Asphalt, cement, and dirt are not adequate surfaces in the "fall zone" around swings, slides and teeter-totters.
- ♡ Is there any trash lying around-such as broken glass or jagged metal-that might cut someone?
- ♡ Walking surfaces should be free of debris.
- ♡ Wooden playground equipment can deteriorate and produce dangerous splinters if it isn't preserved on a regular basis.
- ♡ If a playground doesn't drain well, standing water can freeze and be dangerously slippery in the winter.
- ♡ Look for openings on equipment where a child can trap his or her head. Although rules call for openings of less than 3.5 inches, or more than 9 inches, not all old equipment complies.
- ♡ The current rule for swings is no more than two per support structure, and they should be at least 24 inches apart and 30 inches from the side support.
- ♡ All S-hooks should be squeezed closed.



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