

## Playground Safety

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that emergency departments see more than 20,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related traumatic brain injury each year. Nearly 80 percent of playground injuries are caused by falls and lack of supervision is associated with approximately 45 percent of all injuries.

### Playground Hazards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission identified the following playground hazards parents should be on the lookout for before allowing their children to play:

- **Improper protective surfaces:** Fall surfaces should be made of wood chips, mulch, wood fibers, sand, pea gravel, shredded tires or rubber mats and should be at least 12 inches deep.
- **Protrusion hazards:** Beware of hardware that is capable of impaling or cutting a child (bolts, hooks, rungs, etc.), or catching strings or items of clothing.
- **Head entrapment hazards:** There should be no openings that measure between 3 ½ and 9 inches.
- **Overcrowded play area:** Swings should be set far enough away from other equipment that children won't be hit by a moving swing.

- **Lack of maintenance:** Metal or wooden swing seats should be replaced with soft seats, and equipment should not be split or splintered.
- **Sharp edges on equipment**
- **Platforms with no guardrails**
- **Equipment not recommended for public playgrounds:** One example is monkey bars. The number of injuries caused by monkey bars is so significant many experts recommend they be removed from all playgrounds.

### Safety Tips

With active supervision and some basic safety tips, every day at the playground can be a walk in the park.

- Teach children that pushing, shoving or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.
- Children should wear closed-toe shoes while playing and shouldn't wear sweatshirts with drawstrings, scarves, or necklaces.
- Make sure the playground equipment is age-appropriate for your child.
- Children under age 4 shouldn't play on climbing equipment or horizontal ladders.
- Check that playgrounds are inspected and maintained by qualified personnel.
- If the playground is unsafe, report the problem to the owner or park district.



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PROTECTION**

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[www.ndsc.org](http://www.ndsc.org)

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