

**Children spend countless hours playing on equipment in backyards and at parks. Parents should be alert to potential play area hazards and take steps to prevent injuries.**

#### **Age-appropriate equipment**

Some play areas only provide one piece of equipment for all ages. As a result, younger children are injured on equipment designed for older children who are larger and stronger. Make sure the playgrounds your child uses have equipment for his or her age and skill level.

Equipment for toddlers should be no taller than 6 feet; platforms should be no more than 4 feet from the ground, should have guardrails and should be easy to get down from. A slide should have no more than a 30 degree incline, the platform at the top of the slide should be as wide as the slide and at least 22 inches deep.

#### **Proper surfacing under and around equipment**

Nearly 200,000 children each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms as a result of falls from playground equipment onto unsafe surfaces. Asphalt, concrete, packed dirt and grass do not provide cushioned protection from falls and should not be used in the "fall zone" under and extending up to 6 feet around equipment. Surfaces such as pea gravel, sand, wood chips or mulch and synthetic surfaces designed for playgrounds to a depth of 12 inches help reduce the impact of falls and the seriousness of injuries.

#### **Adult supervision**

Children should be supervised whenever playing on equipment. Playground injuries can happen anytime and anywhere, and adult attention may be needed immediately.

#### **Playground maintenance**

Broken or poorly maintained equipment is involved in 30 percent of all playground injuries.

Your visual impression of a playground is important. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are there any broken pieces of equipment such as broken swing seats or teeter-totters?
- Are there any animal droppings?
- Are the swings made of soft materials like plastic, rubber or canvas, or are they wood or metal?
- Is there trash such as broken bottles, can tops or drug paraphernalia that could cause injuries?
- Does the playground have adequately cushioned surfacing that is deep enough to prevent injury?

#### **Teach your child these playground safety rules**

- Never run, push, shove or fight while near or on equipment.
- Sit in the proper position on equipment.
- Take turns using equipment if several children want to use it at the same time. Do not overcrowd equipment.
- Always use the ladder to reach the top of the slide, rather than crawling up the slide. Never go down headfirst. Always wait for the person in front of you to clear the bottom of the slide and move out of the way right away when you reach the bottom of the slide.
- Avoid walking into the path of a moving swing. Don't twist a swing, push an empty swing or share a swing meant for one person.
- Never wear a bicycle helmet while playing at a playground. The chinstrap can cause choking if caught on equipment.
- Never wear hoods, clothing with strings, capes or any other clothing that might get caught or entangled.

**Help Jungle Gym Jane play safe on the  
playground**



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