Staying safe at the Playground

Supervise your child closely 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.

Did you know?

- Your playground may not meet Canadian standards for safety. Many playgrounds do not, because these standards are fairly new. It may take some time before your playground is safer. Use this information to help keep your child safe at the 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.

Safety check

✔ **Before you go to the playground, check your child.** Take off anything that could strangle your child.

✔ **Check the playground before your child plays.** Look for a deep, soft surface or rubber surface. This will help protect your child when he or she falls. If your playground does not have a deep, soft surface, keep your child on equipment that is close to the ground.

✔ **Supervise your child closely.** Stay close enough to stop him or her from falling off equipment.

For more information, turn over this page

Safe Kids CANADA
www.safekidscanada.ca

safe start
www.cw.bc.ca

Canadian Institute of Child Health
www.cich.ca

Keep Your Kids Safe is a series of fact sheets about children under 5. These are produced by Safe Kids Canada, Safe Start, and the Canadian Institute of Child Health, based on materials by Safe Start. For more information, call **1 888 SAFE TIPS** or visit **www.safekidscanada.ca**. Fact sheets may be photocopied, but only in their original format. Produced 2001.

Staying safe at the Playground

Before you go to the playground

Check your child for anything that could strangle him or her. 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.

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. It should be at least 15 centimetres (6 inches) deep. This 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.

Before you let your child use any equipment, make sure it has good handrails, barriers, and railings to prevent falls.

Watch out for areas where your child's head or neck could 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 9 centimetres (3½ inches) and larger than 22.5 centimetres (9 inches). 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.

Supervise your child closely

Keep your child off equipment that is higher than 1.5 metres (5 feet). This is about as high as most adults can easily reach. Do not let your child go 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 stop him or her from falling.

Keep your child off equipment that is meant for older children. Playgrounds often have equipment for two different age groups: children younger than 5 years, and older children from 5 to 12. 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.

Teach your child the rules of playground safety

- Wait your turn.
- Slide down feet first.
- Do not go up the slide ladder until the other person has gone down the slide.
- Hold on to railings.
- Sit down on swings and slides.
- Keep away from moving swings and the bottom of slides.