

Playground Safety Checklist

By Lauren Meir

- Before the Playground**
 - Make sure all parties are properly dressed for the season and any weather surprises** Bring sweaters or jackets in case it gets cool, and hats and sunglasses for sun protection.
 - Comfy clothes are a must** Make sure proper footwear (socks and gym/running shoes) is worn by all. Laces should be double-knotted tightly.
 - Visit the restroom first** Kids hate to interrupt playtime, and many playgrounds don't have public restrooms.
 - Pick a playground that is newer, clean, and conveniently located** Many older playgrounds feature metal play structures that are rusty and no longer safe. If you see an abundance of metal and concrete, search somewhere else. Newer playgrounds typically boast brightly colored durable plastic or stainless steel structures, with soft piles of woodchips or rubber foam surfaces in case of falls.
- Items to Bring**
 - Sunscreen
 - Bottled water and sugar-free juice boxes
 - Snacks Bags of crackers, nuts and dried fruit are good for on-the-go munching.
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Diaper bag if you have toddlers or babies.
 - Wipes For getting sand or dirt off hands and faces, and wiping down any equipment.
 - Basic First Aid Kit This should include band-aids, antiseptic and antibiotic ointment for minor injuries.
 - Small backpack for personal items like keys or small toys that kids might want to play with outside (jump ropes, balls, etc.)
- Play it Safe (Rules your children should know)**
 - No pushing, biting, kicking or fighting. Children should know this, but may need reminding!
 - It's ok to run, skip, and jump, but make sure you have enough room and there aren't others in your way.
 - Wait your turn to use swings, slides, and any other equipment that is single-use.
 - Don't jump from high surfaces
 - Always slide feet-first Kids - even small children - should not slide with another person, even an adult. Recent studies have shown that sliding down the slide with kids in your lap increases the risk of broken or fractured legs in toddlers, as the sliding pair often gets stuck. If your children are small, stand at the end of the slide to catch them, and have another adult or older child accompany them to the top.

- Learn to share** Waiting for your turn, and sharing playground toys like sandbox items, is an important part of playground playtime.
- Don't fling sand in the sandbox, rub your eyes, or throw sand at others.**
- Kids should know when to talk to an adult** If other children are being abusive, it's time to tell a grown-up.
- No monkeying on the monkey bars** The monkey bars can be especially dangerous, so make sure an adult is nearby to help kids get across.
- One person to a single-swing (aside from tire swings)** Make sure others are well out of the way while swinging. Don't jump from the swing. No "underdogs" allowed! (other kids should not be jumping under the swing while others are swinging).
- Monitoring Playtime**
 - Stand by to hydrate and refresh** When kids are having fun at play, they often forget to drink and eat. Make sure your little ones are refreshed regularly, and ask if they need to use the restroom regularly.
 - If there is no public restroom, ensure there are facilities nearby you can use for bathroom emergencies.**
 - Make sure you always have an eye on your kids** Dress children in easily recognizable article of clothing, such as a brightly colored hat or jacket with an interesting detail.
 - Be on the lookout for anyone suspicious** Adults who are unaccompanied by children, who are lingering at the fringes of the play area should be watched. Anyone who seems very suspicious should be reported to the authorities.
 - When it starts getting dusky, it's time to skedaddle** Even if your playground is in a well-lit area, being there after dark isn't a good idea.