

# Have Fun and Play Safe at the Playground

## For more information

call or visit the Windsor-Essex  
County Health Unit at  
519-258-2146 ext. 1350  
1-800-265-5822 ext. 1350  
www.wehealthunit.org

## References:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2007). "23 children visit an Ontario ER daily due to playground injuries". Retrieved October 21, 2008 from [http://www.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispatch.jsp?cw\\_page=media\\_18jul2007\\_e](http://www.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispatch.jsp?cw_page=media_18jul2007_e)

Safe Kids Canada. (2008). *Playground Safety*. Retrieved October 21, 2008 from <http://www.sickkids.ca/SKCFForParents/section.asp?s=Safety%2BInformation%2Bby%2BTopic&sID=10774&ss=Playground%2BSafety&ssID=11333>

SMARTRISK. (2007). *Ontario Injury Compass Vol. 4, Issue 4: Playground Falls*. Retrieved October 21, 2008 from <http://www.oninjuryresources.ca/downloads/Compass/2007/2007-04-OICompass-Playgrounds.pdf>

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. (2006). *Hold, Follow, Watch: Falls Prevention for Children aged 0 – 6 years*. Retrieved October 21, 2008 from <http://www.wehealthunit.org/family-health/safety/booklets/ip-booklet-layout-rev-may8.pdf>

Playgrounds are a great place for children to be active, make friends, and develop skills.

Playgrounds can also be a place where children get hurt.

## Falls are the number one cause of injury at the playground.

### Children 0-5

Children under the age of five get hurt when they fall off equipment that is meant for older children.

They also get hurt because:

- They are still developing their balance and climbing skills.
- Their bodies are top-heavy and they are more likely to lose their balance.
- They are easily distracted.
- They don't understand danger.

### Children 5-9

Falling from equipment (climbers, slides, and swings) is the most common cause of injury for school-age children. They get hurt because:

- They act before they think.
- They are easily distracted.
- They forget safety rules when having fun.
- They think they can do anything.
- They don't always see the danger of their actions.

## Supervision is the key to preventing falls at the playground.

### Children 0-5

- Stay within arms reach of young children at all times.
- Hold their hands when they are climbing.
- Always catch children when they are coming down the slide.
- Teach young children simple safety rules.
- Remind them of the rules often.

### Children 5-9

- Teach children playground safety rules.
- Tell children how they could get hurt if they don't follow the rules.
- Watch children closely to make sure they are following the rules.
- Remind children of the rules often.
- Stand near children when they are learning something new or climbing on equipment.
- Teach children to think before they act.



# Tips TO KEEP YOUR Children Safe AT THE PLAYGROUND

## Teach Children Safety Rules

### When Using a Slide:

- Wait your turn.
- Use the stairs.
- Hold onto railings.
- Slide feet first.
- Never jump off.

### When Playing on a Swing:

- Sit down.
- Hold on.
- Never jump off.
- Keep away from moving swings.

### When on the Playground:

- Don't wear clothing with drawstrings such as hoodies, jackets, and hats.
- Remove scarves and bike helmets.
- Don't take skipping ropes to the playground.
- Be respectful to other children.



## Look For Dangers

### Look For and Avoid:

- Broken glass.
- Needles.
- Broken equipment.
- Rusted bolts that stick out.

### Make Sure to:

- Teach children to report dangers to an adult.
- Report dangers to local park and recreation departments or the school office.

## Practise Sun Safety

- Wear a hat.
- Wear sunglasses.
- Use sunscreen that's SPF 15 or higher.
- Seek shade or create your own.

## Choose the Right Playground

- Playgrounds often have equipment for two different groups of children – children under five years and children from five to twelve years.



Children under five years of age should use equipment under 5 feet (1.5 m) high.



Children over five years of age should use equipment between 5 and 7 feet high (1.5 m to 2.0 m).

- Check for areas where children could get their heads or necks stuck. Spaces should be smaller than 3.5 inches (9 cm) and larger than 9 inches (22.5 cm).



- Make sure the equipment is placed on a deep soft surface - 6 to 12 inches (15 cm to 30 cm) of sand, wood chips, rubber, or pea gravel. Avoid using equipment placed only on dirt or grass.

**If children cannot reach the equipment by themselves, the equipment is not safe for them!**



## Home Playgrounds

Preschoolers (1-4 years) are more likely to be injured at home than older children. Here are a few tips for home playgrounds:

- Stay within arm's reach of young children at all times.
- Purchase equipment that your children can safely use now instead of expecting your children to grow into it.
- Install a deep soft surface under the equipment - 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 cm) of sand, wood chips, rubber, or pea gravel.