



SAFE PLAY

Children play intuitively and will explore different ways of playing and using playground equipment, sometimes in very different ways than intended by a playground designer, which can lead to playground injuries. Some children will *always* seek out new challenges. For others, visiting a new playground or using new equipment will present new challenges; and many children will try new things as their confidence grows or if they become bored with their playground.

Adults can support children while they learn how to navigate a new playground and tackle new challenges by setting limits about how far children can climb or wander; talking with children to work out safety rules and ways to avoid serious injuries; and encourage older children to think about ways to keep themselves and younger children safe from harm.

Supervision

Parents and carers need to provide close supervision for young children who are still developing their physical abilities and risk assessment skills. As children grow and develop, adults can gradually step back to allow children to practice their risk assessment skills and take responsibility for their own physical safety. This is an important life skill for children as they grow and mature.

Maintenance

Regular maintenance inspections and an annual comprehensive audit are important features of ensuring a safer playground. Establish a system to record maintenance issues and repairs or improvements undertaken.

Important: Remember to include the cost of ongoing maintenance in your budget.

Incident Reporting

It is important to maintain records of any incidents and injuries that occur in the play space. Record as much detail as possible about the incident/injury, the equipment involved and action taken to prevent a similar incident, as appropriate.

Safe Play Rules

Here are some ideas for Safe Play Rules...

- Always supervise your child appropriate to their age and the activity they are participating in.
- Use positive guidance to encourage children to take turns, use equipment safely and think about everyone's safety.
- Encourage children to develop a set of rules they can follow
- Play gently with no pushing or shoving
- Respect others, be fair, share and take turn
- Try not to spoil someone else's game
- Keep busy, active games away from quiet play areas
- Look out for little children
- Remember sun safety - hats, sunscreen and water
- Dress children appropriately - avoid clothing or hats with cords to prevent the risk of entrapment or strangulation
- Report any damage to the equipment or environment to the playground owner.