



PRESS RELEASE

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National Playground Safety Week
April 21 – 25, 2025

According to the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](https://www.cpsc.gov/), over 200,000 children, ages 14 and younger, annually visit emergency rooms for injuries sustained on playground equipment. Of those injuries, the vast majority (76%) occur on playground equipment at schools, daycare facilities and parks (45% schools and 31% public parks). Twenty-three percent (23%) of injuries occur on playground equipment designed for home use while 1% of injuries are attributed to rope swings from homemade playground equipment.

The three most common playground accidents for children are falls, strangulation, and entrapment. Ninety percent of the most severe playground injuries are head injuries that stem from falls. [\(BrainLine\)](https://www.brainline.org/) TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) is just one of the numerous and severe injuries that occur on playgrounds. Other severe injuries include fractures, internal injuries, concussions, dislocations, and amputations. Strangulation occurs from rope structures, swings, or jump ropes when a child's clothing (drawstrings, or jewelry) is caught on the equipment. Entrapment injuries occur when a child becomes stuck or crushed between equipment.

Children not only experience severe injuries but also die playing on playground equipment. Each year, approximately fifteen children die from playground-related injuries. Although preventable, they still occur due to the lack of or improper supervision -- a major contributor (45%) of playground-related injuries. [\(Safe Kids Worldwide\)](https://www.safekids.org/)

National Playground Safety Week begins April 21st – April 25th sponsored by the [National Program for Playground Safety \(NPPS\)](https://www.nppsp.org/). This annual event is a reminder to parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, camp counselors, and others to focus on children's outdoor play environments due to children being vulnerable to playground-related injuries and fatalities. To keep your child safe, on the playground, start by implementing the S.A.F.E Factors and Adult & Kid Safety Checklists to properly maintain a safe playground atmosphere:

S.A.F.E.

- Provide proper **supervision** of children on playgrounds.
- Design **age-appropriate** playgrounds.
- Provide proper **fall surfacing** under and around playgrounds.
- Properly maintain playground **equipment**.

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Adult Safety Checklist:

- Adult presence is needed to watch for potential hazards.
- Remove jewelry, ropes, and strings on clothing, they can cause accidental strangulation if caught on equipment.
- Age-appropriate equipment with separate areas and different equipment.
 - 3 categories for children:
 - Toddlers (6 months – 2 years old)
 - Preschool (2 years – 5 years old)
 - School age (5 years – 12 years old)
- Acceptable play surfaces, i.e., hardwood fiber/mulch, pea gravel, sand, and synthetic materials, i.e., poured-in-place, rubber mats or tiles.
- Perform an equipment check:
 - Is it in good working order?
 - Safe and anchored safely in the ground?
 - No jagged edges or sharp points?
 - No hot surfaces? Surface areas on metal equipment from sunlight can cause burn injuries.
 - S-hooks are entirely closed, bolts are not protruding, there are no exposed footings, etc.?
 - Openings between guardrails and ladder rungs are at least 3.5 inches (to prevent kids getting their heads in) and more than 9 inches (to get out)?
 - Equipment installed at least 6 feet from fences, walls, and trees?

Kid Safety Checklist:

- Are adults at the playground?
- Can adults see children at all times even in crawl spaces?
- Is the equipment in good condition?
- [Is the playground environment clean?](#)
- [Is the equipment surface smooth?](#)

To help reduce unintentional injuries among children, the Prince William County Fire & Rescue System urges the public to get involved at home, school, and your neighborhood.

For additional information, visit [The Dirty Dozen: 12 Playground Hazards](#), [Playground Professionals](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [National Recreation and Park Association](#), and [Injury Free Coalition for Kids](#).

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