



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Veritas Risk Services

The following types of equipment are unsafe on playgrounds: animal figure swings, glider swings that hold more than one child, swinging ropes, exercise rings and trapeze bars.

## CHILDREN'S SAFETY: PLAYGROUNDS

One of the best things about nice weather is that children can head to the playground. But whether it's a public playground or a home jungle gym, it is necessary to take certain safety precautions.

### Surface Safety

One of the most important features of a play area is something children likely take for granted—the playing surface. What the ground is covered in is just as important as the equipment—it should be soft enough to cushion a child's fall. But keep in mind that even the safest surfacing cannot prevent all injuries.

- Concrete, asphalt and blacktop are all unsafe.
- If a child is in a wheelchair, rubber mats will allow the easiest access.
- The playground surface should be free of debris that could cause kids to trip and fall, such as rocks, tree stumps and tree roots.

### Other Things to Look For

Playgrounds are ultimately safest when equipment is separated into three distinct groups: for children under age 2, for 2- to 5-year-olds, and for 5- to 12-year-olds. It is important for children to play on age-appropriate gear so that they do not injure themselves on improperly sized equipment. In addition:

- Items with moving parts (such as seesaws and swings) should be located in a separate area.
- Look for any spaces that could trap a child's head, arms or legs. All openings (such as the rungs on a ladder) should be either less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Wooden equipment should not be cracked or splintered.

- Metal equipment should not be rusting.
- If the playground has a sandbox, make sure it's inspected before use. It should be covered every night to prevent animal contamination.

### Supervise, Supervise, Supervise!

Of course it's impossible to prevent every injury, but playgrounds are a lot safer when adults are around to watch. Younger children will not always have the best judgment and many older kids like to push the boundaries of safety. Also, in the worst case scenario, adults can offer assistance with an injury.

Source: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/>