



Playground Safety NEWS

Summer 2000

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Vol. IV, No. 4

Playground Safety NEWS

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Mark your calendar!

Upcoming events related to playground safety you won't want to miss.

July

10-14
 Playground Safety School, Boston, MA;
 800-877-4723, ext. 162

August

2-5
 National Program for Playground Safety School (NPPS), Cedar Falls, IA;
 800-782-9519

7-10
 National Program for Playground Safety School (NPPS), Cedar Falls, IA;
 800-782-9519

September

25-29
 Playground Standards meeting (American Society for Testing and Materials);
 West Conshohocken, PA

October

10
 Iowa Playground Safety Network, Council Bluffs, IA; 712-366-7070

11-15
 National Recreation and Park Association;
 Phoenix, AZ; 703-858-2157

19
 Iowa Playground Safety Network, Storm Lake, IA; 515-241-5963

Stay up-to-date with www.uni.edu/playground/calendar.html

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NOT YOUR ORDINARY KIDD

When Andrew Kidd steps onto a playground, he's not just there to play



With ruler and basketball in hand, Andrew Kidd heads to the playground. You might ask, "Why the ruler?" And, you might

be surprised to hear he's not out to shoot hoops either. Nope, Andrew's visit to the playground is more than fun and games. He's checking playground equipment to make sure it's SAFE.

His ruler is to ensure that openings between guardrails and bars are less than 3½ inches. If the space is more than 3½ inches, Andrew uses his basketball to make sure it's greater than 9 inches. Spaces wider than 9 inches will help prevent potential head entrapment.

Andrew's time on the playground wasn't always so focused on safety. In 1994, 5-year-old Andrew fell from atop a 9-foot climber. His injuries included 200 bruises and a displaced and disfigured



jaw and lip, requiring numerous surgeries.

In March 1995, an *Indianapolis Star* article about Andrew and his playground injuries found its way to the desk of Dr. Donna Thompson, NPPS Director. She got in touch with Andrew, and he's been a part of the NPPS

team ever since.

Today, Andrew and his mom Judi are working to help prevent playground injuries. Andrew travels across the country talking to officials, children, parents and news media about playground safety.

For such dedication to playground safety, McDonald's and Walt Disney chose Andrew as one of the Millennium Dreamers. Only 2000 young people, ages 8 - 15, were chosen from the more than 11,000 nominated for the difference they make in their communities. Nominees submitted essays on what they're doing to make that difference.

★ Read Andrew's essay at www.disney.go.com/millenniumdreamers/andrew_k.html ★

As a Millennium Dreamer he and his family were honored with an all expense paid trip to Walt Disney World. Judi says, "We were overwhelmed with the honors bestowed upon our child."

One of the trip's highlights was meeting Christopher Reeve. The actor left Andrew with something he thinks about often, "There are no super heroes. Heroes are just ordinary people who, because of their circumstances, do extraordinary things."

Because of Andrew's injuries, he has done extraordinary things for playground safety education. His mom adds, "He takes no credit for it, ever."



Andrew tells us he did not choose playground safety, it chose him. He did, however, choose to do extraordinary things for Playground Safety Week in Indiana. He handed out 150 safety brochures at a park, taught playground safety classes to both Cub Scouts and 5th graders and did several live TV interviews, including *NBC Later Today* with Dr. Thompson.

Judi says, "Andrew is a very busy 11-year-old, but none of this would be possible without the education and support of the NPPS."

Andrew says his heroes are the staff at NPPS. At the end of his Millennium Dreamers essay, Andrew stated his goal, "Make America's Playgrounds Safe!" It's not all serious, though. Andrew still leaves time to shoot hoops.

NPPS SAFETY SCHOOLS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

It's not too late to enroll for the 2000 NPPS Playground Safety Schools!

Join us this August for our hands-on, easy-to-understand, comprehensive playground safety schools and go home with valuable skills, resources and insights to apply to your own playground right away. You may also elect to receive your SAFE certification.

The schools are held on the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls. Sign up now to attend Session I from August 2 through 5, 2000, or Session II from August 7 through 10, 2000.

To enroll or to receive a safety school brochure, contact Kim Andersen, UNI Continuing Education, Non-Credit Programs, by phone at 319-273-6988 or 800-782-9519, or fax at 319-273-7338.

Recent articles by NPPS staff

Mack, M., Henderson, W. (April 2000) "How Safe is Your Playground? Risk Factor Three: Fall Surfacing on Safe Playgrounds." *JOPERD* 71. (4), pp. 17 - 19.

Hudson, S., Mack, M., Thompson, D. (April 2000) "Play it Safe: Steps to Keeping Playground Surfacing Safe for Our Children." *Parks and Recreation* 35. (4), pp. 78 - 85.

Thompson, D., Hudson, S., Mack, M. (April 2000) "A Playground Game Plan." *Athletic Business* 24. (4), pp. 82 - 88.

Thompson, D., Mack, M., Hudson, S. (Spring 2000) "Good Playground Supervision is No Accident." *Children and Families* (National Head Start Association). XIV, (2), pp. 28 - 30.

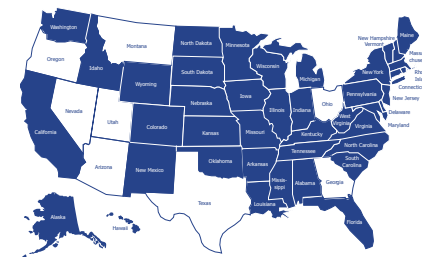
NATIONAL PLAYGROUND SAFETY WEEK

NPPS reaches record high

42 states recognize National Playground Safety Week 2000

Along with help from great volunteers from across the nation, NPPS has had a record high year for governors recognizing the need for playground safety and proclaiming National Playground Safety Week in their states. The celebration, held April 24 – 28, 2000, was the most successful since its inception.

When NPPS first encouraged governors to recognize Playground Safety Day in 1997, only two states, Iowa and Virginia, responded. In 1998, that number increased to 25 and, in 1999, it



The 42 darkened states above declared April 24 – 28, 2000, as Playground Safety Week. Let's work for 50 in 2001!

increased again to 33 states recognizing Playground Safety Day.

This year was no different. Not only did NPPS increase the celebration of playground safety awareness from one day to one week, but a total of 42 states proclaimed April 24 – 28, 2000, as National Playground Safety Week.

We thank all those who helped make this happen, whether by sending letters to their governors or spreading the word to others. We also extend our appreciation to the many Safe Kids Coalitions and State Departments of Education across the nation for their efforts.

New this year, we received assistance from a Wisconsin elementary school. We hope to continue school involvement next year, and are looking forward to working with more students willing to take on this project to help raise the awareness for playground safety in their states.

3M teams with NPPS, provides playground signage to help keep playgrounds SAFE

When representatives from 3M Nexcare First Aid Products viewed the United States Playground Safety Report Card on the NPPS web site, they were concerned about the status of signage on playgrounds.

So, they contacted NPPS and have now partnered with us in a pilot program to provide signage addressing supervision and the age-appropriate design of play settings.

Pilot programs with the signs are being provided by 3M this summer in various parks that separate their

equipment in Cincinnati, Des Moines, Phoenix, San Francisco, Tampa and Washington, D.C. Trained researchers will conduct a survey this summer to determine the effectiveness of the signage. Results will be available in the fall.

NPPS is thankful to 3M for its assistance in an effort to make playgrounds SAFE for children.



3M signage to be displayed at participating playgrounds across the

The signs were featured on NBC Later Today and are available for viewing at www.uni.edu/playground/signs.html. You may also purchase them through NPPS. Call 800-554-PLAY for details.

IN REVIEW



National Playground Safety Week kept the NPPS director and staff busier than ever. Director Dr. Donna Thompson spent part of the week in New York filming with the NBC Later Today show. She also took part in 21 interviews for a satellite tour which included stations from Miami, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Additional interviews with Dr. Thompson were done by CNN Early Edition, CNN Morning News and four local stations in Chicago and St. Louis.

Back at the office the rest of the NPPS staff participated in radio interviews from stations across the country. Most stations featured the results of our two-year study of the nation's playgrounds.

Playground Safety Week attracted the attention of many media outlets and concerned consumers. Our phone inquiries increased from an average of 350 calls per month to 427 calls for the month of April. Our web site saw an even greater increase in visitors. We jumped from an average of 40,000 web visits per month to more than 89,000 in April!

We're happy to see such interest in playground safety awareness and hope to keep that enthusiasm going throughout the entire year.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

National Playground Safety Week 2001 will be celebrated April 23 – 27.

Do-Something League raises playground safety awareness

When the Do-Something League at Jefferson Elementary School in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, sets its goals, it really does something. This year, the community service program, under the direction of educator Peggy Ross, chose playground safety awareness within their school as one of their projects.

Even before learning of NPPS, the students had their mission in place. They designed and distributed a survey to their classmates about favorite and least favorite equipment, playground overcrowding, surfacing and the safety of the equipment. Upon tabulating the results, they made proposals which caught the attention of the PTO, the principal



Members of the Do-Something League helped get these unsafe monkey bars removed from their playground

and a physical education teacher.

The students then came across the NPPS web site and decided to "do something" for Playground Safety Week. They sent letters encouraging the governor of Wisconsin to proclaim Playground Safety Week in their state. During Playground Safety Week, the students created and hung posters in their school, did playground equipment safety checks, and challenged the entire school to no playground injuries for the week.

Results of their efforts included only six children seeking ice for bumps occurring on the playground, the principal deciding to remove unsafe monkey bars, the PTO agreeing to purchase a new piece of playground equipment, and the physical education teacher upgrading outdoor basketball facilities. In addition, Wisconsin's governor, the Honorable Tommy G. Thompson signed a proclamation declaring Playground Safety Week.

Thank you, Governor Thompson, and thank you, Peggy Ross and the Do-Something League. Your efforts to make Wisconsin's playgrounds a safer place for children have paid off and are appreciated not only by NPPS but all children.

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!

SILVANA VOLLERO, Executive Director of the Maxwell H. and Mariel Gluck Child Care Center in San Diego, California, tells us that the center recently had a voluntary inspection of its playgrounds. Unfortunately, much of the equipment failed to meet CPSC guidelines. However, something great did come out of this report. The inspection has jumpstarted a repair and replacement plan to make the playgrounds at the center SAFE.

The center is looking into grant funding to replace a wood chip surface with poured-in-place rubber matting. Partial funding has been received through the Dr. Seuss Foundation.

Silvana says, "It is an exciting project in that we have an opportunity to create safe playgrounds for our children by carefully choosing new equipment that meets or exceeds the guidelines."

KAREE MUNSON, Health Educator at Vernon Memorial Hospital in Viroqua, Wisconsin, writes that more than 325 fourth graders attended the hospital's Sixth Annual Farm and Home Safety Day Camp. Presenters discussed playing safe at home and school, as well as near water, storms, pools and ponds.

Students were also encouraged to write their state representatives requesting Wisconsin's involvement in National Playground Safety Week. (Thanks for your help! Wisconsin was one of the 42 states proclaiming April 24 – 28, 2000, National Playground Safety Week.)

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!

We'd love to hear what's happening in your area to promote playground safety. Just complete this form, attach your news and mail to: NPPS, School of HPELS, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, 50614-0618 or playground-safety@uni.edu. Watch for your submission in upcoming issues!

Please notify NPPS of any address changes with this form as well.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Phone () _____

Address _____ Fax () _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____

My address has changed. Please update your records.