

In THIS ISSue

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- **This just in!** Learn about the newly proposed Safe Playgrounds Act of 2001. See page 1 for details.
- **FAQ column:** Learn more about toxins in wooden playground equipment on page 2.
- *Look What's Happening!* Playground Safety Week was recently celebrated across most of the nation. Find out how youngsters in Massachusetts and West Virginia joined in.

Mark your calendar!

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

August 2001

- 1 - 4**
 NPPS Safety School
 University of Northern Iowa
 Cedar Falls, IA
 800-782-9519
www.uni.edu/playground/school.html
- 6 - 9**
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 University of Northern Iowa
 Cedar Falls, IA
 800-782-9519
www.uni.edu/playground/school.html

October 2001

- 3 - 6**
 NRPA Congress & Exposition
 National Recreation and Park Association
 Denver, CO
 703-858-2158
www.activeparks.org
- 31 - November 3**
 NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo
 National Association for the Education of Young Children
 Anaheim, CA
www.naeyc.org

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what's new on the web?

www.uni.edu/playground/faqs.html

Use our on-line form to submit your frequently asked questions to NPPS Program Assistant, Heather Bauer. Your question might be included in our next newsletter!

www.uni.edu/playground/home.html

Test your playground safety knowledge and answer our question of the month to see how much you really know about proper playground activities, equipment and more!

www.uni.edu/playground/whathappening.html

COMING SOON! Check out what's happening on playgrounds across the nation or submit your latest news for possible inclusion in the Look What's Happening column of one of our upcoming newsletters.

Recent articles by NPPS staff

Hudson, S., Thompson, D., Mack, M. (Winter 2001) "Safe Playgrounds: Increased Challenges, Reduced Risks." *Dimensions of Early Childhood*. 29 (1). pp. 19-23.

Thompson, D., Hudson, S. (May 2001) "Child Socialization on the Playground." *Today's Playground*. 1 (2). pp. 18-21.

Hudson, S., Thompson, D. (April 2001) "Are Playgrounds Still Viable in the 21st Century?" *Parks and Recreation*. 36 (4). pp. 54-62.

THE NUMBERS ARE IN!

CPSC releases new playground-related injury statistics



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has released statistics associated with playground-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. The following statistics were gathered from 1998 to 2000 from the CPSC and its surveillance network, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). NEISS was designed to gather data needed to measure the number of injuries with different consumer products.

The CPSC study reports that each year approximately **205,860** preschool and elementary children received **emergency department care** for injuries that occurred on playground equipment. 76% of these injuries happened on public playground equipment, and 23% occurred on home playground equipment.

Of those injuries on public equipment, 45% occurred in schools, 31% in public parks

and 10% occurred in daycare settings. Most injuries on public playground equipment were associated with climbing equipment (53%), swings (19%) and slides (17%).

Falls to the surface were a contributing factor in 79% of all injuries. On home equipment, 81% of injuries were associated with falls.

Girls were involved in 55% of injuries, while boys were involved in 45%.

For children ages 0 – 4, injuries to the head and face accounted for 49% of injuries. Climbers had the highest incidence rates (40%) among children ages 0 – 4, followed by slides (33%).

For children ages 5 – 14, injuries to the arm and hand accounted for 49% of injuries. Climbing equipment had the highest incidence rates (56%) among children ages 5 – 14, followed by swings (24%).

Legislation Proposed to Make Playgrounds SAFE

Pallone's legislation, the Safe Playgrounds Act of 2001, is in response to the fact that there is no federal legislation that requires playgrounds to be safe. At this point, there are only six states that require, in part or in whole, that playgrounds conform to the CPSC handbook.

The Safe Playgrounds Act would have states individually pass laws requiring that public playgrounds conform to the guidelines in the handbook. That law must be passed within five years of the date of the enactment of the Safe Playgrounds Act.

Upon passage of this state legislation and subject to the availability of appropriations, CPSC shall then provide a \$1 million grant to any state that has passed that law. CPSC will be authorized to carry out the administration of those monies.

The monies granted shall be used from 2002 through 2006 to upgrade public playgrounds in accordance with the CPSC guidelines. Monies may be used to purchase

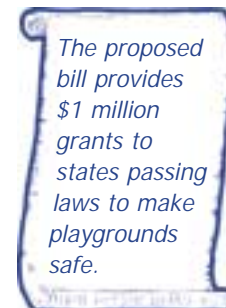
new equipment or to upgrade current equipment to meet the CPSC requirements.

NPPS supports the bill. This would be one of the most beneficial pieces of legislation

possible to improve playground conditions. According to Donna Thompson, Ph.D., Director of NPPS, "If golf courses were maintained in the same manner as playgrounds, there would be a great hue and cry. Children deserve playgrounds that are consistently safe. If children are the most precious attribute that our country has, then adults have a responsibility to provide safe playgrounds so that children can do what children do best, and that is to play."

See the proposed bill on the NPPS web site at www.uni.edu/playground/bill2001.html. NPPS also requests that you contact your state representative or senator and ask them to support this bill.

America's playgrounds – Make them SAFE!



FAQ

frequently Asked questions

NPPS Program Assistant, Heather Bauer, answers your playground safety questions

Submit your question at www.uni.edu/playground/faqs.html

CURRENT HOT TOPIC Toxins in Wooden Playground Equipment

As a parent, I am concerned about the potential health risks for my child who uses wooden playground equipment. How can I be certain equipment is safe?

Over the past couple of months, information relating to arsenic and other toxins on the playground has been receiving a lot of attention. What is all the hype about? Should parents keep their children away from wooden playground equipment?

Pressure treated lumber has a greenish look to it and is infused with a chemical that helps keep the lumber from rotting and can stand up to termites and beetles. The chemical is called CCA – chromated copper arsenate. This pesticide has been

reported to leak into the soil. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the amount of chromated copper arsenate in playground equipment is minimal and manufacturers are held to safe guidelines.

If you are concerned about a playground in your area, contact whomever is in charge of maintaining it. If you build or install equipment, make sure you read over the consumer information sheet included in the installation instructions to find out what preservatives are used in the wood. Creosote, petachlorophenol and tributyl tin oxide are too toxic and should not be used for wooden playground equipment.

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Massachusetts kindergartners celebrate National Playground Safety Week 2001

The week of April 23-27, 2001, was eagerly anticipated at the Goodrich/South Fitchburg Kindergarten Centers in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Two hundred and thirty-seven kindergartners participated in National Playground Safety Week.

Students learned about wearing appropriate clothing and keeping their shoelaces tied while playing on the playground. Teachers noticed that the schoolyard had little shade, so the students raised money through a penny drive and planted three trees that week. Another teacher took photographs of the students playing safely on the playground. The pictures will be displayed on posters around the school to remind students to play safe. Children also developed playground rules. One teacher incorporated the Humpty Dumpty rhyme into her project to facilitate a classroom discussion on how not to HAVE A GREAT FALL!

The Mayor of Fitchburg supported the week by handing out the National Playground Safety Week Certificates created by NPPS. This year, the town plans to put a new, safe kindergarten playground at their 150-year-old school. Also, as part of the city's Fourth of July celebration, the school participated in a block party featuring a playground design event in which children designed their ideal playgrounds. This was not only fun, but also a great source of information for the Community Teacher Organization to use in their upcoming playground build.

These are some great ideas for celebrating National Playground Safety Week. We wish you the best of luck on your new playground. Keep us posted!



Almost Home Daycare: Teaching kids how to keep themselves SAFE

Mary A. Sarro, Director of Almost Home Daycare Center in West Virginia, writes, "Anyone who has spent much time around a preschooler knows how hard it is to keep him or her safe ... At Almost Home Daycare, we have discovered that one of the most effective ways to keep children safe is to teach them how to keep themselves safe. That is why we chose to participate in National Playground Safety Week with our preschool program."

The week was full of activities! We developed playground rules and read *Weekly Reader* articles about playground safety. We cut out magazine pictures of children playing safely and glued them to a poster. We talked about why some equipment is appropriate for younger preschoolers and some is appropriate for older preschoolers. On our playground, we designate one child as playground cop. The "cop" blows a whistle when someone is not using equipment properly or is not playing nicely.

In demonstrating to the older preschoolers the need for safe surfacing in case of falls, we first dropped an egg on a hard, unsafe surface. We then dropped another egg onto a padded, safe surface to simulate proper fall surfacing. We also discussed how to stay safe in the sun, as well as the importance of sunscreen.

We used the checklist to evaluate our playground and felt that we were doing a good job of keeping the children safe. Parents say their children have been sharing safety tips with them; the ideas have stuck with the children. Safety is an ongoing issue with our facility, and it is nice to have a program like NPPS to help us in our endeavors. It is also rewarding to know that the children are listening. Hopefully our concerted efforts will help to keep more of America's children injury-free!

Thanks for sharing! It sounds like Almost Home Daycare really takes an innovative look at keeping kids safe on playgrounds. Keep it up!



42 states proclaim Playground Safety Week 2001!

States proclaiming National Playground Safety Week 2001

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Missouri |
| Alaska | Nebraska |
| Arkansas | New Hampshire |
| Connecticut | New Jersey |
| Colorado | New Mexico |
| Delaware | New York |
| Florida | North Carolina |
| Hawaii | North Dakota |
| Idaho | Oklahoma |
| Illinois | Oregon |
| Indiana | Pennsylvania |
| Iowa | Virginia |
| Kansas | Rhode Island |
| Kentucky | South Carolina |
| Louisiana | Texas |
| Maine | Tennessee |
| Maryland | Vermont |
| Massachusetts | Washington |
| Michigan | West Virginia |
| Minnesota | Wisconsin |
| Mississippi | Wyoming |

U.S. Summit For PLAYground SAFETY a success

NPPS kicked off National Playground Safety Week by sponsoring the U.S. Summit for Playground Safety in Des Moines, Iowa. The summit brought together individuals from Departments of Education, Public Health, Human Services and Natural Resources from around the nation. They addressed issues and solutions regarding the provision of safe playground environments for schools, childcare centers and local communities.

Summit participants received cutting-edge information from Deborah Tinsworth of the Consumer Product Safety Commission who provided a summary of injury statistics from 1998-1999. The information showed a slight decrease in overall injuries. However, falls to surfaces are still the leading contributing factor to all playground injuries both in the public use area and at home. For a complete statistical summary, visit our web site.

Dr. Christine Branche, director of the Injury Prevention Center of the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, gave the keynote address. Her speech outlined the importance of playgrounds in children's lives and the issues involved in maintaining safe play environments as we head into the 21st century.

Participants also heard success stories from the States of Indiana, Hawaii, Virginia and Iowa where playground safety advocates have worked at the state level to produce safer playgrounds in schools, childcare centers and the community. Armed with new ideas and models, participants spent time networking about ways they could help in providing safe playgrounds.

To help keep the momentum of the summit going, a series of follow-up conferences is being planned. The first of these conferences is in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Annual Conference & Expo in November. The event is geared toward state licensing individuals for childcare providers.

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.