



National Program for Playground Safety
 School of Health, Physical Education & Leisure Services
 WRC 205
 University of Northern Iowa
 Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

800-554-PLAY
 Fax: 319-273-7308
 E-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu



Playground Safety NEWS

Summer 2002

KEEPING kids SAFE

Vol. V. No. 3.

National Playground Safety Week



Playground Safety NEWS

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Mark your calendar!

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

August, 2002	NPPS SAFETY SCHOOL <i>Session 1: August 7-10 Session 2: August 12-15</i> Location: University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA www.uni.edu/playground/school.html
September 13 -17	CHILDHOOD EMERGENCIES CONFERENCE Location: Wisconsin Dells, WI www.dhfs.state.wi.us
September 26-27	CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD INJURY CONTROL Location: Sacramento, CA www.cccip.org
October 15 -19	NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION Location: Tampa, FL www.nrpa.org

This publication was supported by Grant Number UC7/CCU712119-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of NPPS and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

We greatly appreciated all the support that made National Playground Safety Week the best to date!

From introducing the Kid Checker checklist, to Governors' proclamations, to television and media events, National Playground Safety Week 2002 were a special 5 days.

Over 150 elementary schools around the country helped us launch our new "Kid Checkers" Program. In one school, the NPPS advocate indicated that her ten minute presentation turned into an hour because the children were so involved with learning about playground safety. Another class had so much fun, that they took all the concepts they learned and created a rap song. A big thank you to all the children and playground advocates who helped with the program in each state.

The Kid Checker program is an ongoing program to empower children across the U.S. to check for hidden dangers on the playground before they use the equipment. The program is aimed at getting children involved with helping to keep America's Playgrounds Safe! Many adults are aware of unsafe equipment on the nation's playgrounds, but many children who use these areas are not. This is why NPPS has created the Kid Checker checklist. The Kid Checker checklist is based on CPSC guidelines and the NPPS SAFE model. It is designed to be used primarily by elementary aged children. **We would like all children to become Kid Checkers!**

Along with the Kid Checker program **45 states supported the week by issuing a state proclamation.**



We encourage you to visit our web site at http://www.uni.edu/playground/safety_week.html to see if your state proclaimed. We thank all the hard working playground safety advocates in the states who contacted their governors to insure that their state supports playground safety for children.

NPPS was also honored to have **Dr. Donna Thompson, the director of NPPS appear on the Saturday CBS Early Morning Show** to start Playground Safety Week and NBC Today Show to conclude the festivities.

It's not too early to start planning for next year's week which will be April 21 -25! **Together, we can show that America wants to make playgrounds safe for children.**

HEY KIDS! CHECK OUT NPPS KID'S WEB SITE www.kidchecker.org



SAFE PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION KIT

NPPS is developing a SAFE Playground Supervision Kit that will help playground supervisors understand and learn the techniques of SAFE Playground Supervision. The kit will include a training manual outlining the ABC's of SAFE Playground Supervision, a video, and a supervision fanny pack. If you are a school administrator, a school board member, child care provider or a playground supervisor, this kit is for you! Stay tuned for NPPS SAFE Playground Supervision Kit available in August! The cost for the kit is \$149.95, plus \$5 shipping and handling. Please call us at **800-554-7529** if you are interested in the kit.

Coming AUGUST 2002 NPPS SAFETY SCHOOL

There is still time to sign up for NPPS Playground Safety School that will be held in August. The School is offering two sessions: **Session I, August 7-10 and Session II August 12-15.** At the school, participants will review playground safety issues, learn to plan and design areas for safe play, and discover ways to affect change in their communities. Sign up now to receive early registration discount! To register or receive additional information, please contact **800-554-7529** or e-mail playground-safety@uni.edu.

Recent articles by NPPS staff

Hudson, S. & Thompson, D. (April, 2002) "Signs of the Times," Parks and Recreation. Vol. 37, No. 4 pp. 60-65.

Thompson, D., Hudson, S. and Bowers, L. (February 2002) "Play Areas and the ADA: Providing Access and Opportunities for All children" JOPERD Vol. 73, No. 2 pp. 37-41

Olsen, H., Hudson, S., and Thompson, D. (April-May 2002) "Supervision + Recess = Injury Prevention" Our Children, 27 (6), 10.

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Lorna Bruya, an elementary school teacher, at **Sunnyside Elementary School in Pullman, WA** implemented the Kid Checker program with her **4th graders and special education group**. The children were thrilled to participate in the new Kid Checker program! The children really enjoyed the project and learned a lot about playground safety. Lorna indicated, *"They still have a long way to go in understanding the safety on the playground. However, they were quick to see the problems with the equipment."*

The community of Sunnyside Elementary School is on a mission, because of the Kid Checker program. They have become strong advocates of making their playground safe. Using the information they gathered from the Kid Checker program, they have made a list of problems that they found on the playground. They discussed and prioritized these problems, which will be given to the principal.

One of their goals is to have the students use the digital camera and take pictures. They will use these pictures to make a video. The video will be used to teach children in their school ways to play safely on the playground.

This has not only been a great experience for the participants, but all the children at Sunnyside Elementary School will learn more about playground safety. This video will be a great source for future learning opportunities. **WAY TO GO!**

NPPS was honored recently to receive a generous donation from the Ahrens foundation to fund a 2,500 square feet office suite in a soon to be constructed Human Performance Building at UNI. The donation, made in memory of Claude and Polly Ahrens and Paul Ahrens will make it possible for NPPS to continue its outreach programs and services to the general public in the future.



Ms. Donna Keefer and Mr. Chris Noel celebrated National Playground Safety Week by having their **3rd graders at Monrovia Elementary School in Indiana** use the Kid Checker checklist. The children had a lot of enthusiasm about the program and were very interested in learning about playground safety. The children got into groups and used rulers to measure spaces and the depth of the surface materials. They used basketballs to observe how appropriate surface materials can reduce the amount of the bounce. They checked the equipment for broken equipment, rusted bolts and missing parts. **We thank Debbie Sampson**, NPPS Board Member, for introducing Kid Checkers to Monrovia. **Great job, Monrovia Kid Checkers!**



During Playground Safety Week, **Mr. Sherrill Carroll's fifth grade class became Kid Checkers!** The class filled out the check list at the **Martin Elementary School's playground in Tennessee**. Here are some of the results: 1) All the students agreed that adults are always at the playground when children are there. 2) There was a split decision concerning the height of the equipment. 3) Most students agreed that the playground has appropriate surface materials and that the playground is kept clean and in good condition. We thank Mr. Carroll's class for doing such a great job with the check list! **Hats off to the Kid Checkers at Martin Elementary School!**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

AHRENS NATIONAL PLAYGROUND SAFETY ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

The first annual Playground Safety Advocate of the Year Award was given to Dr. Frances Wallach from New York. **Dr. Wallach** has worked tirelessly for **over 30 years on behalf of children and playground safety**. As a founding member of the ASTM Committee on Public Playgrounds, Dr. Wallach has had significant influence in shaping the ASTM standards since 1988. In addition, Dr. Wallach has been instrumental in developing and guiding the National Playground Safety Institute and the National Program for Playground Safety as an active board member. Dr. Wallach's commitment to children can be summed up in a recent article in Parks and Recreation in which she stated: *"As a direct survivor of the September 11th disaster I saw, firsthand, the terrible after-effects on the surviving children; and today I see the care and attention that these children require to regain their normal youthful outlook and growth. Critical to this recovery has been the availability of recreation and places to play...If children are our future and will direct our future, we must protect them until their future arrives. Making our playgrounds safer is not a "sissy" thing to do, but a true investment in tomorrow for our entire population"*. For all that she has done, **NPPS was proud to award Dr. Frances Wallach the inaugural Ahrens National Playground Safety Advocate of the Year**. Each year, NPPS will be recognizing individuals for their dedication to making children safe on playgrounds.



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.**

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My address has changed. Please update your records.