

NEWSLETTER

National Playground
Safety Week
April 24-28, 2006

- Celebrating National Playground Safety Week by recognizing the 25th anniversary of CPSC's involvement
- To get more information about National Playground Safety Week, visit the website at www.playgroundsafety.org/safetyweek/

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The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe



FEBRUARY, 2006

National Playground Safety Week April 24-28, 2006

25 Years of Safety

Help us celebrate National Playground Safety Week by recognizing the 25th anniversary of United States Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) involvement in playground safety. In 1981, CPSC published the first two handbooks concerning playground safety: *A Handbook for Public Playground Safety, Volume I: General Guidelines for New and Existing Playgrounds and A Handbook for Public Playground Safety, Volume II: Technical Guidelines for Equipment and Surfacing*.

In 1991, a single volume, *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*, was developed. It provided user-friendly information about playground safety. The previous technical information was scheduled to be published by ASTM F1487. In 1994 the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* was reprinted. There were references to ASTM 1487-93, information about testing for durability, irremovable caps, attaching multi-axis swings to composite structures not being recommended and a correction in Appendix B, Figure B-8.

In 1997, the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* was revised. A playground checklist was added as well as additional information about

maximum height for horizontal ladders and swings for pre-schoolers, maintenance, shredded tires as protective surfacing material, lead paint, use zones, clothing entanglement, and supervision. John Preston was responsible for writing those versions. Most recently, CPSC is considering another revision that will be more in concert with ASTM standards. That revision may be published in 2006-07.

Why CPSC is Important?

Fifteen states have adopted the handbook in whole or in part. In 1994 and 2000, NPPS conducted a nationwide assessment of overall playground safety in which each state was given a letter grade according to the safety of its playgrounds. When NPPS compared the states that had adopted the handbook with those who had not in terms of the safety of their playgrounds in the national survey it conducted, it found that those who had adopted the handbook received a B grade, where as the others who did not, received a C grade regarding playground safety. The influence and effect of the handbook has been amazing nationwide.

Leading the Way

We salute CPSC for taking a stand on playground safety

and for leading the way for adults to provide safer outdoor play environments for children. We hope that the government will continue to lead the way. It would be wonderful if all states would adopt the guidelines, or better yet, if a national law were adopted to require that all publicly used playgrounds meet the minimum requirements outlined in the CPSC Handbook.

Home Playgrounds

In addition, CPSC just published its first handbook for home playgrounds in 2005. Now parents can assess the playgrounds that are found in their backyards to ascertain whether or not they conform to the safety guidelines provided by CPSC.

Let's Celebrate

Help us celebrate the influence that CPSC has had with the establishment of the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*. In addition, if your state has not adopted the CPSC Handbook, encourage your state to do that.

For more information about the Consumer Product Safety Commission visit their website at www.cpsc.gov. Or to view the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* go to www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs325.pdf

What's New: Online Trainings

Starting this month, NPPS will be offering online training for a variety of topics on playground safety. Topics cover a wide range of issues.

Course topics include:

- Supervision
- Assessment

- Maintenance
- Age Appropriate Design
- Planning an Outdoor Learning Environment
- Selecting Appropriate Surfacing Materials

Enjoy the luxury of completing these courses on your own time and receive a certificate from NPPS.

Child Care Professionals

Enroll today for a course designed just for you on playground supervision. You will receive credit for professional development training. Cost is \$12.50. For more information visit www.playgroundsafety.org/online_training/index.htm

"I'm delighted that Stryker has undertaken this important effort and I am proud to be a part of their campaign to bring attention to this issue. Children need to get outside and exercise, but they need to be able to do so in safe surroundings."

Jack Niklaus

Golf Legend

Story on page 4

What's Happening:

What Can You Do to Promote Playground Safety?

Playgrounds don't become safe all by themselves. They need people like you to stick their necks out and do something! So what can you do? Here are some suggestions:

- Design and distribute surveys to discover favorite and least favorite equipment, as well as recurring playground problems and injuries.
- Send letters to your state governor encouraging them to proclaim National Playground Safety Week.
- Create and hang posters in schools and your community areas outlining SAFE playground practices.
- Complete playground equipment safety checks and evaluations.
- Challenge your school to an injury-free week on the playground.
- Host a guest speaker to discuss safety on the playground.

• Check out your local playgrounds. If there is hard surfacing, such as asphalt, concrete, dirt, or grass underneath play equipment, call the owner and politely voice your concern. Ask if there is anything you can do to help.

• Write to the editor of your hometown newspaper commenting on any playground safety issues in your local community. Give credit to those facilities with safe playgrounds as well.

With children, make a maximum of five playground rules that they can remember and follow.

Product Highlight: Assessment Kits

Finally, an easy to use comprehensive assessment for schools and child care facilities. Most facilities are faced with a challenge of meeting current guidelines and standards for playground safety, avoiding legal liabilities, balancing budgets, and providing a safe, yet fun play environment

for all children.

NPPS has designed two kits that will allow you to:

- Discover how well your equipment matches national standards for safety.
- Protect your children from known hazards.

• Gather essential information for planning fun play sites.

• Learn how to write assessment reports.

See page 4 for Specials on these products.

Spotlight: Bob Porter, Playground Safety Advocate

NPPS would like to recognize Bob Porter for his hard work and dedication to making playgrounds safe! Bob Porter is the Safety Coordinator at Iowa City School District. Bob attended NPPS Playground Safety School in the summer of 2005. Bob has been an advocate of playground safety for numerous years. With the knowledge Bob gained at the Playground Safety School he continues to work to educate others and help them recognize the importance of playground safety. On numerous occasions Bob has

helped schools in their process of planning and installing new playground equipment. Through his experiences Bob has become accustomed to working with playground equipment manufacturers and is familiar with common issues that arise when designing a new play area and installing new equipment. Bob has developed a list of important questions for schools to ask when selecting an equipment manufacturer. NPPS has asked Bob to share these with you. Keep up the great work Bob!

Suggested Playground Vendor Interview Questions

1. If we are looking at a multi-year plan, are future equipment add-ons designed to be compatible with existing equipment? (i.e. In three years can we add equipment without it being out of date?)
2. If we purchase equipment in a multiyear plan, is the pricing we receive guaranteed or will the price increase? If there are increases, how much and when will they occur?
3. What financial incentives do you offer?
4. What is the typical lead time for ordering and installing the equipment?
5. If we order your equipment, but do not immediately need it, will you store the equipment until we need it?
6. Besides the playground equipment, what other products do you sell?
7. We anticipate volunteers installing the equipment. Do you have a certified installer to supervise and guarantee installation is in accordance with Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines?
8. What safety surfacing options are suggested for this equipment and do you sell these products too?
9. Does this equipment meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines?
10. At this building, we serve students between the ages of "YYY" and "ZZZ." How do you group your equipment for students of these ages?



REGISTER NOW FOR THE PLAYGROUND SAFETY SCHOOL

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

This is a great opportunity to gain more knowledge and understanding of playground safety and design. There will be two sessions held on the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls, IA. The first session will be held **August 1-4, 2006**. Second session is **August 7-10, 2006**.

Register now and receive the early bird discount of \$100 off. To learn more about the NPPS Safety School, visit our website.

NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU KNOW FOR A PLAYGROUND SAFETY AWARD

Ahren's Playground Safety Advocate of the Year Award!

Do you know someone who you think deserves the Ahren's Playground Safety Advocate of the Year award? Is there someone who is helping keep our nation's playgrounds safe? Has someone in your community made a difference with your playground?

John Preston Playground Safety Award

The National Program for Playground Safety has created the John Preston Safe Playground Award. This award is in honor of John Preston, a tireless worker for the safety of children, and will be given annually to an organization or agency who exemplifies the care and concern for children by creating safe play environments!

Visit our website for more details on how to nominate someone
<http://www.playgroundsafety.org/safetyweek/awards/index.htm>

What we're doing: Stryker Challenge



Ned Lipes, Stryker Orthopedics' Director of Development, Dr. Donna Thompson, Dr. Susan Hudson, and Jack Nicklaus.

In December 2005, The National Program for Playground Safety's directors, Donna Thompson and Susan Hudson, attended the very first Stryker Challenge Golf Tournament. The competitive charity tournament held at The Bear's Club in Jupiter, Florida, was sponsored by Stryker Orthopedics and

golf legend Jack Nicklaus. More than 120 golfers participated in the charity event at Nicklaus' home course. Among them was NPPS' own educational director, Susan Hudson, Ph.D. Funds raised from the tournament were presented in the form of a \$100,000 check to NPPS. This generous donation will help NPPS in our continued commitment to advocating playground safety. We are very thankful to Stryker's belief in the mission of organization and greatly appreciate their generous gift.

"Through the Stryker challenge, we are committed to making a substantive difference in raising safety standards at playgrounds in communities across the U.S."

Ned Lipes, Executive V.P., Stryker

"I'm delighted that Stryker has undertaken this important effort and I am proud to be a part of their campaign to bring attention to this issue. Children need to get outside and exercise, but they need to be able to do so in safe surroundings."

Jack Nicklaus



Dr. Donna Thompson and Jack Nicklaus

Product **SPECIAL**: Assessment Kits

"As a director of a center, I found this assessment to be very valuable. We are using it to identify areas where we can improve and the using that data to set goals. All of this will help us in securing funding for a safe and educational outdoor learning environment, especially as we write grants."

Rosemary Geiken, Child Care Director

Child Care Assessment Manual for Outdoor Play Environments



Child Care Assessment Kit Includes:

- 1 Assessment Manual
- 1 CD-ROM
- 3 Assessment Workbooks

School Assessment Kit Includes:

- 1 Assessment Manual
- 12 Assessment Checklists
- 1 CD-ROM
- 1 Nuts and Bolts DVD

ASSESSMENT KITS SPECIAL

**ORDER NOW
AND RECEIVE \$25.00 OFF
EITHER ASSESSMENT KIT WHEN
YOU MENTION THIS COUPON**



School Assessment Manual for Outdoor Play Environment

"NPPS continues to produce user-friendly products to help keep America's Playgrounds Safe. The School Assessment Manual is a great tool for Principals and Administrators to begin or improve their existing school or district playground safety program. Novice as well as veteran playground safety professionals alike will benefit from this timely resource."

Mark White "Mr. Playground"

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