



- Health Canada estimates that each year in Canada, more than 28,500 children under the age of 20 are treated for playground-related injuries.

(Safe Kids Canada)

- Between 1982 to 1999, 18 children in Canada died from playground injuries. Seventeen of these deaths were due to strangulation on playground equipment.

(Safe Kids Canada)

- 2518 children age 0 to 19 in Ontario were hospitalized due to falls from playground equipment between 1997 and 2000.

(MOHLTC Provincial Health Planning Database (May 7, 2002)).

## Home Play Equipment

Purchase equipment that is durable. Follow manufacturers recommended instructions for installation and usage. Before allowing the children to play, conduct checks of the playground to ensure that there are no hazards and the equipment is maintained (i.e. detached swings, splintering wood, frayed ropes). Do any repairs immediately. Follow this guide for appropriate type and depth of surface material under the equipment.

Protective Surfacing Materials* (6" inches in depth)	Fall Height
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Wood Chips	6ft. (1.8m)
Fine Sand	5ft. (1.5m)
Bark Mulch	6ft. (1.8m)
Fine Gravel	6ft. (1.8m)

\*A depth of 6" of protective surfacing material should provide protection for the fall height listed in the right column.

Install the equipment on level ground away from other structures such as garages, trees, electrical wires etc. Do not install the equipment over asphalt, concrete, packed earth, grass or other hard surfaces. Grass is not a protective surface! Check all nuts and bolts and lubricate all moving parts. Store all removable equipment indoors during the winter months.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that our children are able to enjoy a safe area in which to play and greatly **reduce the risk of death or serious injury.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CALL 1-800-361-5653

# PLAYGROUND SAFETY



YORK REGION HEALTH SERVICES | HEALTH PROTECTION DIVISION



## Look before Playing

Check the playground for sharp objects (i.e. needles, glass) and other waste materials such as garbage and animal waste. If you find a needle, wear heavy gloves or use tongs to pick it up and dispose of it in a puncture proof, unbreakable container with a lid. Secure the lid. Take the container to your nearest police station, hospital emergency or public health office. Do not discard it in municipal garbage.



### Protective Barriers

Look for guardrails or protective panels on elevated platforms to ensure your child does not fall off the equipment. Does the equipment have handrails on each side of walkways or ramps?



### Pinch/Crush Points and Protrusions

Look for areas on the play equipment where children's fingers may become trapped during play (i.e. flexible walking bridges, vertically moving steps). Ensure that there are no materials sticking out of the play surfaces. (ie, bolts must be cut back and sharp edges rounded)



### Strangulation

Dress children appropriately. Ponchos, scarves, drawstrings and other loose fitting garments may become tangled in playground equipment causing strangulation. Ensure children are not wearing bicycle helmets while on the equipment. Do not allow skipping ropes to be tied to equipment, trees or other objects.



### Supervision

Active supervision involves more than being physically present. Stay close to children at the playground. Younger children require you to be there if their hands or feet slip unexpectedly. Reinforce positive behaviour. No bullying. No pushing.



### Surfacing

Look for proper surfacing underneath the play equipment such as sand, pea gravel, wood chips/mulch or synthetic materials. Does this surface extend 6 feet around all sides of the equipment? Is there extra protective surfacing at slide exits and to the front/back of swings?



### Entrapment

To prevent a child's head from becoming entrapped, ensure that openings in the play equipment are less than 9cm. (3.5") or greater than 22.5cm (9").