



PLAYGROUND SAFETY



TARGET AUDIENCE:
Children in Grades K–5 and their families.

SAFETY SLEUTHS



For this activity, students and their families take a field trip to a nearby playground and evaluate its safety. This helps them learn how to identify safe places to play (and avoid those that are unsafe).



LOCATION:

Outdoors, at the school playground or a nearby park.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Safe Kids coalitions have experience conducting playground safety activities in a variety of settings. Partnering with a local coalition is the easiest way to ensure you have access to the expertise, equipment and resources needed to host a successful event.

You could invite a member of the city or county parks and recreation department to accompany your school group to the playground, or to come to the school after your field trip to receive the families’ report and recommendations.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A checklist of playground safety features (for an example, see this safety checklist on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website: www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/327.html)
- Safe Kids Worldwide playground safety materials available for at www.safekids.org
- Clipboards
- Pens or pencils

PREPARATION:

- Identify a playground near the school for students to evaluate.
- Make copies of the playground safety checklist for students and family members.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTION

- Before leaving the school or classroom, review playground safety tips with children and their families.
- Give each child (or team of children) a clipboard, a checklist and a pen or pencil.
- At the playground, invite children and their families to explore together and “check off” safety features as they find them.



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KEY MESSAGES

When you conduct any activity focused on playground safety, share the following key messages with parents (either during the activity, or as a take-home):

1. Always supervise children using playground equipment. Stay where you can see and hear them.
2. Ensure that schools and childcare centers have age-appropriate, well-maintained playground equipment and that trained supervisors are present at all times when children are on the playground.
3. Recommended surface materials include sand, pea gravel, wood chips, mulch and shredded rubber. Rubber mats, synthetic turf and other artificial materials also are safe surfaces and require less maintenance.
4. If there are any hazards in a public or backyard playground, report them immediately (to the school, park authority or city council). Do not allow children to use the equipment until it is safe.
5. Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's clothing. Never allow children to wear helmets, necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings while on playgrounds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

More information about playground safety can be found on the Safe Kids Worldwide website: www.safekids.org