

Child Safety



At Home & In Child Care Settings

Childproofing Outdoor Settings

By ensuring a safe environment and supervising children carefully, we can reduce the potential of injury in outdoor play.

Comings & Goings

Here are some things to be aware of when children and their families are coming to or leaving from your home:

- Repair uneven joints in outside walkways to prevent tripping
- Remove moss or algae from wooden walkways
- Block any stairwells or sharp declines in the yard that have a drop of 2' or more with 4' fence.
- Install a handrail where stairs are more than 2' high.
- Close any open stairs by installing risers at the back of each stair
- Gate outside stairs from a deck at both the top and bottom
- Check that fences and gates are stable and free of protruding nails, nuts, or bolts.
- Trim low branches from trees and shrubs to prevent eye damage or scratches to the face
- Sweep or clear walkways regularly

Traffic Paths

When designing your playground area, plan for clear circulation and traffic paths for both people and wheel toys.

- Define carefully the space around and between swings and slides to prevent collisions
- Establish areas and rules for wheel toys - traffic signs, one-way routes, parking areas, adequate turnarounds
- Create a specific area for sand play

Equipment

Careful selection, installation and ongoing maintenance of equipment are key to playground safety!

- Consult your licensing officer for advice/guidelines when planning or renovating your playground - each province or state will have its own set of regulations.
- Comply with manufacturers instructions when installing equipment and ensure manufacturer's maintenance procedures are followed so that warranties and guarantees are honored.

- Check that climbing structures, footings, slides, swings, rungs, rails, steps, ropes, cables and chains are secure, in good condition and free of splinters or sharp edges.
- Ensure that swing hangers, chains and seats are in good repair and "s" hooks are securely closed.
- Check that equipment parts are not broken, worn, cracked, rusted, or missing and that nuts, bolts and screws are tight, recessed and/or covered with plastic caps.
- Be sure that children are not wearing scarves, ties, clothes with drawstrings or clothes that are too loose which may get caught on equipment.
- Ensure that riding toys are well maintained and stable.
- Provide helmets for children riding tricycles or bicycles to protect their heads and to encourage a lifelong habit.

Teach children how to use equipment safely.

Playground Surfaces

Various types of energy absorbing materials will soften the impact of falls. These include loose materials like wood chips, pea gravel and coarse washed sand or synthetic materials like rubber and foam mats.

- Choose the material which best suits your weather conditions and the specific application
- Avoid using pea gravel with infants and toddlers who are likely to put these small bits into their ears, noses or mouths.
- Ensure that loose material surfaces are maintained between 6-12" in depth depending on equipment height. (this may vary - check regulations in your area)
- Rake sand or other loose materials frequently to keep them soft and to fill holes and bare spots.

Remember: Regularly check all traffic paths and surfaces for litter, glass, sharp objects and animal droppings.

Plants

Many outdoor plants may cause stomach upsets, skin rashes, internal organ damage and even death. Sources say that almost half the calls to the Poison Control Center relate to plants!

Here are some examples of poisonous plants:

Trees: Horse Chestnut; Oak; Yew; Laburnum

Shrubs: Azalea; Holly; Hydrangea; Laurel; Rhododendron

Vines: Clematis; Ivy; Wisteria

Bulbs: Hyacinth; Daffodil; Crocus; Tulip

Plants: Anemone; Buttercup; Rhubarb Leaves; Tomato Leaf & Stem

- Restrict access to or remove, where possible, any hazardous outdoor plants
- Trim any low branches from trees and bushes that cannot be removed.

Teach children not to put leaves, stems, bark, seeds, berries, nuts or wild

mushrooms into their mouths.

Pools and Ponds

While pools and ponds are fun in hot weather, they present particular hazards for young children.

- Supervise kiddie pools or plastic pools constantly while they are in use
- Store pools upside down when not in use
- Protect children from drowning in ornamental ponds by draining them, filling them in with sand or fencing them in.

Field Trips

Field trips have the potential for increasing children's risk of injury.

- Check destinations and routes in advance, where feasible, to identify opportunities and hazards
- Recruit additional adults or volunteers to accompany the group and provide extra supervision
- Take along a portable **first aid kit** including coins for making emergency phone calls
- Carry with you **emergency information**/consent cards for each child.
- Ensure that at least one staff member has a valid first aid certificate.

Vehicles

- Ensure that there are sufficient child safety seats or seat belts for each person and that these are correctly installed and used.
- Lock all vehicle doors when in motion.
- Keep **emergency information**/consent cards for each child and a **first aid kit** in each vehicle.
- Make a habit of carrying a blanket, water, some non-perishable foods, a flashlight and winter emergency supplies.
- Find a safe place to pull over if a child or the group gets overly excited.
- Use teachable moments to discuss traffic signs and road safety.

Remember: Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle!