

Playground Safety



Intent Statement

Outdoor physical activity is fun for children and is important for their health and development. Outdoor play offers children opportunity for cognitive, social, emotional and physical benefits. All children (including children with special needs) will have a well-supervised and safe outdoor play area and appropriate equipment for gross motor play.

Procedure and Practice

Supervision

- Staff is present and attentive when children are on play equipment at all times. Staff will not be distracted by talking to each other or on their telephones when supervising children.
- Children can be easily viewed by staff on equipment. Staff ensures that children are not playing in a blind spot and children can be viewed in crawl spaces and tunnels.
- Safety rules are posted regarding expected behavior and staff will explain to children the reasons for rules.
- Staff limits the number of children playing at one time on equipment, such as climbing equipment.
- Staff will actively monitor closely the equipment and play areas with high use.

Enclosures

- Outdoor play area is enclosed with a fence or natural barriers and area should be free from bodies of water and traffic.
- Area has at least two exits.
- Gates are equipped with self-closing and positive self-latching closure mechanisms and should be kept closed at all times.
- Openings in the fence and gates are no larger than 3 ½ inches.
- The fence and gates are constructed to prevent climbing.
- Wooden fences and playground structures are made out of material free of chromated copper arsenate (CCA).

Play Equipment

- Play equipment and materials in the facility meet the recommendations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the ASTM International (ASTM) for public playground equipment. Equipment and materials intended for gross-motor (active) play conform to the recommendations in the CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook and the provisions in the ASTM "Standard F1487-07a: Consumer Safety Performance Specifications for Playground Equipment for Public Use."
- There are separate play areas with appropriately sized equipment and materials to serve ages under 2, 2-5 and ages 5 and older. See age appropriate equipment: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). 2010. *Public playground safety handbook*. <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>.
- Height of all equipment follows age appropriate guidelines in U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2010. *Public playground safety handbook*.

- Platforms have appropriate guardrails. Either guardrails or protective barriers may be used to prevent inadvertent or unintentional falls off elevated platforms.
- Platforms allow change of direction to get on/off structure. Platforms over 6 feet in height have intermediate standing surface where children can decide to get off or on.
- Play areas have signs indicating age group for play equipment provided.
- Equipment design prevents climbing outside the structure.
- Supporting structures prevent children climbing on it.
- Play equipment will conform to recommendations from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Other Equipment

- Trampolines, both full and mini-size, and ball pits should be prohibited from being used as part of the child care program activities.
- Riding toys (such as tricycles) and wheeled equipment (such as scooters) used in the child care setting should:
 1. Be spokeless;
 2. Be capable of being steered;
 3. Be of a size appropriate for the child;
 4. Have a low center of gravity;
 5. Be in good condition, work properly, and free of sharp edges or protrusions that may injure the children.
- All children one year of age and over will wear properly fitted and approved (meeting CPSC standards) helmets while riding toys with wheels (tricycles, bicycles, etc.) or using any wheeled equipment (roller blades, skateboards, etc.). Helmets will be removed as soon as children stop riding the wheeled toys or using wheeled equipment.
- Sandboxes will adhere to the following requirements:
 1. Sandboxes are constructed to permit drainage;
 2. Sandboxes are covered with a lid or other covering when they are not in use;
 3. Sandboxes are kept free from cat and other animal excrement;
 4. Sandboxes are regularly cleaned of foreign matter;
 5. Sandboxes are located away from prevailing winds, if this is not possible, windbreaks using bushes, trees, or fences should be provided;
 6. Sand used in the box is washed, free of organic, toxic, or harmful materials, and fine enough to be shaped easily;
 7. Sand is replaced as often as necessary to keep the sand visibly clean and free of extraneous materials;
 8. Sand play areas are distinct from landing areas for slides or other equipment;
 9. Sand play area covers are adequately secured when they are lifted or moved to allow children to play in the sandbox.

Protective Surfacing

- Suitable protective surfacing material is provided. See appropriate/inappropriate surfacing material: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2010. *Public playground safety handbook*.
- Play surfaces will conform to recommendations from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Appropriate depth of loose fill surfacing is used. A recommended 12 inches of loose fill surfacing is used and maintained under and around play equipment.
- Appropriate use zones (under and extending from equipment) has protective surfacing and is maintained. Surfacing material is raked and/or replaced as needed.
- Concrete footings and trip hazards in play area are covered with surfacing.

Equipment Maintenance

- Equipment is free of noticeable gaps between parts of equipment that can be an entanglement hazard. i.e., the top of slides and open s-hooks on swings.
- Equipment is free of head entrapments, which can cause strangulation. If a space in play equipment is more than 3 1/2 inches and less than 9 inches, it is an entrapment hazard.
- Equipment is free of broken parts. Report and repair/remove broken play equipment.
- Equipment is free of missing parts.
- Equipment is free of protruding bolts.
- Equipment is free of rust. Rust weakens play equipment.
- Equipment is free of splinters.
- Equipment is free of cracks/holes.
- Equipment is monitored for temperature. Hot play equipment, including metal and plastic equipment, can cause serious burns.

Playground Safety audit

- Inspection is done by an individual with specialized training in playground safety inspection, once a year.
- Monthly inspections are done to check for US Consumer Product Safety Commission recalled or hazard warnings on equipment, broken equipment, or equipment that needs immediate attention.
- Daily safety checks are done of the grounds for safety hazards i.e., broken glass, trash, toys, insect nests, animal droppings, and packed surfacing under equipment.
- Inspection is conducted whenever injuries occur.

Appropriate Dress

- Shoes will be worn and shoestrings kept tied.
- Children will be dressed appropriately for the weather.
- Because of the danger of entanglement and strangulation, children will not wear loose clothing or clothing with drawstrings, and bike helmets will not be worn on play equipment.

Sun Protection and Shade

- Caregivers/teachers will implement procedures to ensure sun safety for themselves and the children under their supervision by:
 1. Limiting sun exposure between 10 AM and 2 PM, when sun's UV rays are strongest;
 2. Keeping infants younger than six months out of direct sunlight;
 3. Wearing clothing and hat to protect against harmful sun rays;
 4. Wearing child safe shatter resistant sunglasses on children with at least 99% UV ray protection;

5. Applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher, with permission from parents or guardians;
6. Children are provided shade from the heat and excessive sun exposure in play areas, using umbrellas, stroller canopies, trees, buildings, or shade structures;
7. Heat absorbing equipment is placed in the shade;
8. Children are encouraged to seek the shade when they are feeling too hot;
9. Drinking water is available.

Emergencies

- Staff will be trained in first aid and emergencies
- First aid kit is available in play area.
- Telephone is readily available and emergency numbers are within easy access

Applicable

This policy applies to all staff, substitute staff, parents and volunteers in the child care setting.

Communication

This policy will be reviewed with parents upon application and a summary copy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will be reviewed with staff at orientation and annual staff training.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education 2011. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition.* Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Also available at <http://nrckids.org>

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2010. *Public playground safety handbook.* <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>

International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA)
<http://www.ipema.org/main.cfm>
 Toll-free: 888-944-7362

Nation Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)
<http://www.playgroundsafety.org/>

Kentucky Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)
<http://www.kentuckycchc.org>
 Toll- free Helpline: 877-281-5277

Reviewed by:

Director/Owner

Board Member

CCHC/Health Professional

Staff Member

Parent/Guardian

Effective Date/Review Date

This policy is effective immediately. It will be reviewed yearly by the center director.