

A parent's guide to keeping kids safe on the playground

September 7 2022, by Ashley Bush



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Playgrounds are fun and can provide a great opportunity for exercise and family togetherness. But did you know that youths age 17 and younger are at risk for falls at the playground? These falls can result in injuries,

like bruises, scrapes and some that may even require a trip to the emergency department (ED).

From 2016 to 2020, Kentucky youths made an average of 2,095 visits to emergency departments due to playground falls; 52% of those children were between the ages of five and eight. The most common playground fall-related injuries seen in the ED among youth were fractures (56%), superficial injuries or contusions (15%) and open wounds (8%). Most of the injuries treated affected kids' legs/arms (73%) and head/neck (21%).

Keeping track of kids on the playground can be a difficult task, so use the following checklist as a tool to keep your children protected.

- Does the surface surrounding the [playground equipment](#) have at least a foot of materials (mulch, sand, [wood chips](#), etc.) to protect against injuries from falls?
- Make sure the protective surfaces you just checked off the list extend at least 6 feet in all directions from the playground equipment.
- Make sure the playground equipment that is more than 2 1/2 feet tall is spaced at least 9 feet from any other equipment.
- Look for protruding fasteners (bolts), sharp points and edges, and other hardware that can pose dangers to kids.
- Look for tripping hazards! These can include raised surfaces, exposed concrete footings, rocks and tree roots.
- Make sure all elevated surfaces have guardrails to help prevent falls and injuries.
- Regularly check playground equipment and surfaces.
- Supervise your kids when they are on the playground.
- Teach kids to safely and properly use playground equipment.

Bringing your children to the [playground](#) should make for an exciting and active day. As a parent, it is important to always be aware of your

surroundings and your children playing there.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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