



## CHECKLIST FOR PLAYGROUND SAFETY

It doesn't matter if it's a playground at school, in the community or rigged in your own backyard, any place where you're going to let your child play is a place that needs to be inspected regularly for safety. What goes into a properly functioning playground? How can you conduct your own playground inspection in order to feel confident that your child or children can be safe? To help answer these questions, here's a playground inspection checklist. To determine the security of a given play area, these are the things to look out for and avoid:

- Broken or Rusted Equipment:** Loose bolts, busted swings, missing caps and cracks in materials are all warning signs that playground safety has been compromised. Be especially sure to look for cracks in plastics. Likewise, metals that rust or corrode over time become less durable and more dangerous. Check the places where metals come into contact with the ground and see if damage has occurred.
- Broken Glass and Trash:** Debris around a playground is more than unsightly; it's dangerous. Broken glass can cut kids and cause infections. Trash can create hazards that make it easier to fall or get hurt. Before letting children play at a site, make sure all broken glass, trash and debris is gone.
- Loose Anchoring:** Check to see how securely playground components are anchored into the ground and other components. If the connections are loose, the equipment is more likely to come apart and cause injuries.
- Displaced Surfacing** Any playground that has loose-fill surfacing needs to be inspected for displacement in high-traffic areas. Look especially under the swings and the slide exits — is the ground uniform and even? If not, it's an accident waiting to happen. For playgrounds with unitary surfacing, inspect for any holes, flakes or buckling.
- User or Insect Damages:** Vandalism at a playground can range from annoying graffiti to dangerous equipment tampering — inspect carefully to see what has been modified. Likewise, check for ways that local insects or animals may have tampered with the playground.

After conducting your playground inspection and finding none of the above problems in place, you can let kids play there happily and freely — what's more, you can do it with full peace of mind.