



WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

MAY HURT YOU

how SAFE is your playground?

Spring is here and there is nothing better than getting out of the house to enjoy the fresh air, pack a picnic, and bring your children to a playground to play! Playgrounds provide the opportunity for children to learn, explore, and take risks in a safe environment. The playground experience is an invaluable childhood tool that helps to develop a child's strength, overcome fears, facilitate socialization, and build self esteem.

Whether the playground you are visiting is in a neighborhood, park, daycare or church, it is important that it is safe. More than 200,000 injuries occur each year on playgrounds—79% from falls! A loose bolt, a cracked piece of plastic, improper spacing, or insufficient surfacing can also cause a child to be injured.

Don't let potential playground safety issues scare your children off the swing set. Parents can be proactive in playground safety by following some simple guidelines.

- If something on the playground looks unsafe, worn, rusted, or damaged, report it immediately to whoever is responsible. Playgrounds should provide an opportunity to take risks but they should not be hazardous. We all know how great it felt to finally make it across the monkey bars for the first time (taking a risk!). It doesn't feel so great though, if in trying, you fall on concrete under those same monkey bars.

- Always make sure your children are properly supervised. Parents should have an idea of the skill and coordination level of their children and should monitor them accordingly.

- Make sure your children are playing on age-appropriate equipment. Playground equipment manufacturers are required to indicate the proper age appropriateness of each component based on anthropometrics. Obviously, you don't want a toddler climbing on a piece of equipment that is designed for a 9-12 year-old child.

Following a few simple guidelines can ensure your children will have a safe and exciting time on the playground. If you are unsure of your playground's safety, have a nationally certified playground inspector check for potential hazards and make recommendations. It is true that playing is really a child's work. Get out and enjoy the outdoors this spring and visit a playground! 🌳



Marilyn Celenza is the owner of Good Clean Fun, a playground maintenance company specializing in cleaning, inspecting, and ensuring the safety of public playgrounds. She is CPSI

certified and a member of NPCAI (National Playground Contractors Association International) and services over 2,000 playgrounds in 11 states. For more information on playground cleaning, safety, and inspections, contact Marilyn at 704-599-9079 or visit the website www.goodcleanfunproducts.com.