



# PLAYGROUND AND WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES



Division of Early Childhood  
Office of Child Care

---

## **MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Dunbar Brooks**

*President*

**Beverly A. Cooper**

*Vice President*

**Lelia T. Allen**

**J. Henry Butta**

**Blair G. Ewing**

**Mary Kay Finan**

**Rosa M. Garcia**

**Richard L. Goodall**

**Charlene M. Dukes**

**Karabelle Pizzigati**

**David F. Tufaro**

**Renford Freemantle (student member)**

**Nancy S. Grasmick**

*Secretary/Treasurer of the Board*

*State Superintendent of Schools*

**Rolf Grafwallner**

*Assistant State Superintendent*

*Division of Early Childhood Development*

**Martin O'Malley**

*Governor*

---

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For inquiries related to departmental policy, contact the Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 410.767.0433 (voice) 410.767.0431 (fax) 410.333.6442 (TTY/TDD)

For more information about the contents of this document, contact 410.767.0335.



---

---

## FOREWORD

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is pleased to provide the Playground and Water Safety Guidelines which provide a framework for medically and scientifically based Safety education for providers responsible for the safety of children and youth.

These Guidelines were developed by the Playground and Water Safety Workgroup which included representation from MSDE, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, Maryland Committee for Children, Maryland State Child Care Association, Baltimore County YMCA Head Start, Maryland School Age Child Care Alliance, and many others. They reflect the current federal and state standards and refer to practices which have been recommended by national associations.

These guidelines are designed for practitioners and administrators who work with young children and should be used as guidance in ensuring safety at playgrounds and swimming pools while children enjoy the excitement and pleasures of play and learning.

*The Guidelines are available online at  
[www.MarylandPublicSchools.org](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org)*





---

---

## PLAYGROUND AND WATER SAFETY WORKGROUP

Barbara Bice  
Maryland State Department of Education  
School Facilities Branch

Tiffany Brewington  
Maryland Committee for Children

Anna Byrd-Jones  
Baltimore County YMCA Head Start

Lori Congleton  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Community Services

Lori Connors-Tadros  
National Child Care Information and  
Technical Assistance Center

Susan Copsy  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Mona Criswell  
Maryland School Age Child Care Alliance

Amy Dapasuki  
Maryland Committee for Children

Vanessa Diggs  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Student and Family Support  
School Health Services

Pamela Engle  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Community Services

Kathy Foster  
Maryland State Child Care Association

Donna Fowler  
Maryland State Family Child Care Association

Cheryl Hall  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Barbara Hamilton  
National Resource Center for Health and  
Safety in Child Care and Early Learning

Rose Marie Hayes  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Paula Johnson  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Elizabeth Kelley  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Michael Mason  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Instruction

Valerie McGuire  
Baltimore City Department of Recreation  
and Parks

Alicia Mezu  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Student and Family Support

Mary Nielsen  
Maryland Child Care Association

Jennifer Nizer  
Maryland State Child Care Association

Lorna Ochs  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Child Care

Mary Porter  
Baltimore City Department of Recreation  
and Parks

Steve Rohde  
Maryland Committee for Children

Barbara Tayman  
National Child Care Information and  
Technical Assistance Center

Sandy Trent  
Maryland State Department of Natural  
Resources

Patricia Tyler  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Adult Education

Linda Zang  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Head Start State Collaboration Project

---

---



---

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	i
Definitions .....	ii
Supervision .....	1
Emergency Care and First Aid .....	3
Sun Protection and the Weather .....	4
Developmentally Appropriate Play Areas .....	6
Accessible Play Spaces and the ADA .....	7
Developmentally Appropriate Play Equipment .....	8
Avoiding Playground Hazards .....	10
Playground Fall Surfacing .....	12
Equipment Maintenance .....	14
Water Safety .....	15

## APPENDICES

Frequently Asked Questions .....	1
Developmentally Appropriate Play Activities .....	3
Exercises and Activities for Birth to Six Months .....	4
Exercises and Activities for the Six Months to 12 Months .....	5
Exercises and Activities for the Second Year (12 to 18 Months) .....	6
Exercises and Activities for the Almost Two (18 to 24 Months) .....	6
Exercises and Activities for Two to Five Year Olds .....	8
Playground Safety Self Assessment Checklist .....	9
Swimming Safety Self Assessment .....	11
First Aid Supply List .....	13
Agency Regulations .....	14
Resources .....	15

---

---





---

---

## INTRODUCTION

Outdoor play is considered an essential component of the total educational experience for children. Whether at home, schools, community parks, apartment complexes, churches, child care facilities, or at other public gatherings, children have an opportunity to interact with various types of outdoor play equipment on playgrounds, often under the supervision of child care providers. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that over 200,000 children suffer serious injuries each year that require medical treatment when this equipment is used improperly.<sup>1</sup> The Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD), Office of Child Care (OCC) has developed playground and water safety guidelines to emphasize the importance of supervising children and the maintenance of safe physical development and learning environments while children are engaged in outdoor play.

Playground facilities created, maintained, and renovated with the CPSC home and public playground safety guidelines support children's healthy development and safety. The safety guidelines contained in this document are based on the National Program for Playground Safety's (NPPS) research-based S.A.F.E. playground safety model.<sup>2</sup> This model incorporates six components: Supervision, Developmentally-Appropriate Play Areas, Accessible Play Spaces, Playground Equipment, Playground Fall Surfacing, and Equipment Maintenance. These guidelines are intended to help protect children using any type of playground environment.

Also included in this document are recommendations for water safety taken from CPSC "Safety Barrier Guidelines for Home Pools" handbook.<sup>3</sup> MSDE seeks to encourage activities that help to develop physical strength and endurance. Child care providers are also encouraged to follow the CPSC recommendations contained in "Safety Barrier Guidelines for Home Pools" handbook. The guidelines for pool barriers can help to prevent drowning and near-drowning of young children.

This document is intended to serve as a resource for child care providers and other adults who supervise children in outdoor play. Current local or state regulation supersedes the recommended practice listed in this document. This document includes self-assessment checklists for playground and water safety, quick tips for sun safety, suggestions for purchasing and maintaining safe equipment, and other helpful information.

<sup>1</sup> *CPSC Handbook for Playground Safety Pub. No. 325 (1997) www.cpsc.gov*

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.F.E. Play Areas Creation, Maintenance, and Renovation*

<sup>3</sup> *CPSC Pub. 362 Safety Barriers for Home Pools*



---

---

## DEFINITIONS

*The following definitions clarify the language used in these guidelines.*

**American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM)** - a standards development organization that serves as an open forum for the development of international standards.

**Caring For Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards 2nd Edition (CFOC)** - a comprehensive set of uniform health and safety standards intended to improve the quality of child care.

**Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD)** - a division of The Maryland State Department of Education responsible for early care and education in Maryland. The Division houses the Office of Child Care and the Early Learning Branch.

**Guideline** - a statement of policy or procedure.

**Lifeguard** - an expert swimmer who holds approved lifeguard certification employed to safeguard swimmers.

**Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)** - responsible for providing leadership, support, and accountability for effective systems of public education, library services, and rehabilitation services in Maryland.

**Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)** - responsible for protecting, promoting and improving the health and well being of all Maryland citizens. Approving public and private swimming pools is one of its many functions.

**National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)** - a non-profit organization who is a leader in research, training and development of S.A.F.E. play areas.

**Natural Swimming Area** - lakes, beaches, bodies of water that meet Maryland Beach Regulations as verified by a local health department permit.

**Office of Child Care (OCC)** - the office in the Division of Early Childhood Development responsible for licensing and monitoring all child care centers and family child care providers, and approving nonpublic nursery schools in Maryland. The Office also administers Maryland's subsidized child care program for working families, administers the state's Child Care Credentialing System, and issues contracts and grants to child care providers to improve the quality of early care.

**Plan** - a detailed scheme, program, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of a goal or an objective.

**Playground** - an outdoor area set aside for recreation and play.

---

*Definitions con't.*

**Policy** - a plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business designed to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters.

**Regulation** - a governmental order having the force of law.

**Requirement** - something that is required.

**Standard** - an accepted measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value or criterion which is a commonly used and accepted authority.

**Supervision** - the action, process, or occupation of critical watching and directing (as of activities or course of action).

**Swimming Pool** - a pool constructed for swimming that meets Maryland's Public Pool and Spa Regulations as verified by a local health department permit.

**U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** - federal agency responsible for promoting greater safety awareness among those who purchase, install, and maintain public playground equipment and other consumer products.



---

---

# SUPERVISION

Because children will use playground equipment in ways for which the equipment is not intended, close supervision of children is necessary while they are at play. Supervision matters because we have a responsibility to keep children safe. Supervision saves lives, prevents injuries, avoids litigation and complies with national guidelines and standards.

Supervision is the action, process, or occupation of critical watching and directing (as of activities or course of action).<sup>4</sup>



Playgrounds that are designed, installed, and maintained in accordance with safety guidelines and standards can still present hazards to children in the absence of adequate supervision. The quality of the supervision depends on the quality of the supervisor's knowledge of safe play behavior. Recognize that preschool-age children require more attentive supervision on playgrounds than older children. Supervision encompasses anticipation, behavior, and context. The application and practice of all three factors are necessary for providing optimal oversight of children during any outdoor activity.

## ANTICIPATION

Anticipation includes program or classroom staff making an assessment of the location of the play environment and making a determination of whether the facility is accessible to children with disabling physical conditions or special health care needs. If there are roads and parking lots nearby, the supervisor should be responsible for preventing children from running into the street or into the path of oncoming traffic.

*The following are items to consider when making the assessment:*

- Outdoor equipment should be divided into equipment that is appropriate for children aged birth to 23 months, 2 to 4 years, and 5 to 12 years. Schools may want to separate their play areas for children into areas for preschool, kindergarten through second grade, third and fourth grades, and fifth and sixth grades.
- If unsafe conditions exist, a report should immediately be made to the owner or operator of the playground which should expedite the repair or removal of the hazard if it cannot be handled by the staff supervising the children.

<sup>4</sup>Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

---

---

## BEHAVIOR

Supervision, when done appropriately, focuses on keeping children safe, and it involves taking the necessary precautions that save lives, prevent injuries, avoid litigation and comply with safety guidelines and standards. It is important that supervisors recognize **unsafe play behaviors** and **unsafe equipment use**.

Supervisors' Behaviors include practices of movement, observation, and interaction to produce a safe play environment. Important actions by supervisors that help to prevent playground injuries include:

- Assessing play area prior to allowing children to use equipment
- Identifying broken equipment, trash, and vandalism
- Providing active supervision, active monitoring, scanning, interacting with others
- Watching and directing children's activities within a designated area
- Responding to each child's needs
- Positioning oneself in the outdoor play area so all children can be observed
- Minimizing conversations not related to direct supervision among caregivers

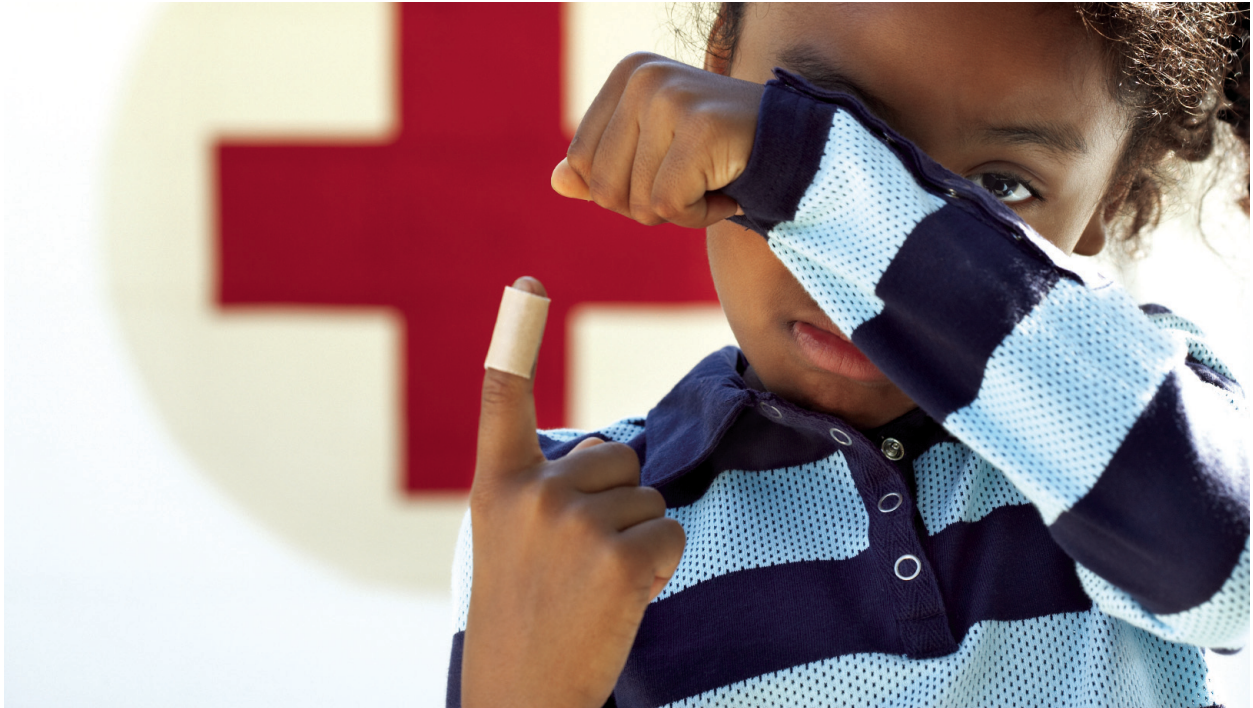
## CONTEXT: HOW THE PLAY AREA IS BEING USED

How the outdoor play environment is used in the community, school, and child care plays a vital role in keeping the play environment safe. Child care administrators and staff should look at who, what, when, and where with respect to providing a safe environment. Administrators should understand that there are essential things that should be considered while playgrounds and swimming areas are in use:

- Emergency Care and First Aid
- Universal Need for Shade and Sun Protection
- Developmentally Appropriate Play Areas
- Accessible Play Spaces
- Age Appropriate Equipment
- Playground Fall Surfacing
- Water Safety



When communities, schools and child care facilities offer opportunities for children to play on equipment, they have a duty to provide a safe environment and provide appropriate interventions to prevent serious injury should an accident occur. Supervisors or teachers should be reasonable and prudent while providing supervision.



## EMERGENCY CARE AND FIRST AID

Playground accidents are to be expected and playground supervisors should know basic first aid procedures. Most playground accidents result in bumps, abrasions, cuts, sprains, and an occasional broken bone. If an injury occurs on the playground, the following steps serve as a guideline for the playground supervisor on duty:

- Stay calm and don't panic
- Analyze the situation completely and quickly
- If basic first aid is required, begin at once using universal precautions
- Stay with the child and seek assistance from support staff
- Unless the situation is serious, the individual on duty should not leave the playground
- If a broken bone is suspected, treat as a fracture
- Do not move child if a fracture of the back, neck, leg or skull is suspected
- Call or send for help immediately
- Know your physical limitations when trying to help an injured child

Any good emergency plan should include practice and drill. When a physical injury does occur, or is suspected, a procedure should be in place to contact parents/caregivers, emergency medical services, or to transport the injured child to the local hospital emergency department. Injuries should be cared for following basic first aid rules, using recommended first aid supplies, documented and reported to parents by the end of the day. (See Appendix for a copy of the OCC First Aid Supply List.)



---

---

# SUN PROTECTION AND THE WEATHER

A common problem that appears during the hot weather months is over-heating, causing fainting spells. If this happens, have the child:

- Rest in the shade, perhaps 10 minutes or more
- Sit down and bend forward at the waist, bringing the head between the knees, or lie down with the feet slightly elevated

Apply cool compresses and have water available for those alert enough to drink. Follow emergency procedures by calling 911 and contact parents/guardians.

It is recommended that children of all ages and abilities have shade available at child care facilities, schools and parks. Shade prevents the children, the equipment, and the surfacing from getting too hot. It is also recommended that children play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions permit according to conditions defined by the National Weather Service forecast and alerts. The following tips should be considered when planning for outdoor activities:

- Protect yourself and children from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection of SPF-15 or higher, with permission from the parents, as described in CPSC Standard 3.081, during outdoor play
- Before prolonged physical activity in warm weather, provide water to aid with hydration and encourage children to drink water during any activity
- Make sure children wear sun-protective clothing, such as hats, long- sleeved shirts and pants, when playing outdoors between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Include shade covering in the design of playground equipment and recreational areas

The American Cancer Society's "Sun Basics for Kids" recommends that adults and children:

**"Slip on a shirt  
Slop on some sunscreen  
Slap on a hat  
Slide on a pair of sunglasses, and  
Shade yourself"**

Shade is especially important for children under 2 years of age, who have more sensitive skin, wear less clothing, and often have bare feet. If the play area has any dark rubber surfacing, be sure to keep it cool by providing shade. All equipment should be tested with the back of the hand to ensure that is not too hot before a child uses it.





## W E A T H E R

Children should play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Outdoor play for infants may include riding in a carriage or stroller; however, infants should be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors, as well.<sup>5</sup> When weather is predicted to be uncomfortably hot during the summer months, we recommend you adjust your schedule to allow outdoor activities before noon.

Dress children appropriately for weather that poses a significant health risk such as wind chill at or below 15 degrees F. or a heat index at or above 90 degrees F. Please be aware of advisories and notices of poor air quality conditions as identified by the National Weather Service. These recommendations should be followed as advised.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Caring for Our Children Standard 2.009*

<sup>6</sup> *National Weather Service [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)*



---

---

## DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PLAY AREAS

Developmentally appropriate play areas should be designed for children aged birth to 23 months, 2 to 4 years, and 5 to 12 years, both in school settings and in the park setting. The maximum group size will be determined by the age of youngest child in your group. (For further information please refer to the CPSC guidelines.)

Infants and toddlers need opportunities of creeping, crawling, and walking. Soft surfacing (such as rubber tiles or poured in place materials) should be provided for pathways from the door of the building to other surfaces in play setting. Separate play areas are recommended for children in the birth to 23 months developmental category.

Adults need to heed signs and labels provided by manufacturers, in early childhood settings, schools, and parks that inform the public about the age ranges appropriate for the equipment. Play areas for children ages 2-4 should offer areas with smaller steps and crawl spaces. Hands require smaller grips, and bodies require appropriately placed railings on platforms. Appropriate play areas for children ages 2-4 could include:

- Areas to crawl
- Low platforms with multiple access such as ramps and ladders
- Ramps with pieces attached for grasping
- Low tables for sand, water and manipulation of materials
- Tricycle paths with various textures
- Flexible spring rockers; sand areas with covers; and shorter slides (usually no taller than 4 feet)



## ACCESSIBLE PLAY SPACES AND THE ADA

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines explain how indoor and outdoor playgrounds can be made accessible for children with disabilities. The Access Board (a federal agency responsible for the development of design guidelines for accessibility) submitted a plan to the Justice Department that determined how the ADA should be implemented in children's play environments. The plan states that children must have access to playgrounds and equipment as well as opportunities to play with children who do not have disabilities. For more information visit [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov).





Playground accommodations need to meet the needs of children with mobility impairments, cognitive delays, and sensory dysfunctions. It is critical to provide an opportunity for children with special needs to use play areas that allow children to:

- Get from the edge of the playground to the equipment
- Be able to play with other children
- Get onto equipment
- Get from the equipment to the edge of the playground and into a parking lot or building

# DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PLAY EQUIPMENT

The following table shows the appropriate age ranges for various pieces of playground equipment. This is not an all-comprehensive list and, therefore, should not limit inclusion of current or newly designed equipment that is not specifically mentioned. For equipment listed in more than one group, there may be some modifications or restrictions based on age, so consult the specific recommendations in CPSC Handbook for Playground Safety.

<b>Toddler Under 2</b>	<b>Preschool Ages 2-5</b>	<b>Grade School Ages 6-12</b>
Ramps Stairways Single file stepladders Slides Climbing equipment under 32" high Spring rockers  	Spring rockers Straight slides Spiral slides up to 360° Certain climbers** Merry-go-rounds Rung ladders Single file stepladders Stairways Ramps Horizontal ladders under 60" high for ages 4 and 5  	Chain or cable walks Free standing arch climbers Ladders – Arch; Rung Free standing climbing events with flexible parts Fulcrum seesaws Log rolls Long spiral slides (more than one 360° turn) Overhead rings*** Horizontal ladders Merry-go-rounds Track rides Vertical sliding poles Single-axis belt swings Slides Ring treks Stepladders Stairways Ramps Rotating tire swings
	** See CPSC §5.3.1	*** See CPSC §5.3.1.5

If a child care center or pre-school is located at an elementary school and the program does not have age appropriate equipment, it is recommended that children not play on the elementary school equipment, which is designed for children 5 to 12 years. If a separate area has been designed for preschool children then that is the only area that should be used.

---

---

Designate a separate area for preschool children. Make sure signs are conspicuously placed to inform adults about the two different playground settings, including appropriate age categories and notification of the need for adult supervision.

Within the elementary school setting it is reasonable to provide several different areas for play equipment because one size does not fit all. Playground facilities are equipped by grade levels such as:

- Kindergarten: areas to develop motor actions, climbing, and arm strength
- Grades 1 and 2: areas that continue to develop upper body strength, opportunities to develop understanding of level, range, direction, pathway, time, and force
- Grades 3 and 4: areas that encourage continued development of balance between upper body and lower body. Areas should also promote socialization with peers, and opportunities to make decisions
- Grades 5 and 6: areas that continue to develop strength and problem solving



---

---

# AVOIDING PLAYGROUND HAZARDS

Outdoor activity space should be accessible to all children and free from conditions that may be dangerous to the health and safety of children in care. The outdoor play space for child care centers is recommended to be 75 square feet (22.9 square meters) allocated per child. The equipment and play areas should be free from general hazards such as entrapment, pinch, crush, and shearing points as well as:

- Entanglement
- Impact with moving equipment or a moving vehicle
- Impact from tip over or failure
- Poisonous snakes, insects, or plants
- A natural or man-made hazard specific to the site or any condition or situation that poses a risk of injury to a child or staff member



## ENTANGLEMENT AND ENTRAPMENT

A playground part or group of parts should not form openings that could trap a child's head. An opening presents an entrapment hazard if the distance between any interior opposing surfaces is greater than 3.5 inches and less than 9 inches. Additionally:

- Drawstrings should be removed from hoods and necks of clothing to avoid entanglement and strangulation
- All fasteners, connectors and covering devices should not loosen or be able to be removed without the use of tools
- Lock washers, self-locking nuts and bolts should be provided to protect from detachment
- All hooks, including S-hooks, should be closed. There should be no gap or space greater than 0.04 inches, or a space that will not admit a dime.

## PINCH, CRUSH, AND SHEARING POINTS

The CPSC advises that "anything that could crush or shear limbs should not be accessible to children on a playground." Crush and shear points can be caused by parts moving relative to each other or to a fixed part during a normal use cycle. Further:

- There should be no sharp points, corners, and edges on any components and all components should be smooth and free from splinters
- All corners should be rounded or capped to avoid sharp edges (warning: children have died when hood or neck drawstrings on their jackets or sweatshirts caught on slides and other playground equipment)
- Protrusions, projections, pinch points, crush and shearing points should be eliminated from all playground equipment

---

## TRIPPING

Play areas should be free of trip hazards to children who may be running through a playground. The two most common trip hazards are anchoring devices for playground equipment and containment walls for loose-fill surfacing materials. All anchoring devices for playground equipment, such as concrete footings or horizontal bars at the bottom of flexible climbers, should be installed:

- Below ground level
- Beneath the base of the protective surfacing material, to eliminate the hazard of tripping

For information on stairways, ladders, and handrails go to section 10 of the CPSC guidelines. Specifications for major types of playground equipment are contained in section 12, Major Types of Playground Equipment in the CPSC Handbook for Public Playground Safety. You may obtain this document online at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).





---

---

## PLAYGROUND FALL SURFACING

The CPSC recommends the installation and maintenance of shock-absorbing surfaces around the play equipment. There should be a minimum of 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high. If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high. Or, use surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber like materials.

The CPSC (Standard 4.5) states that "hard surfacing materials, such as asphalt or cement are unsuitable for use under and around playground equipment of any height unless they are the required base for a shock absorbing unitary material such as a rubber mat. Earth surfaces such as soils and hard packed dirt are also not recommended because they have poor shock absorbing properties. Similarly, grass and turf are not recommended because wear and environmental conditions can reduce their effectiveness in absorbing shock during a fall."

Frequently, child care centers have playground equipment inside. Therefore, if playground equipment is installed inside, the acceptable surfacing materials should be specifically designed and ASTM F.1292 tested. To access this information go to [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for more manufacturing standards for different types of materials.



### SURFACING MATERIALS

There are two types of surfacing available for use under and around outdoor playground equipment: loose fill and unitary. These surfacing materials may be made of organic or inorganic materials.

**Loose Fill Materials** - made up of multiple particles that are not bonded together with glue or other adhesives. Because these materials are easily displaced and migrate with use, they should never be installed over an existing hard surface (e.g. asphalt or concrete). These materials need a method of containment (e.g. retaining barrier or excavated pit). There should also be good drainage underneath the material to prevent pooling and migration of the particles.

- **Organic Materials** - such as wood chips, bark mulch, and engineered wood fiber get compacted and decompose over time and should be replaced on a regular basis. Signs of microbial growth or the presence of weeds or other plant growth will require some replacement or removal of the material.



- **Inorganic Materials** - such as sand, pea gravel, or shredded rubber may need to be loosened from time to time because they become compacted, or in the case of gravel, they can turn into "hardpan." Gravel is not recommended for preschoolers because they place the small pea stones in various body cavities.

Recycled tires in multi-colors are available. Note that those materials with the primary color of black could make the rubber surfaces too hot in some climates. Care should be taken in extremely high temperatures to avoid burn injuries.

**Unitary Materials** - have materials that are bonded together either through heating or cooling or

with the use of a bonding agent or adhesive. Common unitary synthetic materials are rubber tiles or mats, urethane poured in place, and rubber compositions. When unitary surfacing materials develop holes or cracks they need to be repaired or replaced. Unitary materials should be ASTM approved.

## USE ZONES

Other than the equipment itself, the use zone should be free of obstacles that children could run into or fall on top of and thus be injured. It is also recommended that protective surfacing be installed 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, the surfacing should extend in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.

The CPSC defines use zones and outlines their requirements in the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety, 1997* as:

- Stationary equipment: 6 feet (1.8 meters) on all sides of the equipment
- Slides: 6 feet (1.8 meters) on all sides; 4 feet (1.2 meters plus the height of the slide in front of the slide chute
- Swings: 6 feet (1.8 meters); twice the height of the swing beam in front and back of the swing

---

---

# EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

An equipment maintenance policy provides a basis for what types of inspections will be performed, who will perform the inspections and how often the inspections will be performed. The following constitutes an important series of activities when a standard of care for the playground is to be maintained:



- Include the development of maintenance policies that set forth standards for the ongoing care of equipment and playground surfacing
- Carry out training in identifying different types of hazards and common problems for current and new staff or persons assuming supervision responsibilities
- Document hazards found on the playground enabling agencies to provide remedial training and maintenance
- Assign responsibility to an individual or group of individuals to identify maintenance activities, perform the maintenance, and to keep a maintenance record
- Provide training for maintenance supervisors and maintenance personnel (or designated staff) to look for hazards
- Establish a schedule for inspection and maintenance based on manufacturers' recommendations, frequency of use, equipment age and frequency of repairs, materials used, vandalism and accidents that occur on a piece of equipment



# WATER SAFETY



Each year, nationwide, about 300 children under 5 years old drown in swimming pools, usually a pool owned by their family. In addition, more than 2,000 children in that age group are treated in hospital emergency rooms for submersion injuries.<sup>7</sup> A child can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone. Seventy-seven percent of the victims had been missing from sight for 5 minutes or less. There is no splashing to alert anyone that the child is in trouble.

The following are recommendations for actions necessary to ensure the safest swim or water play activity possible.

## SWIMMING SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Use Only:

- Facilities that comply with Maryland's Public Pool and Spa Regulations, COMAR 10.17.01 (Verified by a local health department permit)
- Natural swimming areas that meet the requirements of the Maryland Beach Regulations COMAR 26.08.09.00 (Verified by a local health department permit)
- Facilities that are maintained to protect the health and safety of children and staff members

### Establish a swimming activity and swimming safety plan that includes:

- ✓ Supervision rules of behavior for children and supervisors assigned to the care of children permitted to be in the water
- ✓ Each child should have a signed permission slip from a parent or guardian before participating in water activity
- ✓ Lifeguard, family child care and child care center staff surveillance zones should be determined in the swimming area
- ✓ Designate safe swim areas based on the children's size and swimming ability
- ✓ Establish and maintain clear communication and emergency procedures that every staff member receives at the time of orientation
- ✓ Have clear provisions for a child with a special need

<sup>7</sup> CPSC Pub. 359 *How to Plan for the Unexpected-Preventing Child Drowning*

---

MSDE recommends that all local, state, and federal regulations that apply to water safety be followed. Please note the following items are not permitted:

- A pool such as a fill and drain molded plastic or inflatable pool or slide, which does not have a filtration and disinfection system approved by the local health department
- Pool toys, floatation devices (not meeting U.S. Coast Guard specifications), and swim aids are not recommended in home or public pools
- Hot tubs, spas and saunas are not recommended (Caring For Our Children Standard 5.211)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards*



---

---

## WATER SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Obtain prior written approval from a child's parent to take the child wading or swimming
- ✓ Approved child care staff in centers and family child care homes should provide continuous supervision for all children during any water activity
- ✓ When using pools, lakes, or any bodies of water available to children for swimming, a lifeguard must be present who holds current approved lifeguard certification. During the swimming activity the qualified lifeguard is at waterside and is not included in the required staff/child ratio
- ✓ When water is over a child's chest and the child cannot swim, a one-to-one staff/child ratio for each child who cannot swim should be maintained in the water. This standard does not apply to swimming lessons approved by the American Red Cross
- ✓ Only swimming facilities meeting applicable local standards of health, sanitation, and safety may be used
- ✓ Maintain child/staff ratios for infants and toddlers (See CFOC Standard 1.005)

## BARRIERS

When a body of water, pool or spa is onsite or in close proximity to the child care center or family day care home a barrier must be installed that:

- Meets the requirements of the Office of Child Care Circular Letter #97-06 Barriers for Swimming Pools and Spas in Child Care Centers
- Prevents a child from getting over, under, around or through the barrier and keeps a child from gaining access to the water

During a swimming activity, it is recommended that there be on duty at all times:

- At least two individuals who are certified in both CPR and First Aid
- A lifeguard, who is currently certified by a national organization
- An adult staff person, in addition to the lifeguard who is on duty to provide active supervision
- One staff member actively supervising not more than 2 children who are 2 years old
- One staff member actively supervising not more than 5 children who are 5 years old
- One staff member actively supervising not more than 10 children who are 6 years old or older
- If the child is a non-swimmer the ratio of staff to child should be one-to-one

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Public Pool and Spa Regulations (10.17.01) require supervision, for mixed age groups, to be at a ratio based on the age of the youngest child. When water is over a child's chest and the child cannot swim, a one-to-one staff member to child ratio shall be maintained in the water.



---

---

## APPENDICES

Frequently Asked Questions .....	1
Developmentally Appropriate Play Activities .....	3
Exercises and Activities for Birth to Six Months .....	4
Exercises and Activities for the Six Months to 12 Months .....	4
Exercises and Activities for the Second Year (12 to 18 Months).....	6
Exercises and Activities for the Almost Two (18 to 24 Months .....	6
Exercises and Activities for Two to Five Year Olds .....	8
Playground Safety Self Assessment Checklist .....	9
Swimming Safety Self Assessment .....	11
First Aid Supply List .....	13
Agency Regulations .....	14
Resources .....	15









## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ For whom was the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety guidelines written?

The handbook is intended for use by parks and recreation personnel, school officials, equipment purchasers and installers, and any other members of the general public concerned with public playground safety such as parents and school groups.

- ✓ Public playground refers to which areas?

"Public play areas are considered parks, schools, child care facilities, institutions, playgrounds for multiple family dwellings, restaurants, resorts and recreational developments, and other areas of public use. They are not intended for use with soft contained play equipment, equipment found in water play facilities, or home playgrounds."

- ✓ Are there CPSC guidelines for home playground equipment?

Yes. The Outdoor Home Playground Safety Handbook is the CPSC guidance intended for homes and residential child care facilities. There are also the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) technical provisions for the performance and design of home playground equipment.

- ✓ Are the MSDE Playground and Water Safety Guidelines formal regulations to be adhered to for licensed and registered child care providers in the state of Maryland?

No. The Playground and Water Safety Guidelines have been developed to help child care providers and other early education staff to voluntarily provide for increased safety of children while on a playground or participating in a water activity. The guidelines condense existing Office of Child Care (OCC) child care licensing regulations, CPSC standards, ASTM standards, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene regulations and other agency guidelines into one document to be used as an easy training or reference tool for child care providers and parents.

- ✓ If we use a community park or swimming pool and have notified the appropriate agency of a hazard without success, what should our next course of action be?

If you are a licensed or registered child care provider, the next step would be to enlist the help of your OCC Licensing Specialist to help communicate with the agency responsible for the maintenance of the playground. The Office of Child Care has established many cooperative relationships that can help improve the quality of these facilities. MSDE is committed to providing this type of support with help from parents, child care providers, and other early education providers.

---

---

✓ How do these recommendations apply to me as a family child care provider?

The MSDE Playground and Water Safety Guidelines contain recommendations based upon the CPSC document “Outdoor Home Playground Safety Handbook” and serve as a guide for the development and maintenance of home playgrounds.

✓ How do I address creating separate play environments for a family child care home serving mixed age groups?

When you look at playground design and equipment consider the developmental characteristics of children. ASTM has provided manufacturing standards for equipment for children of differing age ranges. The MSDE strongly recommends that family child care providers use products from reputable manufactures following these standards when designing and constructing a playground.

✓ How do I address creating play environments for children with health or other special needs?

Children with special needs receive the same positive benefits from exercise and exploration while at play. Again, some activities may need to be modified to fit each child’s needs and limitations.



---

---

## DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PLAY ACTIVITIES

Children in child care and pre-school learning environments benefit from early care and education providers encouraging activities that are developmentally age appropriate. The curricular objectives for Physical Education and Development included in the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) standards may act as guidelines for assessing children's performance. The physical development and health objectives and activities may be found online at [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care).

### ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

The following activities will help children to coordinate movements to perform simple tasks:

#### MOVING WITH BALANCE AND CONTROL

- Maintaining balance on a 2 x 4 balance beam that is close to the ground
- Moving around objects on narrow paths without bumping into things
- Developing mastery over running (such as quick stops, full circle turns, short 180 degree turns, speeding up and slowing down)
- Going up and down stairs using alternating feet without holding onto the rail or wall
- Walking and jumping
- Hopping several times on each foot
- Galloping with a smooth gait and relative ease

#### COORDINATING MOVEMENT TO PERFORM SIMPLE TASKS

- Throwing a ball in the right direction, aiming at a target with reasonable accuracy
- Catching a ball by moving arms or bodies to adjust for the direction the ball is traveling
- Kicking a large ball with a two step start
- Riding a tricycle on a path around a playground
- Using the slide, seesaw, or swings
- Hitting a stationary target with an overhand throw
- Attempting hopscotch or jumping rope
- Climbing on a play structure

#### ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

- Block building
- Throwing and catching balls
- Use of sand/water tables





## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS

### CHEST STRETCH TO STRETCH AND RELAX ARMS

**Action:** Put baby flat on back on the carpet or a covered pad on a table. Place your forefingers in the baby's hand to encourage grip. If baby does not hold his/her forearms, slowly stretch open the arms side-wards and gently close arms across the chest. At the same time, give a "snug hug."

### MASSAGE TO RELAX ARMS, SHOULDERS AND HANDS

**Action:** Put baby flat on back on the carpet or on a covered foam rubber pad. Pat and relax his/her shoulder; slowly massage the arm starting from the shoulder down to the hands. When baby has opened his/her hand, help the infant stroke his/her body and face as well as yours.

### LEG STRETCH TO RELAX AND STRENGTHEN LEGS

**Action:** Place baby flat on back on the carpet or on a covered pad on a table. Relax baby first by supporting baby's legs under the knee joint. Gently toss legs up and down. Then with one hand on the knees, carefully straighten legs. The hips should be in contact with the surface.

## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS

### SIDE TO SIDE

**Action:** Adult and child sit astride a large roll. Support on the hips. Lean the roll to the right and then to the left, so that the child transfers the weight to one foot for support as s/he learns to stand. Stop between each movement.

### ROLLING

**Action:** Place child on all fours over a roll or on an adult's thighs. Roll child slightly, transferring the weight from hands to feet, feet to hands. Continue rolling until the arms have been released and the child's weight is on the feet. Gradually the child will push off the roll to a standing position. Support child's hips.

### SIT AND REACH

**Action:** Encourage the child to sit on a low stool or wide-based wooden box with feet flat on the floor. Sit behind the infant, holding one thigh. Do not support his/her back. Hold a toy on one side, then the other. As the child reaches, s/he may lose balance. Teach the child how to support him/herself with the feet.



## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR SIX MONTHS TO TWELVE MONTHS *con't*

### CRAWL WITH ME

**Action:** As the child learns to crawl, lead the way around different objects such as a chair, a stool, a box. Crawl through a hoop, cardboard box tunnel, tire structures. Arrange favorite objects to encourage child to crawl under tables, benches, or a person's body forming a bridge. Challenge the child to crawl zigzag, straight, in the circles, slowly, quickly, forward, backward.

### SWING AND SWAY

**Action:** Sit on carpeted or padded surface facing the child, feet crossed in front of you. Grasp the child's hands and gently push and pull, swing and sway. Repeat the same action as both of you tug on opposite ends of a hand towel, rope or hoop.

### STAND UP

**Action:** Standing directly behind your child, support his/her arms. As the child gains balance and confidence, reduce your support progressively by holding one hand raised above shoulder level. The child will use his/her other hand for balance as s/he learns to stand alone.

### PULL UP

**Action:** Place child close to safe, stable surfaces which provide adequate support. Encourage the child to pull him/herself to standing position. Praise the child's attempts to stand alone.

### WALK TO ME

**Action:** To encourage the child to walk, stand one foot in front of the child and encourage him/her to step toward you. Gradually increase the distance between you and the child as his/her balance improves and confidence heightens. Two adults may be involved encouraging the child to walk back and forth between them.



## EXERCISES ACTIVITIES FOR THE SECOND YEAR (12-18 MONTHS)

### JACK IN THE BOX

**Action:** Show the child how to curl up into a tiny ball in an imaginary box and then to spring up when the lid is lifted. This can be accompanied by singing.

### FOLLOW THE LEADER

**Action:** Have the child follow you. This is an excellent game for children in this age group, since they love to imitate an adult. Be imaginative as you lead your child over, under, through, off, on, into, up, down, and a variety of other actions. Change the rhythm of moving by crawling, walking, or jumping.

### IN AND OUT

**Action:** Provide the child with a variety of household items to crawl into, out of, and through such as a box, a laundry basket, a cupboard, a chair, hoop or a playhouse.

### DROP AND PICK UP

**Action:** Encourage the child to drop and pick up different objects such as a ball, feather, bib, or can. Also encourage the child to pick up an object such as a small toy using another object like a large spoon. Demonstrate several times. Praise any action attempted and generously acknowledge accomplishment.

## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE ALMOST TWO (18-24 MONTHS)

### MY BODY

**Action:** To increase body awareness, have the child lie on back. Ask the child to lift different parts of his/her body.

- Have him/her lift two parts at one time; for example, two arms, two legs
- Have him/her lift two different parts; for example, foot and arm, elbow and knee
- Have child hide parts of the body; for example, hands behind back, feet under buttocks
- Have child move body parts in different ways; waving, shaking, tapping, rubbing, patting, pointing, wiggling, clapping, grasping
- Finally, have the child place a toy "between" his/her feet, then your feet



## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE ALMOST TWO (18-24 MONTHS) *con't*

### LET'S PRETEND

**Action:** Imitate animals through movement, while at the same time making up stories involving animals moving body parts, such as a bear stomping through the forest, snake moving on its stomach through the grass, bird flying through the air, a dog digging, and a turtle hiding in its shell. Imitate the actions of animals by bending, stretching, twisting, turning, swinging and swaying body parts and by moving in different directions.

### LOG ROLL

**Action:** Have child roll like a log with his/her body stretched, legs together, and hands together, above head.

### UP AND DOWN

**Action:** Encourage the child to learn about various "levels" by squatting down, standing up; lying down, sitting up; crouching down, standing up; climbing up, climbing down; wiggling or shaking body parts, holding them up and down. Also practice rising and falling by raising arms and letting them fall, standing and letting your body slowly fall to the floor, and playing and singing "Ring-Around-the-Rosy."

### OVER AND UNDER

**Action:** Explore "over" and "under" by providing equipment -ropes, poles, hoops, climbing apparatus - that the child can walk, run, climb and jump "over" and "under".

### ROPE

**Action:** To refine loco-motor skills and enhance spatial awareness, stretch two ropes along the floor and encourage the child to walk or run "between" ropes, "over" ropes, and "along" ropes. Gradually introduce walking along a balance board or balance beam, placed one foot above ground, first with support and then without support. Look for natural balance beams such as fallen logs, sidewalk curbs, picnic benches.

### WHERE AM I?

**Action:** Find objects the child can sit, crawl, or walk "in front of" and "behind." Crawl, walk, or jump "into", "out of" and "through" a variety of small boxes, tunnels, hoops, or tents made from blankets.





## EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR TWO TO FIVE YEAR OLDS

### CHASE GAMES

**Action:** Invite toddlers to run, especially at impromptu times-let them chase you, and you chase them. Toddlers also like to chase moving objects, such as balls, rings, and floating scarves.

### MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS

**Action:** Set up soft play equipment and ladders so toddlers can climb and develop upper-body strength. Climbing builds strength in arms, chest, and back. A nearby adult is a must for assistance and safe play.

### TARGET TIME

**Action:** Around the playground hang various size targets, laminated or on bed sheets, with bells sewn on them (to give children, especially those with visual impairments, instant feedback when they hit the target). Targets may be hung on the side of a building or on a fence. Toddlers stand close to or far away from the targets to aim and throw objects of different sizes, shapes, and weights (tennis balls, bean bags, lightweight floating balls, foam cubes with dots similar to dice, balls with numbers, and so on).

### CHASE BUBBLES

### SILLY WALKS AND RUNS

**Action:** Invent walks and runs like a monkey, hopping like a bunny, and flapping like a bird.

### ENCOURAGE RIDING

**Action:** Encourage the use of scooters and tricycles, and play with push toys such as trucks, doll broom hockey and toy lawn mowers.

### LEG ROCKS

**Action:** Have child stand with feet shoulder distance apart. Ask child to point the right (left) toe forward lifting the foot off the floor. Squeeze as hard as they can. Make the calf muscles feel like a rock. Ask the child to touch it - to make it harder. Ask him/her to make it bigger. Then ask them to let it go mushy. Do the same with the other leg. Then have them jump with both feet. Ask them to jump higher if the toes point down to the floor. Then have them shake the right (left) leg out so it's loose like spaghetti.

Encourage them to get moving at least 60 minutes a day for active free play. Let them have fun, climb, march, pedal, throw, roll, skip, dig, and jump in a safe space until they are tired. Offer riding toys, balls, bean bags, climbers, balance beams and obstacle courses.

# PLAYGROUND SAFETY SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This form is intended as a guide to ensure that the playground is a safe and fun environment for children to play. Use this checklist to observe the entire playground at least once a month. Train all personnel to be alert for hazards and report them promptly. Do not use hazardous equipment until it is repaired!

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>SUPERVISION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DATE REPAIR COMPLETED</b>
Has supervision training been provided for all staff?			
Is adequate supervision and care provided at all times only by individuals who are designated by the operator to provide supervision and care?			
Are activities provided for children that are age appropriate and meet the child's age, needs and capabilities?			
Do staff/child ratios meet the OCC Child Care Center regulations?			
Are children wearing appropriate clothing and appropriate footwear on climbing and moving equipment? Capes, flip-flops, etc. are not recommended.			
<b>FACILITIES</b>			
Are sufficient indoor and outdoor facilities provided to accommodate the number of children?			
Are there 9-12 inch deep resilient ground covers under all swings designed for older children, merry go rounds, slides and climbing or moving equipment?			
Is the resilient surface in place and not compacted?			
If concrete or asphalt is under the equipment, is there an CPSC or ASTM approved manufactured installed playground surfacing product on the surface?			
Is the outdoor play area free of standing water and does it have appropriate drainage?			
Is the space for physical activity large enough to accommodate all children and allow all of them to move safely at the same time?			
Are indoor and outdoor facilities free of hazards so children may participate safely? For example animal feces, broken glass, etc			
Is the outdoor play area free from electrical hazards such as accessible air conditioners, switch boxes, or accessible power lines?			
Are grass, trees and shrubs properly trimmed and maintained?			
Is the outdoor play area free from obstructions (such as tree stumps, roots and rocks) that may interfere with normal play activity?			
Are facilities inspected before activity begins to ensure safety of space and equipment?			
Is play equipment free of openings that could trap a child's head? (Openings should be less than 3.5" in width or more than 9" in width)			
Are there concrete supports below the ground, and are they secure?			
Do the climbing areas prevent children from falling more than their reaching height when standing erect?			
Are the wood timbers not rotting, splitting, splintering, or excessively worn?			

SUPERVISION	YES	NO	DATE REPAIR COMPLETED
Are there ample equipment and supplies provided so each child can participate fully in physical activity?			
Is all equipment maintained and in good repair and is all equipment regularly inspected and repaired or replaced?			
Is an emergency first aid kit readily accessible on the playground at all times?			
Is the equipment free from protrusions that can catch clothing?			
Are portable toys such as tricycles and wagons in good repair?			
Is the equipment free of crush points or shearing actions such as hinges of seesaws and under carriage of revolving equipment?			
Is the fence at least 4 feet high and in good repair. Can gates be secured?			
Is the equipment free from frayed cables, worn ropes, open hooks, or chains that can pinch?			
Is the equipment free from sharp edges, broken parts, pinching actions, loose bolts, or wobbly equipment not properly anchored?			
Are swing seats light weight with no protruding parts?			
Are Preschool children prevented from playing on elementary school playground equipment unless it is designated for preschool age children ages 2-5?			

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_












\_\_\_\_\_













\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Modified from form developed by Dr. Joe L. Frost, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Texas at Austin*

**SWIMMING SAFETY SELF-ASSESSMENT** for  
**CHILD CARE CENTERS, FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES and BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

FACILITY NAME:			
<p>Swimming is a fun and healthy. But take precaution at swimming activities to prevent recreational water illnesses, injuries and drowning. The following guidelines help you prepare and provide a safe activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Complete sections A, B, C and D of the water safety self-assessment: <b>for each</b> swim activity.</li> <li>▶ Sign and date the water safety self-assessment form and maintain the signed document in the facility records.</li> <li>▶ Before participating in a swim activity, train facility staff and volunteers so that a person understands the safety risks and rules.</li> <li>▶ Questions? Please contact MSDE Office of Child Care at:  <a href="http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/licensing_branch">http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/licensing_branch</a></li> </ul>			
<b>A. SWIM SAFETY PLAN</b>			
1. Swimming Activity Date		2. Swimming Activity Time	
3. Public Pool Information		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
Public Pool Name		Phone	
Pool Permit Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes ▶ Enter Permit #: _____ ▶ Enter Permit Expiration Date: _____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim at a pool that is not permitted by the Local Health Department</b>		
4. Natural Bathing Place Information		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
Natural Bathing Place Name		Phone	
Natural Bathing Place Swim Site Location			
Swimming water sampled or permitted by the Local Health Dept.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes ▶ Enter Permit #: _____ ▶ Enter Permit Expiration Date: _____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim at a natural bathing place that is not approved by the Local Health Department</b>		
Beach hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes or Do Not Know  <b>Do not swim until hazards are identified and eliminated.</b>	
5. Written swimming safety procedures prepared	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim. Prepare plan.</b>	
6. Program personnel trained in swim safety procedures. Training documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim. Train staff.</b>	
7. Parent authorization form obtained for each child	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim. Obtain authorization.</b>	
8. Child behavior rules established	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim. Establish activity rules.</b>	
<b>B. SWIM SITE SUPERVISION AND DESIGNATED SWIM AREAS</b>			
1. The facility director or the director's designee is present at the swim site supervising the overall activity.	Name _____ Phone During Activity _____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim. Provide management supervision at the swim site.</b>		
2. One lifeguard is positioned and on duty for each 50 swimmers or less.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>Do not swim until adequate lifeguard supervision is provided.</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Number of lifeguards required: _____	
3. More than one lifeguard is required at this site and is positioned and on duty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown/Not Provided  <b>Do not swim until adequate lifeguard supervision is known and provided.</b>		
	Group	Non-Swimmers	Designated Swim Area
4. Appropriate swim areas are established by the facility and aquatic staff.  <b>The areas must be based on the children's swimming ability, age and height with direct and active supervision provided AT ALL TIMES by lifeguards and facility staff</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	

<i>to prohibit a non-swimmer from entering water chest deep or deeper.</i>		Swimmers	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. In addition to lifeguards, the facility staff are positioned at each designated swim area and are supervising children in the water as required by State regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until adequate supervision is provided.
6. In addition to lifeguards, the facility staff directly supervises a non-swimmer child who is allowed in water chest deep or deeper at the ratio of one adult to 1 non-swimmer child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until adequate supervision is provided.
7. Children who are not swimming and are at the swim site are supervised by facility staff according to State regulation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not allow child to swim until safeguards are in place.
8. A special needs child is supervised and accommodated according to the established care plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until supervision is provided.
9. Two persons certified in CPR (age-appropriate) and First Aid; <i>The individuals may be facility personnel or aquatic staff.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until first aid personnel are provided.
<b>C. SWIM PROCEDURES</b>			
1. First visit: The lifeguard or aquatic manager discusses the swim site rules with children and facility staff before children enter the water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until the rules are discussed.
2. Before allowing a child in water chest deep or deeper, swimmers are tested for swimming skills by the <b>lifeguard on site.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable, Children restricted to shallow water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Children who are not tested by the lifeguard on site must be classified a non-swimmer and is not allowed in water chest deep or deeper.
3. First visit: The facility's safety procedures are practiced at the swim site.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until safety procedures are practiced.
4. The provider can quickly account for all children during a swim activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim; Establish procedure.
5. Swimmer rest periods and bathroom breaks are scheduled.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until scheduled.
6. Facility personnel remove children who are not following rules from the water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not allow child to swim until distraction is eliminated.
<b>D. BARRIER</b>			
1. A barrier prevents a child from getting over, under or through the fence gaining access to water. Public Pool: Barrier includes wading pool separation from main pool with fence and self-closing gate. Natural Bathing Place: Instead of barrier enhanced safety procedures and supervision must be provided by on-site facility staff restricting activity to safest area.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Do not swim until the hazard is eliminated.
<b>E. COMMENTS</b>			
Facility Director or Designee's Signature		Date	

4/2008

## FIRST AID SUPPLY LIST

REQUIRED ITEM	USE TO
Band Aids ( assorted sizes)	To cover and protect cuts or open wounds.
Flashlight (operable, may be small)	To check eyes, inside nose, throat and ears.
Gauze pads (2"x2" or 4"x4")	To clean, cover and protect cuts or open wounds.
Gauze pad (large, thick size) or sanitary napkin	To control bleeding or cover large wounds.
Gauze, flexible rolls (2 rolls)	To hold gauze bandages in place.
Gloves (disposable vinyl-latex gloves are acceptable, but they may cause a skin reaction for the wearer)	To protect person administering aid.
Ice Bag or Chemical Ice Pack	To control swelling when filled or activated.
Paper Towels	To clean up spills (then discard).
Pocket mask/Face shield for CPR	To perform rescue breathing during CPR.
Safety Pins	To secure sling in place.
Scissors (blunt tip)	To cut gauze and bandages to size.
Soap (liquid, fragrance-free)	To clean injured area.
Tape (hypo-allergenic)	To hold gauze bandages to size.
Thermometer (non-glass, non-mercury) or fever strip	To take body temperature. Do not take rectally.
Triangular bandage (pre-made or 40"x40"x64" piece of clean cotton cloth)	To immobilize body parts as a sling or a tie for a splint; To hold dressing on large wounds.
Tweezers	To remove splinters.
Wash cloths (disposable)	To clean injured area.
<p>If you suspect that a child has been poisoned, call Poison Control immediately! Follow all instructions given by Poison Control. Do not induce vomiting unless instructed to do so by Poison Control. <b>POISON CONTROL: 410 529-7701 (Metropolitan Baltimore) or 1-800-222-1222 (Maryland only, toll-free)</b></p>	

**Note: First aid supplies are to be kept in a location which is convenient and easily accessible. All first aid items are to be maintained in a sufficient quantity for the size of the child care program. First aid supplies are to be available at the child care facility and on all field trips.**

### Recommended Additional Items:

- Coins for emergency phone calls or cell phone
- Pen/pencil and note pad for recording emergency events for use on field trips
- Splints (metal or plastic)
- Emergency medication for children with special needs (as approved and provided by parents)
- Purchased bottled water (replace once opened)

# AGENCY REGULATIONS

## OFFICE OF CHILD CARE CENTER REGULATIONS

Maryland State Department of Education Family Law Article 5-560, 5-64, and 5-570-5-585; State Government Article, 10-617; Article 88A. Effective January 1, 2006, the chapter was re-codified as COMAR 13A.14.02. These regulations govern non-parental care of children for part of a 24-hour day, not in the child's own home, in a group setting such as a child care center, preschool, child development center, nursery school, before-school and after-school program, school aged child care or early learning center, by whatever name known, under private nonprofit, proprietary, public, and religious auspices.

## OFFICE OF CHILD CARE FAMILY DAY CARE HOME REGULATIONS

Maryland State Department of Education Family Law Article 5-550-5-557.1 and 5-560; State Government Article, 10-617; Article 88A; Annotated Code of Maryland (COMAR) is re-codified as COMAR 13A.14.01. The purpose of registration of family day care homes is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children while they are in family day care, and to identify family day care homes.

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE PUBLIC POOLS AND SPA REGULATIONS

Health-General Article Sections 2-102, 2-104, 18-102 and 20-303 - Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.17.01 Public Swimming Pools and Spas is administered by Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). The purpose of this chapter is to enact regulations that protect and promote the public health and safety of individuals at public spas and pools in Maryland. Public pools include limited public-use pools, recreational pools, and semipublic pools. This chapter adopts construction standards, updates disinfection standards, recognizes certain new technologies and design concepts, and establishes minimum criteria for public pools and spas.

## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT BEACH REGULATIONS

26.08.09.00 Title 26 DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT Subtitle 08 WATER POLLUTION Chapter 09 Public Bathing Beaches Authority: Environment Article, §9-252, 9-313-9-315, and 9-319, Annotated Code of Maryland 26.08.09.01 26.08.09.01. 01 Definitions. A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated. B. Terms Defined. 1) "Approving authority" means the Secretary of the Department of the Environment or the Secretary's designee. 2) Beaches. a) "Beaches" means natural waters, including points of access, used by the public for swimming, bathing, surfing, or other similar water contact activities. b) Beaches are places where people engage in or are likely to engage in activities that could result in immersion or ingestion of water.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS, i.e. Local Recreation and Parks Units and Local School Boards

COMAR 10.16.06 allows local government programs to self-regulate its recreation and park programs (camp-intramural-swimming), providing that it has its own health and safety standards. DHMH annually advises the local unit of any violation of State regulation, but does not certify the program.

## ADMINISTRATION for CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HEAD START

Federal safety requirements at 45 CFR §§ 1304.53 (a)(7) and 1304.53 (a)(10) (x) for public school or public playgrounds used by grantees and delegate agencies are to "provide for the maintenance, repair, safety, and security of all Early Head Start and Head Start facilities. The regulations requirements include the "selection, layout, and maintenance of playground equipment and surfaces to minimize the risk of injury to children. These programs must, as prescribed by local laws and comply with the minimum specifications described in the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety (Chapter 4.5) of various surfacing materials.

## RESOURCES

*Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards*\_American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (2002).

*Child & Family Canada, Moving and Growing: Exercises and Activities for Five and Six-Year Olds*,  
[www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cich/0003-en.htm](http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cich/0003-en.htm)

"Concurrent and longitudinal relations between children's playground behavior and social preference, victimization and bullying." *Child Development* 70 (4), 944-954

*Consumer Product Safety Handbook for Playground Safety*, Consumer Product Safety Commission (1997)

*Safety Barriers Guidelines for Home Pools*, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Pub 362  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/Pool.pdf>

"Elements of Negligence", in *Law for Recreation and Sports Managers*, (3rd Edition), O. Cotton and J.T. Wolsham (eds), (pp. 56-65) Dubuque, IA. Kendall Hunt

*High Expectations: Playgrounds for Children of All Abilities*, 1st Edition, pp. 54, National Center for Boundless Playgrounds

*Illinois Early Learning Project, Resources on Early Learning Tip Sheets, Physical Fitness for Preschool-Age Children*, <http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/fitness-preschool.htm>

National Program for Playground Safety website: <http://www.playgroundsafety.org/> ,  
*S.A.F.E. Play Areas: Creation, Maintenance, Renovation*, Thompson, Hudson, Olsen (2007)

*National Child Care Information Center*, <http://www.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/playgrounds.pdf>

*Raising Children Network, Activities for Younger Children*,  
[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/activities\\_for\\_younger\\_kids.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/activities_for_younger_kids.html)

*S.A.F.E. Playground Supervision Manual*, Cedar Falls IA: National Program for Playground Safety. Bruya, Hudson, S. Olsen, H. Thompson, D, and Bruya (2002)

*Suitel01.com, Broom Hockey Daycare Activity: Physical Gross Motor Lesson Plan for Preschool*,  
[http://day-care-activities.suitel01.com/article.cfm/broom\\_hockey\\_daycare\\_activity](http://day-care-activities.suitel01.com/article.cfm/broom_hockey_daycare_activity)

"*Supervision on elementary school playground.*" Unpublished master's thesis, Gonzaga University, Spokane WA

Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary (1984)

*Work Sampling System (WSS™)*, Dichtemiller, et al (1999)





## WEBSITES:

American Standards for Testing Materials (ASTM)

[www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org)

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education

<http://nrc.uchsc.edu>

CPSC Handbook

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>

Safety Checklist for Active Play (PA ECELS program) - I really like this checklist - you may want to compare with the one you have for any additional information

<http://www.ecelshealthychildcarepa.org/content/Safety%20Checklist%20for%20Active%20Play%20Areas.pdf>

Sun Safety Alliance Resource List

<http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org/resources.html>

Moving and Growing: Exercises and Activities for the First Two Years

[http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cich/00001\\_en.htm](http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cich/00001_en.htm)

IEL Tip Sheets: Physical Fitness for Preschool-Aged Children

<http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/fitness-preschool.htm>

Public Health Seattle and King County Child Care Health Program , The Power of Physical Activity

<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/childcare/physical.htm>

SunGuardMan Online

[www.sunguardman.org/core.html](http://www.sunguardman.org/core.html)

## FIRST AID KIT SUPPLIERS:

Channing Bete Company 1-800-611-6083 [www.channing-bete.com](http://www.channing-bete.com)

Laerdal Medical Corporation 1-888-562-4242 [www.laerdal.com](http://www.laerdal.com)

WorldPoint ECC, Inc. 1-888-322-8350 [www.worldpoint-ecc.com](http://www.worldpoint-ecc.com)

First -Aid Product .com [www.first-aid-product.com/industrial/cprl.htm](http://www.first-aid-product.com/industrial/cprl.htm)

[www.cpr-savers.com](http://www.cpr-savers.com)

[www.cprkits.com](http://www.cprkits.com).



# PLAYGROUND AND WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES



Division of Early Childhood Development  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

[www.MarylandPublicSchools.org](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org)

2008 Maryland State Department of Education