

Playground Equipment

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

Home Safety Checklist

43. Cushioning materials (i.e., mats, wood chips, or sand) are used under climbing equipment, slides, and swings--according to Wisconsin State Licensing's recommended guidelines for depth.



The Basics

Why is playground safety important? Injuries sustained from home playgrounds can be significant and can even result in death. 50,000 children in the United States visit hospital emergency rooms every year because of injuries on home playgrounds, accounting for one out of five playground-related injuries. 80% of the injuries occur when children fall off equipment. Of the reported deaths of children younger than age 15 that involved playground equipment, 70% occurred in home locations. Severe injuries are most common on the upper extremities, including the head and neck, and have the potential for long-term consequences or death. The likelihood of severe injury is closely tied to the type of surfacing underneath the playground. Non-impacting-absorbing surfaces, including grass and dirt, double the risk of severe injury from falls, while loose-fill materials like sand, pea gravel, and engineered wood fiber provide shock-absorbing properties that reduce the chance of significant injury from falls. Minimizing the risk of injury by properly planning, constructing, and maintaining outdoor play areas is key to keeping children safe and happy outdoors.

How do I keep children safe when they fall? Family child care professionals are responsible for planning and maintaining a safe outdoor environment. To minimize risk of injury, playground equipment like climbing structures, swings, and slides with a fall height of 36 inches or higher must:

- Not be placed over concrete or asphalt.
- Be placed atop loose-fill materials filled to the recommended depth by height.
- Be positioned in an area with a fall zone of 6 feet in all directions.

I want to learn more!

- [Playground Safety: Cushioning Material](#)
- [Outdoor Home Playground Safety Handbook](#)
- [Licensing Rules for Family Child Care DCF 250.06 Physical plant and equipment](#)
- [Playground Information to Use with the Environmental Rating Scales](#)
- [Is Your Playground Safe for Kids?](#)
- [National Program for Playground Safety](#)