

## TRAMPOLINES

Trampolines require active supervision and parents/carers need to ensure they can meet certain safety measures to reduce the risk of injury:

### When buying and installing a trampoline Kidsafe NSW recommends the following:

- ◆ The trampoline complies to Australian Standard AS 4989
- ◆ Safety pads are installed to cover the frame and springs
- ◆ Locate the trampoline on a flat, soft surface and secure to the ground
- ◆ A clearance (fall zone) around the trampoline of 2500mm for open and in ground trampolines and 1500mm for enclosed trampolines
- ◆ A clearance of 8 metres above the trampoline
- ◆ Do not provide access to the trampoline by using linked ladders or planks



### When using the trampoline:

- ◆ Children under 6 years require constant supervision
- ◆ Older children need firm guidelines on proper use of the trampoline
- ◆ Allow only one child at a time on the trampoline and encourage skill development
- ◆ Teach your child to jump in the centre of the mat and focus their eyes on the trampoline to help to control bounce
- ◆ Teach your child to climb on and off the trampoline rather than jumping off
- ◆ Regularly check the condition of the trampoline frame, springs and bed for tears, rust, detachment and general weakening of the structure



## SWINGS

- ◆ Swings should be free-standing—not attached to any other play equipment
- ◆ Ensure swing frames are **well anchored** into the ground. It is recommended that tested playground surfacing be provided in the fall zone of the swing
- ◆ Swing seats should be made of a soft flexible plastic or rubber. There should be no more than 2 seats per frame and at least 600mm separating the two swing seats
- ◆ Chain links can entrap and crush fingers. A short link chain is recommended or cover chains with a plastic/rubber sheath
- ◆ Ensure the connections of the swing at the seat do not present sharp protruding parts which could injure the child's hand or catch clothing

**KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.**  
**Playground Advisory Unit**  
 Kidsafe House  
 Hainsworth Street  
 Locked Bag 4001  
 WESTMEAD NSW 2145  
 Ph: 02 9845 0890 Fax: 02 9845 0895  
[kidsafe@chw.edu.au](mailto:kidsafe@chw.edu.au)  
[kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

February 2012



## Safe Play for Backyards



Play is an essential part of childhood and growing up. Children develop and learn skills through play. A safe and creative play environment enables this vital development to occur.

The most common place for childhood injury is in and around the home. The majority of these injuries occur in the backyard and garden. Falls from play equipment make up most of the injuries in backyards.

There are no laws covering the equipment children can play on in their own backyards, however there are Australian Standards for playground equipment. Australian Standards aim to reduce the number and severity of playground injuries and enable children to play confidently in a safe environment.

When purchasing play items and installing them in your backyard ask the question *"Does it comply with the Australian Standards?"*



## SAFE BACKYARD PLAY

- ☑ The backyard should be clear from general rubbish and trip hazards
- ☑ Tools, equipment and chemicals should be locked away in safe storage
- ☑ It is recommended that play equipment should comply to the Australian Standard AS 4685
- ☑ Position play equipment in an area that is densely shaded, easily supervised and accessible and away from the driveway, pool or other hazards
- ☑ Ensure play equipment including bikes are age appropriate and size appropriate
- ☑ Ensure play equipment is strong, sturdy and securely anchored, secure any ropes top and bottom so they are not slack and cannot form a noose
- ☑ Play equipment should not have sharp edges, splinters or protruding parts that could pierce skin, or tangle children's hair or clothing
- ☑ Remove cords from children's clothing
- ☑ Supervise young children on and around play equipment at all times
- ☑ Regularly check play equipment for wear and tear
- ☑ Fence off driveways and garages/carports from play areas
- ☑ Ensure pool gates are self closing, self locking and well maintained. Regularly inspect fence panels and gates
- ☑ Remove any plants that may harm or cause illness in children
- ☑ Keep animals that may harm children away from the area when children are playing

child safety is no accident

child safety is no accident

# Backyard Play Equipment

## General Considerations

### HEIGHT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT

Falls are the leading cause of injury in playgrounds. There are Australian Standards restricting the **fall height** of play equipment - the distance a child could fall from the equipment to the ground. The recommended maximum fall height for any play equipment is:

- 1000mm for children 0-3 years of age (*Kidsafe NSW* recommendation)
- 1500mm for children 3-5 years of age
- 2500mm for children over 5 years of age.

Equipment with a fall height greater than 500mm above ground level must have a soft surface (impact absorbing material) under and around it to cushion the fall and prevent the risk of both head and other serious injuries.

### TESTED PLAYGROUND SURFACING

Tested playground surfacing is not just bark mulch you buy to put on your garden. Tested playground surfacing has impact absorbing properties. Asphalt and concrete do not have any impact absorbing properties and therefore are not a suitable surface below or surrounding play equipment. Grass should not be used as surfacing for equipment more than 500 mm above ground level because of its reduced ability to cushion a fall.

Refer to the *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheet titled *Playground Surfacing*.

*Kidsafe NSW* recommends that in domestic backyards surfacing be placed under and around play equipment higher than 500mm and cover the **fall zone**. The fall zone is the area under and around the play equipment in which a child is likely to fall. 1900mm for 0-6 years (in supervised care) and 2500mm for older children is used as a guideline in backyards. Consider the ages of ALL children using your backyard before deciding what size fall zone to use. Refer to the *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheet titled *Fall Zones*.



### HEAD AND NECK ENTRAPMENT

Care should be taken to ensure that spaces within play equipment items do not present as head and neck entrapment hazards. Head and neck entrapment refers to a space where a child can fall feet first through a gap which is too narrow for their head to pass through. The child can be left hanging potentially at risk of strangulation. This can occur with any enclosed space 600mm or more above ground or surface level where the child may not be able to stand to support their body weight. If the child's head is trapped, they need to be able to support their weight with their feet on the ground or standing surface to prevent strangulation.

*Any enclosed space between 89mm — 230mm and above 600mm from ground or standing surface level is a head and neck entrapment hazard.*



A ruler or tape measure could be used to check for bound head and neck entrapment hazards in the set up of fixed and mobile equipment (example pictured above).

### MAINTENANCE

**A regular maintenance regime is an essential part in keeping the backyard safe.**



- ☒ Check all play items for spiders and insects
- ☒ Check the condition of play items for splinters, rust, detachments or weakening from exposure to the sun
- ☒ Check all play items are securely anchored
- ☒ Rake surfacing material and maintain to a minimum depth of 300mm
- ☒ Check sandpits for animal debris and other items of contamination. Remove debris
- ☒ Check all chains (eg. swings) for rust, wear and tear



### CUBBY HOUSES

A cubby house can be a creative and imaginary play space for children.

When purchasing and/or installing a cubby house consider the following:



Is it an appropriate size for the children who will be using the cubby?



Is the fall height no greater than 1m for 0-3 years and 1.5m for 3-5 years? The design and location of the cubby house should not allow children to climb onto the roof or surrounding structures.



If the cubby is climbable then a fall zone with surfacing is recommended. Refer to the *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheets titled *Playground Surfacing* and *Fall Zones*.



It is recommended for cubby houses with a platform height of 500mm or more above ground level, that all barriers on the cubby house comprise of either SOLID PANELS or VERTICAL RAILS (not horizontal rails) with a recommended height of 900mm above standing surface. This reduces the chance of a child climbing higher. To avoid a head entrapment hazard, gaps between vertical rails measure less than 89mm for metal rails, or less than 75mm for timber rails.



Ensure that there are no sharp edges, splinters or entrapment areas on or within the structure.



Ensure that CCA treated timber is not used in the construction of the cubby house. Check with manufacturers or distributors. A wide range of preservative treatments for timber are available. Refer to the *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheet titled *Timber for Playspaces*.



A cubby at ground level reduces the risk of falls.



### EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION IN THE BACKYARD AND PLAYGROUND

Good adult supervision involves careful, attentive monitoring of a child. The backyard and playground can be unpredictable and uncontrollable, even within established boundaries of a safe play area.

- Constant supervision means that an adult is always within sight and sound of a child.
- Intermittent supervision occurs when an adult is out of sight and sound for up to 15 minutes.
- Periodic supervision involves visual observation of a child at least every 15 - 30 minutes.

The proper amount of supervision depends on the age of the child, the number of children engaged in play, the type of play occurring and the location of play.

**Children 0 to 6 years of age** need constant supervision during play. They are slowly developing their muscles and balance. They are learning about spatial relationships and how to solve problems. Children this age are entirely dependent on adults to provide them with appropriate and safe play opportunities.

Adults should:

- Allow exploration within strict boundaries under careful watch
- Provide reassurance to children that an adult is near and will keep them safe
- Give simple explanations about why some things are "off limits"

**Children 7 to 9 years of age** have increased mobility and require larger spaces for play. They should have constant or intermittent supervision during play. Adults should:

- Be firm and consistent and promote respect for safety rules
- Take questions seriously and explain consequences of unsafe play
- Explain how and where to contact an adult quickly in case of emergency

**Children 10 years of age and older** require intermittent or periodic supervision, depending on play activities. Children this age are very mobile. They begin seeking new play/recreation experiences that are more complex and may pose greater risk for harm. They still do not fully understand hazards and the potential consequences of hazards. Adults should:

- Set and enforce consistent rules and explain consequences of breaking those rules
- Explain how and where to contact an adult quickly in case of emergency