



Playground Safety: What To Look For

(NAPSA)—Each year in the United States, emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related injuries—but parents can keep their own kids out of such statistics.

Five S's of Playground Safety

There are five S's in particular that parents, teachers and other caregivers should consider in and around playground equipment, equipment of their own in the backyard, and equipment that kids jump onto in parks, at school, in fast-food restaurants or while in day care. These are:

1. S-hooks and -rings on swings. They attach a swing's chains to the overhead bar. If a swing's S-hooks are worn or they are not fully closed, move on to a better-maintained playground. Bent S-rings can cause the chain on the swing to come loose. Swings are responsible for most injuries on home playgrounds.

The National Safety Council says swings are the most likely piece of playground equipment to cause injuries to children and most serious swing injuries come from falls that cause bone fractures. The most common fractures in children occur in the forearm and wrist. Typically, these injuries occur from a fall when children try to catch themselves with their arm outstretched.

2. Sharp edges. Bolts and screws, bent metal and the like around the playground can all cause scrapes and serious cuts.

3. Soft surfaces. Mats made of safety-tested rubber are a great



A few simple steps, such as making sure the S-hooks on swing chains are secure, can help parents protect their little ones from playground dangers.

surface. Wood chips, mulch or sand, about a foot deep, is also fine. On public playgrounds, more injuries occur on climbers than on any other equipment, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports.

4. Space. Kids need plenty of landing space when jumping off swings or a jungle gym. Make sure the soft surfaces extend well beyond the equipment. A good rule of thumb is double the height of a swing set.

5. Supervision. Watch your children on the playground—they won't mind the extra attention.

Learn More

You can find more safety advice and information on a downloadable checklist for parents available from AccidentAttorneys.org, a nationwide network of highly credentialed accident and injury attorneys. The list is at <http://accidentattorneys.org>.