

Maintaining Playgrounds

Each child care facility, whether it is a home or a center, should inspect the playground on a regular basis. Before going out on the playground each day, check for:

- broken equipment
- debris
- obvious hazards
- surfacing depth (rake if necessary)

More thorough inspections should be done using a checklist. How often these inspections are conducted will depend on the type of equipment, amount of use, and weather. Quarterly inspections are often sufficient. Keep checklists as documentation of your evaluation.



A comprehensive inspection should be done occasionally (at least once) by a trained professional. Child Care Health Program staff are Certified Playground Safety Inspectors through the National Playground Safety Institute and are happy to conduct such a review for your child care. Call to schedule an appointment.

Child Care Health Program Mission Statement

To promote and maintain healthy, safe and nurturing child care environments through support, education, and collaboration involving the child care community.



Call the Snohomish Health District's Child Care Health Program if you are interested in having an assessment of your playground or would like assistance in playground design. We can also provide handouts to share with parents.



PUBLIC HEALTH
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND
HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Child Care Health Program

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Child Care Health Program

▶ Playgrounds:

Maintenance



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Playground Maintenance Checklist

General Up-Keep

- Area is free of debris, litter, or animal waste
- Trash or garbage is not accessible to children
- Paint is in good condition, is not chipping, and contains no lead
- There are no trip hazards, such as exposed footings on anchoring devices, rocks, roots, or any other obstacles in the play area
- Area around the equipment is free from obstacles
- The entire play area has no drainage problems; pay special attention to heavy use areas, such as under swings and slide exit regions
- Treated wood is sealed annually with a protective coating

Surfacing

- Surfaces around playground equipment have 9"-12" of wood chips, rubber mulch, or pea gravel; Rubber mats or mulch may be used provided ASTM testing results are available and match equipment requirements
- Foreign objects or debris are removed from surfacing
- Loose surfacing materials have not compacted, reduced in depth, or deteriorated; Pay special attention to those areas under swings and at slide exits. Rake surfacing, if necessary
- Surfacing extends at least 6' from the base of the equipment in all directions, and further for swings and slides

General Hazards

- There are no sharp points, corners, or edges; For example, check the sides and sliding surface of slide chutes for sharp or rough edges caused by deterioration
- Elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails and barriers
- There are no missing or damaged protective caps or plugs
- Spaces such as openings in guard rails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5" or more than 9"
- There are no potential clothing entanglement hazards such as open S-hooks, protruding bolt ends, or spaces between the slide and the platform
- There are no crush or shear points or exposed moving parts
- Equipment is not broken or missing pieces
- Equipment and other play features have no rust, rot, cracks, or splinters; Pay special attention to possible corrosion where structures come in contact with the ground
- Equipment is securely anchored



Security of Hardware

- There are no loose or worn connecting, covering, or fastening hardware devices
- S-hooks at both ends of swings and all connection points on flexible climbing elements show no wear
- Moving parts, such as swing hangers or merry-go-round bearings are not worn
- Screws have no more than 2 exposed threads

