

Playground Safety Procedure

Policy: Playground safety is of foremost importance in preventing childhood accidents. Routine safety inspections and rules will be established and maintained at all sites.

Performance Standard 1304.22(d)(1), (d)(2)

Procedure:

- Head Start staff and EHS-CCP will thoroughly inspect all areas of the playground each day prior to the children's outdoor time. This check will include but not be limited to a check for the following hazards:
 - Needles, glass, and other sharp objects. Gloves should be used when picking up these objects. Dispose of objects in an appropriate manner. Remember—wash your hands immediately afterwards.
 - Suspicious person who do not have legitimate reasons for being in or around the playground area.
 - Dangerous equipment that may cause falls, cut, scrapes, pinching, bruises and or puncture wounds or serious injury.
 - Areas underneath play structures and swings were the depth of the ground cover is not adequate.
 - Moveable play structures that are brought outside must only be located on a cushioned surface (within 6 ft. of space on all sides) in an area that is at least 6-8 feet away from jumping (from structures) and running zones.
 - Other dangers may include; poisonous or hazardous foliage, including sharp branches, thorns, poisonous mushrooms, bee or wasp nests, and wood structures that have sharp splinters, bolts, nails, etc...
 - Staff will complete the **Playground Safety Checklist** daily and turn it in to the Health Coordinator with the End of Month Report. If a concern is found it will be called into the Health Coordinator at that time and the Health Coordinator will follow up with the report within a week.
- Sandboxes with bottoms will be covered to avoid hazards such as: contamination from neighboring animals, broken glass, and other sharp objects that can be easily hidden within the sand play area.
- Ground surface cover will be raked daily, particularly under swings and slides. Ground surface depth will be checked quarterly and will be replaced when below level.
- Staff will routinely go over playground rules with children and consistently reinforce the rules. These rules should be written and include appropriate visual cues placed next to the written rule.

- Playground rules should include the following:
 - Establishment of areas that are safe for running.
 - Establishment of boundaries if playground fences are not present. Some sort of visual marker needs to be identified as the playground boundary.
 - Appropriate places to jump off of play structures. Anything at or above four feet is too high for children of this age to safely jump from.
 - Appropriate slide safety. Sliding down and facing forward, not laying down head first, sitting down backwards, climbing up the slide or jumping off the top of the slide.
 - Sand play; no throwing, eating, putting in clothing, etc.
 - Tricycle play. Talk about safety (driver and pedestrian) rules when going over trike safety. Establish a specific domain of travel and safe location for children to ride without running into others.

- Children will be taught safety concepts regarding objects that they may find around the play area. Children should know what needles (syringes) are and to not touch them or any other sharp object.
- Staff must be strategically located on the playground so that all children are within sight at all times.
- First Aid kits and **DSS Child Registration Forms** must always be taken onto the playground and cannot be placed within reach of children.
- **DSS Child Registration forms** will not be placed inside the First Aid kit unless staff is wearing the kit (fanny pack). This confidential information is not to be made available to parents or volunteers.
- Health Coordinator will complete quarterly **Health & Safety Screenings**, to include the playgrounds.

Referenced Procedures:

First Aid Kit Procedure

Referenced Forms:

DSS Child Registration Form

Playground Safety Checks

Health & Safety Screenings