

Summer playgrounds come with fun and random hazards

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(HealthDay)—As the pandemic eases and children flock to playgrounds

this summer, parents need to make sure their kids are safe, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) says.

"After a challenging school year and months of being socially distanced and kept apart from their friends, children are eager to get outside and play," said AAOS spokesperson Dr. Rachel Goldstein. She is a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

"We all want our children to play, but we also want them to be safe," Goldstein said in an academy news release. "With the start of summer, it is important to take steps to make sure no one ends their day at the [playground](#) with a trip to the hospital."

In the United States, a child visits an [emergency room](#) for a playground-related injury every 2½ minutes, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. emergency departments see more than 220,000 children aged 14 and younger for playground-related injuries each year.

The AAOS offers the following safety tips:

- Never go down a slide with a baby or toddler in your lap. The child's foot can get caught underneath the adult's leg and cause an injury.
- Direct children to *age-appropriate* playground [equipment](#).
- Ensure there is enough space for children to easily get off the slide. Don't let kids crowd around the exit areas.
- Check that handgrips on monkey bars and other climbing devices are secure and sized for a child's hand.
- Swing seats should be made of plastic or rubber for a better grip.
- Avoid any equipment that has openings that could entrap a child's head.
- Be sure you can always clearly see your children on the

playground.

- Avoid playgrounds that have concrete, asphalt, hard-packed dirt or grass play surfaces. The surface should be made of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7-feet high.
- Be careful in the sun. In [hot weather](#), equipment exposed to [direct sunlight](#) can become hot and potentially burn skin.
- Remove tripping hazards such as exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, or rocks.
- Remove drawstrings and hoods from [children's](#) clothing that could catch on equipment. Children should wear proper footwear to prevent splinters and cuts.

More information: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers a [playground safety checklist](#).

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