

## ACT NOW!

- Make a habit of active and arms-length supervision for infants and toddlers on raised play equipment. Older children should be within view.
- Check the age limit labels at your local playground. Use equipment that is right for your child's age and size.
- Check the surfacing materials at the playgrounds your child uses. Do they follow these guidelines?
- Go to [www.preventfalls.ca/children](http://www.preventfalls.ca/children) to search playground tips and learn about safe play structures.
- Report safety concerns about surfacing or playground equipment.
- Go to [www.greenheartinc.org](http://www.greenheartinc.org) for the Parents Guide to Nature Play. Check [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org) and [www.nwf.org/GreenHour](http://www.nwf.org/GreenHour) for more ideas about natural play and to learn about the many health benefits.



*Kids Don't Bounce*

**FAMILY ACTION GUIDE**

*playground safety*



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## ACTIVE!

Playgrounds and parks are favourite destinations for children of all ages. Unstructured play is essential for child development and important in keeping kids active and healthy. Today's neighbourhood play spaces may feature traditional climbing structures, modern manufactured play equipment with many unique designs, or equipment-free natural playgrounds with living landscapes. Playground designers are creating more innovative designs, using better surfacing, creating richer play experiences and encouraging more active lifestyles. Get out and explore your local playgrounds and parks today!

## and SAFE!

Fractures and head injuries are the most common and serious injuries that occur at the playground, usually caused by falling from play structures. Many serious fall injuries can be prevented by following these supervision, equipment, and surfacing guidelines. Whether your kids are playing at the neighbourhood park, school playground, or on the backyard swing set, you can **ACT NOW** to prevent playground falls and injuries.

## Active & Safe Kids Manitoba Program

*This series of family and community action guides was designed by the Active and Safe Kids Manitoba coalition. This program aimed to increase the use of protective equipment such as helmets, wrist guards, and PFDs in children and youth, and to raise awareness about preventing injury during popular recreational activities. This project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.*

### Actively Supervise Young Children

- ✓ Active supervision means being right beside your child!
- ✓ Infants and toddlers less than 5 years of age should be within arms-reach.

### Select the Right Equipment for Your Child's Age and Size

- ✓ Toddlers: For children less than 5 years of age, choose equipment that is less than 5 feet high. If your child cannot get up on the equipment without help, it is too large!
- ✓ Public playground equipment should have a label that indicates the age that it was designed for (2-5, 2-12, or 5-12 years). These labels are often on the structure supports or posts.

### Check for Soft Surfacing

- ✓ Sand, pea gravel, shredded bark, wood chips and rubber mulch are commonly used loose-fill surfaces. The depth of these surfaces is very important.
- ✓ Equipment designed for toddlers should have surfacing that is at least 6 inches deep (if using loose-fill material) and extends 3 feet from all sides of the play structure.
- ✓ Equipment designed for older children should have surfacing that is at least 12 inches deep and extends 6 feet from all sides of the play structure.

### Teach Your Children these Playground Rules

- ✓ Helmets, scarves and drawstrings can cause strangulation on play equipment, so take off helmets when on playground equipment, use neck warmers instead of scarves, and avoid clothing with any drawstrings or cords.
- ✓ Never tie anything like a skipping rope to the play structure.
- ✓ Children should not sit or stand on equipment railings or climb over the railings.

### Consider Natural Playground Alternatives

- ✓ Explore natural places to play in your community, such as parks, paths and trails. Encourage running, jumping, skipping and hopping. Play tag or other active games with your child.
- ✓ Bring a ball, frisbee, or kite. Large soft balls are great for kicking or playing catch with younger children. Older children can use a softball and glove or a frisbee.
- ✓ Play I Spy Nature, and have your child spot the biggest tree, count three leaves, find a flower or a pine cone. Run, skip or hop to the next item on your list.
- ✓ Bring a nature checklist, bug container, magnifying glass, or binoculars.