

Get your playgrounds summer ready

By Kim Dennis

The days are getting longer, the school calendar is winding down - summer is almost here! For many families, summer means long days at the park, swinging, sliding, and climbing. Let's discuss some ways members can get outdoor playground ready for the busy summer months so everyone can have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Inspect playground equipment. A lot can happen over the winter months such as damage from the weather or even vandalism; now is a perfect time to catch any hazards or damage before the busy summer months begin.

Look for excessive wear, deterioration, and potential hazards such as broken equipment, broken glass, trash, cracks in plastic, loose anchoring, problems with surfacing, or vandalism. Any problems found during an inspection should be noted and fixed as soon as possible.

Make sure signage is posted at each play area indicating whether the play equipment is designed for toddlers (6-23 months), preschoolers (2-5 years), or grade schoolers (5-12 years).

If you are opening a new playground, have added new equipment or surfacing, or if repairs or modifications have been made to existing play equipment, be sure to conduct a safety audit. The safety audit evaluates each piece of equipment and surfacing looking for hazards such as head entrapments, sharp points, protrusions or projections, and crush and shearing points. It also involves looking at the surfacing material and fall zones, ensuring that equipment is not placed too closely together.

Be sure to document inspections, and audits, as well as any repairs made to the equipment.

A safe play space is a great community asset to promote physical well-being, social interaction, and create wonderful summer memories.

Do not hesitate to reach out to your WCIA Risk Representative with any questions or for further information.

Resources:

[WCIA PAR.05](#)

[National Recreation & Park Association \(NRPA\) Playground Safety Checklist](#)

[U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook](#)