

Each year over 200,000 children receive emergency department care for playground related injuries. That is one child every 2 1/2 minutes. Most injuries are the result of falls—falls to the ground below equipment, but falls from one piece of equipment to another are also reported. These falls can cause serious brain and spinal cord injuries or even death.

## Virginia Playground Injuries, 2007

- There were 85 playground fall-related injuries that required hospitalization in Virginia in 2007.
- The total hospital cost associated with these injuries was \$1,243,351 with a median cost per episode of care of \$9,633 and an average length of stay of 2 days.
- 91% of the injuries involved fractures and 8% resulted in a traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- Falls from playground equipment resulted in 29% of all of the hospitalized fall injuries among children 5-9 years of age.

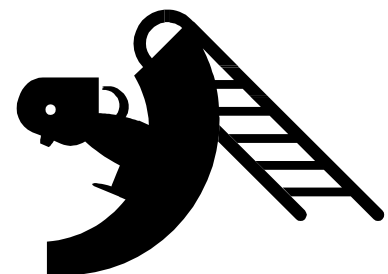
### SAFETY TIPS:

- Supervise children at all times. Prevent behaviors like pushing, shoving, and crowding around equipment.
- Make sure that children play on playground equipment that is appropriate for their age. For example, don't let young children play on high climbing equipment such as monkey bars. Keep all children off equipment from which they might fall six or more feet.
- Check the surface under playground equipment. Avoid playgrounds with asphalt, concrete, grass and soil surfaces under the equipment. Look for surfaces of hardwood fiber, mulch chips, pea gravel, fine sand, or shredded rubber — materials that can cushion a fall — with a depth of at least 9 inches.
- Remove or cut the hood and neck drawstrings from all children's outerwear to prevent entanglement and strangulation. Children have died when hood and neck drawstrings were caught on slides and other playground equipment.
- Make sure spaces that could trap children's heads, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure at least 3.5 inches (so children can't get their heads in) or more than 9 inches (so they can get out).
- Check playground equipment to make sure it is in good repair, with no loose or protruding bolts, jagged edges or sharp points.
- Check for hot surfaces on metal playground equipment before allowing young children to play on it. Metal equipment can heat up in direct sunlight and cause burn injuries in a few seconds.
- Make sure there are no obvious hazards around the playground, such as broken glass, exposed concrete footings, and tree stumps.
- Make sure there is fencing between the playground and the street to prevent children from running in front of cars.
- Install playground equipment at least 6 feet from fences, wall or trees.

### RESOURCES:

National Program for Playground Safety  
[www.uni.edu/playground/](http://www.uni.edu/playground/)

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)



Division of Injury and Violence Prevention  
Virginia Department of Health  
1-800-732-8333  
[www.vahealth.org/injury](http://www.vahealth.org/injury)