

# PLAYGROUND BEST PRACTICES

SLIDES, SWINGS, FALL ZONES, FENCES, RESILIENT  
SURFACING, RESTRICTED EQUIPMENT

## >>> SWINGS



Swings should not be attached to any other equipment, and there can be no more than 2 swings per bay. All fall zone measurements should extend the required distance both in front of swings and behind swings and have a 6' perimeter from each side of the swing structure.

### Infants and Toddlers:

**Belt Swings:** Pivot point 47" or less, with a fall zone twice the distance of the pivot point to the ground.

**Bucket Swings:** Pivot point 47"-95," with a fall zone twice the distance of pivot point to the bucket seat bottom.

### Preschool and School Age:

**Belt Swings:** Pivot point 8' or less, with a fall zone twice the distance of the pivot point to the ground.

**Tire Swings:** Fall zone required is the distance from the pivot point to the top of the tire plus 6' in all directions.

*\*Pivot Point = where the swing starts moving at the top of the chain*

## >>> FENCES

Fences should be 6' tall with gate latches positioned 48" or higher and have no sharp points, holes, or protrusions, such as bolts facing inward with more than 2 threads. Fences should be located at least 6 feet from preschool and school-age equipment and at least 3 feet from infant/toddler equipment.

## >>> SLIDES

**Infants and Toddlers:** Slides can be up to 32" high, with 6' fall zone at the slide exit and 3' on the remaining sides around the slide.

**Preschool:** Slides can be up to 60" high, with 6' fall zone at the slide exit and on all remaining sides around the slide.

**School Age:** Slides can be up to 84" high, with 6-7' fall zone at the slide exit. If the slide is taller than 6', the fall zone should be at least as long as the slide is tall. The fall zone should be 6' on the remaining sides around the slide.



*To help prevent strangulation, bike helmets with chin straps, clothing with exposed drawstrings, scarves, etc. should not be worn when on swings, slides, or climbing equipment.*



## >>> FALL ZONES AND SURFACING

Shock-absorbing, protective surfacing is needed under and around equipment where children's feet do not remain in contact with the ground during play.

Maintaining nine inches is required for sand, pea gravel, wood mulch, and wood chips. Six inches is required for shredded rubber. Unitary protective surfaces are preferred for infants and toddlers. Poured in place systems must meet ASTM F1292 requirements.

Fall zones for climbing equipment should extend at least 6' in all directions for preschoolers and school ages and 3' in all directions for infants and toddlers. Fall zone requirements are specific to one piece of equipment and cannot overlap the fall zones of other equipment.



## >>> RESTRICTED EQUIPMENT

**Equipment Not Appropriate for Any Age Group:** trampolines, climbing ropes not secured at both ends, rope swings, swinging dual exercise rings, balance beams over 16", and swinging trapeze bars.

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### Additional Equipment Not Appropriate for Children Younger than 6 Years:

freestanding arch climbers, dome climbers, freestanding flexible climbers, fulcrum seesaws, log rolls, track/trolley rides, spiral slides with more than one 360 degree turn, parallel bars, balance beams over 12", and vertical sliding poles.

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### Additional Equipment Not Appropriate for Children Younger than 4 Years:

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### Additional Equipment Not Appropriate for Children Younger than 2 Years:

rung ladders, merry-go-rounds, spinning equipment, rotating tire swings, spiral slides with a full 360 degree turn, and balance beams.

**NOTE:** These are nationally recommended best practices for the safety of children; these exceed minimum licensing requirements for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.