

# Playground Equipment

**Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.26(6)** – Equipment. Playground equipment shall provide an opportunity for the children to engage in a variety of experiences and shall be age-appropriate. For example, toddlers shall not be permitted to swing in swings designed for School-age Children. The outdoor equipment shall be free of lead-based paint, sharp corners and shall be regularly maintained in such a way as to be free of rust and splinters that could pose significant safety hazard to the children. All equipment shall be arranged so as not to obstruct supervision of children.

**Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.12(5)** – All indoor\* and outdoor furniture, activity materials, and equipment shall be free from hazardous conditions such as, but not limited to, sharp rough edges or toxic paint and kept clean. (\*This document focuses on outdoor equipment.)

## Rule Type: Core Rule

## Intent of the Rule

To protect children from injury and harm by ensuring that outdoor play equipment is safe and in good condition.  
To ensure adequate supervision of children.

## Clarification

Outdoor play equipment should be of a size and skill level that is appropriate for the ages and developmental abilities of the children who use it. Children need equipment for climbing, balancing, riding, building, pushing, pulling, lifting, digging, running, etc. Outdoor play equipment should be safe, in good condition, and arranged so that staff have clear lines of sight to children playing on, with, or near the equipment.

Playground equipment and materials should appeal to children’s individual interests. Enough play equipment and materials should be available to avoid excessive competition and long waits. The facility should offer a wide variety of age-appropriate portable play equipment (e.g., balls, jump ropes, hoops, ribbons, scarves, push/pull toys, riding toys, rocking and twisting toys, sand and water play toys) in sufficient quantities so that multiple children can play at the same time. Staff should closely monitor children’s use of all playground equipment and materials to ensure children are using them appropriately.

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## Indicators

- ✓ Child care programs must ensure that all outdoor play equipment is free of hazards.
  - Note: All play equipment should be constructed, installed, and made available to the intended users in such a manner that meets the manufacturers’ recommendations.
  - TIP: Child care program staff should regularly inspect all outdoor equipment to ensure no equipment hazards are present. A sample playground maintenance checklist can be found on Bright from the Start’s website at:  
<http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/PlaygroundChecklist.pdf>
  - Reminder: Playground equipment hazards include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - Exposed nails, screws, bolts, pipes
    - Splintered, deteriorated wood
    - Open/deformed “S” or “C” hooks, rings, links, etc.

- Crush/pinch joints
- Areas of entrapment
- Unprotected protrusions
- Broken/missing steps, rungs, hand-guard, rails, handles, sides, ladders
- Sharp edges
- Broken seats, parts, equipment
- Obstructions on slides
- Equipment off track, unsecured to support
- Chipped/peeling paint
- Worn swing hangers, chains
- Broken supports, anchors
- Bars, rungs, handholds unstable (wobble or turn when grasped)
- Organizational TIP: Refer to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) Public Playground Safety Handbook for additional information about playground equipment. The handbook can be found at: [www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf).

## **Resources:**

Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org>