

Playground Equipment, Surfacing, and Supervision For Administration and M&O Departments

1. New equipment

- a. **Design** – include the JPA in designing the playground. State law requires all new playgrounds conform to a variety of regulations. Proper equipment decisions, layout, and compliance issues are most easily addressed in the design stage. The JPA retains Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI). They can also review the documentation the vendor provides to insure that all the required documentation has been provided.
- b. **Installation** – State law requires that playgrounds be installed to specifications.
 - i. **Vendor:** the best option. Some liability is transferred to the installer if the cause of an injury is due to faulty equipment. This is usually more expensive.
 - ii. **Contractor:** Ensure that the company is a certified playground installer licensed by the state. Check for a current license and get references. Quality varies greatly depending on the company and liability is likely retained by the district.
 - iii. **Parents groups:** Any liability resulting from poor installation is fully retained by the district. If the district chooses this option, ensure that the person managing the installation has a minimum of qualifications, such as a contractor's license, an engineering degree, or some other applicable experience. Use a CPSI during the installation process to verify that the installation is being done properly. Note that having a CPSI monitor an installation is not a substitute for a qualified manager.
- c. **Inspection** – Before a new playground can be used, it must be inspected by a CPSI, per state law. Although a vendor-installed structure might be inspected by the vendor's inspector, the JPA strongly recommends that the district have the structures inspected by the JPA's CPSI. If the equipment was installed by a contractor or parent's group, it must be inspected by the JPA's CPSI before first use.

2. New surfacing

- a. **Design** – The JPA can help with this process.

There are several surfacing options available such as crumb rubber, unitary (spongy rubber layer), and engineered wood fiber (EWF or "fibar"). Note that fibar is NOT simply wood chips like the ones sold at garden stores. They must be purchased from a fibar vendor. For crumb rubber, grants may be available. Each option has pros and cons that the district should weigh. Contact the JPA for help.

 - i. Surfacing must conform to fall protection regulations (ASTM1292) and ADA Access requirements (ASTM1951). Districts need to obtain documentation from the vendor that documents compliance with both of these regulations.
 - ii. The surfacing must be deep enough to cushion a fall and is dependent on the type of surfacing and the maximum height of the equipment. Discuss with the vendor the specific equipment involved. Note that the regulations

regarding depth are currently in revision to require a minimum of 9" of any loose fill product. Contact the JPA for the latest information.

- b. Installation** – Loose fill surfacing may be installed by the vendor, a contractor, parents groups, or district personnel. Ensure that regardless of the installer, the surfacing is installed according to manufacturer's instructions. This includes any edging and/or ADA ramps.
- c. Inspection** - After the new surfacing is installed, it must be inspected by a CPSI to verify proper installation, edging, depth, ADA access, and related issues. Contact the JPA to schedule a CPSI inspection.

3. Upgrading existing equipment

- a.** According to state law, removing or upgrading playground equipment is subject to the same regulations as installing new equipment. This includes a requirement to allow ADA access. If you are considering upgrading just some of your equipment on a given playground, contact the JPA to determine how these regulations may impact the design.
- b.** Routine maintenance, add fibar/rubber chips, and repair do not qualify as "upgrading" equipment.

4. Supervision

- a.** There are about 200,000 playground injuries each year in the US. The JPA strongly recommends implementing a comprehensive playground supervision plan to limit district exposure to these injuries.
- b.** A comprehensive plan includes:
 - i.** Addressing site layout, appropriate staffing ratios, written rules, procedures for bad weather, intruders, injuries, supervisor requirements, training, maintenance, and similar concerns.
 - ii.** See page 3 for a plan template. The JPA can provide individualized help.
- c.** Playgrounds must be properly maintained. See page 4 for a monthly checklist that can be used to check the playground for hazards. Note that yard duty personnel should check the playground for hazards daily.

5. Injuries

- a.** The JPA retains a policy regarding injuries on site, including playgrounds. The insurance carrier will cover all the costs for a 911 call up to \$2500. For any injury that might be serious, always call 911.
- b.** If playground personnel are not all trained in first aid/CPR, ensure that someone with the proper training is always available. Ensure everyone knows who is qualified to handle playground injuries.
- c.** Document the circumstances of any injury requiring a 911 call. Include pictures of the equipment and surfacing.
- d.** Complete and fax the confidential school accident report to Corvel. The insurance company should be alerted to initiate proper claim handling.
- e.** If the injury is extreme (loss of limb, fatality, etc.), contact the JPA at 536-2035.

GENERAL PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION PLAN

Start by assembling a committee of yard duty supervisors, administrators, teachers, and custodians. Discuss all the different aspects of this plan and develop a draft. Use it for a period of time and then review it to make changes as needed. Review it every year to keep it up to date, relevant, and in use.

1. SITE MAP
 - 1.1. Includes location of equipment and fields
 - 1.2. Identify lines of sight, supervision areas, what loops to walk, blind spots, off limits, etc
2. PLAYGROUND REQUIREMENTS
 - 2.1. Determine ratios based on students, equipment, layout, etc.
 - 2.2. How to handle absences, weather, etc
3. PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT RULES
 - 3.1. Rules for various equipment
 - 3.2. Include behavioral rules (taking turns, no climbing on top, etc
4. PLAYGROUND FIELD/BLACKTOP AREAS RULES
 - 4.1. What can be played where
 - 4.2. Off limit areas
5. GENERAL PLAYGROUND RULES
 - 5.1. Things like no running, etc
 - 5.2. Rules of Five
6. GAME RULES
 - 6.1. Various games such as tetherball, kickball, tag, etc
7. DISCIPLINE METHODS
 - 7.1. How to intervene
 - 7.2. Progressive discipline
8. SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS
 - 8.1. Education, physical ability
9. COMMUNICATION
 - 9.1. Radio use, charging, who has
 - 9.2. How those without radios communicate
 - 9.3. Backup systems
10. SUPERVISOR BEHAVIORS
 - 10.1. How to move, scan, monitor, etc
 - 10.2. When talking to other supervisors is warranted
11. EMERGENCIES
 - 11.1. How to handle small and large emergencies
 - 11.2. Who will be trained to handle first aid, injuries
12. TRAINING
 - 12.1. How to train new supervisors
 - 12.2. Annual training for supervisors and students
13. MAINTENANCE
 - 13.1. Daily maintenance by supervisors
 - 13.2. Weekly/monthly by custodians
 - 13.3. Yearly evaluations
 - 13.4. Out of service and repairs

DISTRICT PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

School Name:		Inspected By:	
Playground Area:		Date of Inspection:	
Observations			
		Recommendations	Completion Date
1. Is perimeter fencing in good condition, with no gap greater than 2" between fence and ground?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
2. Are the play area, pathways, and entrances free of trip hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
3. Are play equipment platforms, stairs, rungs, or pathways free of slippery materials, water, or ice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
4. Is the play equipment free of loose, missing, or broken parts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
5. Are all plastic parts (slide beds, climbers, platforms, swing seats, etc.) free of cracks, splits or tears?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
6. Are there no gaps between adjoining plastic parts such as slide beds, playhouses, etc?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
7. Are all moving parts in good condition and not excessively worn (more than 50%)? Check Caribiners, connectors, S-hooks, swing chain attachments, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
8. Are the cables that support clatter bridges not stretched out and do not create pinch points for student's fingers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
9. Is the area free of insects, rodents, and other pests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
10. Is the play area free of holes or low areas caused by digging or play activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
11. Is the play area free of puddles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
12. Is the surfacing still in good condition, not decomposed, and not compacted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
13. Is the surfacing free of debris and foreign objects such as stones, leaves, twigs, sharp objects, mold, insects, rodents or animal feces?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
14. Is the surfacing still in place under heavily used areas such as slide exits and under swings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
15. Is the surfacing at least 9" deep throughout the play zone (or up to the labels on the equipment legs)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Comments: