

# Checking Playground Surface Safety Procedure

## Purpose

This document explains how to check the playground equipment surface to make sure children will be safe if they fall while playing.

## Guidance

As a part of the *Site Readiness & Safety Checklist* that is due prior to the first day of class in September, site staff check the playground surfacing material and depth to see that it is in good condition and at the correct depth for fall safety. Playground equipment used by preschool children should be no more than 60 inches. This is the maximum fall height from which a life-threatening head injury would not be expected to occur.

The depth of the material, be it sand, pea gravel or wood chips, should be a minimum of 9 inches. Matting must comply with ASTM F1292. Request ASTM f1292 test data from manufacturer that identifies the critical height rating of the surface. Important places to check are under swings and at the bottom of platforms and railings.

## Procedure

To do this check, you will need a hand spade and ruler. Dig down as far as you can with the hand shovel until you either hit hard packed dirt or get to an appropriate depth. Measure the surfacing material with a ruler. Record the material and the depth on the *Site Readiness & Safety Checklist*.

If the depth is not correct, there are options:

- If the surfacing is insufficient--only under certain equipment, (for instance, the use area of a swing or slide), material can be raked to fill in holes.
- If the material is down in several areas, the site needs to buy material to insure the correct depth.
- If the playground is not an Early Learning playground, but a school district playground, the concern should be reported to the school principal.
- If the material is compressed, it can be roto-tilled to loosen it up.