Playground Information Sheet

Safety Area	Requirements
Protective Surfacing	Protective surfacing is the shock absorbing material in the use zone found under and around playground equipment. The minimal requirement of protective surfacing increases with the height of equipment. There are three categories of gross motor equipment to consider when determining the amount and type of protective surfacing required:
Category 1	Equipment that has an elevation of 18 inches or less can be on grass or another type of cushioning material. Consider safety factors if on hard surface such as concrete or asphalt.
Category 2	Equipment that has an elevation over 18 inches, but is not intended for climbing, can be on cushioning material that may not necessarily meet the depth of 6 inches. It is a safety factor if on grass or hard surface.
Category 3 **Manufactured surfacing must meet ASTM F1292 standard**	Climbing equipment is generally designed to present a greater degree of physical challenge than other pieces of equipment. This type of equipment requires use of the hands to navigate up or across the equipment. Equipment over 18 inches intended for climbing must be on an appropriate and adequate protective surfacing.

Equipment Height→	5’ or less	6’	7’	8’	9’	10’
Wood mulch and pea gravel	6”	6”	9”	9”	9”	9”
Fine sand and coarse sand	6”	12”	12”	12”	12”	12”

Use Zone for Stationary Equipment	A use zone is the area under and around the playground equipment where a child might fall. These areas are designed for unrestricted circulation around equipment. A use zone should be covered with protective surfacing that extends a minimum of **6 feet** in all directions.
Use Zone for Swings ***2 per bay** ***Preschool children should not use swings over 8’ high**	A use zone for swings should extend the required length as detailed below.

Swing	**Front and rear**: **2 x length** of pivot point to surface (ground) below **Side support**: **6 feet out from support**
Tot Swing	**Front and rear: 2 X length** of pivot point to bottom of swing seat **Side support: 6 feet out from support** **Height of swing: no less than 24 inches** from bottom of seat to surface below
Tire Swing	**Distance around:** length of pivot point to swing seat **+ 6 feet** **Support structure:** When tire is pulled towards support structure, the distance from top of tire where child sits to support structure should be at least **30 inches**

Embankment Slides	Embankment slides should follow the recommendations for slides where applicable. If the end of the slide is elevated, a use zone is required.
Protrusion and Entanglement Hazards	A protrusion hazard is a component or piece of hardware that might be capable of impaling or cutting a child if a child should fall against the projection. Some protrusions are capable of catching strings or clothing worn around a child’s neck. This type of entanglement could result in strangulation. **No protruding bolt ends, narrow gaps in metal, open S-hooks on swings, exposed hardware, etc.**
Entrapment Hazards	Children often enter openings feet first and attempt to slide through the openings. If the opening is not large enough it may allow the body to pass through the opening and entrap the head. Generally, there should be no openings that measure between **3 ½ -9 inches.**
Equipment Spacing	Proper equipment spacing allows room for children to circulate and prevents the possibility of a child falling off one play structure and striking another play structure. **Spacing requirements for gross motor play equipment over 30 inches: 9 feet** **Spacing requirements for gross motor play equipment 30 inches and under: 6 feet**
Trip Hazards	Trip hazards are created by play structure components or items on the playground.

Standards and information for the Tennessee Playground Information Sheet are derived from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC Document 325) and the Dirty Dozen Checklist published by the National Recreation and Park Association and the National Playground Safety Institute. The sheet is not intended to be a complete list of all hazard types. For a more detailed safety assessment, providers may contact a NPSI certified playground consultant or the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. Distributed by the UT College of Social Work Office of Research & Public Service. This project is funded through a contract with the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the University of Tennessee, Social Work Office of Research and Public Service. Updated 8-1-18