

PLAYGROUND SURFACE SAFETY

(Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2002)

Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2012

- WHEREAS,** In 1999, the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons reported the number of public access playground injuries at more than 509,000, and falls to surface accounted for 58% of these injuries; and
- WHEREAS,** In 2001, a Consumer Product Safety Commission study reported statistics have not been kept on the type of surface fallen onto, but did report that 79% of the injuries that occurred on public access playground equipment involved falls, primarily to the surface below the equipment; and
- WHEREAS,** The type of surface on the playground is the most important factor in the number and severity of injuries due to falls; and
- WHEREAS,** Currently, the playground industry must only test their products to prevent head injury; and
- WHEREAS,** The California Education Code does not specify a school playground accident reporting procedure because this process is established by individual school district insurance carriers; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts, and PTA school safety committees urge school districts and others responsible for public access playgrounds to:
- monitor and maintain public access playgrounds according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommendations and manufacturers product specifications;
 - ensure adequate reporting of all injuries with information to include type of equipment and type of surface; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA support legislation to require the development of surface testing methods that provide for prevention of public access playground fall-related injuries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils, districts and PTA school safety committees to support installation of surfaces that provide for resiliency and displacement to prevent fall-related injuries on public access playgrounds, and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA submit this resolution to the National PTA for consideration at its convention, and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That California State PTA encourage all other state PTAs to adopt a similar resolution.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, from January 1990 to August 2000, 147 deaths to children younger than 15 years of age that involved playground equipment were reported. Approximately 205,860 preschool and elementary children received emergency care for injuries on playground equipment. The most prevalent diagnoses were fractures (39%), lacerations (22%), contusions/abrasions (20%) and strains/sprains (11%). Falls to the surface was a contributing factor in 79% of all injuries. Based on these statistics and other research, the National Program for Playground Safety advocates that adults provide safe surfacing both in the public use areas and at home for playground equipment. Further, adults must insure that all equipment and surfacing located in children play areas be maintained on a regular basis.

PTAs, school districts, and public parks all seek installation of safe playground equipment and surfaces. Children need to play on equipment and surfaces that best protect them from all types of injuries, not only brain injuries. Play equipment and surfaces need to be properly maintained according to the manufacturers specifications and guidelines. Regular (monthly) inspection of playgrounds would detect the need for maintenance or repair before accidents occur. Recording and reporting of all types of accidents, noting the type of equipment and surface, would allow for informed decisions on the type of product to purchase.

Currently, the California Education Code does not specify a playground accident reporting procedure. The process of reporting playground accidents is established by the school district's insurance carrier. Only accidents subjectively deemed significant are reported to insurance companies. The type of surface the child falls onto is often not included in the accident report.