

Check your playground!

Before your child goes to play at the playground — talk to her or him about the dangers that may be found there. Then go to the playground together.

On the route to the playground observe dangers such as: busy streets or fishy neighbourhood—tell your child how to avoid these places.

At the entrance take a look to see if the area is fenced and if there is a sign indicating who is responsible for the safety of the playground and equipment installed there.

Tread the ground to see if the surface is safe. Remember that concrete and asphalt are not as safe as synthetic materials or wood chips . Look at the surface to see if it is safe and clean-search for rocks, tree stumps, broken glass, trash.

Scan the equipment yourself before your child will play on it—use it, rock it, shake it, slide on it. Use your imagination as your child would use the facilities—beware of rusted, loose or damaged elements of the equipment.

Before the play repeat your warnings by pointing your finger at possible dangers on the area. Try not to be too restrictive— after all the playground is not a prison and bruises (but not more serious injuries!) are part of the play.

React if something dangerous occurs—pay attention not only on careless children but also careless parents.

Keep in mind that it is impossible to create a playground where children never get hurt, but the most serious accidents shall be avoided also thank to your awareness.

Whom should I inform, if the playground is not safe ?

If you spot facilities, which are potentially dangerous to children (e.g. loose, damaged or missing elements, corroded or splintered handles, scattered foundations, lack of surfacing etc.) then **inform the owner or the area administrator first.**

Playgrounds in public rooms, schools and kindergartens are often owned by the municipality or private owners – **look for a table** indicating, who is responsible for the safety of the equipment.

Depending upon the type of risk presented by the equipment – the **facilities should be repaired, corrected or removed to prevent injuries.**

Who can also help me?

The County Office of Construction Surveillance

You will check at your County (or City-County) or Voivodship Administration Office—the addresses of these authorities you can find at:

www.gunb.gov.pl

or

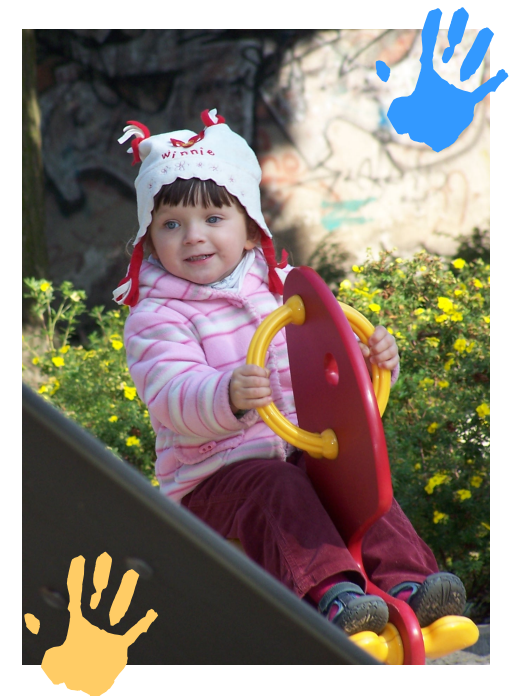
Your Regional Trade Inspectorate Office located in every “old” voivodship city.

The addresses of these you can find at:

www.uokik.gov.pl



Play safe on the playground!



A few words to parents...



Play is children's main activity, associated with spontaneity, creativity, pleasure and fun and each of us enjoyed playgrounds! When we were young many times we grazed the skin on our knees on slides and bruised our elbows on the swings. Without these small accidents or bruises our memories of childhood would be so dull, wouldn't they? We could even say that it is the "right" of every child to have bruises whilst playing on the roundabout. But, every child also has the right to be safe on a playground.

DOs and DON'Ts on the playground

Before your child starts playing on the playground you should **take a look around** the place. The area should—when necessary—be fenced and information on the person responsible for safety of the playground should be displayed.

Falls **against a hard surface** and strangulation caused by clothing entrapment in parts of the equipment are the most common accidents on playgrounds. Remember that and tell your child how to play safe.

Always **supervise your child whilst playing**.

Never attach any clothes, additional ropes, pet leashes to the playground equipment – these may cause accidents.

Do not repair anything on the playground. If you really want to do something – warn other users by placing the notice on the dangerous fitting and call a person or authority responsible for the equipment safety.

Think safety—play safely



There are swings, slides, carousels, rocking animals and many different items on the playground. Each of them should be safe and not cause harm to people using them.

- 1 Firstly, remember that the equipment should be properly fixed to the ground and stable whilst standing, sitting, rocking, pulling and playing on it according to the expected conditions of use by a child. **On your own you can check** this by trying every unit of equipment—grab the handles of a roundabout, sit and ride along on a slide play before your child will start to play.
- 2 Secondly, remember that not every item is suitable for every child. Particularly you should take a look at the elevated fittings. **On your own you can check** if the slide is suitable for your child by measuring her or him with hands stretched overhead. For example if your child cannot reach the highest point at the elevated surface the slide it might be too high to play on and you may not allow your child to play on it.
- 3 Thirdly, pay attention that around each item there should be an area where no other equipment or obstacles are placed ("falling space"). There are different falling spaces for different items, but as a parent **on your own you can check** and make sure there are no objects (rocks, fencing, trees, toys) or protruding parts into the fall zone that may lead to injuries if your child falls on it.
- 4 Fourthly, **on your own you can check** the openings where your child might get trapped and suffocate. The equipment must have openings that are either so large that the whole body can go through or so small that the child is stopped at the chest height if she/he slides through with feet first and loses her/his footing. If the opening is so large that the child's head will go through there must also be room for the head to be pulled back out. There must not be fixed openings of the dimension between 9 cm and 23 cm. You can use the ruler on the bottom of this leaflet (the space marked in red indicates the range of the fixed openings which are not allowed).

Safe surface equals safe playground

It is not only the equipment that should be safe but also the surface. Properly installed and maintained surfaces reduce the likelihood of life-threatening head injuries.

There is little restriction on which type of surface can be used, such as rubber, wood chips, sand and gravel. Each of them is used to **reduce the impact from a fall from height**. The higher the potential fall the more important the surface becomes. For example if there is a high slide on a playground thicker or deeper surfacing would be installed under and around it. However if there is a small roundabout the surface might not be as thick or as deep since the danger from falling from lesser height is reduced.

All in all it is **better to avoid** playgrounds covered with asphalt or concrete because they do not absorb the shocks whilst falling. However, if these surfaces are used outside of the falling spaces, for example on paths or basketball areas, this is acceptable.



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