

Play Safely!

1. Inspect the play area before starting any activity

- Walk over the entire play area checking carefully for things that may cause injury during play. Teach the children to help.
- Removal of hazardous objects (e.g., broken glass, hanging ropes, sharp objects, discarded needles, condoms, animal excrement, holes in the ground) is the responsibility of the adult.



2. Set boundaries

- Review boundaries for safe playing areas and make sure players stay within the space.
- Set boundaries away from roads and free from cross traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular.



3. Proper equipment

- Use equipment that suits the game and ability of all players.
- See **Stuff You'll Need!**
- Play on a flat surface for skipping games.
- Keep all equipment in a good state of repair and with no sharp edges.
- Set rules for using ropes to help minimize the risk of injuries or problems. Help players understand the dangers of tying ropes to fences, equipment or other players. Supervise rope use.
- Avoid playing with balloons; they are not environmentally friendly and some children have allergies to latex.
- Set rules for using equipment safely; involve the players.
- Set guidelines for throwing/kicking balls (safe hit spots/zones – no hitting above the waist).



4. Clothing

- Wear clothing appropriate for the weather. See **Get Dressed!**
- Games may need to be modified if children wear glasses or use assistive devices.



5. Body

- Always do warm-up exercises. Start with gentle muscle stretches. Then have children walk slowly at first, then faster so their heart rate increases.
- Help players stay well hydrated by having them drink a few gulps of water (every hour) before, during and after all activity.



6. Adequate knowledge

- Before playing a game review the rules. Decide as a group, all changes that will make the game fair for all players. This will help avoid potential conflict. See **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**.
- Select activities that suit the ability level and skill sets of all the children playing. Modify games to provide a successful experience and a bit of a challenge. See **Games and Skills Chart** and **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**.



7. Supervision

- Provide adequate, active adult supervision for all players according to their individual needs and the overall number of the children playing.



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8. Medical

- Have accurate, up-to-date medical/allergy information (asthma, bee stings or food) for each child and current emergency contact information.
- Make sure supervising staff are trained in First Aid and have immediate access to a complete First Aid Kit and emergency help.
- Staff must be prepared to act appropriately when an injury occurs (e.g., cuts, bruises, strains, sprains, broken limbs, concussions).
- Do not let a child play through an injury.



9. Social

- Consider the effect of excitement on children for potential conflict and possible bullying or excessive aggressive behaviour.
- Be aware of children who are impulsive and intimidating and also those who withdraw to the sidelines.
- Encourage fair play and integration of all children, including those with ability challenges; provide support as needed.
- Teach rules of safe play: wait for your turn, no name calling or putdowns, no breaking equipment or hurting others.



10. Sun safety

- Be sun smart. Protect skin from the sun as much as possible with hats, sunscreen, clothing, sunglasses and by playing in shaded areas.
- See **Sun Safety Smarts!**
- Staff – Be a sun safety role model.



11. Outdoor safety

- Protect everyone's health during heat & smog alerts. Reschedule activities, drink lots of fluids, wear loose fitting clothes, have rest breaks, play in the shade or move indoors.
- For information about exercising during heat & smog alerts see **Get More Info and Add Games!** or www.toronto.ca/health



12. Mosquitoes

- Don't play near mosquito breeding areas. Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirt, pants, shoes, socks and use insect repellent.
- If insect repellent is needed, always put sunscreen on first. Wait for 30 minutes and then apply the insect repellent.
- Do not use insect repellent on children under 2 years old.
- For information about West Nile Virus see **Get More Info and Add Games!** or www.toronto.ca/health



13. Lightning

- Don't play outdoors if a thunderstorm is anticipated.
- If caught outdoors, in a field away from indoor shelter, immediately kneel on the ground with feet together. Place hands on knees and bend forward. This is better than lying flat.

