



# “Kids Don’t Bounce” Playground Safety

After the  
**School  
Bell Rings**

A Manitoba After School Recreation Project



# Playground Safety for Families and Communities

Presented by Lynne Warda, Medical Consultant, IMPACT and  
Roy Mulligan, ASBR Project Coordinator  
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- Manitoba Active Coalition for Safe Kids (MCASK) is a partnership between sports, recreation and injury prevention organizations and involves government departments, non-profit organizations, the private sector and public health.
- The overall aim of this program is to increase the use of protective equipment such as helmets, wrist guards, and PFDs in children and youth, and to raise awareness about preventing injury during popular recreational activities such as cycling, wheeled sports, swimming and skating.

**MCASK**



The MCASK Partners have a shared objective of promoting injury prevention during recreational play and informal sport activities.

Recreation Connections Manitoba <a href="http://www.reconnections.com">www.reconnections.com</a>	The Lifesaving Society <a href="http://www.lifesaving.mb.ca">www.lifesaving.mb.ca</a>	IMPACT, The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority <a href="http://www.wrha.mb.ca">www.wrha.mb.ca</a>	Manitoba Healthy Living Seniors and Consumer Affairs <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving">www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving</a>	Winnipeg In Motion <a href="http://www.winnipeginmotion.ca">www.winnipeginmotion.ca</a>
Sport Medicine and Science Council of MB <a href="http://www.sportmed.mb.ca">www.sportmed.mb.ca</a>	Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/cyo">www.gov.mb.ca/cyo</a>	Directeurat de l'activite sportive <a href="http://www.directorat.mb.ca">www.directorat.mb.ca</a>	Canadian Red Cross <a href="http://www.redcross.ca">www.redcross.ca</a>	

**MCASK PARTNERS**



- Specific program initiative of MCASK and part of a National injury prevention commitment for kids.
- Funded through Public Health Agency of Canada, administered by Recreation Connections MB and supported through MCASK.
- Aims to increase use of protective equipment and to raise awareness about preventing injury during popular recreational activities such as cycling, skateboarding, swimming, ice skating and unstructured play.

**ACTIVE & SAFE KIDS MANITOBA**



Recognizing the importance of injury prevention for children 0 – 19 years of age, MCASK has five key initiatives:

1. Promotion of safe participation in play, recreation and informal sport activities through leadership development, dissemination of information and communication of existing resources and research.
2. Increased safe play behaviour through use of protective equipment and supervision.
3. Education in safe play environments for children and youth.
4. Promotion of safe recreational policies and practices.
5. Collaboration with public and private sectors as injury prevention partners.

## KEY INITIATIVES



Our focus is on injury prevention for children 0 – 19 years who participate in recreation activities:



**TARGETED RECREATION ACTIVITIES**



MCASK provides information guides targeted to Families and Communities to educate on injury prevention strategies and use of safety equipment.

**MODULE 1**  
Introduction to  
M.C.A.S.K.

**MODULE 2**  
Kids Don't Float –  
Water Safety

**MODULE 3** Caught  
You Using Your  
Head – Bicycling  
Safety

**MODULE 4** Caught  
You Using Your  
Gear – Roller Sport  
Safety

**MODULE 5**  
*Kids Don't Bounce*  
- Playground Safety

**MODULE 6**  
Ice Skate Safety

**TRAINING MODULES**





**“Kids Don’t Bounce”  
Playground Safety  
Orientation to Injury Prevention  
MODULE 5**

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- Participation Statistics & Injury Rates
- Evidence Based Strategies for Injury Prevention
- Resources to Promote Safe Play and Ensure Safe Play Spaces
- Potential Funding Sources
- What Families Can Do
- What Communities Can Do
- Communication Strategies and Tools

## PLAYGROUND SAFETY OVERVIEW



- **Playing on swings, slides and teeter-totters are the main activities done by children aged 1 to 4 years.**
- **Estimated that children between the ages of 1 and 9 spend 14 hours per week in spring and summer on playgrounds.**
- **95% of children aged 1 – 4 years play on playgrounds.**

**PARTICIPATION RATES**



- **Playground injuries are the leading cause of injury presenting to emergency departments among children 1 – 4 years old.**
- **Majority of playground injuries occurring among females (8.5% compared to 4.1% among males).**

## **INJURY STATISTICS**

- **Over 90% of playground injuries occur due to falls.**
- **Most common injuries sustained are fractures (35%) and superficial wounds (19%) to the upper limb, head and neck (73%).**



## INJURY STATISTICS



- **Fall related injuries can be reduced:**
  - ✓ **if playground structures are less than 1.5 meters high**
  - ✓ **monkey bars (i.e. horizontal ladders) are removed**
  - ✓ **energy-absorbent surfaces, such as loose fill (i.e. course sand or pea gravel) or rubber, with an impact absorption of less than 150g are used under playground structures.**
- **Research has shown that compliance with these safety guidelines can reduce fall-related injuries and emergency department visits.**

**EVIDENCE BASED STRATEGIES**



Communities may benefit from participating in the Active & Safe Kids Manitoba initiative by:

- Sharing in a Provincial/National commitment on active & safe play
- Accessing multiple sources to create local active and safe campaigns
- Leveraging local support through public and private partnerships
- Learning the importance of recreation safety and preventing unnecessary injuries

**COMMUNITY INCENTIVES**



The main strategies for **families** to keep children safe at the playground are:

- ✓ Actively supervise young children.
- ✓ Select the right equipment for your child's age and size.
- ✓ Check for soft surfacing.
- ✓ Teach your children playground rules.
- ✓ Report safety concerns.
- ✓ Consider natural playground alternatives.

For more information on playground safety for families, follow the link: <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/playground-safety>

**STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES**



Main strategies for **communities** to encourage playground safety are:

- ✓ Educate families and community partners about playground safety.
- ✓ Provide safe play spaces that meet the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard.
- ✓ Focus on reducing the height of play equipment , preventing falls.
- ✓ Ensure adequate protective surfacing is installed and maintained.
- ✓ Promote training for inspectors, operators, and supervisors.
- ✓ Consider natural playground alternatives.
- ✓ Share your successes!

**STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITIES**



***Active & Safe Kids Manitoba***

[www.reconnections.com](http://www.reconnections.com)

PLAYGROUND SAFETY– Family Guide: Tips and information on identifying safe equipment use, the importance of supervision in preventing falls and natural playgrounds as an alternative to traditional playground equipment.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY– Community Guide: Informative participation and injury statistics, key safety messages, and program ideas for your community to encourage safe playground use.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**





***Canadian Standards Association***

[www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca)

With reference to CAN/CSA Z614 “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment” this site includes detailed information on types of surfacing, testing for impact absorption and general standards for play equipment.

***Canadian Parks and Recreation Association***

[www.cpra.ca](http://www.cpra.ca)

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s Canadian Playground Safety Institute offers a number of courses about the CSA playground standard. They also maintain a certified inspector directory online.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**



### ***Government of Manitoba***

[www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/safety\\_charter\\_guide\\_centres.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/safety_charter_guide_centres.html)

Manitoba Child Care – Safety Charter. The Manitoba Child Care Program has developed sample daily and monthly checklists for the playground area (see Enhanced Safety Plans, Chapter K).

Or visit the link:

[www.naturalplaygrounds.info/PDF/innovative\\_playground\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.naturalplaygrounds.info/PDF/innovative_playground_research_report.pdf)

Innovative Playgrounds is a Government of Manitoba report that provides case studies and a design matrix for creating innovative playgrounds, including many examples of natural play spaces.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**



***Children and Nature***

[www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)

This website has toolkits for families (nature clubs, family bonding) and excellent research summaries of the many health benefits related to play and learning in nature.

***The National Wildlife Federation***

<http://www.nwf.org>

The National Wildlife Federation has set a goal to get children back outdoors. Check their website for lots of tips and tools for parents and communities.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**



***Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood*** [www.greenheartsinc.org](http://www.greenheartsinc.org)

This website features a wonderful guide for families (Parents Guide to Nature Play) with practical ideas for the backyard. It also has 25 ideas for early child care centres and 101 ideas for parents, as well as other resources, fact sheets and links about natural play.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**



***Richard Louv***

[www.richardlouv.com](http://www.richardlouv.com)

A convincing case that through a nature-balanced existence—driven by sound economic, social, and environmental solutions—the human race can and will thrive. View his site for a listing of his books on “nature deficit disorder”, resources to his blog and related links on the benefits of nature in our lives.

***Canadian Pediatric Society***

[www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)

Read the Canadian Pediatric Society’s playground policy statement Preventing Playground Injuries and their handout for parents.

***National Recreation and Park Association***

[www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

Read about the top 12 leading causes of injuries on playgrounds in The Dirty Dozen - A Checklist for Safe Playgrounds. This brochure discusses the twelve most common safety concerns and leading causes of injuries on playgrounds.

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**





### ***Manitoba School Boards Association***

[www.mbschoolboards.ca](http://www.mbschoolboards.ca)

*Public Playground Safety* – An information guide for schools, daycares and municipalities. Their 31 page booklet was created for the use of school maintenance personnel and educators who are responsible for playground installation, maintenance, and supervision. Includes tips on designing, installing, inspecting playgrounds, identifying hazards and completing repairs.

*Risk Management at a Glance for Manitoba Schools* - This guide outlines risk management principles and tips for schools. The accompanying 11 page book of risk management forms includes the following playground safety forms:

- Critical Heights for Protective Surfacing Guide
- Monthly Playground Maintenance Inspection Report
- Playground Inspection Report
- Weekly Playground Inspection Checklist

**RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**



***Government of Manitoba - Community Places Grant***

[www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)

The Community Places Program provides funding and planning assistance to non-profit community organizations for facility construction, upgrading, expansion, including playgrounds.

**POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**



## Actively Supervise Young Children

- ✓ Active supervision means being right beside your child!
- ✓ Infants and toddler less than 5 years of age should be within arms-reach.
- ✓ Older children should be supervised by an adult who is watching for risky or aggressive behaviour that could lead to a serious fall or injury.

**ACT NOW:** Make a habit of active and arms-length supervision for infants and toddlers on raised play equipment. Older children should be within view.

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Select Appropriate Equipment for your Child

- ✓ Toddlers: For children less than 5 years of age, choose equipment that is less than 5 feet high. If your child cannot get up on the equipment without help, it is too large!
- ✓ Older children: Play equipment higher than 5 feet high should have barriers or guard rails to prevent falls.
- ✓ The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) requires that public playground equipment have a label that indicates the age that it was designed for (2-5, 2-12, or 5-12 years). These labels are often on the structure supports or posts.

**ACT NOW:** Check the age limit labels at your local playground. Use equipment that is right for your child's age and size.

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Check for Soft Surfacing

- ✓ Proper surfacing reduces the risk of a serious injury from playground falls.
- ✓ Sand, pea gravel, shredded bark, wood chips and rubber mulch are commonly used loose-fill surfaces. The depth of these surfaces is very important.
- ✓ Equipment designed for toddlers should have surfacing that is at least 6 inches deep (if using loose-fill material) and extends 3 feet from all sides of the play structure.

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**





- ✓ Equipment designed for older children should have surfacing that is at least 12 inches deep and extends 6 feet from all sides of the play structure.
- ✓ Some playgrounds use synthetic materials for surfacing such as rubber tiles.

**ACT NOW:** Check the surfacing materials at the playgrounds your child uses. Do they follow these guidelines?

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Teach your Children Playground Rules

- ✓ Helmets, scarves and drawstrings can cause strangulation on play equipment, so take off helmets when on playground equipment, use neck warmers instead of scarves, and avoid clothing with any drawstrings or cords.
- ✓ Never tie anything like a skipping rope to the play structure.
- ✓ Children should not sit or stand on equipment railings or climb over the railings.

**ACT NOW:** Review playground rules with your child when you go to the playground. Visit [www.preventfalls.ca/children](http://www.preventfalls.ca/children).

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Report Safety Concerns

- ✓ Play areas should be maintained on a regular basis, including checking equipment for loose or broken parts and checking for worn surfacing.
- ✓ Report any safety hazards or concerns to the owner/operator of the playground. This may be a school, city/town, child care centre, provincial park, church, non-profit organization, or a commercial establishment.
- ✓ Call 311 to report safety concerns about City of Winnipeg playgrounds.

**ACT NOW:** Report safety concerns about surfacing or playground equipment.

**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Consider Natural Play Spaces

- ✓ Explore natural places to play in your community, such as parks, paths and trails.
- ✓ Encourage running, jumping, skipping and hopping. Play tag or other active games with your child.
- ✓ Bring a ball, frisbee, or kite. Large soft balls are great for kicking or playing catch with younger children. Older children can use a softball and glove or a frisbee.



**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**





- ✓ Play I Spy Nature, and have your child spot the biggest tree, count three leaves, find a flower or a pine cone. Run, skip or hop to the next item on your list.
- ✓ Bring a nature checklist, bug container, magnifying glass, or binoculars.

**ACT NOW:** Check [www.greenheartsinc.org](http://www.greenheartsinc.org) for the Parents Guide to Nature Play. Or visit [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org) for more ideas on natural play and associated health benefits.



**WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO**



## Educate Families and Community Partners

- ✓ Teach about playground safety.
- ✓ Promote and distribute the Kids Don't Bounce family action guide to parents.
- ✓ Promote and distribute the *Kids Don't Bounce community action guide* to day cares, community centres, schools and other organizations in your community who are responsible for installing and maintaining playgrounds.
- ✓ Use the family guide key messages in your media communications, newsletters, emails to parents, and website.
- ✓ Send families and community partners to [www.reconnections.com](http://www.reconnections.com) to access more information and online links about playground safety and natural play.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**



## **Provide Safe Play Spaces (CSA standard)**

- ✓ CSA playground standard (CAN/CSA Z614 “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment”) is a voluntary standard for outdoor public play spaces and is considered the “gold standard” for public playgrounds.
- ✓ Ensure that your equipment and play spaces comply with the CSA standard by using an inspector certified by the Canadian Playground Safety Institute.
- ✓ CSA standard also specifies maintenance criteria; requires that playground operators routinely inspect playgrounds for new hazards that may arise, such as worn surfacing or broken equipment.
- ✓ If injuries occur on public play equipment, the incident information should be reported to Health Canada. The Hazardous Products Act requires that injuries related to consumer products such as these must be reported.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**



## Reduce Play Equipment Height and Prevent Falls

- ✓ Surfacing and fall height are the two main factors that predict the risk of a serious fracture or head injury.
- ✓ When selecting new equipment, choose designs that reduce the maximum fall height (this refers to the highest point from which a child could fall, when using the equipment as it was designed). Avoid equipment on which children could fall from high open spaces or platforms. Choose equipment with high protective barriers, play structures that discourage climbing (e.g. onto the roof or up the outer structure, other than on a climbing wall), and/or feature fully enclosed spaces on the highest elevated platforms.
- ✓ Another option for reducing the risk of falls is the use of alternate play spaces such as natural playgrounds.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**



## **Ensure Adequate Protective Surfacing is Installed and Maintained**

- ✓ Surfacing and fall height are the two main factors that predict the risk of a serious fracture or head injury.
- ✓ Protective surfacing should be installed and maintained according to the CSA standard (CAN/CSA Z614 “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment”). The standard can be purchased at [www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca) and includes detailed information on types of surfacing and how to test for impact absorption using a tri-axial accelerometer.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**



## **Promote Training for Inspectors, Operators, and Supervisors**

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's Canadian Playground Safety Institute offers a number of courses about the CSA playground standard. They also maintain a certified inspector directory online.

The following courses are offered:

- o Basic (introductory workshop for daycares, parent groups)
- o Theory, practical (certification of inspectors)
- o Inspection and maintenance (non-certification)
- o Accessibility
- o Train the trainer
- o Consultant

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**

## Consider Natural Play Spaces

- ✓ Natural playgrounds are an increasingly popular choice for playground designers and communities needing to repair, replace, or purchase new equipment.
- ✓ Natural playgrounds should still comply with the CSA standard, which is designed to prevent falls, head and neck entrapment, pinching, and other injury hazards.
- ✓ Check your design ideas with a certified inspector or landscape architect, and be sure they meet relevant provincial guidelines, such as those established for schools and child care facilities.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO**



1. Share the information with other community leaders.
2. Explore the resources and links to organizations who share the injury prevention objective.
3. Visit the website [www.reconnections.com](http://www.reconnections.com)
4. Work with others to coordinate educational campaigns featuring the key helmet safety messages.
5. Coordinate events or activities to raise awareness of safety strategies including equipment usage.
6. Be Active, Be Safe!

**ACT NOW**





## **Thank you for participating in Playground Safety Module 5**

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**BE ACTIVE, BE SAFE!**