

CHLD 202: Health, Safety, and Nutrition for the Young Child

Playground Inspection

Learning Outcomes	3. Explain and identify ways to maintain a safe environment including: identifying hazards and risks; conducting regular health and safety assessments consistent with regulations and quality standards; and taking corrective action when necessary.
DEC Recommended Practices	C6 Learning environments meet accepted standards of quality including curriculum, child-staff ratios, group size and physical design of classroom. C10 Interventionists facilitate children’s engagement with their environment to encourage child-initiated learning that is not dependent on the adult’s presence.
NAEYC Standards	3c Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches.

According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, “Each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground.” In this activity you will use a simple checklist to help make sure your local community or school playground is a safe place to play

To prepare for this Activity you need to:

- Read Chapter 8: Safety Management
- Review the portion of the IL DCFS Licensing Standards for Child Care Centers that address playgrounds (Subpart H: Facility and Equipment: 407.390 Outdoor Play Area).
 - Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. (2010, December 15). *Licensing standards for day care centers*. Available from <http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/docs/407.pdf>
- Create your own simple checklist from the DCFS Standards and the information presented in the text book.
- Print out and familiarize yourself with the “America’s Playgrounds Safety Report Card” and study the criteria explanations on page 485. You will be using this Report Card as part of your evaluation.
 - National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2012). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition*. Appendix EE: *America’s Playgrounds Safety Report Card*. Available from http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/PDFVersion/PDF_Color/CFOC3_EE.pdf

- Find a local park, childcare center or school playground where young children play. You will not need permission for a public park but will need to schedule an appointment if you choose a center or school.
- Take a tape measure with you so that you can make accurate measurements.

During the inspection:

- Be a considerate guest and be careful not to offend your host with critical comments.
- Evaluate the playground using your checklist.
- Complete the Safety Report Card according to the criteria on the form.

After you have completed your evaluation:

- You will need to write a report that includes the following:
- Name, location and description of the playground that you choose to inspect.
- Did the playground meet the criterion outlined on your checklist? Be specific about any problems that were found.
- How did the playground score on the Safety Report Card? Be specific about any problems that were found.
- How do you feel the playground facilitates children's health by engaging them with the outdoor environment?
- What would you recommend for an action plan to improve this playground?
- Submit your report to your instructor.