

Child Safety Update



Playsets: 10 Tips For Parents

(NAPSA)—Few things work as well as an outdoor playset to get kids out of the house and into the fresh air. There are, however, several things to keep in mind:

1. **Placement.** Find a spot with at least a six-foot space around the playset so kids don't swing, jump or fall into or onto anything dangerous. Loose fill materials such as mulch, wood chips or reground plastic should be placed under the playset to cushion falls. Also, the set should be placed where parents can monitor children's activities.

2. **Lumber.** Look for a naturally decay- and weather-resistant lumber, such as cedar, which is also a natural insect repellent and blends well with any backyard.

3. **Assembly.** Consider your options. Should the playset be hand-built? Will the lumber be hand-picked and the playset built with a kit? Or will the playset come ready to assemble—pre-cut, pre-stained and pre-drilled with all the hardware and accessories pre-packed?

4. **Cost.** Most playsets are built to last whatever the price, but features vary. A playset is something to be enjoyed for years, so be sure it can grow with your family.

5. **Safety Railings.** Safety features must be put in place during assembly. All elevated surfaces, such as platforms, need guardrails, and sit-down bars should be above the slides. Most quality sets will have an arched entrance area to protect little heads.

6. **Anchoring.** Make sure the entire structure is firmly anchored to avoid tipping.

7. **Maintenance.** Preventative maintenance helps keep kids safe and the warranty in effect. Every



A backyard playset can be healthful fun for the whole family.

season, tighten any loose supports, anchors, bolts and screws and replace any missing nuts, bolts or protective caps. Following manufacturer's directions, playsets should be periodically sealed, stained and painted to prevent deterioration.

8. **Everyone Plays.** Playsets should be developmentally appropriate, so consider the ages of the children who will play on it. Size depends on how many children will play on the set, as well. Consider how many swings and how many features you need for a fun and safe environment for all.

9. **Warranty.** You should know what type of warranty is offered and what it covers. Playsets should last a long time, so seek a warranty with long-term protection.

10. **Features.** Decide if you need an infant swing, a hammock or a two-person glider. Accessories like a buoy ball, rock wall, gang-plank, hammock or ship's wheel create a fun play experience. With most quality playsets, accessories can be added later. You can see some of the features available for Backyard Discovery playsets at www.swingsetsonline.com.

Taking these small steps toward a safer play area can make a big difference when it comes to long-term safety.