



## Winter Playground Safety Tips

It's cold outside, and the days are shorter, but the energy of our younger ones is typically still at full capacity. For most parents, even though the temperature is lower, we still want to make sure our kiddos get outside and enjoy some fresh air, exercise, and get those wiggles out. This often is accomplished with a trip to the playground.

Playing outside in the winter time has a host of benefits from fresh winter air in the lungs, allowing the body to adjust to different temperatures, and of course, making memories with friends and family. However, while fun and exercise is the goal, winter playground time should also be safe. The following 3 tips will help your children have tons of fun outside in the colder temps, while still staying safe.

- 1) **Dress for the weather** – Colder temperatures can change the feel of metal and plastic playground components. Ensure children have appropriate coats and gloves for their hands as they play. Most heat is lost through the top of our heads. Wearing a hat can lessen this loss of heat and lengthen the time kids can play outdoors. Playground equipment can also be wet and dirty as snow melts. Make sure children have clothing on that can get muddy or damp as they play.
- 2) **Stay Hydrated** – It seems odd to say that making sure a child stays hydrated in winter time is as important as during the summer, but it is equally very important. Even in colder temperatures, our bodies work hard to fight the cold by using more of its energy to produce heat. When children run and play, they are sweating under their clothing and it's important to make sure they are properly hydrated. Plenty of water or juice will help your kiddos stay safe.
- 3) **Pay Attention to the Area** – Many playgrounds have the appropriate type and level of surfacing under the equipment. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that approximately 200,000 children visit the emergency room each year due to playground injuries, and 80% of those are from falls to the surface. During the winter months, debris from storms, such as sticks, trash, and even frozen areas of the surfacing from having water in it can be something to watch for as kiddos play. Avoid trips and slips on these slippery surfaces by paying attention to wet or frozen areas and wearing a good pair of tennis shoes with appropriate traction on the soles.

If you have any questions about your playground, or if you would like to have one of our Certified Playground Safety Inspectors assist you with a playground safety inspection, please let us know. We'd be happy to help.