

11.2.17 PLAYGROUND SAFETY / PIPER CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PURPOSE:

Playgrounds are a fundamental part of the childhood experience. They should be safe havens for children. This policy sets forth procedures for maintenance and operation of a safe and healthy environment in the playground and other facilities at Baylor University's Piper Child Development Center (CDC).

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Baylor University employees, full or part time, students, or visitors.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Many regulatory agencies oversee different aspects of the maintenance and operation of day-care and playground facilities such as Baylor University's Piper CDC at 315 Washington Avenue in Waco, Texas. Some of these agencies are the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, The Texas Department of Health as well as Waco-McLennan County Health Department, Waco Fire Department, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, and many others. These agencies along with some other accepted guidelines from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety and the American Society for Testing and Materials' (ASTM) F1487 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use provide recommendations for creating safe public playgrounds. The facilities as well as the policies and procedures at the Piper CDC meet or exceed all the standards set forth by these agencies.

Monthly safety audits are conducted by the Fire & Occupational Safety Coordinator in Baylor University's Department of Risk Management of the day-care and playground facilities to check for any maintenance or potential safety items. Each deficiency is immediately reported to the appropriate department and rectified. The auditor follows up on each deficiency to ensure each item is addressed completely. Part of this monthly audit also includes reviewing relevant accident reports and ensuring any and all contributing hazards to said accidents have been rectified.

Some injury prevention measures reviewed during each monthly audit include the elimination of entanglement and head entrapment hazards on playground equipment that can cause strangulation and ensuring the overall layout of the play areas are without visual barriers that could hamper adult supervision of the total play space. All objects and equipment are checked for sharp points, corners, and edges, as well as any protrusions or projections. All equipment is also checked to ensure that there is no accessible pinch, crush, or shearing points on playground equipment that could injure children or catch their clothing. All areas are reviewed for any potential tripping hazards along with any suspended hazards such as tree limbs, power lines, etc. All areas at Piper CDC are checked for these and any other safety concerns.

Supervision of children on the playground is conducted by staff trained in playground supervision, first aid, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. All staff receives monthly training on numerous topics, including relevant health and safety issues. Staff is also required to obtain a

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minimum of 20 hours of continuing education training annually, a part of which must be relevant health and safety topics.

Most playground injuries are preventable. Compliance with national playground safety standards can reduce the risk of serious injury and death. The most effective injury prevention measures are those that create a safe environment. A safe playground includes proper design, developmentally appropriate equipment, and proper maintenance. The playground facilities at Piper CDC were designed and installed by professional, licensed technicians from Grounds For Play Inc., to be intrinsically safe and healthy for children. Licensed technicians from Grounds For Play Inc., also inspect the structures annually to verify there are no stress points or faulty equipment or structures.

Protective surfacing is one of the most important safety factors on playgrounds. Shock absorbing surfaces can help disperse the impact of a child's falling body or head, thus reducing the risk of life-threatening injuries. Thus, an important aspect of reducing playground injuries is to provide cushioned surfaces beneath and around equipment at depths appropriate to equipment height. Protective surfacing is inspected checked and maintained throughout the fall zone for each piece of equipment. The protective surface used at the Piper CDC playground facility is a layer of wood chips. These chips are especially designed for this purpose, and are guaranteed chemical free and free of any sharp edges or points.

Any questions or comments about this policy or the Piper CDC should be directed to the CDC Director at 710-4373, or the Department of Risk Management at 710-4586.

Formulated:

Reviewed:

Revised: 12/23/10

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