

Location/Center: _____ Date of Inspection: _____

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT AND PLAY AREA INSPECTION WCMCA HEAD START

Outdoor equipment and play area shall be inspected for safety at regular intervals and the observations documented. Playground equipment will be checked according to the manufacturer's instructions. Health and safety items meet the most stringent standards by MN Rule 3 Child Care Licensing, Caring for our Children adopted by the Office of Head Start (see CFOC rationale included on the back of this form). Concerns should be addressed with the Head Start Supervisor, and resolved by FES immediately whenever possible. **Due before classes begin, or by Sept 15th, and following Spring melt, or by April 30th. 1-per center, including EHS.**

Indicators	Yes	No	Improvement Actions
1. A variety of surfaces and equipment (climbing equipment, slide, sand play, grassy area)			
2. Staff zoning plan (Active Supervision) in place			
3. First Aid Kit, cell phone, and emergency contacts in place for outdoor use			
4. Outdoor play area fenced in or otherwise protected from adjacent hazards			
5. Sunny and shady areas on the playground			
6. Permanent equipment is properly secured, anchored			
7. Adequate cushioned material under climbing surfaces: shock absorbing mat or, for loose-fill: minimally 6" of shredded/recycled rubber, 9" pea rock or wood chips			
8. Loose fill playground material (especially sand) has been inspected for debris, proper depth, compaction points, standing water, ice or snow			
9. Playground surface is checked; litter, sharp objects, or animal feces is removed			
10. Riding toys are stable (well balanced) and appropriately sized for the children			
11. Children wear approved helmets while riding pedal-powered equipment			
12. All equipment is free of rust, chipping or peeling paint			
13. Sharp edges, splinted wood, rough or cracked surfaces			
14. Handhold/railings stable			
15. Non-anchored play pieces (ex. playhouse) stable			
16. Pinch or crush points are protected, and non-play moving parts are covered			

Outdoor play areas shall be checked daily for areas of poor drainage and accumulation of water and ice.

COMMENTS: If an off-site play area is used, a safety check for hazardous materials within the play area should be done upon arrival at the off-site playground. Hazardous materials may have been left in the play area by other people before the arrival of children from the childcare facility.

6.2.5.2: Inspection of Play Area Surfacing

Loose-fill surfacing materials used to provide impact absorption beneath play equipment should be checked frequently to ensure surfacing is of sufficient depth and has not shifted or displaced significantly, especially in areas under swings and slide exits. Missing or displaced loose-fill surfacing should be raked back into proper place or replaced so that a constant depth is maintained throughout the playground.

All loose-fill surfacing material, particularly sand, should be inspected daily for:

- a. Debris (such as glass);
- b. Animal excrement, and other foreign material;
- c. Depth and compaction of surface;
- d. Standing water, ice, or snow.

Loose fill surfaces should be hosed down for cleaning and raked or sifted to remove hazardous debris as often as needed to keep the surface free of dangerous, unsanitary materials. Surfacing should be raked to fill in areas of wear (e.g., under swings, bottom of slides, etc.) on a daily basis before use.

Check for packing as a result of rain or ice, and if found to be compressed, material should be turned over or raked up to increase resilience capacity. Play should not be permitted on structures in the area if a packed surface cannot be raked up or turned over.

RATIONALE

The number one cause of injury on playgrounds is falling to the surface. Maintaining the correct depth of loose-fill material is crucial for safety. Surfaces should be shock-absorbing (1-3). Cold temperatures may cause “packing,” which causes the surface material to lose shock-absorbing capacity. Other materials, such as glass, debris, and animal excrement, present potential sources of injury or infection. Maintaining loose fill surfaces provides for proper sanitation.

COMMENTS

Surfacing is not tested with ice or snow on it and thus its shock-absorbing and injury-preventing ability is unrated. Therefore, surfacing with ice or snow cannot be relied upon to absorb falls and prevent injuries. Sand is not an appropriate playground covering in areas where pets or animals are a problem. Contact a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) for further guidance. To locate a CPSI, check the National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) registry at https://ipv.nrpa.org/CPSI_registry/.

5.7.0.2: Removal of Hazards From Outdoor Areas

All outdoor activity areas should be maintained in a clean and safe condition by removing:

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| a. Debris; | h. Branches; | p. Wells; |
| b. Dilapidated structures; | i. Animal excrement; | q. Holes; |
| c. Broken or worn play equipment; | j. Tobacco waste (cigarette butts); | r. Grease traps; |
| d. Building supplies and equipment; | k. Garbage; | s. Cisterns; |
| e. Glass; | l. Toxic plants; | t. Cesspools; |
| f. Sharp rocks; | m. Anthills; | u. Unprotected utility equipment; |
| g. Stumps and roots; | n. Beehives and wasp nests; | v. Other injurious material. |
| | o. Unprotected ditches; | |

Holes or abandoned wells within the site should be properly filled or sealed. The area should be well-drained, with no standing water.

A maintenance policy for playgrounds and outdoor areas should be established and followed.

RATIONALE

Proper maintenance is a key factor when trying to ensure a safe play environment for children. Each playground is unique and requires a routine maintenance check program developed specifically for that setting.