



# Early learning playground maintenance.

There's a lot more to an early learning playground than just fun and games. They provide a great deal of benefit to children in developing their physical skills as well as their confidence and imagination. However, like many areas of an early learning service, they unfortunately don't come without risk.

The Education and Care Services National Law requires early learning services to protect children from harm and any hazard. Therefore, it's recommended that any products purchased, including both equipment the children play on and other materials around the playground such as softfall, meet relevant Australian Standards.

Another way to manage the risk of a playground and increase its lifespan is to put a maintenance program in place. A maintenance program will provide staff with information regarding what equipment is to be inspected, how often, what's being looked for during these inspections and what to do if there are any problems.

This structured approach will create consistency between staff members and make it more likely the inspections will be done as and when they should.

## What's a maintenance program?

All services should create a maintenance program tailored for them. There's no one exact way this should be done as it will vary according to a range of factors such as the type of equipment, the age of the equipment and the climate of that location.

Daily checks of playground equipment should be occurring in every early learning service to be sure no damage has occurred with the regular and frequent use. However, it's also worth undertaking a more thorough and detailed inspection less frequently, such as every three to six months. Services should also undertake inspections when significant events, such as storms or vandalism, have occurred as they may cause damage to equipment.

When undertaking any inspection and maintenance program always:

- > Follow the manufacturer instructions for any repair, service and cleaning.
- > Keep a record of the inspections undertaken and any repairs needed and then carried out.

## Help is available...

There are a range of organisations available to assist with playground safety. To be sure your playground has been installed and is being maintained in the safest and most appropriate manner, consider engaging experts. Installers of playground equipment will often provide maintenance programs. There's also a range of organisations, both private and government, in all states and territories who offer playground safety information as well as inspections.

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