

Hot Playgrounds

Playground Structures

This is why. We used a digital thermometer to check out the slides, swings, even the rubber flooring underneath the jungle gym. What we found at 1 o'clock on a 100 degree day may surprise you.

The metal slide was 118 degrees. That's hot, but not dangerous. But, here's the interesting part. We tested the plastic slide, and each time our thermometer read around 155 degrees. The swing was 145 degrees, and the rubber flooring was even hotter at 165 degrees. This is when fun turns dangerous. Skin can burn at 130 degrees.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says young kids are especially at risk of 2nd and 3rd degree burns because they don't react by pulling away from hot surfaces as quickly as older children.

"Older children have a tendency to feel something hot they're going to jump up or step away or move to another piece of equipment. Younger children especially don't have that reflex so they are at particular risk in this situation," Dr. Wesley Rice with the Brazos Physicians Group said.

Rice says parents should feel the playground equipment before letting kids play.

"Put your hand on it and hold it there for a minute and see if feels too hot to you," Rice said. "If it does then it's probably too hot for a child to play at that time."

Experts recommend going to the playground in the early morning hours or evening, when it begins the cool down. If your child is burned at the playground, doctors say to run the burn under cool water for several minutes. If the skin is blistering or coming off, call a doctor immediately.

Blacktop