



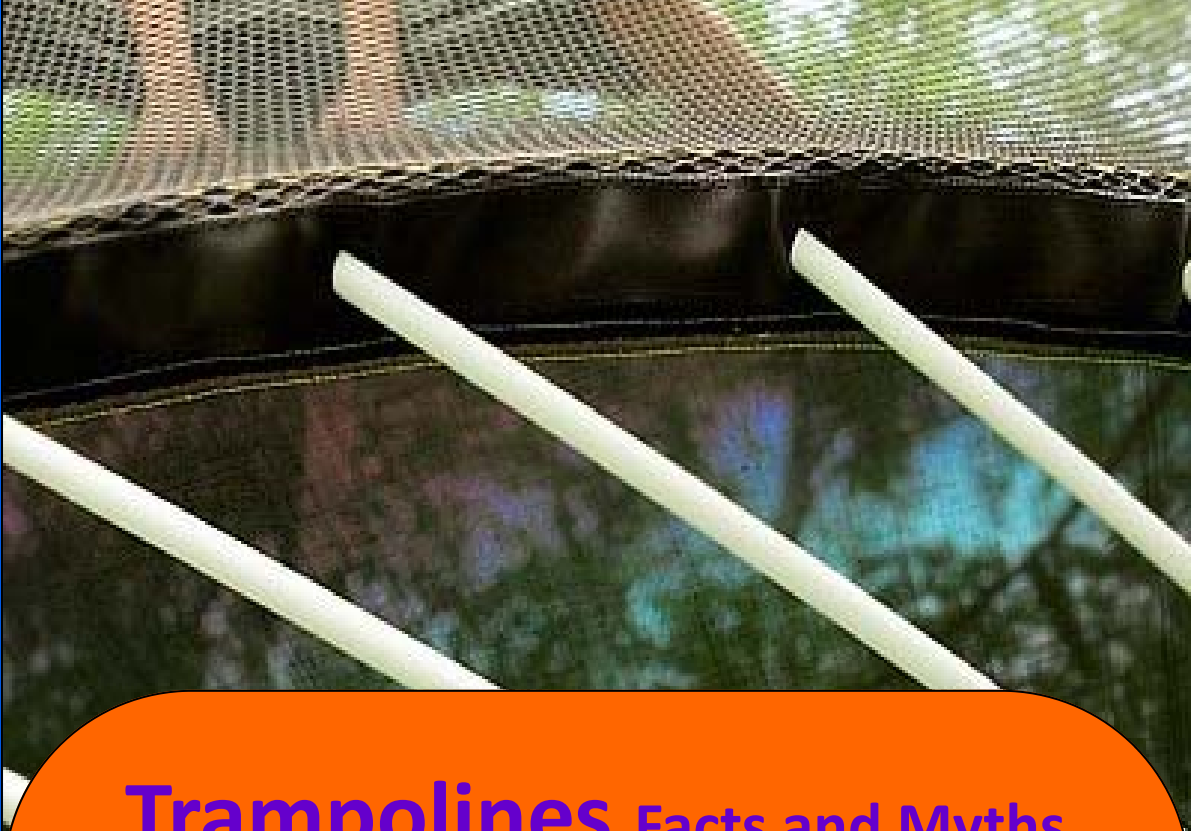
PLAYGROUND NEWS

Issue 28

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Trampolines Facts and Myths

Associate Professor David Eager is the Chair of the Australian Standards Committee CS-100 Trampolines. He is also a Member of the International Standards Committee ASTM-F08.17 Trampolines and Related Equipment. David discusses the facts and myths behind the modern trampoline.

In our cyber-based world of increasing levels of childhood obesity it makes sense to encourage our children to get outside and exercise. A great way to achieve this is to give them a toy that is fun, relatively safe and provides cardio and muscular exercise while developing balance and coordination skills. A trampoline can be ideal. The latest craze is the totally enclosed soft-edged trampoline that has safety embedded in its design. This is a highly recommended option although maybe beyond the average family budget in these tough economic times.

Historically the trampoline has been responsible for a disproportionate percentage of childhood injuries, many of which were quite serious. At one stage the number and severity of injuries were so bad that the trampoline was almost banned globally.

In Australia all trampolines that are sold into the domestic market should comply with the Australian Standard AS4989:2006 Trampolines – Safety Aspects. If a trampoline complies with the Australian Standard all the known hazards have been engineered out of the product. It does not mean that accidents won't happen. It will however reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents.

Diary Dates:

- Proposed Coffs Harbour and District Visit: 2nd—6th February 2009



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Continued overleaf

Trampolines—Facts and Myths continued

What to look for when purchasing a trampoline?

Step 1—Compliance: The most important and easiest thing to look for is a statement of compliance with the Australian Standard AS4989:2006 Trampolines – Safety Aspects. For a trampoline to comply it must have been tested for compliance and have appropriately marked packaging, point-of-purchasing displays, and include promotional safety literature.

Watch out for overseas compliance statements that can not be verified. When in doubt seek advice from the NSW Office of Fair Trading.

The most important physical aspect for compliance with the Standard is that the trampoline frame limits the maximum impact that a child can sustain and prevents limbs from entanglement, that is, the suspension system must be designed to protect the child from injury.

In Australia all trampolines that are sold should comply with the Australian Standard AS4989:2006 Trampolines – Safety Aspects.

This is achieved by the use of a ‘frame padding system’, or for other designs where the springs are beneath the trampoline bed, by a ‘soft-edge system’. The trampoline design must still absorb the impact without the net-enclosure attached, even though it may be supplied with a net!

Watch out for trampolines that are supplied with inferior padding as this will quickly deteriorate and not provide adequate protection for your child. A really quick check is to squeeze the foam padding. If it makes popping sounds like when you pop bubble wrap, do not purchase this trampoline. If you squeeze the foam padding as hard as you can and your thumb and index finger can still feel uncompressed foam between your fingers, you can be assured that your child’s head and spine will be afforded an adequate level of impact protection.

Step 2—Installation: Ensure that the trampoline is correctly installed. Always install on a flat, level surface that has some form of impact attenuation such as grass or bark. This also applies to enclosed trampolines. Place the trampoline away from walls, structures, fences, sharp hard objects, and other play structures. The Standard recommends 2.5 metres clearance zone for open trampolines and 1.5 metres for enclosed trampolines.

Adequate overhead clearance is essential. Never install your trampoline beneath power lines, clothes lines or any other object. Watch out for situations that may change with time such as trees growing into the jumping space. Don’t install the trampoline above concrete. Never use the area beneath the trampoline as a storage area for garden tools and other articles. Do not allow children to park their tricycles or other toys beneath the bed or within the clearance zones.

Step 3 - Supervision: Misuse and abuse of the trampoline is dangerous and can cause serious injuries. The basic rules are:

- One user at a time
- Do not use the trampoline with the family dog or cat
- Do not allow the user to jump from the trampoline to the floor or ground when dismounting, or onto the trampoline when mounting
- Never allow the user to jump onto the trampoline from the roof or other high launching platforms
- Do not allow hard objects such as skate boards, surf boards, bicycles, or roller skates on to the trampoline
- Hard buckles, jewellery or backpacks should not be worn and it is best to discourage wearing of shoes while bouncing on the trampoline

TYPES OF TRAMPOLINES

Inground trampolines are inherently safer than un-netted aboveground trampolines as they reduce the fall height from the trampoline to the ground. They are ideal for children with limited mobility as this configuration allows the carer to more easily transfer the child onto the trampoline bed.

Consideration must be given to drainage and access for maintenance.



For smaller, bouncing-type devices that are used in Family Day Care and Early Childhood settings, these trampolines must be designed, built and sold with all the safety features and documentation required by the Standard. This means that the suspension system must be designed in such a way as to prevent little legs penetrating between the frame, bed and springs.

The fall heights from these smaller trampolines is considerably less but it is still important to check location and free space provisions. As they are a forced movement device that is less than 500 mm above ground level, there is no requirement to install/use over certified undersurfacing. It is recommended however, that they be installed/used over an impact attenuating surface (or soft surface) such as grass or bark mulch with clearance zones of 1.5 metres.

Please refer to the Kidsafe NSW fact sheets titled Trampolines and Safe Fall Zones available on the website. kidsafensw.org

PLAYGROUND SAFETY AND DESIGN WORKSHOPS

In recent months, *Kidsafe NSW* has held a series of Playground Safety and Design workshops.

The session held at West Ryde in September was attended by a variety of organisations including representatives from local government, children's services, landscape designers, education and equipment suppliers.

Gosford Council hosted a workshop in October for staff of their Children's Services.

November workshops hosted by Palerang Council and Conargo Shire Council were attended by representatives from over 8 local government areas.

Delegates were provided with information on playground standards, basic training in conducting inspections and maintenance checks and design ideas for future planning.

Kidsafe NSW has received many requests for training particularly in regional areas and planning has commenced for a series of workshops throughout NSW in 2009. If you are interested in attending or hosting a workshop, please call 02 9845 0890 or email kidsafe@chw.edu.au to register your expression of interest.



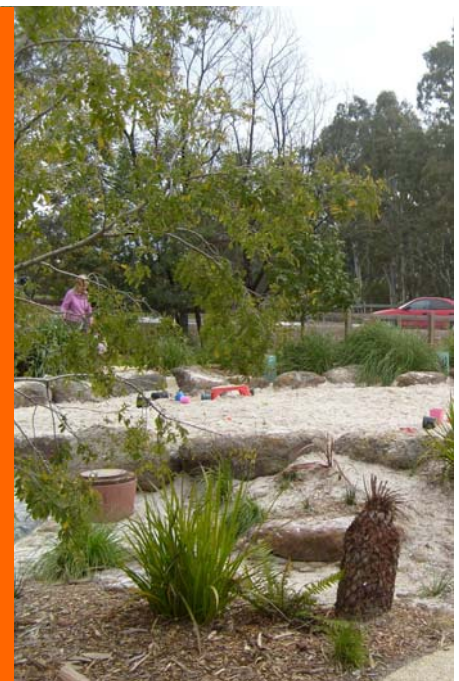
The Playground Safety and Design Workshop provides the prerequisite knowledge for enrolment in the University of Technology Sydney Level 2 Operational Playground Inspectors Course.

MAINTENANCE

A regular maintenance regime is an essential part in keeping the backyard safe.

- Check all play items for spiders and insects
- Check all play items are securely anchored
- Check the condition of all play items for splinters, rust, detachments or weakening from exposure to the sun
- Rake undersurfacing material and maintain to a depth of 250mm
- Check sandpits for animal contamination
- Check all chains (eg. swings) for rust, wear and tear

Taken from the *Kidsafe NSW* Fact Sheet "Safe Play for Backyards"





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Call Kay Lockhart on 02 9845 0890 if you would like to sponsor a future issue.

Do you have a story or article you would like to share with us? We invite you to send in articles that may interest our readers.

KIDSAFE NSW PLAYGROUND ADVISORY UNIT

Training for the Playground Advisory Unit Team

In recent months the Playground Advisory Unit Team has undergone training to further enhance the services provided by the *Kidsafe NSW Playground Advisory Unit (PAU)*.

Kay Lockhart completed the Level 2 Playground Inspector (Operational) Inspection and Maintenance course. This course enabled Kay to extend her experience and knowledge and provided a valuable opportunity to engage and network with other stakeholders passionate about safe playspaces and the safety of children.

Kate Fraser and Bev Boland completed the Level 3 Outdoor Playground Inspector (Comprehensive) Inspection and Maintenance.

Both courses were conducted by Dr David Eager (Associate Professor in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Technology, Sydney). Many thanks to David Eager and his associate Jim Connor for supporting *Kidsafe NSW*.



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Services provided by the PAU include:

- ☞ Phone Advisory Service
- ☞ Onsite Inspections Services
- ☞ Playground Safety Audits
- ☞ Evaluation of Playspace Plans
- ☞ Design Advice
- ☞ Playground Safety and Design Workshops
- ☞ Fact Sheets
- ☞ Publications including:
 - Resource Directory
 - Concept Designs
 - Plants for Playspaces
 - Plan It Guidelines