

Get More out of Your Playground Buy Better

As we enter troubled economic times, we all must be very careful to get the best value for our money. Playground purchases will go through fundamental changes as value becomes the catchphrase of 2009 and the successful playground will find a balance between play value, injury prevention and cost. Failure will have consequences for the purchasing team, the manufacturer/suppliers, the maintenance team & mostly the community. In tough economic times families will be looking to preserve their financial resources and as a result they will put pressure on the parks and community centres to fill their free time. There will be more day trips to parks and these parks will have their facilities tested. The test will be whether there are enough challenges for all members of the family and the emphasis will be on the chil-

dren, especially those not yet in high school.

The most important aspect of any project will be its play value and the ability for the family to return to it time after time and come away wanting more. These will be the facilities that voters will remember later in 2009 when they will be asked for support the incumbents.

Children need an opportunity to stretch their limits and learn about their bodies, minds, friends and environment, preferably in a fun and challenging way. They will find it in toys, games, people, trees, rocks, hills, etc. and sometime playgrounds. They will also find the activities and structures that meet their needs and abilities. Play is important, especially in these changing times when we must give our children every advantage that they will need later in life to be successful in the competitive world in which they are to grow. Without this opportunity to test their abilities and revel in the achievements of their friends and themselves, they just might become part of the pack later in life.

Through play, children will learn self reliance, risk management, vector analysis, leadership and

News from ASTM F08.63

At the recent F08.63 sub-committee a number of issues were covered, ballots considered and new work items established.

The new standard for the Rotational Penetrometer is slowly progressing and it is anticipated that those with disabilities will benefit from its passage within a year. The Standard Guide on Poured-In-Place surfaces has a new provision to accommodate the junction between the loose fill and poured-in-place surfaces. This should be beneficial for those wishing to provide for accessible routes and prevent falls off the transition edge.

A new work item is the poured-in-place performance standard that has worked through a task group of experts and there is currently a ballot for review and consideration of the sub-committee.

F1292 is currently under review and a task group is soliciting suggested changes for presentation to the sub-committee over the next year. This should result in a revision within the next 2 years.





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team work, problem solving and a whole host of skills. Depending upon the activity, they will increase their physical strength, coordination and stamina. Ultimately play is the precursor to all of the activities a child will do in the rest of their life. Although children of all ages have evolving play patterns, however, they mostly end up going up. Higher structures are unique as they provide both greater play value and challenge as well as space for more play components. One aspect of increased height will be the perceived risk of injury due to the impact of a fall to the protective surface. This can be prevented at no additional cost.

Few realize that impact values above the allowable pass/fail for impact attenuation are where a life-threatening head injury could occur.

The CSA Z614-07 requires that the Gmax not exceed 200 and the HIC not exceed 1000 from essentially the tops of barriers, guardrails, swings, and climbers. At the same time, studies have shown that long bone injuries are 3 time more likely when the Gmax is greater than 150.

Good injury prevention strategies will include the requirement for a Gmax <150 and HIC <850 for all structures and it is important to provide lower impact values for younger children. This could be achieved for fall heights 1800mm (6') or less with the Gmax less than 100 and the HIC less than 500. This will provide protection during the child's attempts of challenging manoeuvres.

Warranties of at least 5 years for compliance to Standards will protect the financial investment for the owner & provide superior protection.

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