

First Class Pre-K Playground Regulations and Recommendations

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education does not monitor or maintain outdoor play environments. It is the responsibility of the program to adhere to all state and federal regulations regarding safety. The OSR has one certified Early Childhood Playground Safety Inspector per Region to provide guidance and resources for safe environments and playground quality enhancement.



The outdoor play environment MUST:



Include equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate.



Provide a minimum of 60 square feet for each child. This shall be for all 18 children at one time.



Provide opportunities and access for children with disabilities to participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities.



Contain an area for children to have large motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, or swinging.



Be enclosed by a fence or wall at least four feet in height. The fence or wall shall be free from sharp protruding edges and have secured gates



Not contain concrete or asphalt under outdoor playground equipment, with the exception of wheel toys.



Be arranged so that staff can supervise children by sight and sound. Staff should practice active supervision, moving around supervising and monitoring play at all times.



Have playground equipment that is not designed to be portable, securely anchored so that it cannot be tipped over by an adult or child.



Not be shared with younger or older children at the time of play.



Contain resilient/fall surfacing extending six feet beyond the limits of stationary equipment.



Provide shaded areas to provide a break from the sun or heat.



Be well-drained and free from tripping hazards.



Be inspected prior to play. Wooden equipment must be checked for sharp areas and splintering wood that could cause cuts or splinters. Metal pieces of equipment must be checked for rust, if rust is visible it must be removed immediately. All broken toys and equipment must be removed and replaced immediately.



Recommendations for the outdoor play environment:



If sandboxes are present, they should allow for drainage, be covered when not in use and be cleaned of foreign material on a regular basis.



Materials for activities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play, art and music should be present.



The environment should include a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces for children to explore.



There should be semiprivate areas where children can play alone or with a friend. Semiprivate areas should be visible at all times.