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Fall playground checklist

As kids head back to school and the playgrounds become busy once again, it's important to make sure that your school's playground equipment is in shape to provide children with hours of safe fun. So here's a checklist to help you make sure your playground is ready for kids:

Site Maintenance. Debris and litter on a playground are not only unattractive, but also very dangerous for kids. Make sure the playground site is clutter-free. Also check for any erosion of the playground surfacing material or for anything kids may trip over.

Playground Equipment Maintenance. In addition to keeping the area clean, you need to maintain the equipment itself. Burke customers have a head start on this, because BCI Burke provides a free maintenance kit with each playground. The kit includes graffiti remover, a customized maintenance schedule, and touch-up paint to match your playground's colors.

Equipment Inspections. Some school playgrounds don't have many kids on them during the summer, so problems can go unnoticed. Check your playground equipment for sharp edges, broken parts, or anything that can snag skin or clothing. (If yours is a BCI Burke playground covered under [Burke's Generations Warranty™](#), replacing the parts won't cost you anything. We can easily identify the replacement parts and quickly ship them to you so kids can get back to playing.)



Playground Safety Education. Safety is top priority on playgrounds, so now's the perfect time for teachers to brush up on playground safety. Burke is the only playground manufacturer that includes a National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) safety kit free with every modular play structure ordered.

New school year, new fundraising opportunities

The new school year brings new students and new opportunities. It's the perfect time to get students, teachers, parents and the community excited about projects such as a new playground for the school. And BCI Burke is here to offer resources to help you get started planning your new playground.

Our [Funds for Fun®](#) program gives you the tools you need to run an effective fundraising campaign, with plans, tips, pre-designed templates and much more. Our [Grant Resource Center](#) gives you information about available playground grants. In addition, we've partnered with The School Funding Center to provide expert grant writing services to you for a modest fee.



And to make sure you get the most for your money, we listen carefully to your needs and help you identify the best possible options. Our representatives can create a customized playground to fit your space and budget. Your representative can design your playground using our EZ Design technology so you can see in 3D what your playground will look like before it's installed.

Once your playground equipment is ordered, we work hard to ensure your order is shipped on time. In fact our goal is 100 percent on-time and correct shipments, and we come close to hitting that goal, with 98 percent on time shipments and 96 percent correct shipments the past three years.

Back-to-school means team-building

By Tim Ahern
Owner/CEO

School is back in session, and that means parents, kids and teachers are all engaged in team-building. Football teams, cheerleading squads, instructional teams, PTA committees and scores of others are busy recruiting members, electing leaders, setting agendas, learning new roles, and getting to know each other.

And before folks lose their enthusiasm for the new year, it's a good time to form a playground committee to ensure that children are getting the most out of their playground and their "free play" time.

As noted elsewhere in this issue of Playground Adviser, the first order of business – whether by committee or individual – is checking over the playground equipment, making sure any potentially hazardous conditions have been corrected.

Once that's done, you might start thinking ahead to improvements that can be made to the playground. Here are a few things to consider:

- Capacity. Has enrollment or participation increased significantly since the playground was installed? It may be time to consider an expansion or replacement.
- Amenities. The little touches around the playground can make it safer as well as more pleasant. Signs with playground policies, instructions or age guidelines for use of equipment are a good idea. Consider adding some [benches, picnic tables and trash receptacles](#).
- If you'd like to expand but can't swing (so to speak) a full playground this year, consider some stand-alone activities such as BCI Burke's [Freestanding Basics](#).
- Canopies and shades. Sunburn to young skin can cause permanent damage. If there's no shade around your playground equipment, you may want to consider adding Burke's [ShadePlay Canopies](#).
- Of course, as soon as you decide to make some improvements, you'll face the inevitable question of how to get the funds for it. Ironically, that's good news. We've found that fund-raising is an excellent team-building activity and our [Funds for Fun®](#) program makes it easy. Ask us about it!



Playground planning with ease

Planning a playground doesn't happen overnight. Doug Buell, owner of [Buell Recreation](#) knows it can take several months to raise funds and have everyone agree on the specific design of a playground. And with most of his business catering to school playgrounds, Buell knows Burke's resources and technology go a long way to easing the stress.

"We work with schools throughout the entire process. It's not just about buying a playground, but rather designing a playground to fit each school's needs, giving schools the resources for funding, helping with safety surfacing for the site and installation as well as handling any issues that may arise along the way," said Buell, whose company represents BCI Burke products in Nevada, Utah and Idaho.

It's exciting working with schools because of the energy surrounding each project. The people truly care about what the students will get, he said.

"Schools are fun because they really take an intimate focus on the project. There's a lot of energy and enthusiasm among parents, teachers, students and even the community. It brings everyone together, and people take pride and ownership of the structure," he said.

By adding a playground to a school, it shows that adults care about kids' healthy



habits. Kids who enjoy physical activity at an early age are more likely to carry those healthy habits into adulthood, said Buell.

"It's never too early for kids to start forming healthy habits. As adults, we need to do things and provide things that show kids that their health is important to us, and a playground is a perfect example. It lets kids get excited about exercise. We just can't afford to neglect something as important as that," he said.

Even though Burke offers the versatility to mix and match different [playground components](#), Buell recommends that schools seriously consider incorporating events from the [Intensity®](#) line.

"Our intensity line is perfect for schools because it is geared toward kids' fitness by allowing kids to utilize major muscle groups, plus it's affordable. We've done research that shows kids need to burn a minimum of 150 calories a day through play. They need to be moving to burn calories, and 30 minutes on a playground can burn about half of those calories," he said.