



For more information contact:  
Rose Ahern  
Public Relations Specialist  
BCI Burke  
660 Van Dyne Road  
P.O. Box 549  
Fond du Lac, WI 54936-0549  
920.921.9220  
[rahern@bciburke.com](mailto:rahern@bciburke.com)  
[www.bciburke.com](http://www.bciburke.com)

**2/15/07**

## **BCI Burke creates safe play spaces**

### **Playground safety top priority in design, fabrication, installation and beyond**

Playgrounds are a compelling and fun attraction for children of all ages and offer the chance to explore and develop physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills. However, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year over 200,000 children are injured seriously enough on America's playgrounds—both on home and public play spaces-- to require emergency medical visits. Educating adults and children about common safety hazards and how to prevent playground mishaps are the first steps toward helping communities reduce these figures.

BCI Burke is committed to making playgrounds safe and supports their pledge with tangible and valuable resources including being the only playground manufacturer in the country to provide a National Program for Playground Safety(NPPS) Supervision Kit with each playground purchased.

“Keeping kids safe is a priceless investment and Burke has been a leader in playground safety since its inception in 1920,” says Tim Ahern, BCI Burke President and CEO. “We build exceptional playgrounds that stand up to use and abuse, and we continually look for ways to help our customers create fun, educational and safe play environments.” he adds.

While safety has always been a priority for Burke, a renewed effort is being placed on informing and educating the public about the importance of teaching kids, caregivers, educators, and parents about playing safe on playgrounds.

“One of the most important, yet often overlooked, aspects of playground safety is an effective supervision program. No matter how safe the equipment is, it cannot supervise the kids,” says Ahern.

In addition to the supervision kit, Burke offers a line of professional, yet economical signage for playgrounds that inform users which structures are appropriate for different age groups and remind them about the importance of adult supervision. A free copy of the NPPS Fall Surfacing Guide is available to help customers choose the appropriate playground surfacing and each Burke play structure comes with a free customized maintenance kit to help maintain a safe, functioning playground.

“Our goal is to provide the public and our customers with innovative information, comprehensive education and a superior playground product to ensure the safest possible environment for kids to play on” Ahern says.

There are several key factors for adults to consider when children are on the playground:

- As a rough rule of thumb, surfacing around play structures should be at least 12 inches deep, consisting of either loose fill surfacing such as pea gravel, mulch, sand or wood chips, or one of a variety of rubber products available. It is strongly recommended to consult with a certified playground installer or BCI Burke to ensure all safety guidelines, including exact depth of surfacing materials, are followed.
- Never attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines, or pet leashes to the equipment. These present serious strangulation hazards to children.
- Watch for broken parts, rust, protruding hardware, sharp edges, or other disrepair. Bring maintenance and safety concerns to the attention of the appropriate person immediately.
- Ensure debris and litter is picked up to prevent tripping hazards and health issues.
- Due to the differing capabilities and needs of children, separate play areas should be provided for pre-schoolers (ages 2-5) and children ages 5-12. Be sure children play on the equipment designated for their age.
- Look for signage on playgrounds that inform parents/supervisors which structures are appropriate for the age of the children in their care, and remind them of supervision requirements.
- Choose a cooler part of the day to play. Apply sunscreen to protect children’s delicate skin.
- Interact with children at play. They take pride in showing adults what they can do. This also allows for better attention to safety.

Children can also help. According to NPPS, children should follow the following safety tips:

- Never play on playgrounds with loose clothing or drawstrings.
- Remove bike helmets while playing.
- Bring an adult to supervise.
- Only play on equipment with soft surfacing underneath.
- Pick up trash in and around the playground.
- Tell an adult if any equipment is broken, and do not play on it until it is fixed.
- When playing on swings: be sure to sit down at all times, slow down before getting off, and do not walk near someone who is swinging.
- Play on dry equipment only.
- Beware of hot surfaces that can burn skin on sunny days.

While it is impossible to prevent every injury, careful planning, education and supervision will make the playground experience more enjoyable for kids and adults alike. Ultimately,

the best playgrounds provide fun and safe play experiences, and memories that last a lifetime.

BCI Burke Company, with headquarters in Fond du Lac, is a leading manufacturer of playground, park, and recreation equipment, as well as a full line of skate park products and an avid supporter of playground safety. You can reach them at (920) 921-9220, or visit [www.bciburke.com](http://www.bciburke.com).