



Winter 2008

Keeping Kids Safe!

# PLAYGROUND SAFETY NEWS

<p>What's Inside?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We've moved locations!</li> </ul> <p>Page 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of a Leader</li> <li>• NAEYC: Update</li> </ul> <p>Page 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Tips!</li> <li>• Ahren's Training</li> </ul> <p>Page 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground Safety Awards</li> <li>• Playground Safety Week</li> </ul> <p>Page 4</p>
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## WE'VE MOVED!

The National Program for Playground Safety has recently moved its organization's location to the nearby **Human Performance Center** located on The University of Northern Iowa's Campus. The HPC was designed to support the academic and public service programs of the UNI's School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services (HPELS).



The (HPC) includes classrooms, offices, laboratories and medical office space. NPPS now occupies a 3,000 sq. ft. office suite in the new \$7 million complex thanks to the generous donation of the Claude W and Dolly Ahrens Foundation of Grinnell, Iowa. The office suite includes three private administrative offices, a large open workspace for student associates and a much needed storage room. A shared conference room and classroom round out the new NPPS facilities. We look forward to hosting the Annual National Playground Safety School in our new complex this August.

**NPPS**

University of Northern Iowa  
 Human Performance Center  
 Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

*New Address!*

# Loss of a Leader

## *Dr. Frances Wallach*

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the passing of Dr. Frances Wallach on January 27, 2008 in New York City. Fran was a close colleague and friend of all in the playground safety world, and a tireless worker in the effort to help make playgrounds safe for children. She was often referred to by colleagues as the “mother” of playground safety in the U.S.

As chair (18 years) and founding member of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) sub-committee for public playground standards (ASTM 15.29) Fran worked vigorously to insure that children had safe play areas. In addition, she was a member of many other playground-related sub-committees including Soft Contained Playground Equipment, Residential Playground Equipment, Playground Surfacing, and Children under Two.

As one of the most prominent experts in the field, Fran provided sage counsel to playground manufacturers, professional organizations, community recreation departments and the general public through her private company, Total Recreation Management Services, Inc. She also imparted her wisdom to young people as she served as an adjunct associate professor in recreation at New York University.

When NPPS was first created in 1995, she became the first person appointed to its Board of Directors, a position that she held until her death. She also was honored with the first Ahrens national Playground Safety of the Year Award in 2002. We will miss her wise counsel and gentle guidance.

Fran is survived by her husband Gil, children and grandchildren. She also leaves a legacy of service to millions of children who can safely play at home, school, and in the community because of her efforts.



From the...

Director's Desk



## **NAEYC Recognition of Outdoor Play Inspection Course: An Update**

There has been much confusion over whether the NPPS Outdoor Play Inspection course will help agencies meet the NAEYC accreditation 9B standard. Specifically, the controversy is over the language of substandard 9B.07. That standard currently recognizes only a CPSI as someone able to do the inspection. Unfortunately when the standard was first adopted, there were no other certification programs in existence. Recognizing this problem, NAEYC officials currently have put together a special ad hoc committee to address the issue. The committee will meet in February and forward its recommendation to the Accreditation council. NPPS fully expects that the Outdoor Play Inspector will be seen as an additional alternative to the CPSI. Until that time, NAEYC has accepted assessments by NPPS inspectors since 9B.07 is an emerging criterion. A review of all standards will occur in June of this year. We will keep you posted.

**NEWS 2**



# WINTER IS HERE!

Please remember that children still need time to explore the outdoors. As childcare professionals, it is important to be aware that Winter weather means special conditions exist on the playground.

NPPS recommends that the playground equipment is off limits if the equipment is wet. Wet conditions exist because of:



**FOG** It makes the equipment wet and it will be slippery

It makes the equipment wet and children will lose **RAIN** their grip and fall.



**ICE** It makes the equipment slippery, thus resulting in falling.

Surfacing under and around equipment that has snow placed on top of it has not been **SNOW** tested for impact attenuation. Surfacing is important because it protects children from falling.



Children should be allowed to play on the equipment once the snow is removed and when equipment is dry

## AHREN'S TRAINING

Thanks to the generosity of the Claude W. and Dolly Ahrens Foundation, the National Program for Playground Safety was able to provide seven playground planning workshops around the State of Iowa from June to December, 2007. Also helping in this endeavor were the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Childcare Resources and Referral agencies of Sioux City and Dubuque, the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children and the Iowa Parks and Recreation Association. Professionals from over 100 agencies from around the State attended the 6 hour workshops to learn about how to plan and design S.A.F.E. play areas for children. For many attendees, the workshops provided the first information about the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines and basic planning principles concerning design criteria, assessment of space requirements, the selection of equipment, importance of proper surfacing materials and placement of activity centers. Evaluations from the workshop indicated that the information gained was valuable to participants returning home to plan S.A.F.E. and fun play environments for children. The NPPS as well as participants are grateful for the support of the Ahrens Foundation for this opportunity to help make Iowa's children safe in childcare centers, parks, and schools.



# PLAYGROUND SAFETY WEEK

## *Nominations*

**NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR PLAYGROUND SAFETY AWARDS**

THE AWARDS WILL  
BE GIVEN DURING  
PLAYGROUND SAFETY  
WEEK.

APRIL 21-28th, 2008!

PLEASE HAVE YOUR  
NOMINATIONS IN BY  
APRIL 15, 2008

Ahren's Playground Safety Advocate of the Year Award!

Do you know an individual who you think deserves the Ahren's Playground Safety Advocate of the Year award? Is there someone who is helping keep our nation's playgrounds safe? Has someone in your community made a difference with your playground? This is your chance to recognize the individual.

### John Preston Playground Safety Award

The John Preston award is given annually to an organization or agency who exemplifies the care and concern for children by creating safe play environments! The National Program for Playground Safety has created this award in honor of John's tireless work and dedication to the safety of children.



### ***Nominate Online!***

Visit our website for more details on how to nominate an individual or organization.

<http://www.playgroundsafety.org/safetyweek/awards/index.htm>

*Think warm thoughts..*



## PLAYGROUND

**AUGUST 4-7th 2008**

## SAFETY SCHOOL!

ARE YOU A **CHILD CARE SPECIALISTS** ? A **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR** OR **NURSE**? IF YOUR JOB ENTAILS **WORKING WITH CHILDREN** ON A **DAILY BASIS** , THEN IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO **ATTEND** THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR PLAYGROUND SAFETY'S 12TH ANNUAL PLAYGROUND **SAFETY SCHOOL!**

### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- How to identify and fix playground problems
- Gain knowledge on a variety of surfacing materials
- Learn the importance of supervision
- Examine the features of good playground design

### SAFE PLAYGROUND CERTIFICATION

- NPPS'S Safety School offers SAFE Playground certification
- The SAFE certification exam is scheduled on the closing day of each session. Cost for the exam is \$100.00