

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency

California Department of Public Health

AFL 17-_
September 28, 2020

TO:
All Californians

SUBJECT:
Outdoor Playgrounds and other Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Summary

COVID-19 continues to pose a severe risk to communities and requires all people in California to follow necessary precautions and to adapt the way they live and function in light of this ongoing risk. This guidance provides direction on usage of outdoor playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities (hereafter facilities), to support a safe environment for children and families. It applies to outdoor playgrounds located in parks, campgrounds, and other publicly accessible locations. This guidance does not apply to indoor playgrounds or family entertainment centers.

Outdoor Playground Definition:

- Fully outdoors
- Publicly accessible
- Free to enter and use
- Operated by a city, state, county, or federal government
- Designed primarily to serve nearby residents within a half a mile
- Can provide State-mandated outdoor space for preschools (which could be scheduled in advance to avoid overlapping use)

- Typically includes recreational equipment, like play structures, slides, swings, etc. intended to enrich children's physical health and development

Visitors to outdoor community playgrounds must comply with the following requirements:

1. Face masks over the mouth and nose are required for everyone 2 years of age or older with caregiver supervision at all times to ensure face mask use.
2. Do not use the playground when different households are unable to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or when the capacity limit has been reached.
3. Caregivers must monitor to keep adults and children from different households at least 6 feet apart.
4. Consider coming on different times or days to avoid wait times and potential crowded times.
5. No eating or drinking in playground, to ensure face masks are worn at all times.
6. Wash or sanitize hands before and after using the playground.
7. Elderly and persons with underlying medical conditions should avoid playground when others are present.
8. Limit visit to 30 min per day when others are present

Note: Facility operators [should download and print this flyer](#) to post at all outdoor playgrounds.

All playground facilities operators should review and follow these recommendations:

1. An adult must actively supervise each child at all times to make sure that children two years of age or older keep their face covering over their nose and mouth and stay 6 feet away from adults and children outside their household.
 - a. Children who are supervised by the same adult must stay together in the same play area or play structure at all times, to allow active supervision.
 - b. If an infant or child requires attention (nursing, diapering) that precludes an adult from actively supervising other children using the playground, the adult should ask

the other children to leave the play structure/area and stay by the adult's side until needed care is complete.

2. People standing outside the playground, including people waiting to enter the playground, should remain 6 feet away from areas of the playground used by children and adults.

3. Maintain six-foot distancing between children and adults from different households including children using or waiting to use play structures or play areas, and families waiting to enter the playground.

4. Increase cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, daily as practicable.

5. To the extent feasible, provide handwashing stations or sanitizer to facilitate hand hygiene, especially during times of heavy usage. Use a hand sanitizer containing (60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol). Never use hand sanitizers with methanol due to its high toxicity to both children and adults.

6. Post the maximum number of children allowed at the entrance of each playground.

a. Determine and post the maximum occupancy of each play structure, (e.g., climbing structures, slides, swings, spinning structures, and sand areas) with 6 foot vertical and horizontal distancing.

b. Determine and post the maximum occupancy for supervising adults to ensure that each adult can maintain six feet of distance from other adults and children.

c. Provide directions on how to wait in line when maximum playground occupancy has been reached.

7. Mark playgrounds to help children and adults maintain 6 foot distancing.

a. Mark spaces for families to stand while waiting to enter the playground. The spaces should be far enough apart to allow 6 feet of distance between households.

b. For play structures or play areas that can hold more than one child while allowing 6 foot distancing:

i. Post the maximum number of children allowed on each structure/in each area to allow 6 foot distancing vertically and horizontally.

ii. For play structures or areas that can hold more than 1 child, consider marking with tape or other visual indicators to help children assess whether they are 6 feet apart.

c. Mark designated spaces 6 feet apart for children to stand while waiting to use a play structure/area.

Additional Considerations

If there is a pre-scheduled activity that will access the playground, the playground must be closed to the broader public during that time.

Child care programs, schools, out-of-school time programs and other programs for children and youth where children must remain in cohorts may not use playgrounds during times when they are open to the public. However, if the playground operator permits, the childcare, school or other program may reserve a time for the exclusive use of the playground by the program. While on the playground, cohorts should maintain separation and avoid mixing.

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