

Planning a Playground Fieldtrip?

Planning a Playground Fieldtrip is a great way to examine and test a wide range of equipment from different manufacturers. Because all equipment may look equally attractive in catalogues and in 3D drawings, at Habitat Systems we encourage you to go out and play on a variety of playground equipment. You will soon find that there is a wide range of quality in the market place. Please look below for some ways that you can assess the quality of different playgrounds.

Posts & Clamps



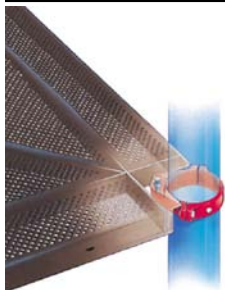
- Check for aluminum posts and post caps, which will prevent rusting.
- Check for 5" posts, which increase stability and will help prevent a structure from swaying when older children are playing on it. Structures with 5" posts will also come standard with larger decks, which accommodate more children and result in increased play value.
- Check that clamps are compact, fit tightly, and contain no gaps between the post.
- Do the clamps work on a 360 degree compression system, which requires no drilling of holes into the posts? This prevents posts from rusting and attachment failure.
- Can the manufacturer's clamps be adjusted in the field, if the equipment is to high / low?

Hardware



- Is the manufacturer's hardware vandal resistant? (Otherwise equipment is vulnerable to anyone with standard tools).
- Is the hardware stainless steel, which will prevent rusting?

Decks



- Strong decks are made of 12 gauge flanged formed perforated steel .
- When bouncing up and down on a deck, you should find little movement or warping.
 - Check for adequate reinforcements under the deck(s), which prevent warping.
 - Is the deck mounted flush to the outside of the posts, which will increase stability?
 - How big is the deck area? Can the deck accommodate many children at once?

Slides

- Does the slide have an adjusting footer to help ensure that the slide doesn't pull away from decks, or crack, due to normal expansion and contraction during warm and cold cycles. A sliding footer will prevent dangerous gaps which may catch children's clothing or hands.
- Does the slide have a "hood" which encourages children to sit down before going down the slide?

Warranty



- Do areas on the playground where children place their hands and feet have TenderTuff coating? This coating protects little hands and feet from hot and cold temperatures and also protects equipment.
- What is the manufacturer's warranty? Remember that in most cases, a "Lifetime" warranty is only good for 7 years.