

Playground Safety and Helmets

Most families know the basics of playground safety. Teach your children to always sit down before they slide, to stop a swing completely before getting off, and not to push or shove other children. Parents are warned to remove all hanging strings on children's clothing that could potentially trap or strangle their child. However, there is a hidden hazard which many people overlook about playground safety: bicycle helmets.

Imagine this. Your child is playing with friends over the weekend. The kids decide to go for a bike ride around the neighborhood. After a while, they decide to head over to the local park and play on the bars and slides. But when they arrive, they ditch their bikes and run to the play structure, not taking the time to remove the helmet that their parents specifically instructed them to wear when riding their bikes. What you might not expect is that playing on a play structure while wearing a bike helmet can be a potential strangulation hazard. Because bike helmets are designed to stay on your child's head during a crash, the buckle does not have a releasing mechanism. And because of this, it is possible for a strap to get caught, causing a possible choking or strangulation hazard for your children.

In 1999, a Pennsylvania child asphyxiated because he was wearing a bicycle helmet while playing on playground equipment. And although there have not been many reports of death because of this hazard in the United States because of our high playground safety standards, it is still important to be aware of the danger associated with bike helmets and playgrounds. So please, remind your children to remove their bike helmets before playing on playground equipment so you can eliminate this potential threat to your children.

