MAINTENANCE OVERVIEW
Playgrounds should have monthly inspections, to ensure health, safety, and accessibility. These inspections should be done by staff trained in playground maintenance. Annual inspections. Playgrounds should have annual inspections, performed by staff trained in health, safety, and structural integrity, and which should be reviewed at the end of every season. These should be done at recommended times.

MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS
It is essential that the proper record-keeping be established for all playgrounds, to ensure health, safety, and accessibility. These records should include manufacturers documentation of all equipment specifications, database ID numbers, inspection dates, injury reports, as well as maintenance work of all structures, nature areas, and surfacing. It is recommended that this documentation be retained for a specific time (at least 10-15 years), and which should be confirmed by the State College Area School District (SCASD) legal department.

TREES AND CLIMBING
Children naturally want to climb trees, and loose branches offer children an opportunity for play, which could otherwise be more complicated, once the basic approach is understood. A risk-benefit assessment is recommended as a tool to evaluate nature play, such as how to perform a visual inspection for weak or damaged branches, which would otherwise be impossible to determine.

RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT
The risk-benefit assessments are a good tool to determine fitness levels. A risk-benefit assessment is performed by a qualified professional, to determine the potential risks and benefits of a particular activity. This tool should be used in conjunction with other risk assessments, such as how to perform a visual inspection for weak or damaged branches, which would otherwise be impossible to determine.

WATERING:
Through a regular maintenance regime and trained staff, the State College Area School District (SCASD) should review the the need for additional water or irrigation during warmer months.

FIREWOOD AND WOODstry:
Maintaining the playground ground mulch (also referred to as engineered wood fiber) is critical for playground safety and accessibility. EWF naturally settles on a stable play surface but with continued use, it may compact and require additional material. To maintain the proper level of EWF, it should be checked and cleaned at least monthly, to ensure it is not overly compacted.

MULCHES:
MULCHES are important to suppress weeds and retain soil moisture. Mulches are biodegradable, and some may provide additional benefits, such as nutrient release. Mulches should be used to cover natural areas, such as around trees, shrubs, and perennials, to help them survive. Most trees will take two years to establish. Shrubs and perennials will establish within the first year.

MOWING:
During the establishment period, watering will be required, depending on weather conditions. Grass can only be mowed when the damage assessment is complete, to ensure that the grassland is not damaged. Watering is necessary to maintain the proper level of EWF, and can significantly shorten its lifespan. Additionally, fasteners and bolts can become loose over time, and must be inspected frequently.

Steel and plastic equipment are often viewed as not needing maintenance, and may be more durable than natural elements. Unfortunately, this is not the case. UV degradation and heavy use may cause steel equipment to become more susceptible to rust and corrosion. It is recommended that all fixed equipment be inspected on a monthly basis, with particular focus on fasteners and moving parts.

Tree trunks, LOGS, and Boulders:
Fallen or cut down tree trunks, logs, and boulders offer children the opportunity for play, which could otherwise be more complicated, once the basic approach is understood. A risk-benefit assessment is recommended as a tool to evaluate nature play, such as how to perform a visual inspection for weak or damaged branches, which would otherwise be impossible to determine.

VANDALISM:
Many trees and shrubs will grow in the shade, provided there is no underlying damage. Damage to the aging process, but weather and heavy use can advance the aging process. The inspections should include removal of any damaged or weakened branches.

FALLEN OR CUT DOWN TREE TRUNKS, LOGS, AND BOULDERS
Trees and branches in the playground area should be removed or pruned, depending on the extent of the damage. Damaged joints should be repaired, and new ones should be added. It is recommended that all fixed equipment be inspected on a monthly basis, with particular focus on fasteners and moving parts.

PLANTS AND VEGETATION
Plants providing value for decades of children to enjoy. Through a regular maintenance regime and trained staff, the State College Area School District (SCASD) should review the need for additional water or irrigation during warmer months.

INSPECTION PROGRAM
All playgrounds are subject to regular inspections, to determine if they are health, safety, and accessibility compliant. Maintenance actions should be taken immediately, as necessary. These inspections should be done by trained staff.

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