

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL SUPPORT IN GYM AND ON THE PLAYGROUND

BIG IDEAS:

- Physical support of children should not be the first thing you try! Always use verbal or gestural prompts first.
- If physical support is needed, do the least amount possible. For example, if a child needs help climbing part of the play structure, try stabilizing the feet in the footholds instead of lifting or pushing their whole body. Children learn motor skills by practicing them, so the more you do for them, the less they learn.
- Move slowly when providing physical support, **ask for permission to physically support a child, and tell the child what you are doing!** For example, “Do you want me to help your body get on the tire swing?” “I am going to lift your leg and help your knee stay still on the seat while you hold on and pull yourself up on the chains.”
- Young children are at risk for elbow dislocation, and children with low muscle tone are at even higher risk. **Never move a child’s body by pulling on any part of their arm. If a child’s whole body needs to be moved, your hands must be on the torso.**

CLIMBING WALLS and PLAY STRUCTURE:

- Make sure you **have your hands on their torso** or close to their hips so if they lose their footing or need support you are in the best position to assist them.
- Always assist from below.
- **Do not pull on their arms or legs.**
- Use verbal cues prior to physical support.
- Children should climb up and climb down, no jumping off the wall.



STAIRS:

- Position your body behind them when going up stairs and in front of them when going down stairs.
- If a child falls, they will most likely fall down the stairs, so you **always want to be on the downside of the stair.**



SWING:



- Make sure children are **holding on with both hands.**
- **Teachers push the swing**, not children.
- Be aware of children’s facial expressions while on the swing.
- Teach children to get on the swing by holding the ropes with both hands and putting one knee on the seat at a time to climb up and over. You can help them by stabilizing the swing, so it doesn’t move.

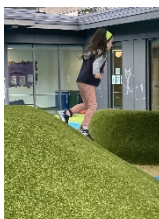
SLIDE:

- For safety reasons, children are only allowed to go down the slide **FEET FIRST. DO NOT LET THEM GO DOWN THE SLIDE HEAD-FIRST, or CLIMB UP THE SLIDE**
- **DO NOT allow children to RIDE ON YOUR LAP!** There is a high risk of leg fractures when children ride adult laps down slides.
- **NO TOYS/TRUCKS ON SLIDE**
- **ONLY LET ONE PERSON GO DOWN THE SLIDE AT A TIME**



MOUNDS:

- **FEET FIRST** going down (**NEVER** headfirst)
- Watch for friends at the bottom



GARBAGE: Goes in the garbage can!