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Olsen, Hudson, and Thompson's "Safe and Fun Playgrounds: A Handbook" (Book Review)

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Safe and Fun Playgrounds: A Handbook,

by Heather M. Olsen, Susan D. Hudson, and Donna Thompson. St. Paul, MN:
Redleaf Press, 2016. 150 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 9781605544601

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Safe and Fun Playgrounds is an accessible, well written handbook. Olsen, Hudson and Thompson are experienced educators and experts in playground safety. The book is an excellent resource for anyone with a role in playground supervision, planning or maintenance.

“Safe” stands for supervision, age-appropriate design, fall surfacing, and equipment maintenance. The book is organized into six chapters, eight appendixes, a glossary, a resource list, references and index. The book chapters address the history of American playgrounds and play areas, supervision, age-appropriate design, fall surfaces, equipment maintenance and planning. Standards, injuries, legal issues and cost are also covered. Photographs, charts, and real-life examples enhance the text. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions. Appendixes include useful checklists on supervision, ADA accessibility, safety and maintenance inspection. Sample forms include an injury report and a documentation form. The appendixes are rounded out with a summary of state regulations, chart of fall heights for equipment and playground use zone guidelines for equipment. Olsen, Hudson and Thompson recommend that readers consult the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) website: playgroundsafety.org for updates.

Active, challenging play is important for children’s development. The authors provide current, useful information for navigating the details of planning, creating and maintaining safe and engaging play areas and playgrounds. The handbook would benefit both novice and experienced individuals who work with children.