



April 14, 2009

Contact:  
Jaclyn White or  
Becky Booker  
Communications Manager  
205/562-3220 ext. 35  
[bbooker@tcpa.org](mailto:bbooker@tcpa.org)

Source: Jay Strickland, Director of Park Operations and Development  
205/562-3220 ext. 25

## **PARA FOCUSES ON PLAYGROUND SAFETY**

*Tuscaloosa, Ala.* – The Tuscaloosa County Park and Recreation Authority is stressing the importance of playground safety in conjunction with National Playground Safety Week April 19-25.

With summer vacation approaching, more children will be outside, and it is important that children and parents alike understand the risks that come along with playing outdoors. According to the National Program for Playground Safety, more than 200,000 preschool and elementary school-age children are treated in the emergency room every year for playground injuries.

PARA park rangers consistently check the playground equipment to make sure that it does not need any additional maintenance. PARA ensures the safety of the public playgrounds in our community by completing more thorough annual and biannual inspections.

Jay Strickland, Director of Park Operations and Development, says “We also add to the wood chip fall surface in order to comply with Public Playground Safety Standards.” The standards have certain recommendations about the amount of wood chips needed for different height levels of playground equipment.

There are many things that can be done to make playgrounds a safer place. Children should always be supervised while playing and should only play on equipment that is appropriate for their age and development level. The area around playground equipment should allow for sufficient usage space (especially for equipment such as swings), be free of tripping hazards and be cushioned properly.

PARA has many playgrounds for public use. There are play units in Bowers Park, Braughton Park, Cardinal Park, Faucett Brothers Park, A.L. Freeman Park, the Hughes Community Center, Jaycee Park, Kaulton park, McKinney Park, Monnish Park, the Northport Community Center, Palmore Park, Rosedale Park, Snow Hinton park, Springbrook Park, Munny Sokol Park and West End Park. There are also playgrounds at the Mary Ann Phelps Activity Center and the Leroy McAbee, Sr. Activity Center.

Any questions or concerns about PARA's playground facilities can be fielded to Gene Kent in Park Operations at 205/562-3210 or to Strickland at 205/562-3220.

Whether playing at school, the park or home, it is always important to put safety first. With nice weather and school vacations approaching, there is not a better time for children, parents and teachers to brush up on playground safety. Information about PARA's parks and facilities can be found at [www.tcpara.org](http://www.tcpara.org). For more information about Playground Safety Week, go to [www.uni.edu/playground](http://www.uni.edu/playground) or for research and safety tips visit [www.playgroundsafety.org](http://www.playgroundsafety.org).

###

Live, Learn, Play! PARA. The Tuscaloosa County Park & Recreation Authority is a county wide non-profit agency funded by the city of Tuscaloosa, the city of Northport and Tuscaloosa County. PARA's mission is to provide safe, clean, and beautiful facilities, parks and open space, along with professionally managed leisure activities for all people and to enrich the quality of life, provide economic value, and encourage long-term community stability and growth. Through strong partnerships, we achieve exceptional services and foster an atmosphere of cooperation, trust, and innovation to better serve our community.