

EVOLUTION of SWINGSETS



WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Greek vase painters, as early as the 5th century B.C., are known to have captured life's more playful moments, including women and children playing on a swing. And while such evidence suggests that swings are an ancient notion, the modern concept of playground equipment as we know it today began in the United States at the turn of the 20th century, amidst cultural and economic reform.



IMAGES OF SWINGS are present in art as early as the 5TH CENTURY B.C.

SWINGS ARE ANCIENT. SWING SETS ARE NEW.

SOCIAL REFORM. IDLE CHILDREN.

FIRST PLAYGROUNDS SPRING UP ACROSS U.S.

1890-1900

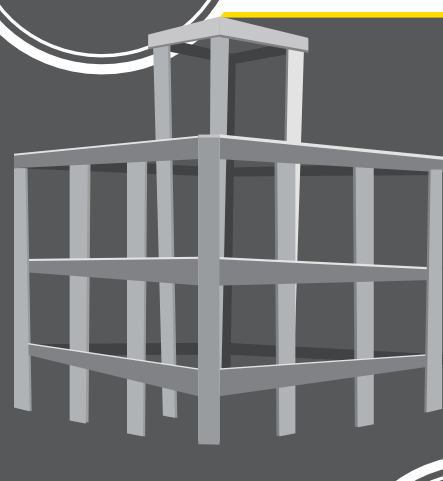


In the late 1800s, when child labor laws successfully increased the minimum working age, newly idle children had no safe place to play in urban areas. Setting aside space and creating playground equipment, then, became the heart of a movement backed by women and educators in many private associations.

1920

1ST PLAYGROUND STANDARDS ISSUED

The National Recreation Association began publishing recommendations for school playground equipment.



JUNGLE GYM PATENTED BY SEBASTIAN HINTON

1930

GREAT DEPRESSION GOVERNMENT FUNDING

During the Great Depression playgrounds grew rapidly across the country, and were funded by the Federal Government.

1940

PLAYGROUNDS FALL INTO DISREPAIR

WORLD WAR II put a damper on the manufacture of new playground equipment and many fell into disrepair.

POST-WAR BOOM

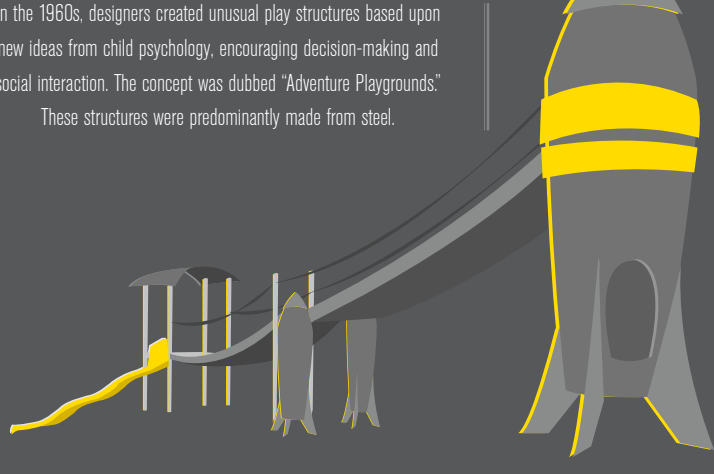
1950

In the post-war period, there was a boom in playground construction for, you guessed it, the Baby Boomers. Public playgrounds were funded right along with a flood of public school, housing and highway construction projects.

1960

JUNGLE GYMS GET CREATIVE

In the 1960s, designers created unusual play structures based upon new ideas from child psychology, encouraging decision-making and social interaction. The concept was dubbed "Adventure Playgrounds." These structures were predominantly made from steel.



INJURIES SURGED FROM STEEL PLAYGROUNDS

1970

OUCHIES!



REDWOOD PLAYSETS ARE BORN

1975

In 1975, two young partners (and parents), who noticed the danger of steel playsets, began Woodplay Playsets in Raleigh, North Carolina, as the Original Redwood Playset Company.

1980-1990

SAFE. SAFER. SAFEST.

The Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) published standards in the 1980s that would greatly influence swing set design for future generations. The new regulations included recommendations for removing hard equipment (metals bars) and substituting "soft" replacements such as wood and plastic. The change to wooden swing sets accelerated through the 1990s, and injuries from the playground equipment lessened. In the 1990's, further guidelines brought finely tuned sensitivity to safety issues in swing set design. At the start of the 21st century, installation of wooden playground equipment continued to accelerate.

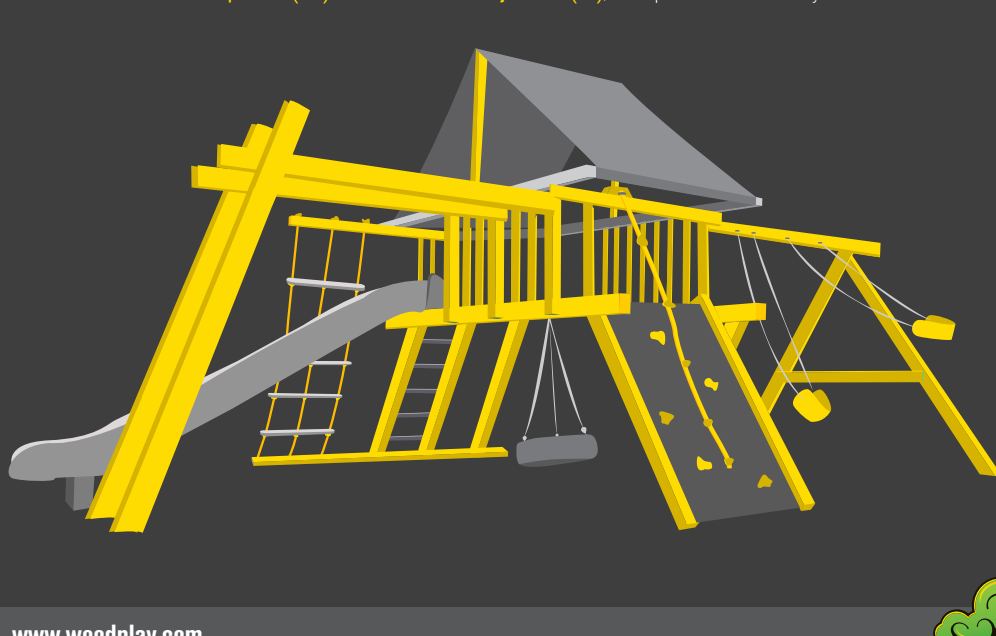
CPSC

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

REBIRTH OF OUTDOOR PLAY

Now

In 2011, The childhood obesity concern has given rise to an increased interest in outdoor play. The driving factor behind swing set design today is to achieve a swing set which stimulates the imagination and increases physical activity, while remaining safe. And the finest swing set manufacturers work only with lumber mills which meet or exceed the standards of either the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** or the **Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)**, which plants five trees for every tree harvested.



www.woodplay.com

Playgrounds and Public Recreation (1896-1929), www.nycgovparks.org

Map: DN-0000014, Chicago Daily News Negatives Collection, Chicago History Museum.

J is for Jungle Gym, by Sheila Duran, (winnetkahistory.org)

A Timeline: 1898 - 1998 (History of park organizations around the US), Parks & Recreation

Are Playgrounds Still Viable in The 21st Century? - how safe and sound they are, by Susan D. Hudson, Donna Thompson

Playgrounds in Parks, www.nycgovparks.org

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