**NRPA Joint Statement**

Nationally, more cities and states have implemented shelter in place orders, closed schools and businesses, and taken crucial measures to protect public health and slow the spread of COVID-19. As these changes in policy and practice have been implemented, many questions regarding the safety of public playgrounds and play structures have emerged.  
  
The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) understands the important value playgrounds and play structures provide to communities across the country, especially for children. But, given the current situation and the guidance from public health officials on physical distancing, limiting in-person social interactions, avoiding spaces where people congregate in close quarters, and the concerns around transmission of the virus being spread through surfaces, we believe that playgrounds and play structures should temporarily close in an effort to reduce community spread.  
  
Many communities have already taken steps to close these spaces, including:  
  
\* Posting signage  
\* Wrapping equipment  
\* Making public service announcements  
\* Locking permanent fencing gates or installing temporary fencing

NRPA fully supports these decisions and efforts to protect public safety. However, we recognize these decisions involve a number of factors and should be made at the local level - consulting with public health officials and based on the local risk assessment.  
  
While we believe that playgrounds and play structures should close, NRPA continues to support keeping parks, trails, and green spaces that provide adequate room for physical distancing open for the public to use in responsible ways that protect public health and safety. Through this outbreak, local parks, trails and open spaces have become even more of a haven and place of respite from the stresses of daily life and the uncertainty we face. We know the physical and mental health benefits that these spaces provide and urge them to remain open wherever possible, as outlined in our [***Joint Statement on Using Parks and Open Space While Maintaining Physical Distancing***](http://send.nrpa.org/link.cfm?r=QsxUWlF53tSk-Nx7t6vDcw~~&pe=PiOlLs7t8ocoDkSQ7Y0ocGdEd-xmpi2uam77siz_B43L14snoroQirhfH8Q5xczWPQpOVbw0YT4WlLZpqczMgA~~&t=a8RaY49aQpcxFAMdGZuENQ~~%3e%20) that is supported by more than 1,000 organizations nationwide.  
  
The work you are doing is more critical than ever and we are working tirelessly to elevate all that you do. You can find stories from the field and updated [***COVID-19 Resources for Parks & Rec***](https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/coronavirus-disease-2019/) on our webpage. Thank you and stay well.  
  
In gratitude,   
Kristine Stratton  
NRPA President and CEO