

news

Herald Sun

Newer playgrounds are too dull for kids

- **by: Mitchell Toy**
- From: Sunday Herald Sun
- December 26, 2009 10:18PM

16

Ads By Google

- ***Self Managed Super Fund***
Learn The Advantages of SMSF With Australia's Biggest SMSF Provider!

www.esuperfund.com.au



Too dull: Maroondah Federation Estate Park is one of a number of children's playgrounds that has been criticised for putting safety above having fun. Picture: Tony Gough

Source: Herald Sun

FINDING a decent playground these school holidays should be a walk in the park, but parents and health experts say the quality of Melbourne play spots for children is on the slide.

New-age playgrounds designed to minimise injury have come under fire for being boring and limiting.

Experts have warned a lack of older-style "adventure" playgrounds could be holding back our children's development.

Child nutritionist Kim Bishop, of Yu Food and Lifestyle, said old-fashioned playgrounds let children exercise more effectively.

"I certainly tend to go for the older playgrounds rather than the more sterile environments," Ms Bishop said.

"At a playground, kids need a space where they are free to move in a variety of different ways.

"There has even been controversy around sandpits as play spaces, but I think it's important to let kids put their hands and feet in dirt and sand."

Researchers at the University of Western Australia have launched a study on the declining quality and

number of playgrounds and their effect on children.

The project's research leader, Lisa Wood, has said councils and schools go overboard in creating safe and sterile environments, and that children should be given greater scope to play.

Docklands mum-of-three Kristy Seymour-Smith agreed, saying playgrounds should be designed for fun.

"I think of the playgrounds that were around when I was a kid - they were quite a bit different," Ms Seymour-Smith said.

"As long as there's supervision, they can be fun and safe at the same time."

Parents were asked to put forward their favourite aspects of a good playground, used by the Sunday Herald Sun to find some of the best spots around Melbourne.

Top playgrounds included a castle-style structure at Thomas St Park, Hampton, an adventure playground in Victoria St, Doncaster, and Hays Paddock in Kew.

Some of the worst-rated playgrounds included the minimalist Empress Rd Reserve at Surrey Hills and the quirky Maroondah Federation Estate in Ringwood.
