


# Specifying Rope-Based Play

A reputable playground designer or architect can assist in selecting a brand of rope-based playground equipment. However, not all rope-based equipment is created equal. Here is a short list of things you will want to require and some things you may want to avoid:

- Rope fibers can be made of vinyl (polypropylene), which is much less desirable for its strength and durability than nylon (polymide) or polyester.
- UV protection or color fastness – look for a rating of 7/8 or 8/8. Red does tend to fade a little more than other colors, but if you select a 7 or 8 rating, you'll notice the fading is considerably less.
- Underneath the rope fibers are steel strands that give the rope its strength. Look for the most steel strands you can find: 144 to 168 galvanized steel strands is preferred. Steer away from any products providing less than 100 strands of steel.
- Connectors, like kids, come in all shapes and sizes and content. Look for compressed connectors that are factory-installed. Avoid plastic connectors or hook-type connectors (think s-hooks on a swing), which can work loose and cause abrasion against the rope fibers making them fray.
- Breaking strength – Ask your net distributor the tested breaking strength of the equipment: the connectors should be able to hold in excess of 2000 lbs. and the cable with steel content should have a breaking strength greater than 12,000 lbs.
- IPEMA Certified – When in doubt, select net products that have the IPEMA Certified Seal of approval on them. IPEMA certification gives inexperienced playground purchasers or first time net purchasers the assurance that the equipment they are buying is going to meet or exceed industry accepted standards for quality construction and safety. 

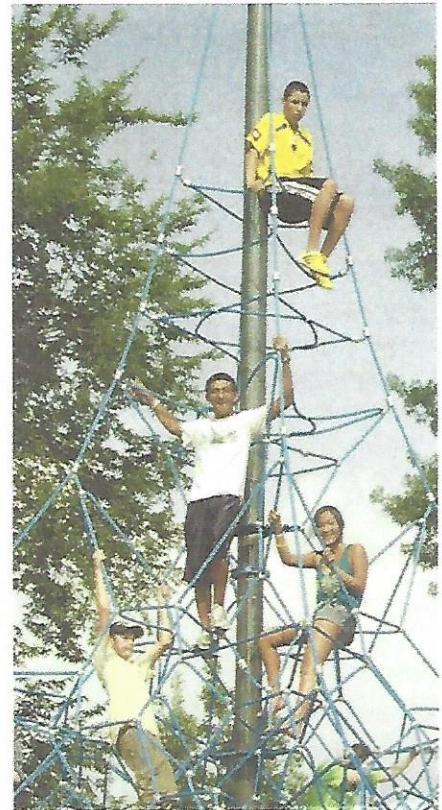


Photo Credit: Dynamo Playgrounds