Correcting Entrapment Hazards

There shall be no openings greater than 3-1/2 by 6-1/4 inches and less than 9 inches in diameter anywhere in the outdoor play area where children's feet cannot touch the ground.

Openings that fit these dimensions are called "entrapment hazards." An entrapment hazard is an opening that a child's body could fit through, but not their head. Children often enter openings feet first and attempt to slide through the opening. If the opening is not large enough it may allow the body to pass through the opening and entrap the head. When the ground forms the lower boundary of an opening, it is not considered to be a head entrapment hazard.

Common Entrapments:

The table below shows some common entrapment hazards seen by Licensing Specialists. It is not meant to be a complete list of all possible entrapment hazards.

Railings: The spaces between railings on a hand rail can create entrapment hazards. Entrapment hazards may also be found on stair railings.	

Stair Treads: The open spaces between each stair can form an entrapment hazard.	
Older or Handmade Play Equipment: Some older equipment may have been built before information about entrapment hazards was published.	
Equipment Installed Incorrectly: If equipment is installed incorrectly there may be gaps that create an entrapment hazard.	

Some Ways to Correct Entrapment Hazards:

Below are some possible ways to correct entrapment hazards. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all possible ways to correct entrapments.

Lattice:

Metal Bars:

Hard Plastic:

Mesh:

Wood:

Plexiglass:

Brick: