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Kids' Swings: Metal vs Wood by Clinton Chaz

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If you're thinking of putting up a swing for your kids in your garden or yard, you're probably finding it difficult to choose between metal and wood swing-sets. They're both great options and come with their own advantages and disadvantages. Your final choice depends really on the space available, budget, the age of your kids, and how much time you'll have to do regular maintenance.

Wood is definitely more attractive and a white cedar or pine swing-set enhances the charm of your garden or lawn. It's also sturdier and more durable than metal. Wood which has been sourced from a sustainable forest resource, well-seasoned and treated against pests can withstand years of rough use by kids and weathers well too. However, if the wood is not finished properly, or seasoned well enough, you can have the problem of splinters, rotting and warping. Wood is also much more expensive than metal. However, if you're looking for a long-term recreational feature that's going to stand for years in your yard, and can be used long after your kids have grown, then wood is a better option.

Metal swing-sets are definitely cheaper and if you're not looking for a long-term feature, these are a good option. They're more value for money and you can buy a multiple set in metal for the same price that you'd pay for a high-quality wooden swing-set. They're easier to install, but you have to ensure that they're firmly anchored, since they're lighter than their wooden counterparts and more prone to tipping. Lightweight metal can also bend with rough use. If the set is to be installed outdoors, rust can be a huge issue, unless you have a guarantee from the manufacturer that they've used specially treated metal. Painted sets are another cause of concern and you must ensure that the paint used is lead-free and will not chip too easily due to weathering. Though you don't have to worry about splintering, you'll have to look out for sharp edges on joints and sticking-out bolts/screws.

Swing-sets that come with combinations like climbing frames, climbing walls, Jungle Jims, rope bridges, castles/towers and sand-pits are a great option for day-care centers, kindergartens and homes. They provide opportunities for creative and co-operative play, though children should never be left unsupervised on swings. Some swing-sets are of the twin-seater type and these are suitable for younger kids. Other options include swings with seats hung at different heights for older and younger kids, a trapeze style swinger and deck-chair type for added fun.

Whatever your choice, there's nothing better than a swing to give your kid hours of fun and outdoor play.

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Clinton Chaz - About Author:
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