

## Shmanners 327: Playgrounds

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[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet! This is your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:** And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:** And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

**Teresa:** It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello, dear.

**Travis:** Listen, I'm gonna get right into it. This week, we're talking about playground etiquette. How much of this is about the rules of pogs?

**Teresa:** Uh, none of it.

**Travis:** Oh, is it all about Pokemon cards?

**Teresa:** No...?

**Travis:** Um, at my school when I was a kid— hey, okay. I don't know what age range, what our demographic is. Pogs...

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** ... were these little, like, half-dollar sized— oh, wait. I don't know if our demographic— half-dollar...

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** ... is a kind of coin. It's not used that much. But, uh, pogs were like cardboard circles, and they usually had some kind of weird designs on 'em. And

usually for some reason a lot to do with eight balls, or, like, what looked like coked up rats. Uh, there was a lot of—

**Teresa:** [laughs] What?!

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** I didn't have any of those!

**Travis:** You didn't have the rats who liked like they were, like, in a biker gang, or— it's like, weird, weird stuff. Uh, from, like, *Cracked* Magazine.

**Teresa:** No, mine were all kind of, like, Lisa Frank style.

**Travis:** Oh, no. There was Lisa Frank too. Those were also great. There was a lot of, like, yin yang.

**Teresa:** Anyway, you would use this slammer, this special thick plasticky one to kind of, like...

**Travis:** Slam 'em.

**Teresa:** Slam 'em.

**Travis:** And if they flipped over you got to keep 'em.

**Teresa:** Kind of like tiddlywinks or marbles?

**Travis:** A little bit.

**Teresa:** It's— it's in that family.

**Travis:** It's actually exactly like marbles. It's exactly like marbles, except instead of marbles it was pogs. And my school had to ban them.

**Teresa:** Oh...

**Travis:** Because they were like, "This is like gambling." And it took me many, many years before I realized the only reason— there's two ways that this banning could have happened. One, teachers were like, "Why are all those kids..."

peacefully sitting over there on a big concrete area, not running around, not getting hurt, not screaming at each other, not screaming at us. Just, like, minding their business. We've gotta put a stop to that." Or...

**Teresa:** Must be nefarious.

**Travis:** Or... or... some kid lost some pogs that were like, "Those were my babies!" And the parents complained. That's gotta be it.

**Teresa:** Hmm, maybe.

**Travis:** 'Cause I always assumed it was like, "Well, the teachers must've hated them." And now as an adult I'm like, if my kids— and I've only got two of 'em there, mind you— were like, "We're just gonna sit here and hit these cardboard circles with plastic for an hour," I'd be like "Yes!"

**Teresa:** Also, how is it— how could it be like gambling? Do they think they're, like, playing craps or something?

**Travis:** Well, 'cause you— 'cause you could win or lose your pogs. So hypothetically, a kid who's "good at pogs," quote-unquote, could clean out all the other kids.

**Teresa:** Be rich in pogs.

**Travis:** Anyways, that's enough about our episode about pog etiquette.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Which is so weird now, by the way, because it's, like, a streaming thing where people will say "Pog," which is short for "Play of the game," or "Player of the game."

**Teresa:** Ohh.

**Travis:** So they'll be like, "That was totally pog." And I'm like, "[quietly] What?"

**Teresa:** What?

**Travis:** Everything old is new again!

**Teresa:** They don't know. And in case you don't know what tiddlywinks or marbles are, you should look that up.

**Travis:** I don't either, actually, frankly.

**Teresa:** No, I—

**Travis:** I know what marbles are. Marbles—

**Teresa:** Or jacks! It's a lot like jacks.

**Travis:** I don't know the rules of jacks. We could do a whole playground, just, weird games episode.

**Teresa:** [gasps] Okay. Write it down.

**Travis:** 'Cause you know we'll start with stick and hoop and work our way up to pogs.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Okay.

**Travis:** Pokemon cards have gotta be in there. That's another one. It seems like anything with just, like, this could be a thing that leads to kids fighting each other? Maybe that was it. Of just, like, is one kid taking stuff from the other kid? We can't do that, you guys.

**Teresa:** We can't do that. Okay. So, the first playground originated in Germany in the 1800's.

**Travis:** Okay. Now— okay. For whatever reason, if you had said "Hey, I'll give you a million dollars to tell me right now if you've ever even considered if a play— there was a first playground," I'd be like, "No." I don't know how to answer whatever that question was. I don't know if it's a yes or no answer that I just asked myself, but the answer is no. I've never thought about it. I just assumed playgrounds have been forever, from caveman times when they said, "Hey, see that log balanced on that rock? Go busy yourselves and leave me alone."

**Teresa:** [laughs] Well, before— I mean, it seems like the entire outdoors has always been a playground for children. They can always find something to do. But

at this point in time, I mean, it was either you lived in the country and you played out in the woods, you know, or the fields, or you lived in a city and you played in the streets.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** So, um—

**Travis:** And then cars came along and ruined it for everybody.

**Teresa:** Uh, Friedrich Froebel who invented kindergarten, by the way— kindergarten—

**Travis:** And his name was Friedrich Froebel!

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** I love an alliterative name. It reminds me of, uh, comic books.

**Teresa:** Um, he was a big proponent of having time for free play and nature play. And so he's credited as being the first person to make play gardens, he called them, and sandboxes, which is kind of like the original manufactured playground.

**Travis:** Bane of my existence. Don't like a sandbox. Can I tell you why? Can I tell you why, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Why is that?

**Travis:** Um, I'm gonna break new ground here with the comment that sand gets everywhere.

**Teresa:** It does.

**Travis:** And listen!

**Teresa:** But they love it! It's so much fun!

**Travis:** You know what else kids love? Ice cream! I'm not giving them that all the time!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Only six days a week. Because the—

**Teresa:** I love a good sandbox.

**Travis:** The other thing about a sandbox? Outside long enough, you don't cover it, gross.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** It becomes quicksand. Neighborhood cats like to use it as a big bathroom. It becomes a rest stop for cats. I just don't like it. It's gross! It— sand? Listen. I'm gonna take a bold stance here. Are you ready? Sand? Just glorified dirt. Just fancy dirt. Except it's easier, I would say, to clean off dirt.

**Teresa:** My parents had one of those turtle-shaped sandboxes—

**Travis:** Yeah, mine too.

**Teresa:** —with the cover on. You could put the turtle shell cover on, which kept it dry, kept the cats out, kept the insects out, so.

**Travis:** Now, did your parents ever let you use it, or was it just for them?

**Teresa:** Yes, of course!

**Travis:** Okay. I just like the way you said "My parents had this sandbox."

**Teresa:** [laughs] Oh! I meant for me.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** They had it for us. Um, and so that first giant sandbox was probably in 1885. Um, and when—

**Travis:** That's actually a lot later, now that I think about it, than I would've expected. It's something I had never thought about before, but now I have strong opinions on, it seems.

**Teresa:** Indeed. So when German immigrants began to migrate to America, they brought this idea of public play spaces with them. I mean, along with brewing traditions and Christmas trees.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, and so the first American—

**Travis:** And good sausage.

**Teresa:** And good sausage. Yeah, wurst. Um, first American playground popped up in 1886 in Boston, and at first people were like, "Hmm, do we really need this? When I was a kid, we didn't need playgrounds! The world was my playground!"

But it really did meet a need. Because, like I said, people were... the children were playing in the streets, and on the curb, and this is when, like, kids were, like, getting hurt in the streets, hit by carriages and things like that. Like, not good.

**Travis:** It's so interesting 'cause I can see... like, if I was a parent during that time I'd be like, "Yes, please." And if I was not a parent I'd be like, "Who cares? We could put anything there! Are you kidding me?"

**Teresa:** And there was a kind of middle ground at this point designated, quote, "play streets." I mean, because, like, if you already have a very structured urban area, you don't necessarily have a place where you can just, like, knock out stuff and make a playground. So there was a designated kind of play street where—that was meant— like, traffic was not really supposed to go there, and kids could play in the street safely.

**Travis:** Good luck enforcing that, though. Unless you, like, put up barricades or something, I guess.

**Teresa:** Yeah, yeah, you put up barricades on either side.

**Travis:** You could find an empty lot.

**Teresa:** Something like that.

**Travis:** Play a game of stick ball there. Huh? Little game of hoop and stick and... stick and hoop. Which is like hoop and stick, but...

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** ... it's much more challenging. It's where you have to roll the stick along using the hoop.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Using the hoop. I got it, I got it. Um, but one of the— the first playground that has what we think of playground equipment was at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and that was 1887. So, it had swings, slides, and even a carousel.

**Travis:** Can we both agree that those things were, while probably really appreciated, bet that slide burned the skin off your legs on hot days.

**Teresa:** Probably.

**Travis:** I bet those swing chains were, like, pinchy as heck.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And I bet the carousel was, like, [through laughter] kids were just flying off it left and right!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That is something I think about now. And not to be the "When I was your age" thing, but on my— I remember the number of times that I would go down, like, the fireman's pole, and a kid would go down right after me and just, like, land on my shoulders?

**Teresa:** [laughs] Land on top.

**Travis:** Drive me into the ground like a tent peg? You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And, like, kids were just swinging on swings and launching themselves into the air over, like, gravel play spaces, and teachers were like, "Keep it up! You're doing great. Don't talk to me."



**Teresa:** [laughs] Um, so through the turn of the 20th century, this early model of playground was still kind of viewed as a little strange. A few private organizations made some more playgrounds, but they weren't the fixture of, like, communities that we have now, where basically there's one on, you know, every couple blocks. Right?

**Travis:** I mean, where else are you gonna go to Pokestops, you know what I mean? Kids need somewhere to catch Pokemon. Thank you, Friedrich Froebel.

**Teresa:** So now we have Teddy Roosevelt to thank for the real popularization of playgrounds in the US.

**Travis:** And we're talking about, like, the Teddy Ro— not, like, a Teddy Roosevelt.

**Teresa:** The Teddy.

**Travis:** I bet it'd be really difficult to be a different historical figure who also happened to be named Teddy Roosevelt. Because I bet a lot of stuff that you did just went ahead and got credited to that other guy.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And in real life, the real, like, President Teddy Roosevelt didn't care about nature and all, and the guy who did all the work, ugh, never gets any of the credit.

**Teresa:** This is an interesting theory. However, it is untrue.

**Travis:** But what if— what if Teddy Roosevelt had a brother who was locked away in an iron mask—

**Teresa:** [through laughter] Oh no.

**Travis:** —for most of his life. Because they looked exactly the same. And it was short for Theodore, and also Tederick. And Theodore and Tederick, oh, they never got along. One loved nature. And the other one loved monopolies.

**Teresa:** You've got to stop.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Okay. [laughs quietly] So, 1903, the first government-funded playground was installed, and then three years later in 1906 the Official Playground Association of America was formed.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and so this is when—

**Travis:** Not a good acronym. Playground Associated—

**Teresa:** OPAA.

**Travis:** Playground Association of America?

**Teresa:** Yeah. PAA.

**Travis:** Pahh!

**Teresa:** [laughs] Um, Teddy Roosevelt wanted these playgrounds to protect children from dangerous unsupervised games in crowded city streets. Also as, like, the idea of getting kids back outside, right? He loved those outdoors.

**Travis:** Sure. Teddy did.

**Teresa:** Sure did. Um, and you know, these got more popular. But as these things start to grow, regulation doesn't always grow to, like, anticipate what's gonna happen.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So there were lots of, like, just climbing structures that—

**Travis:** I'm anti— yeah. I'm anticipating, like, that there were city officials who were like, "You asked me to build it! You didn't say to make it safe, c'mon!"

**Teresa:** Exactly. There were lots of climbing structures that were constructed that were not very safe for children. Um, and so New York in 1912 banned those. And then it was outlawed in 1914 to play in the street, probably because they thought that kids were having so much fun in the street they didn't want to go to

school, but who knows. Um, and then in 1931, quote, "adventure playgrounds" became popular, and these were spaces that were actually modeled after empty lots. [laughs quietly]

**Travis:** Huh!

**Teresa:** It didn't take a long time for us to come full circle. Um, they were well maintained, and they were filled with safer versions of things that kids might actually find in vacant lots. So, like, you know—

**Travis:** It was like broken glass without sharp edges.

**Teresa:** Mm-mm. Things like tires and, like, building blocks, right?

**Travis:** Did you ever—

**Teresa:** Instead of, you know, rusty nails and sticks.

**Travis:** Did you ever, um, play on when you were a kid those, like geodesic dome kind of things?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** They were like jungle gyms, but they— here's what I remember about it. One, instantly rusty. From what I recall, instantly rusty. Two, even from the first day it was born, it seemed kinda creaky to me. Like, I looked at this and like, listen, I love Clint McElroy very much. But I would not trust him to put anything together. And I love him. Love him so much. But he built a thing that from any single bar of it, his kids could fall. And instantly I also remember my parents being like, "Go." And we would just, like, go out back, completely unobserved— there was— I have clear memories of making tents out of it by pulling big, thick tarps over it in the middle of summer.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And going under them, fully enclosed spaces, and just kind of [through laughter] baking ourselves?

**Teresa:** Now, the playground, the little swing set we have in our backyard has big posted signs: "Adult supervision required." Not at this point.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So we get to the 60's and 80's, we have a new resurgence.

**Travis:** In swing sets?

**Teresa:** In playground safety.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so this is when mass production entered into the playground game. And, you know, we have McDonald's play spaces.

**Travis:** Aw, yeah!

**Teresa:** That's when these started, right? And we've got in the 70's we're talking about a large overhaul of, like, the merry-go-rounds, right? And the see-saws with poor weight distribution.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, and you know, there's a lot of industry regulations that were required, so by the 1980's we had some much safer playground guidelines.

**Travis:** Yeah. Like, kids can throw themselves off of anything now, and it's usually fine.

**Teresa:** Usually.

**Travis:** Mostly fine. My favorite ones now especially are the circular discs that are kind of, like, uneven, so as you grab onto 'em they naturally, like, spin around quickly, you know? Because it's really fun to watch a kid go "Whoa-a! Whoa-a! Whoa-a!" It's great. I love it.

**Teresa:** Um, and so eventually the PAA merged with four other organizations to become the National Recreation and Park Association. Um, shout out to Leslie Knope.

**Travis:** Aw, yeah!

**Teresa:** Um, and so people have started to really get creative with the way that they think about play. I'm thinking about visiting the city museum in St. Louis. I mean, so many of those slides were made out of interesting materials, or they were— you know, they felt more like caves, or they felt more like cages or like skate parks or things like that.

**Travis:** My whole deal— even now, 38, almost 39 years old, when I see a playground that, like, looks like a pirate ship or looks like a dragon, I'm wild about it!

**Teresa:** And that makes complete sense. They've actually started seeing that special play places created for people who are, like, 70 and up for, like— they have different mental challenges or things like that.

**Travis:** Really? You know I'm not 70 years old, right?

**Teresa:** I— I know.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But they can really be stimulating to people of all ages, is what I'm saying. It can be incredible for senior mental health.

**Travis:** Also, just side note, I also appreciate this quite a bit as someone with a five-year-old and a two-year-old, that more and more it seems like playgrounds are taking into account that adults will most likely at some point be called upon to go up into them, uh, and then make the stairs big enough for grown folks to go up and down.

**Teresa:** [laughs] I really like those— those, um, swings where you can have, like, a big person on one side and a smaller person on the other side. Meaning, like, a child on the other side.

**Travis:** Yeah. I also— speaking of, though, I also see more and more accessibility things in playgrounds.

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** Which are awesome! There are swings for people who, you know, traditionally wouldn't be able to hold themselves up in a swing, and spaces for—

**Teresa:** Even accommodations for wheelchairs.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** I've seen those for swings.

**Travis:** More of that, please. More children playing together, please. More people of all ages playing together, please.

**Teresa:** Um, so an example of one of those, like, architectural playground spaces is in New York. Um, the Silver Towers Playground. There is 27 whimsical bronze figures that you can, like, climb up. And there's, like, one that has legs that are slides.

**Travis:** Way better than, like, 27 very serious figures. "Go play, kids!" [imitates dramatic music]

**Teresa:** Um, in the 90's there was a playground created in Valencia, Spain where it is a giant replica of Gulliver from the scene in *Gulliver's Travels*—

**Travis:** Get out!

**Teresa:** —where he's, like, tied up by all the tiny people, right?

**Travis:** [gasps] The Lilliputians?

**Teresa:** So his legs are a staircase, his arm is dotted with climbing ropes, and there's a slide in the stands of his hair.

**Travis:** I love that.

**Teresa:** Pretty cool.

**Travis:** Yeah. From now on when people are like, "Your body's a temple," I'm gonna be like, "My body's a playground for tiny people."

**Teresa:** Hmm...

**Travis:** Which... is a weird thing to say, now that I've said it out loud. You know what?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Let's not talk about this anymore. Uh, let's go do a thank you note to our sponsors.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** [singing] I wanna thank Quip, I wanna thank Quip, I wanna thank Quip today! [speaking] Now, I know what you're saying. "That was weird, Travis." And you're absolutely correct.

**Teresa:** [laughs loudly]

**Travis:** But—

**Teresa:** I was not aware that they had a theme song.

**Travis:** They don't, but I need to think of new and interesting ways to thank Quip, because at this point I feel like time and time again we've said how much we appreciate. It's my favorite toothpaste on the market.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Um, my favorite toothbrush on the market.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Gentle vibrations that leave my teeth feeling clean.

**Teresa:** Timed pulses.

**Travis:** Time pulse. At this point, Bebe and I brush our teeth together morning and evening. Um, and she is—[laughs] sometimes she's like, "Hey. Don't spit till I'm done, okay?" Because—

**Teresa:** She's very adamant about all of us starting at exactly the same time.

**Travis:** And then saying it's a race, but it's two minutes.

**Teresa:** [through laughter] It's not a race if we're all...

**Travis:** Anyways.

**Teresa:** Anyway.

**Travis:** They got great floss. They got great mouthwash. Everything Quip does is great. And not only that, it's not difficult on your wallet. It's easy on your wallet is what I wanted to say.

**Teresa:** [laughs] That's what you mean.

**Travis:** Anyhoo, it's not expensive.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And you should check it out. You should sign up. You're gonna love it, I guarantee. Plus, no bulky chargers. It's just, like, a battery that's already in there. And if you're already great at brushing and you're like, "[mumbling] I don't need [unintelligible]." Well, good for you! But also, if you get their new smart motor, you can track your brushing and earn rewards. And these stylish and affordable electric brushes start at just \$25. If you go to [getquip.com/shmanners](https://getquip.com/shmanners) right now, you'll get your first refill free. That's your first refill free at [getquip.com/shmanners](https://getquip.com/shmanners), spelled G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners. Quip: the good habits company.

[music plays]

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**J. Keith:** And introduced them to some of their personal heroes along the way.

**Speaker 3:** Oh my gosh!



**Speaker 4:** Shut up! [laughs]

**Speaker 5:** Oh, I feel like I'm gonna cry!

**Speaker 6:** Oh, my stars. [laughs]

**Speaker 7:** I'm so— I'm so excited to meet you!

**J. Keith:** Join me, J. Keith van Straaten...

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[music and ad end]

[music plays]

**Hal:** Hi, I'm Hal Lublin.

**Mark:** And I'm Mark Gagliardi.

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**Mark:** That's right. What arguments are you and your friends having that you just can't settle?

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**Mark:** Marvel or DC?

**Hal:** Fork versus spoon.

**Mark:** Chocolate or vanilla?

**Hal:** Best bagel?

**Mark:** What's the best Disney song?

**Hal:** *We Got This with Mark and Hal*, every week on Maximum Fun. We do the arguing...

**Mark:** So you don't have to. Oh, all answers are final for all people for all time.

**Speaker 3:** [singing] We got this!

[music and ad end]

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, we've gone through some really great actual playground history and stuff. Let me tell you about why playgrounds are great. Um, there are some good studies that have shown they are great for children's development. So, like, public spaces are good for socializing children in general, but it also teaches them motor skills and communication, and the importance of taking turns, right?

**Travis:** Well, and you were telling me too that it's very good for, like, soothing their mi— like, organizing their thoughts?

**Teresa:** Swinging especially is very good for children, um, because it helps them regulate their bodies when they're faced with new stimuli, right? So the swinging is the constantly moving back and forth, and it's their sensory system practicing adjusting to ever-changing stimulation.

**Travis:** And that's not surprising. Think about even as adults, rocking chairs, hammocks, bench swings. All of these things were it's like, "Time to relax," and then you go and you find a swinging repetitive motion and just, like, chill out.

**Teresa:** It also helps strengthen your inner ear, right?

**Travis:** Oh yeah?

**Teresa:** Um, so it can— it has a lot to do with your sense of balance and motion and muscle strength.

**Travis:** I need the strength in my outer ear. That's something— I just feel like they're not—

**Teresa:** [laughs] You need to do ear push ups.

**Travis:** They're not pulling their— every time I put on big earrings I can feel it, and I don't like it.

**Teresa:** So there are occupational therapists who, quote, "prescribe" playing on a swing set to help children with sensory processing disorders.

**Travis:** Oh, really?

**Teresa:** As long— and it also calms nerves and anxiety. You know, like you were saying, there's a reason babies like to be rocked, and people like to relax in rocking chairs and hammocks and things like that, right? Um, and it can develop— help develop the motor skills, like with the pumping of legs, right? And holding on to their ropes, and keeping their core strong while they sit on the swing that's moving. Um, and it can also stimulate brain development for very young children. You know, so you have to learn how to balance, and hold on tight, and watching the world kind of move back and forth. It's really great.

**Travis:** I will also say, as someone who is more of an indoor kid, I really appreciate that I've seen more and more playgrounds incorporate, like, imaginative play, too, not just physical play. So there will be, like, boards that you can move stuff around on or, like, musical stuff incorporated, or even just, like, a place to sit and pretend like it's, you know, a window at a restaurant that you're, like, serving out of, or just places to sit and talk with people, and it doesn't always have to be, like, run up the stairs, run down the stairs, run up the stairs. 'Cause man, even as a kid I was like, "That's a lot. That's a lot of activity, you guys."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "When can I just go back to playing pogs?"

**Teresa:** So here is some general playground etiquette. Um, and these are great tips for kids... and adults. So, uh, don't just hog a popular spot, right? Feel free to enjoy the activity, but then let someone else take a turn.

**Travis:** You know what's always a big one? Zip lines.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Zip lines.? Here's a little secret, too. Parents, make sure your kids are doing this. Kids, if you're listening, do this. Zip line to the end. Bring it back.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Bring that— the handle back for the person.

**Teresa:** And then you can get back in line.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** After you've brought it back for the next person. Like we said, it is important that there be some supervision, right? Um, you don't need to solve every dispute or, like, show the kid exactly how things are done, but be around in case, right? Watching from a distance I think is really important. Now, our kids are like, "Look at me! Look at me! Look at me! Look at me! Look at me!"

**Travis:** Well, Bebe is.

**Teresa:** [laughs] That's true, alright.

**Travis:** If it was up to Dot, you would be invisible pushing her on the swing while she just contemplated existence the whole time.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Dot could sit on a swing—

**Teresa:** I think it's the age.

**Travis:** —for six hours.

**Teresa:** She loves it.

**Travis:** I seem to remember even Bebe at that age would swing for, like, three seconds and be like, "It's been a year! Next thing!"

**Teresa:** No, that's not true! She loved the swings.

**Travis:** Okay. She likes swinging herself now, and it's terrifying.

**Teresa:** Yes. [laughs]

**Travis:** And I don't just mean she sits on the swings and, like, kicks her legs back and forth. I mean she runs, grabs the thing, Tarzans around. I'm going, "[shakily] Oh, Lord! My precious glass bauble of a child!" But she's been fine. She's fine.

**Teresa:** She's not, she's not glass. She's great. She bounces.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, so I would insist that you adhere to anything with age limits, okay? Um, if it says it's only for kids over 10, it's probably got a really good reason. Same thing on the opposite end, an age limit. I mean, because with an age limit you are encouraging, like, younger children who don't have maybe as much dexterity. Um, their playground spaces are inherently smaller. So, like, take a look at those age limits and make sure to adhere to them.

**Travis:** I'm gonna, like, double enforce that, as someone who, like, has a two-year-old. If I see... [low voice] your, like, gangly 12-year-old come over in, like, a four-and-under play place and knock my kid over, I'm gonna throw your kid over the fence.

Not really, but in my head.

**Teresa:** Not really. [laughs]

**Travis:** In my head I'm doing that so hard, especially at a pool. You knock my kid down in the pool? Oh, the things I'm gonna imagine being mad and saying to you, the parent. I never will, 'cause I'm from the Midwest. But oh, I'll think about angry things to say to you. Ooh.

**Teresa:** I would suggest that you also establish expectations early for whatever space you're going to. Talking about time limits, talking about if there are areas that are off limits. Are they allowed to play on the equipment but you'd rather not

climb trees? Things like that, right? This is going to make your playground experience as an adult better for the kids that you're with. Um, I do say that you don't bring snacks, and you shouldn't— if you bring snacks, is what I mean, don't share the snacks. Because, you know, children don't always know their allergies, and they don't know all of their dietary restrictions. You know, better safe than sorry.

**Travis:** This is just a little tip, too, from me to you, parents, that I'm sure everyone listening is like, "Yeah, man. We already figured that out." But if you go to a playground, don't say "Don't go where I can't see you."

Because they don't know when you can see them or not. Say, "Don't go where you can't see me." That way the child is able to regulate that without you having to constantly say, "Okay, now I can't see you."

And them going, "Can you see me here? Can you see me here?" And it's like, "Well, can you see me?"

**Teresa:** [laughs] [simultaneously] "Can you see me now?"

**Travis:** So teach them, "Don't go anywhere where you can't see me."

**Teresa:** Right. And here's something that even I have changed my mind about.

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Teresa:** It's okay to go up a slide. If nobody is waiting, if you're the only one or two people there... climb up the slide. What does it hurt? I used to be a very adamant— I think it was my lifeguard experience— very adamant that you do not climb up the slide. The slide is for going down. We climb up the ladder. But in my— my now [laughs] second child wisdom... [sighs] eh. It's not gonna hurt if they climb up the slide if no one's waiting. If, you know, no one's waiting for a turn, if they're not gonna, like, fall on someone, it's fine.

**Travis:** I think there's actually a practical reason why you've changed your mind on that. Because I think that over time slides have become wider and shallower, right? Less steep, right? Where it used to be metal slides that were much steeper, and you ran the risk of if you slipped whacking your head right into it, right?

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** And, like, there not being as much room. Anyways, I think that now slides are much less steep, and so they're a lot easier to climb up, and they're usually not made of metal.

**Teresa:** They might not be. But, you know, I think that I've kind of, like, just loosened my thoughts around the kind of play that I allow my children to do.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** You know? It's not hurting 'em.

**Travis:** Sure. Alright, and you know what else doesn't hurt? [holding back laughter] Listening to *Shmanners*.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Thank you, everybody, for joining us. Thank you to our editor, this week, Amanda. Thank you for editing. Um, thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to you, Teresa. I couldn't make this show without you.

**Teresa:** I couldn't make it without you, dear.

**Travis:** Thank you to you all for listening. Would could make this show without you, but why? Thank you to our podcasting home, [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org). Go there, check out all the other amazing shows. I guarantee you'll love [through laughter] every single one of them! Or your money back.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Well, it's free.

**Teresa:** It's free.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And I haven't listened to every single one of 'em. There's some nice new ones, though, that I want to try.

**Travis:** That's true. Go check 'em out. If you're interested in other McElroy shows, you can go to [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family). Go to [bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours). Go ahead and get your tickets for the November shows in Washington, DC and Detroit and Cincinnati. At the Washington, DC shows we're doing an *Adventure Zone* with special guest DM Brennan Lee Mulligan, where we will be playing *Dadlands 2.0*. *Dadlands*, in case you don't know, is the game system that me and Justin and Griffin and Dad made up, but we've added a new mechanic that you're really gonna love, so make sure you get those tickets. [Bit.ly/mcelroylive](http://bit.ly/mcelroylive). *Mcelroytours*? [Bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours), and make sure you go check out all of the merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). There's gonna be new stuff starting in October, 'cause we put new stuff up every month, and there will be a new, um— a new charitable organization that we will be donating 10% of the proceeds to, so go check that out, and check out all the good merch at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). And don't forget to preorder *TAZ: Eleventh Hour* at [theadventurezonecomic.com](http://theadventurezonecomic.com). What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That's @shmannerstcast. Go ahead and follow us, because we frequently ask for questions on our topics. Um, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners Fanners*. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. Also, we are always looking for idiom suggestions and topic suggestions. Please email us, [shmannerstcast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerstcast@gmail.com), and say hi to Alex, 'cause she reads every one.

**Travis:** And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

**Travis:** You've been listening to *Shmanners*...

**Teresa:** *Manners, Shmanners*. Get it!

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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