

PLAYGROUND GRASS SMART IMITATION

By Julia Biggs • Monday, April 25, 2011

The Goddard School® in Edwardsville celebrated the opening of its new “green” playground last week. The \$55,000 playground was designed using Earth-friendly materials that are safer for children and the environment.

Designed to look just like healthy, well-trimmed natural grass, the playground features an artificial turf called XGrass that is weather-resistant, hypo-allergenic and permanently manicured, eliminating the emissions generated by lawn equipment.

The synthetic lawn also eliminates the need for using fertilizers and does not require watering. The XGrass product serves as a more sanitary surface than sand, pea gravel, mulch or shredded tires and is completely anti-microbial – it dries in minutes and is not subject to bacteria build-up, allowing children with allergies to play without added exposure to allergens.

Barbara Burrows, owner of the school, said they decided to make a capital investment in the school so that its children could play in the safest environment possible.

“Prior to this investment, we had regular grass and occasional worn areas and found that it eliminated our ability to allow the children to play outside after rain,” she said. “We like them to be exposed to the outdoors as much as possible to fit the goals of the Goddard System’s curriculum.”

The XGrass Play product is endorsed by the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association for meeting its safety requirements for up to a 12-foot critical fall height. In addition, all materials used in the playground are 100 percent recyclable and will never see a landfill.

According to Ron Bennett, president of XGrass, the synthetic turf is soft to the touch and provides a consistently safe playing surface.

“We rigorously test all of our products and installation methods to ensure that we are installing the highest quality product available,” Bennett said. “We are the country’s largest synthetic turf safety surface installation company, and we take pride in providing a safe and enjoyable play environment for children.”

The Goddard School in Edwardsville, located at 801 South Arbor Vitae in The Park at Plum Creek development, is a part of the Goddard Systems, Inc. It offers programs for children six weeks to six years of age as well as after-school enrichment and a summer program for children up to seven years of age.

The Edwardsville location opened its doors in February, 2009 and has since attracted more than 160 families.