SITE-TO-SOURCE / SAMPLE CONSULTATION

Native planting beside a family play area

Lawrence, Kansas

$39 Focused Plant Consultation • Play-equipment edge

Illustrative report for a fictional client and site; no real property inspection or purchase. Sample edition: 7 Nov 2026 | PHY-SAMPLE-003_Lawrence_Play_Area

Your recommended direction

Place the planting outside the equipment use zone. If space remains, choose prairie dropseed and purple poppy mallow for a low, cohesive start; use taller grasses only where they do not obstruct movement or sightlines.

The client behind the question

Fictional client: John Winchester

"My son Dean is always running through the backyard, and there is a narrow sunny strip near the swing. I have an infant son that will be joining him soon as well. I would like some Kansas-native flowers and grasses, but not thorns, something that blocks their route, or plants that cause problems if one of them pulls a stem. I can water a few starter plants. I don't want a whole-yard design; just tell me whether anything sensible can go there, and where I need to keep the plants away from the playset."

Illustrative mock submission, not an actual customer testimonial. Adapted from the fictional intake originally prepared for this example.

Selected answers from the client intake

Intake question	Client's answer
Main question	Which native plants could go beside my boys' play area without creating an obstacle?
Space described	An approximately 15-foot sunny strip; actual distance from the swing has not been measured.
Known conditions	Mostly turf, hard ground in dry weather, no persistent puddles.
Must avoid	Thorns, sharp seedheads in running routes, ingestion hazards and planting inside equipment clearances.

How we answered the client's questions

Client asked	How this report responds
Where can the plants go?	Only outside the actual equipment movement/fall-use zone, after measuring and checking manufacturer and CPSC guidance.
What is a good short starting group?	Prairie dropseed with low purple poppy mallow gives structure and color without a tall screen.

Client asked	How this report responds
Can you guarantee they are safe if my children taste them?	No. This is plant selection, not a certified child-toxicity or playground-safety assessment; supervise and avoid edible-plant assumptions.

Written clarification: Is the strip inside the swing's fall or movement area? The fictional client replied: I have not measured that; I can move the bed farther away. As a result: Planting is deferred until clearance is confirmed; otherwise shift the bed.

The plant recommendations and next steps that follow show the result of these client-specific choices. Site observations remain fictional, and conditions must be confirmed before real installation.

How we interpreted this project

A narrow sunny garden strip beside backyard play equipment. The overriding requirement is to preserve impact-surfacing and movement clearances.

A $39 Focused Plant Consultation answers one small-area planting question with a short list and cautions. No paid call, full-yard design or formal revision is included.

Three decisions that matter most

01 Measure the actual playset and follow CPSC and manufacturer clearance rules before digging.

02 In a sunny, drained strip beyond that zone, start with only two or three species.

03 Select taller or bee-attracting plants for the distant edge, not the active play route.

Plant recommendations

5 screened plant choices are presented below. They are alternatives organized by planting environment and use—not a shopping list you must buy in full. Mature dimensions and growing conditions remain approximate; confirm the supplied plant form, actual site light and water before purchase.

Single play-edge strip

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Prairie dropseed *Sporobolus heterolepis* CORE / first choice	Most ordered, neat texture and native to eastern Kansas. Site still must be outside equipment clearance. **Best fit:** Full sun; dry-to-average moisture; fountain-like bunchgrass; approximated height 1.5–3 ft, spread often ~2–3 ft. **Check:** Clumping not a play surface; do not encroach into swing fall zone. No affirmative child-ingestion safety certification established.
Purple poppy mallow *Callirhoe involucrata* CORE / front-of-bed flowering accent	Low color without tall growth; watch sprawling stems and visitor behavior. **Best fit:** Full sun; dry to moderate, well-drained soil; about 4–12 in tall with 2–3 ft trailing spread. **Check:** Pollinator visits; stems can extend into traffic; no child-safe/toxicity guarantee; no eating garden plants.

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Sideoats grama *Bouteloua curtipendula* CORE / rear grass edge	Good simple dry-soil grass if there is room beyond use zone. **Best fit:** Full sun; dry-to-average soil; about 1.5–3 ft tall, clumping warm-season grass. **Check:** Seed stalks and placement must not obstruct traffic; grass blades may irritate skin; seed sold separately can be named cultivar El Reno (not local ecotype).
Black-eyed susan *Rudbeckia hirta* CONDITIONAL / outer flower patch	Use only in outer strip where flowering-pollinator exposure is acceptable. **Best fit:** Sun; average to dry soil; 2–3 ft typical; short-lived perennial/biennial/annual behaviors vary. **Check:** Highly visited by bees and self-seeds; stand back from children's frequent route; no consumption safety certification.
Little bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium* CONDITIONAL / rear structure	Useful for larger rear border, not necessary if strip is very small. **Best fit:** Full sun; dry to moderate; roughly 2–4 ft tall, non-spreading bunchgrass. **Check:** Tall stems and seedheads may obscure line of sight, dry stalks catch balls; no ingestion safety clearance; seed cultivar Aldous is not proven local.

How to put the recommendations to work

01 Mark the equipment clearance area and verify underground utilities.

02 Trial small clumps of prairie dropseed and low flowering plants outside the exclusion zone.

03 Observe how children move through the space before adding taller choices.

Important site and safety considerations

- This report does not certify playground safety or replace equipment-manufacturer guidance.
- Natural plants may attract pollinators and none are presented as certified non-toxic for children.

A few things we would hold back

blue grama: KNPS explicitly codes W rather than E; omission prevents mistaking statewide nativity for eastern-Kansas preference.

butterfly milkweed: High-exposure placement not justified; direct the homeowner to a separate low-contact wildlife patch.

switchgrass: Too tall for an ordinary narrow active-play border; no regulatory or toxic hazard finding.

Plant sourcing and expectations

Ask growers for the exact scientific name (including any trade synonym), the plant or seed format, the propagation source and whether stock is suitable for the local climate. A nursery listing is a lead for shopping, not proof of current inventory, correct provenance, or guaranteed establishment.

Examples of places to inquire

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery. Published species/product examples; shipping, quantity and Kansas-local provenance were not confirmed.

Sources consulted

The references below support the regional botanical, gardening, or regulatory decisions in this illustration. Published range, nursery listings and generalized soils information do not prove parcel-scale conditions, county indigeneity or seed-lot origin. Check dated rules and availability before making real purchases.

Gardening with native plants; east/west plant suitability

Outdoor Home Playground Safety Handbook, Publication 324

Callirhoe involucrata, accepted name and Kansas range

Rudbeckia hirta, accepted name and Kansas range

Poisonous and non-poisonous plants: An illustrated list

Sporobolus heterolepis, accepted name and Kansas range

Bouteloua curtipendula, accepted name and Kansas range

Schizachyrium scoparium, accepted name and Kansas range