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(54) **PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT**

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Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,199, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,409.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,200, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,412.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,201, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,410.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,204, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now abandoned.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,205, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,406.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,234, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,411.

Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,248, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,407.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/255,249, filed on Mar. 6, 2006, now Pat. No. D,536,408.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 29/256,361, filed on Mar. 20, 2006.

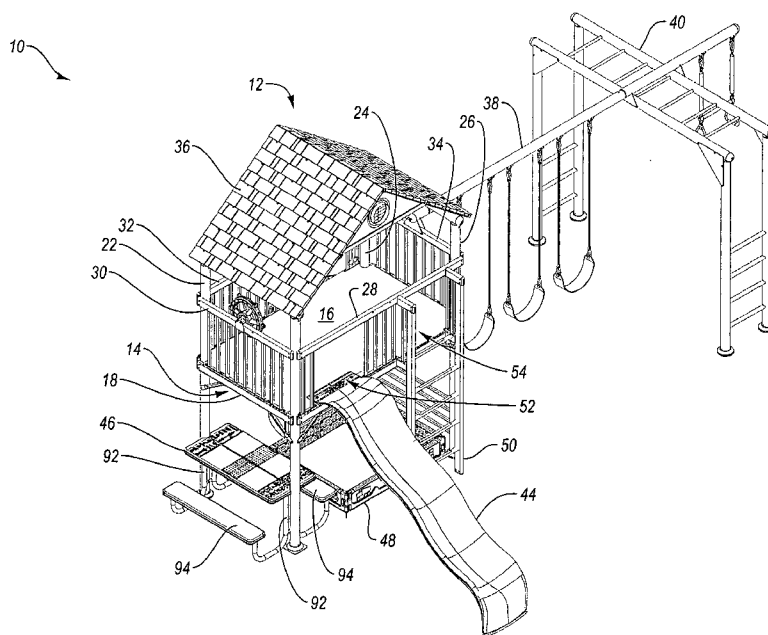
(60) Provisional application No. 60/688,551, filed on Jun. 7, 2005. Provisional application No. 60/729,625, filed on Oct. 24, 2005.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **472/116**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Playground equipment may include a variety of different types of components. For example, the playground equipment may include a main structure and one or more components, such as a swing set, a climbing wall, a slide, monkey bars, picnic table, sandbox, a ladder and/or the like. The various components and structures of the playground equipment may be connected in a variety of suitable configurations and arrangements. Advantageously, if the playground equipment includes a climbing wall, the climbing wall may include one or more panels that are adjustably connected and constructed from blow-molded plastic. Additionally, if the playground equipment includes a picnic table, the picnic table top may have a surface that includes one or more generally planar portions and one or more generally offset portions. The offset portions may be sized and configured to be traced, for example, onto a sheet of paper to create a pleasing design.



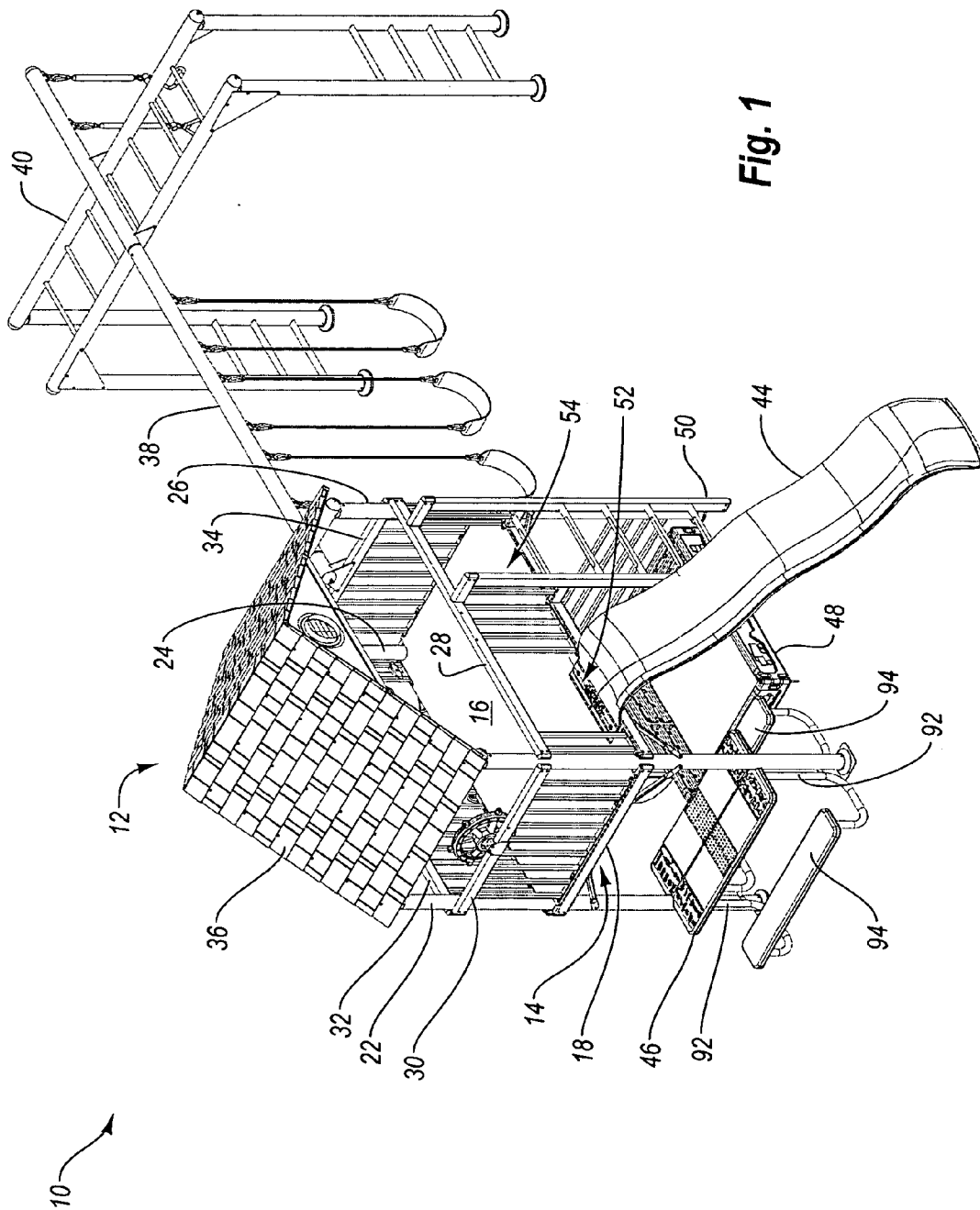


Fig. 1

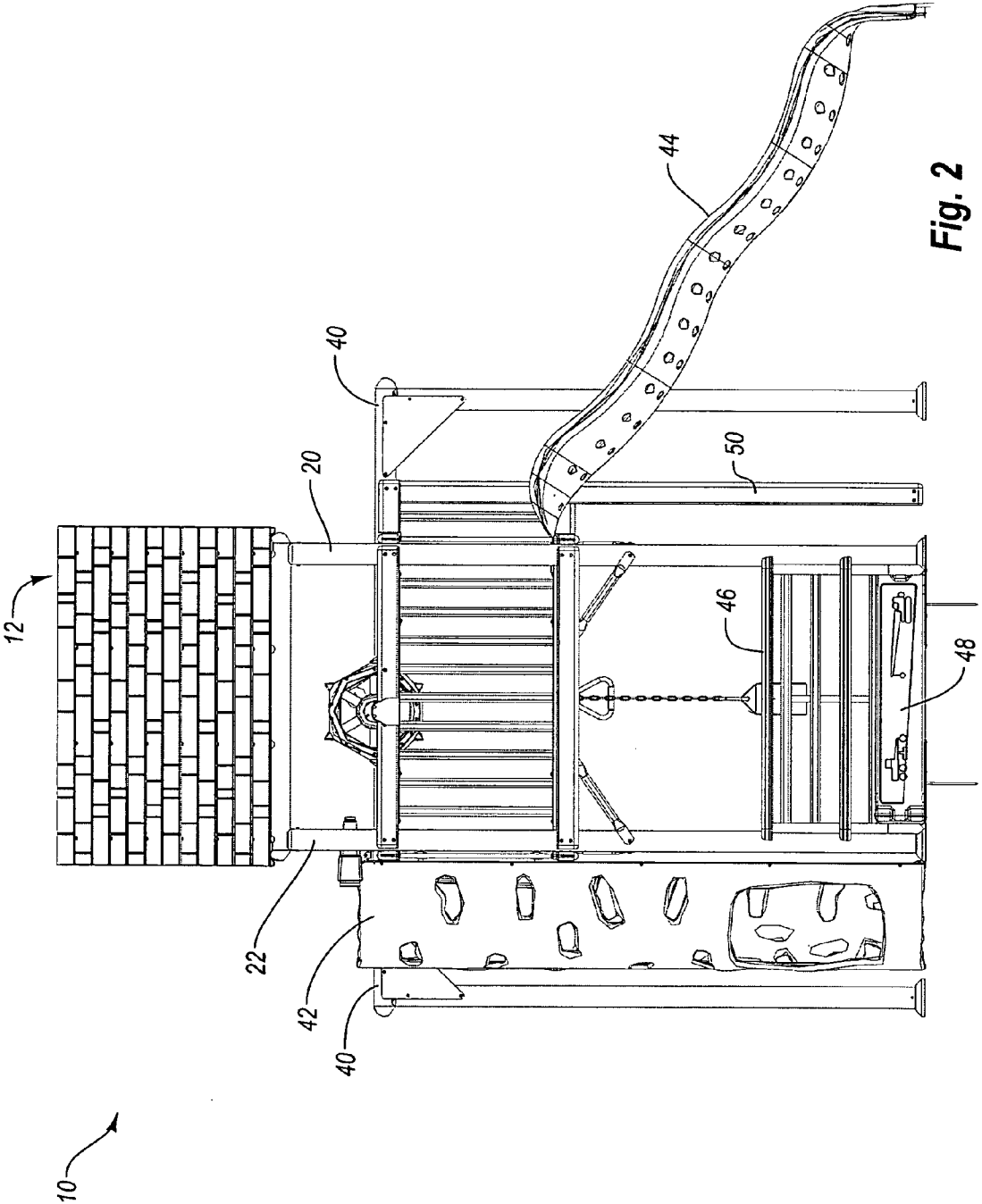


Fig. 2

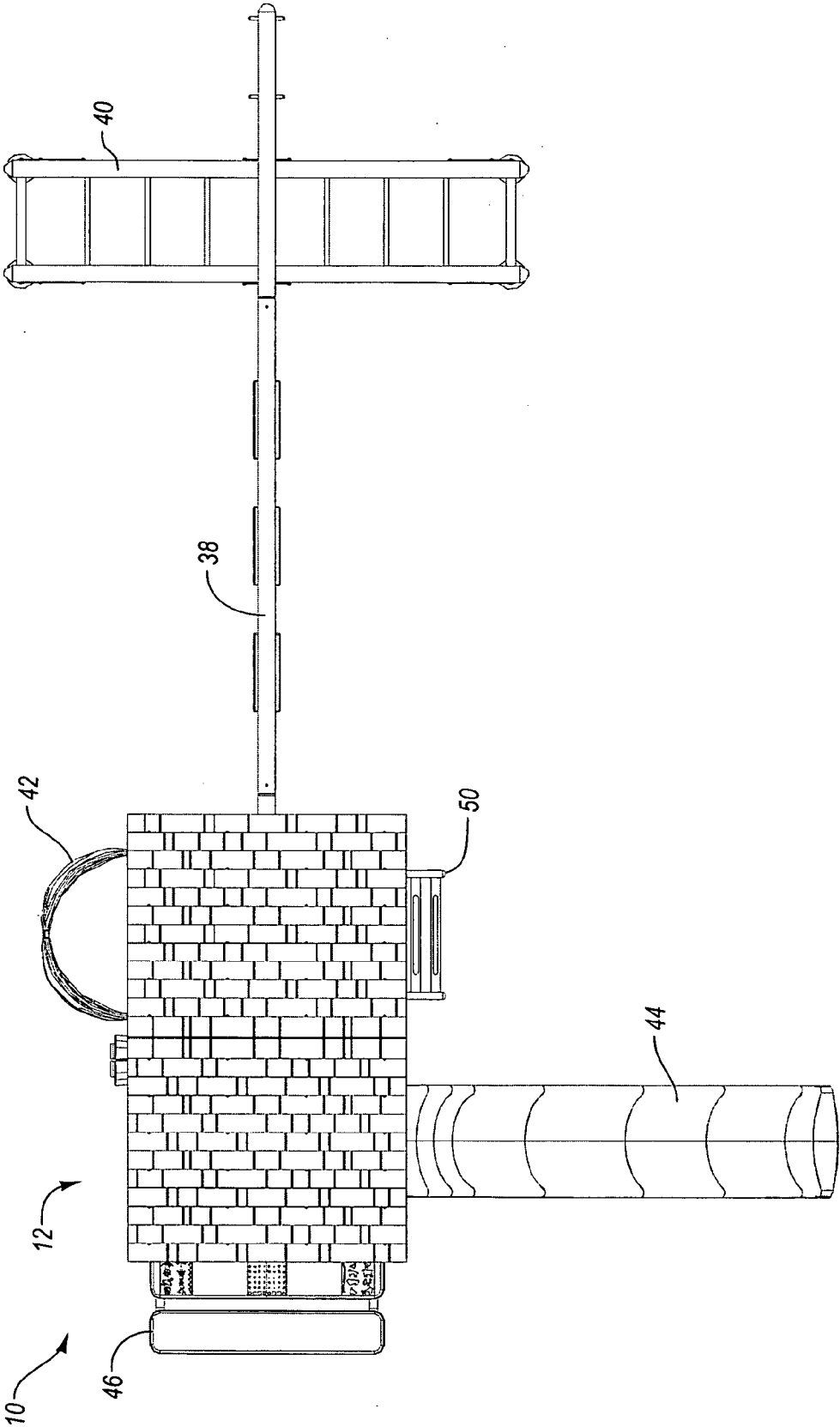


Fig. 3

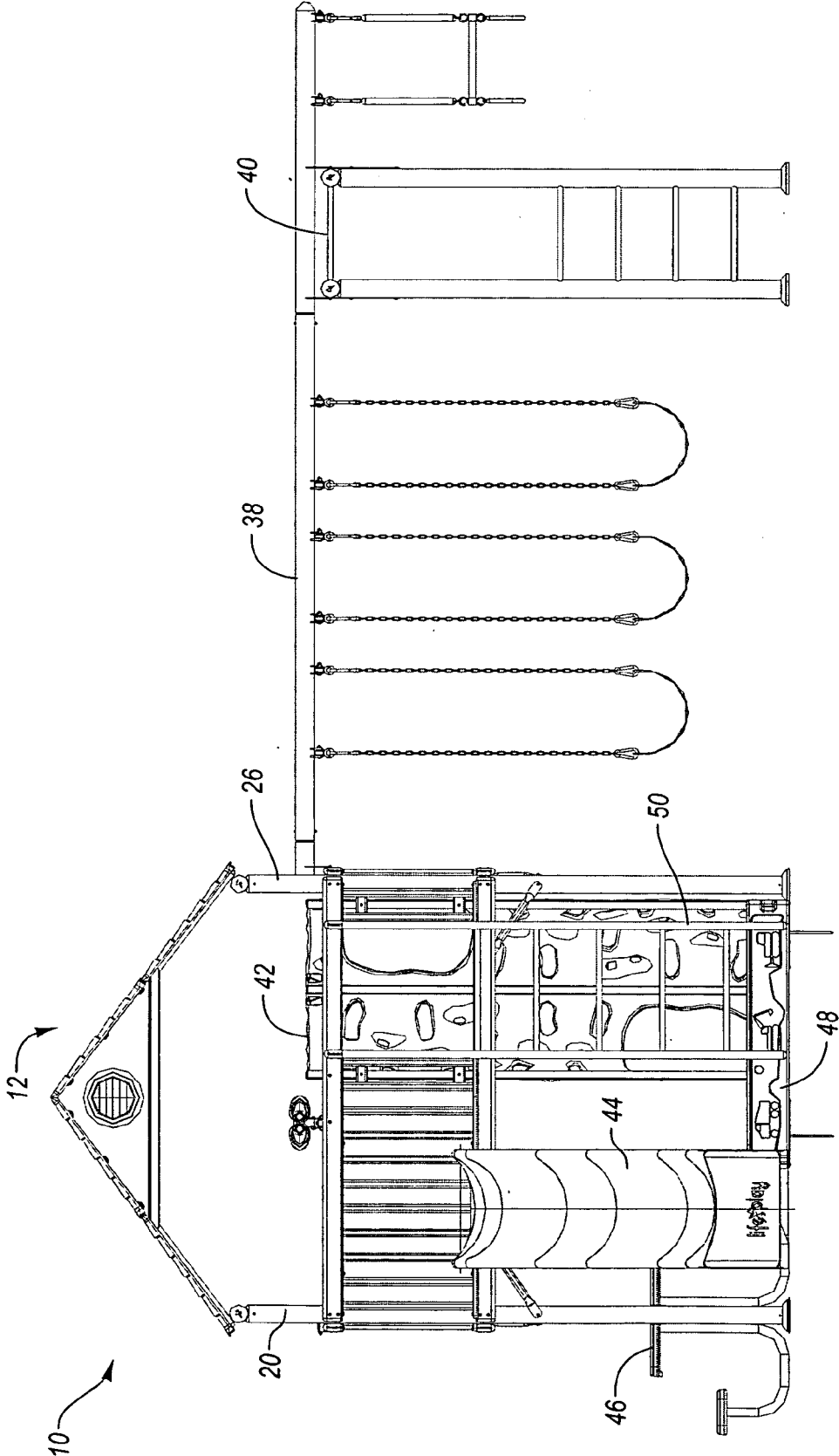
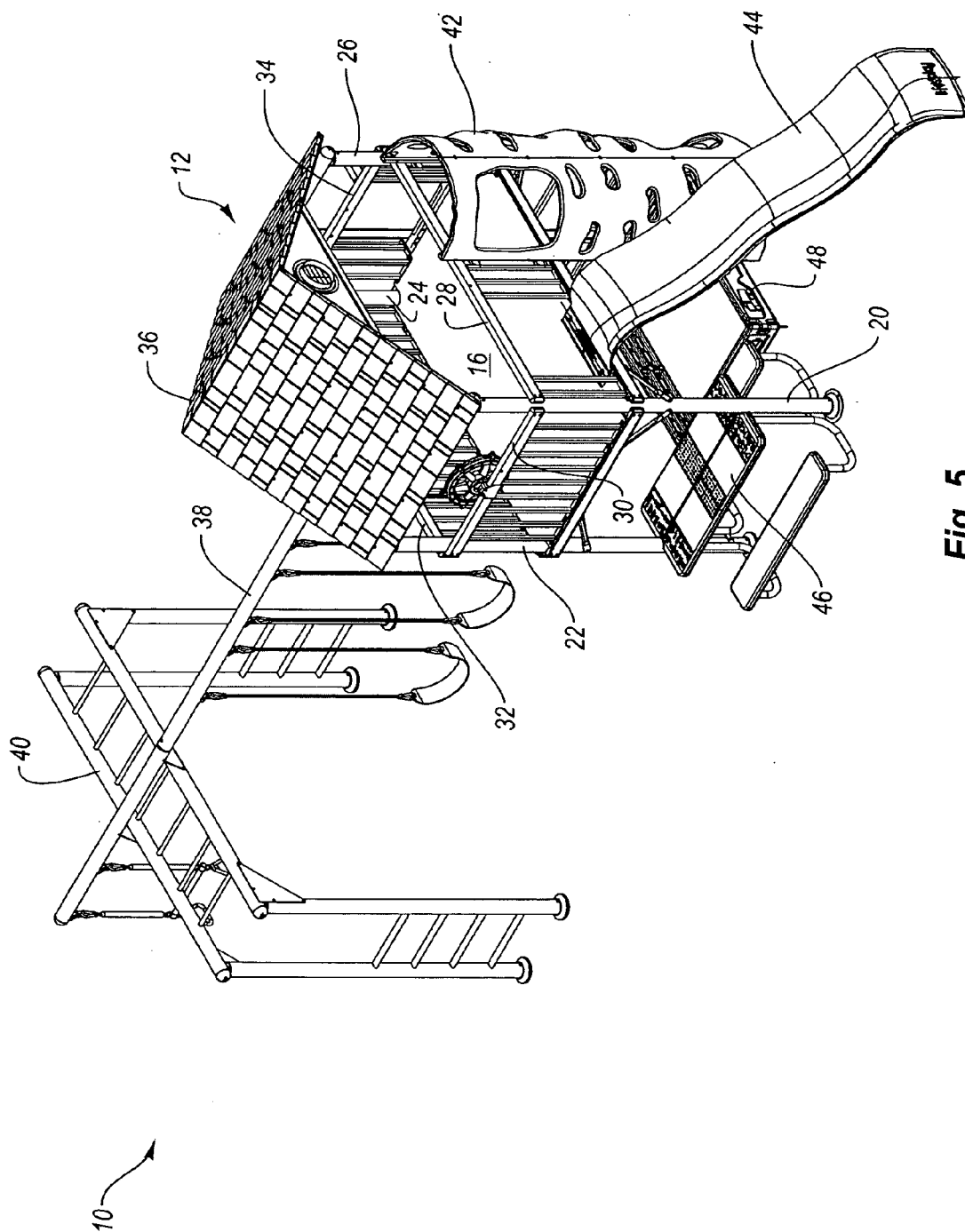


Fig. 4



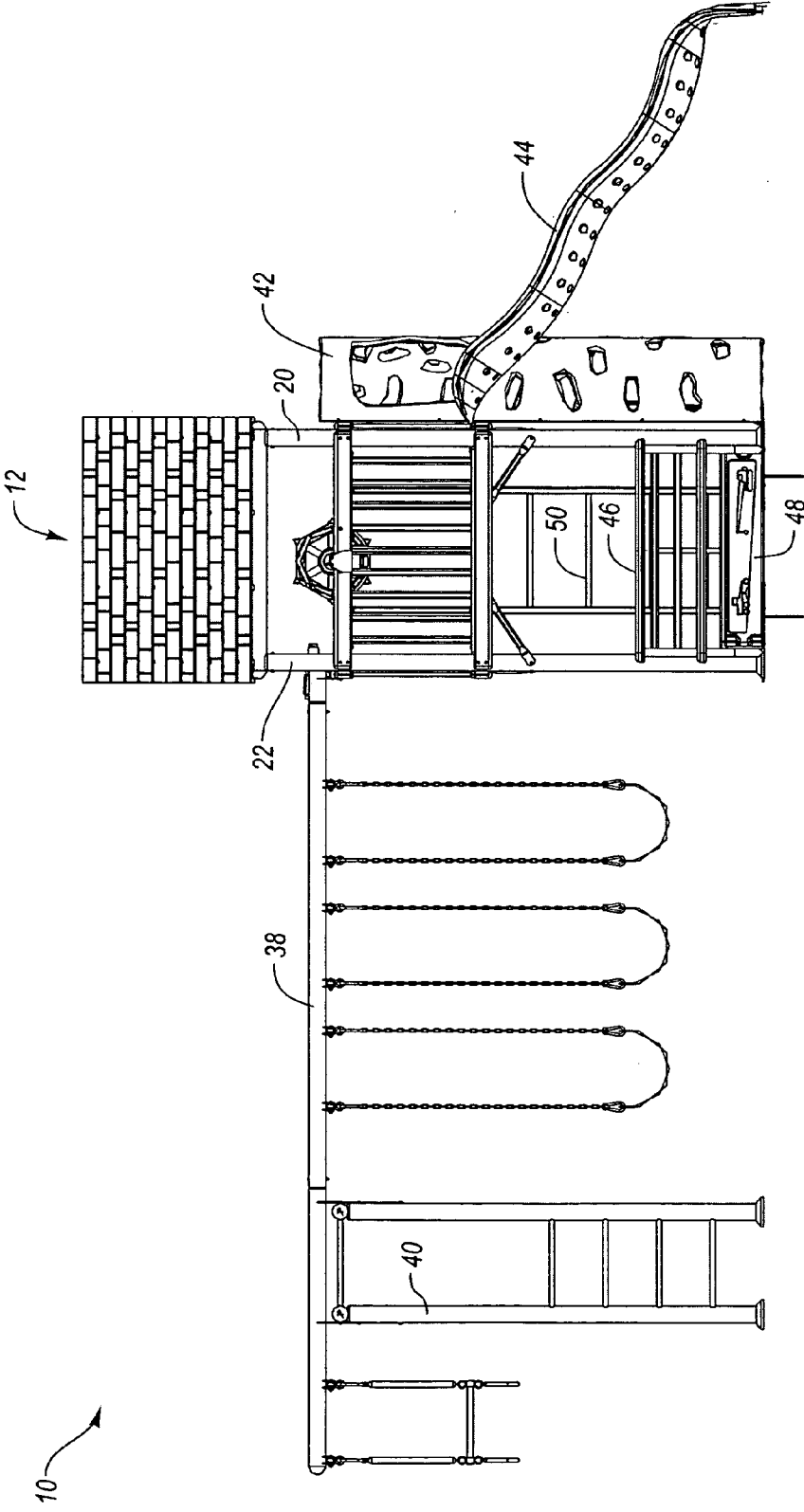


Fig. 6

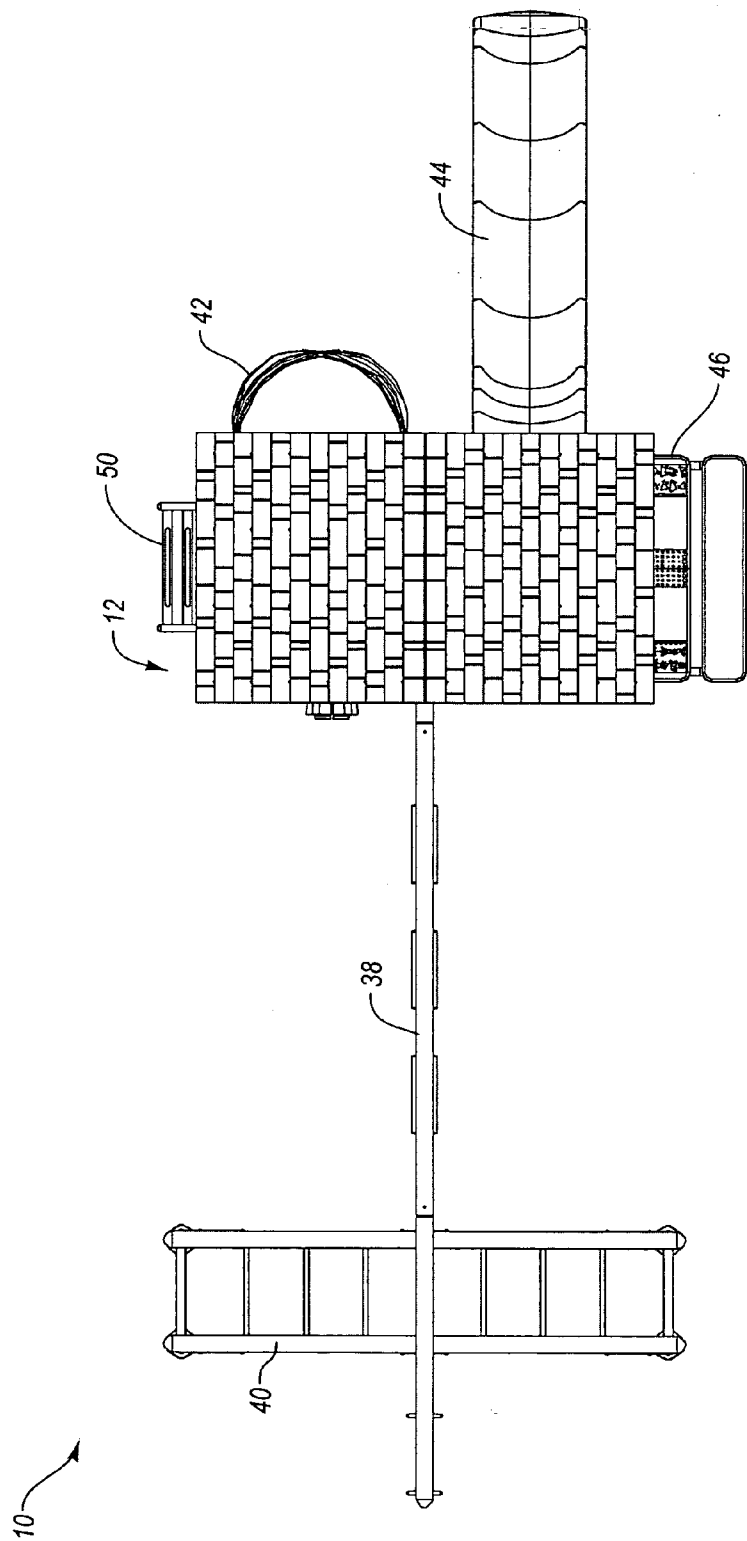


Fig. 7

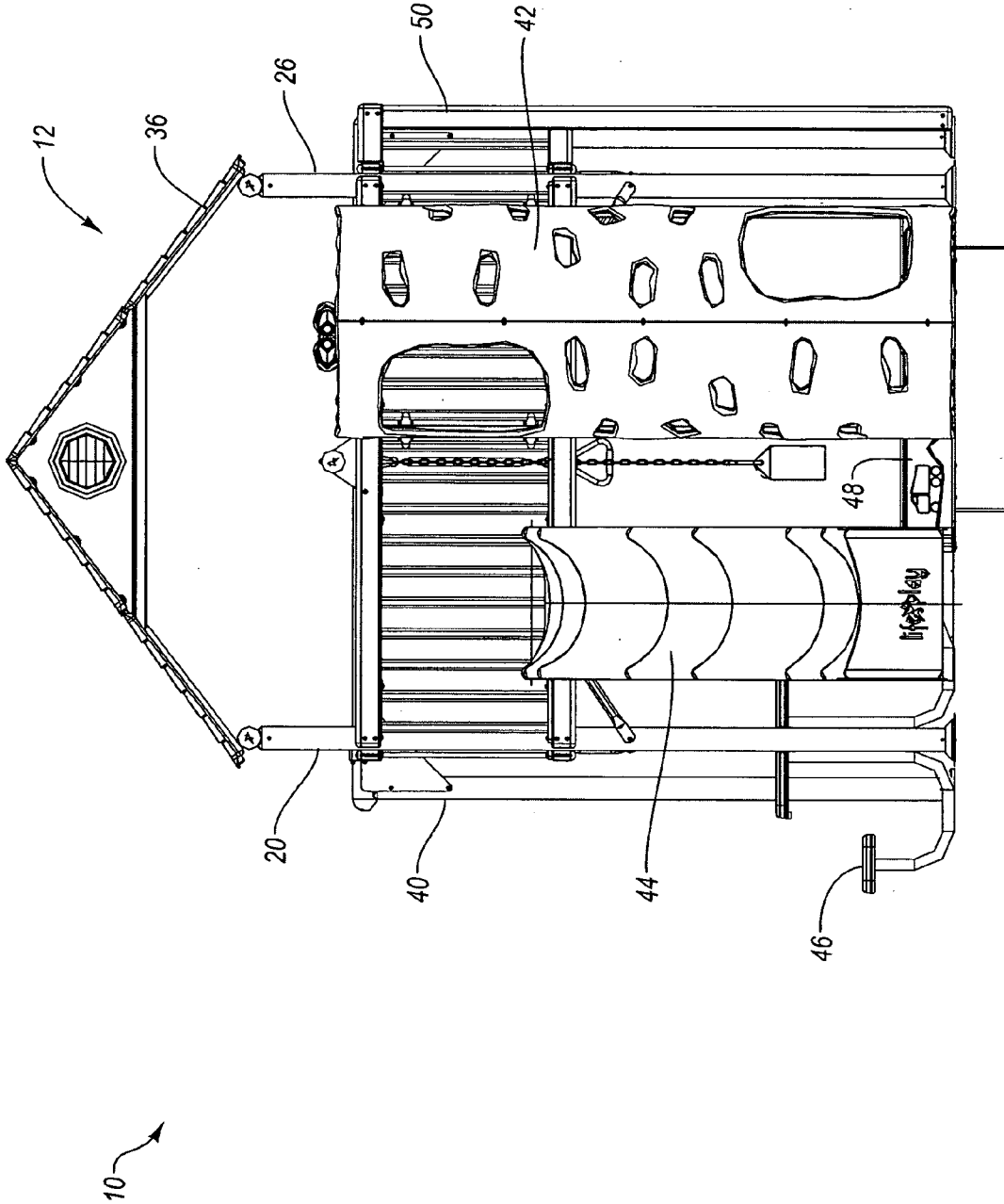


Fig. 8

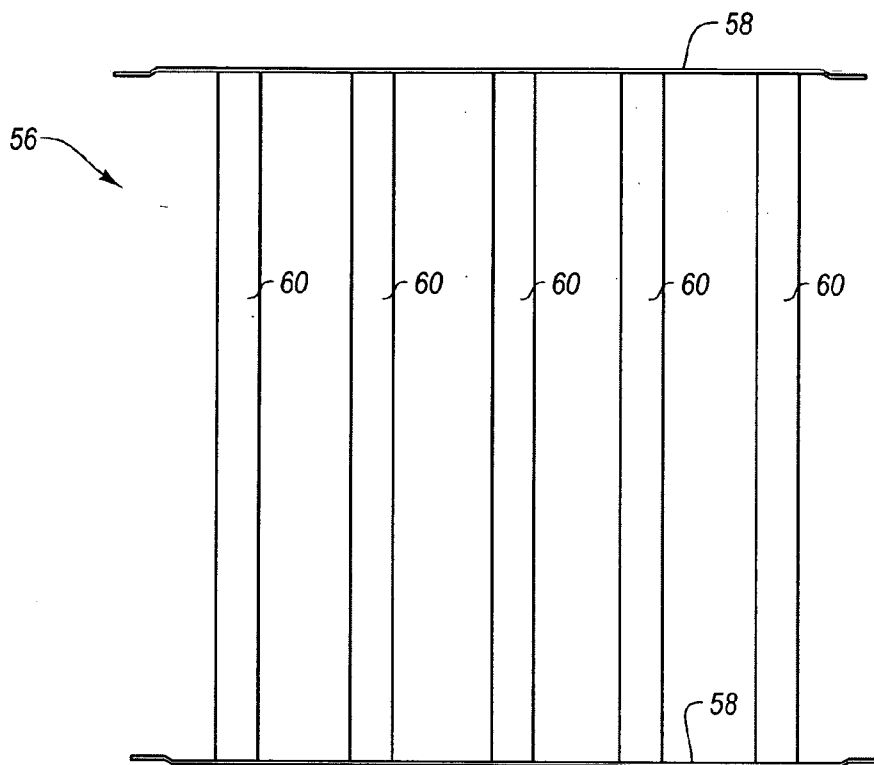


Fig. 9

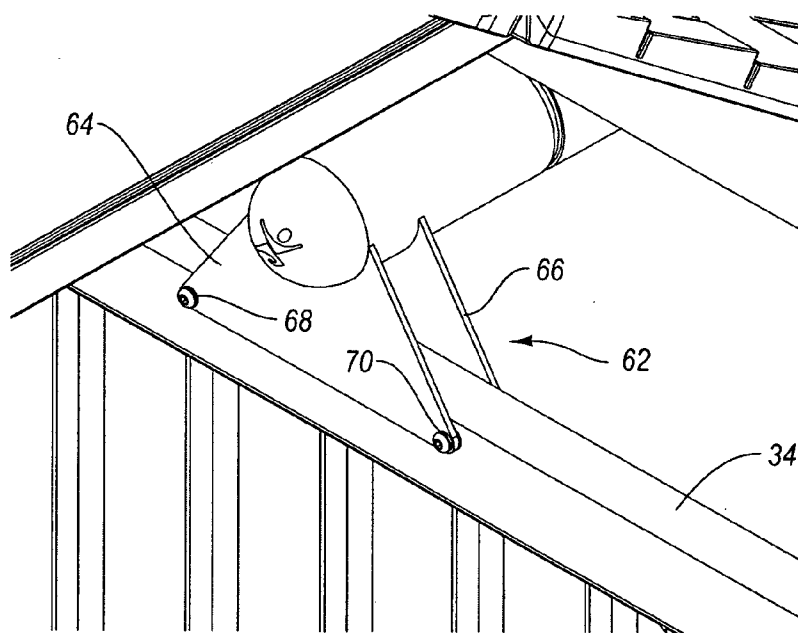


Fig. 10

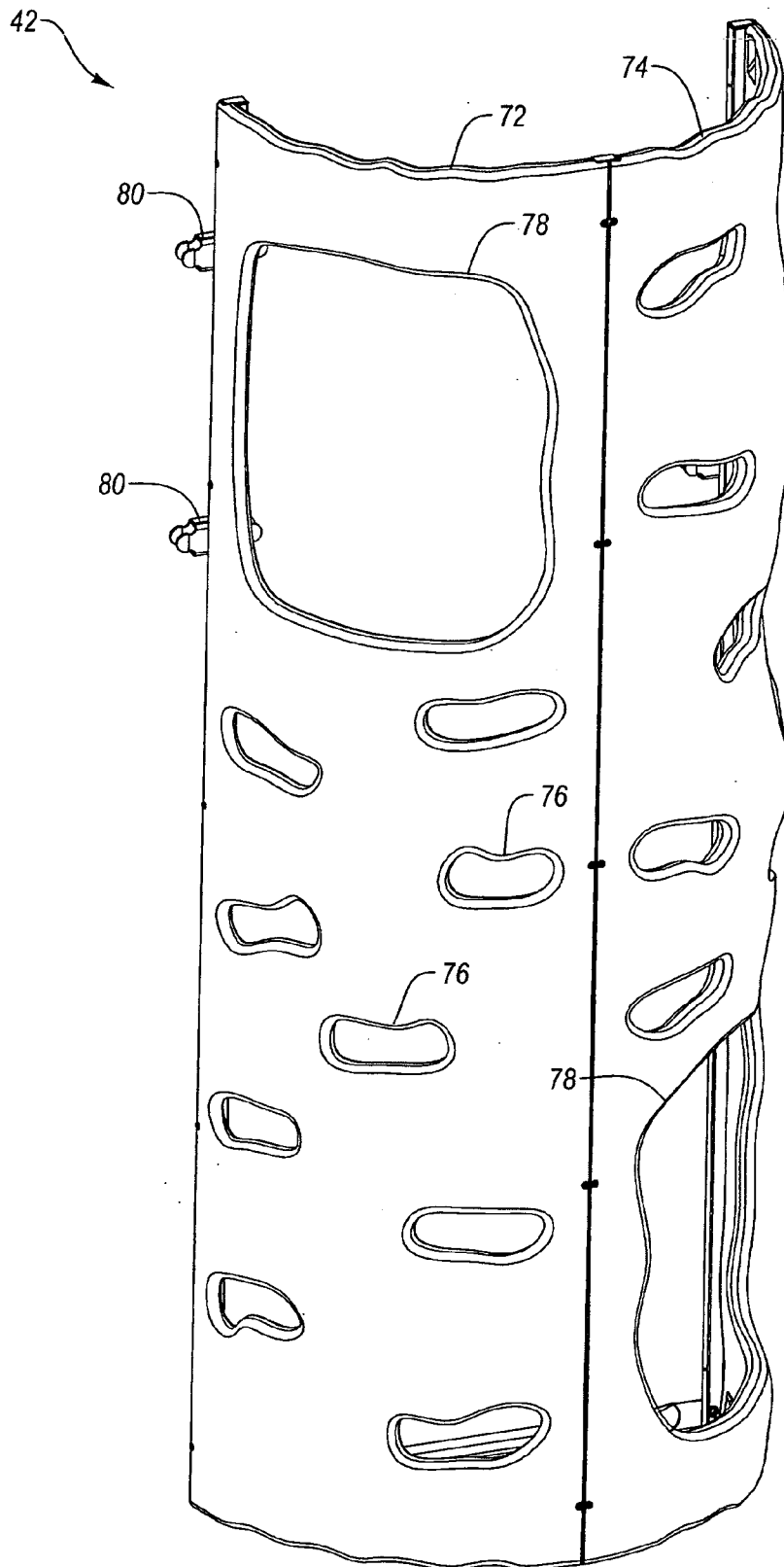


Fig. 11

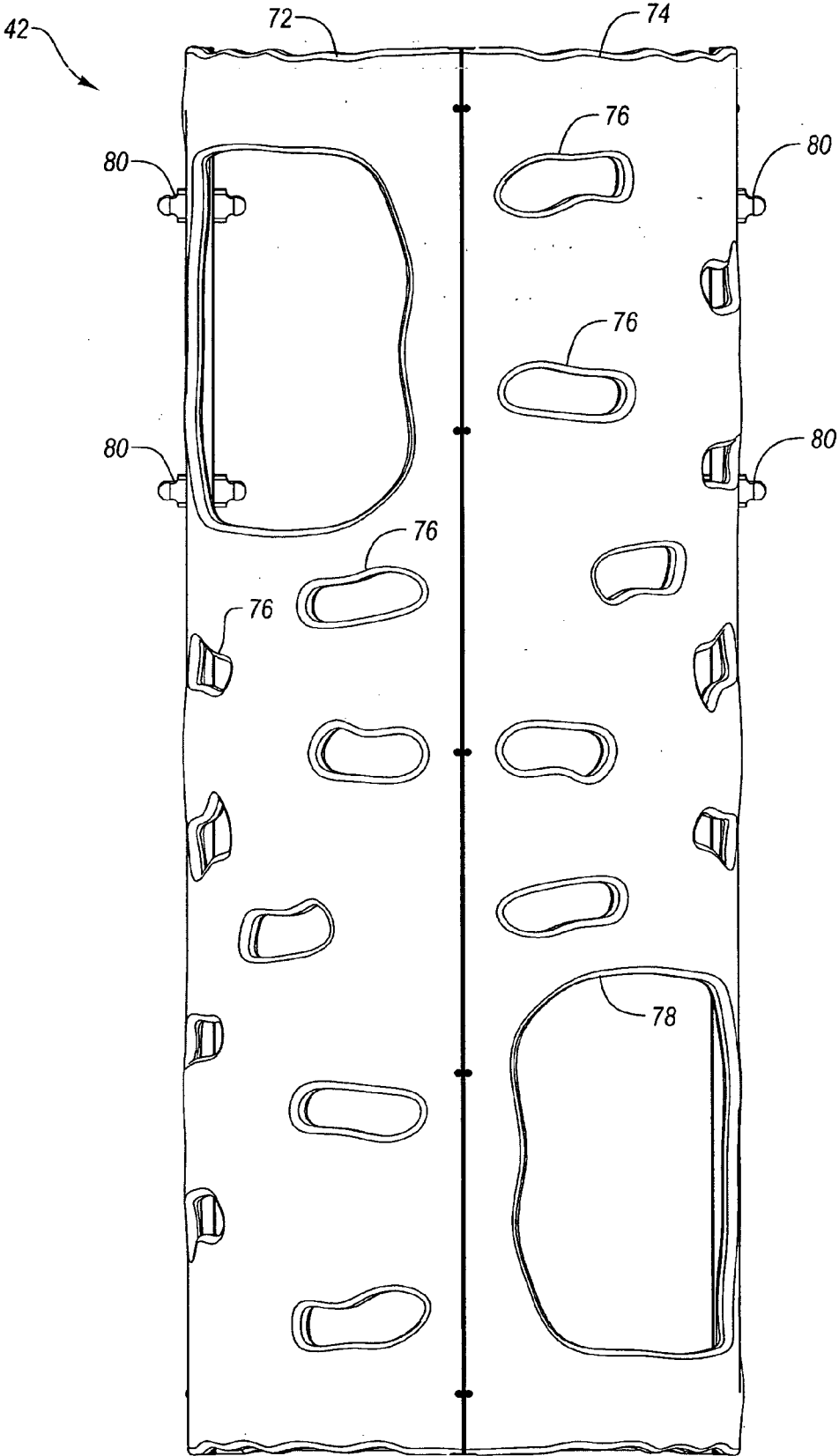


Fig. 12

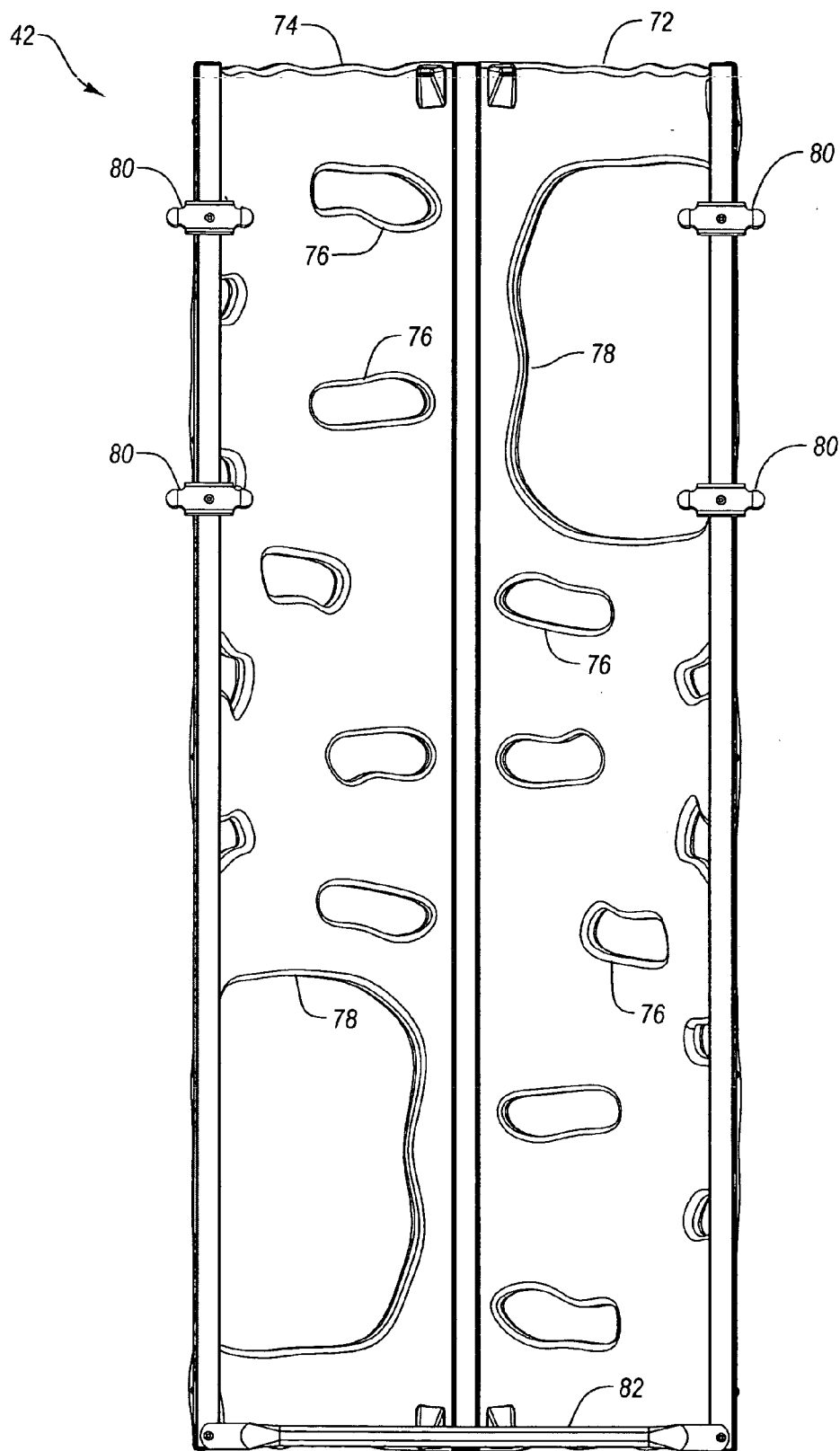


Fig. 13

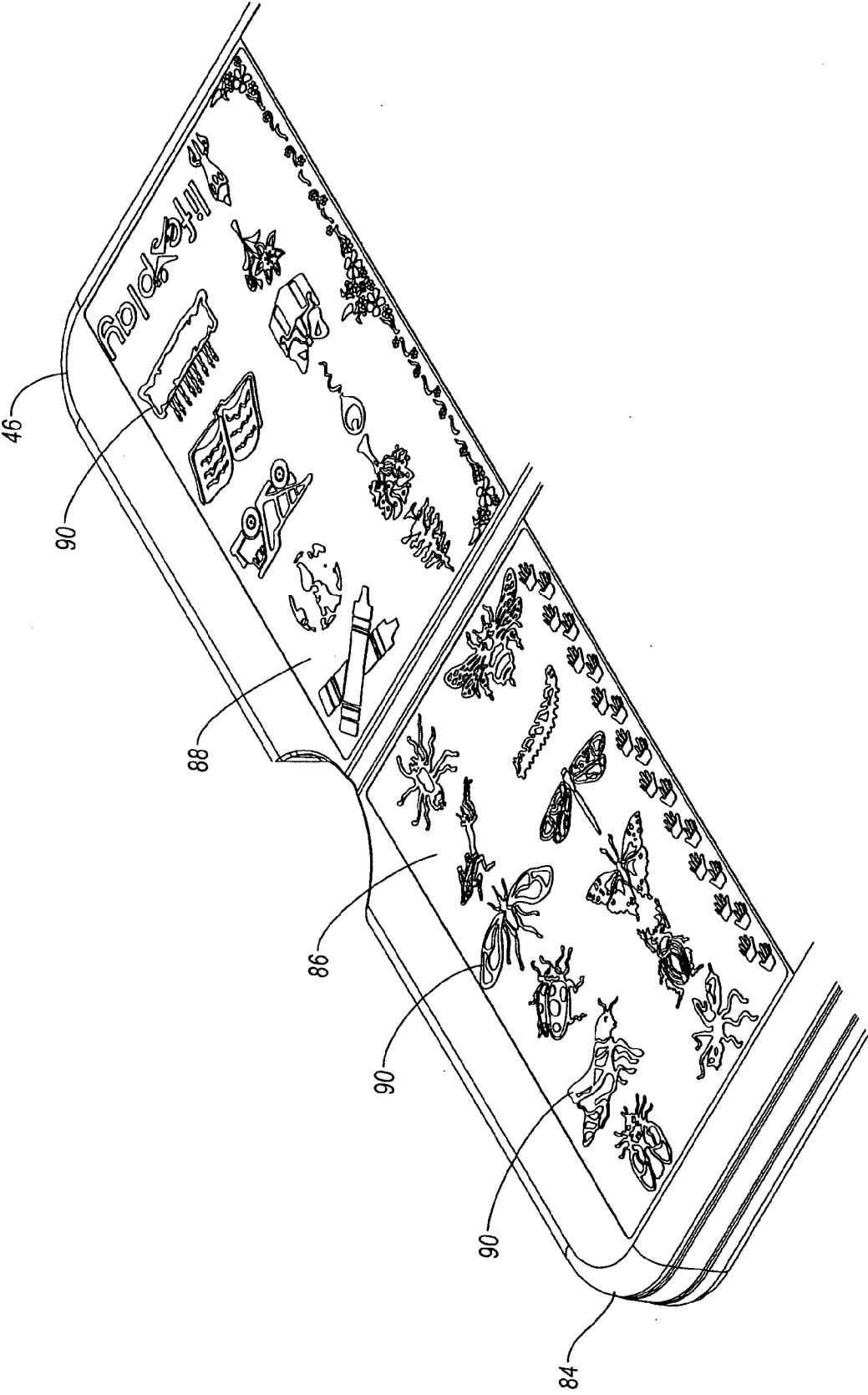


Fig. 14

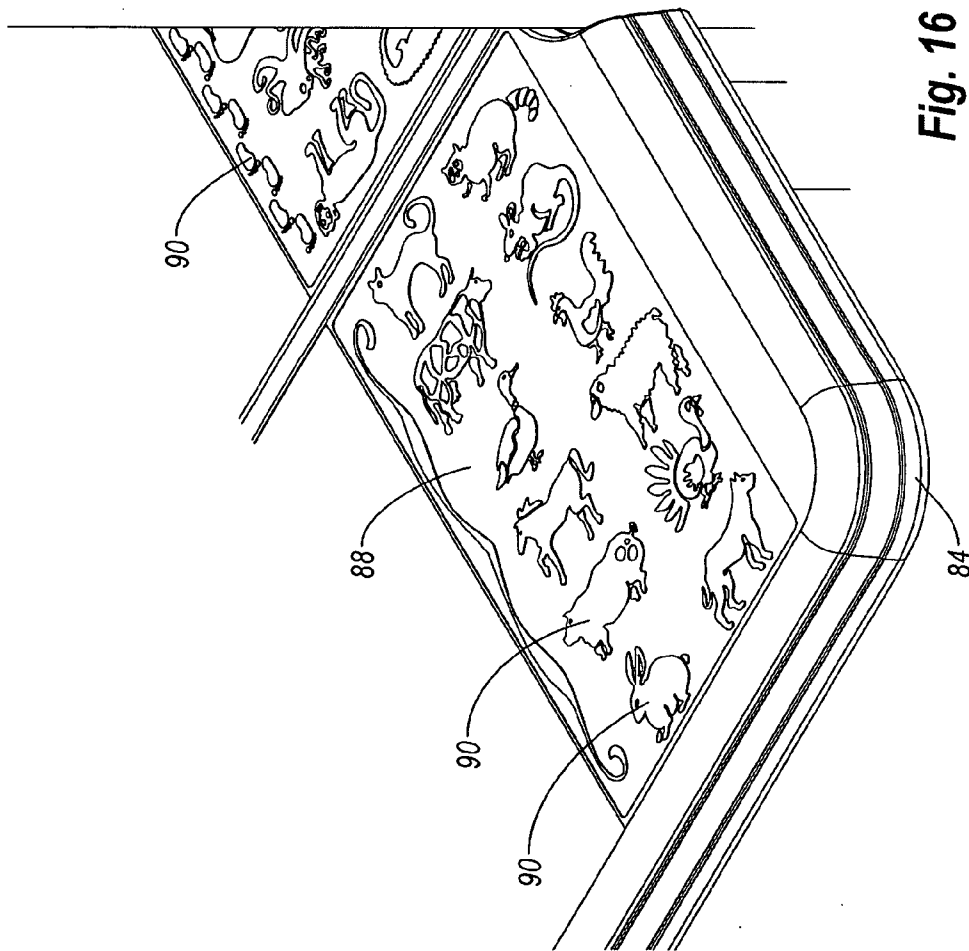
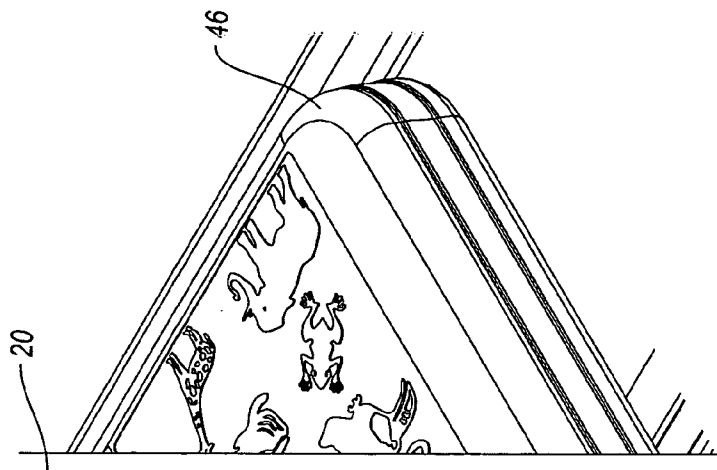


Fig. 16

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/688,551, filed Jun. 7, 2005 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0002] This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/729,625, filed Oct. 24, 2005 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0003] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/241,103, filed Oct. 24, 2005 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0004] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/253,602, filed Feb. 9, 2006 and entitled METAL TUBING.

[0005] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,199, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0006] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,200, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0007] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,201, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0008] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,204, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0009] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,205, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0010] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,234, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0011] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,248, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0012] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/255,249, filed Mar. 6, 2006 and entitled PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

[0013] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. design patent application Ser. No. 29/256,361, filed Mar. 20, 2006 and entitled CLIMBING WALL.

[0014] The disclosures of each of these applications are incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0015] 1. Field of the Invention

[0016] This invention is generally related to playground equipment.

[0017] 2. Description of Related Art

[0018] Conventional playground equipment is often used in a variety of locations and environments such as parks and

schools. Children often use playground equipment for games, exercises and other activities.

[0019] Conventional playground equipment is frequently constructed from materials such as wood. Conventional playground equipment constructed from wood, however, is relatively expensive and the wood must generally be treated or finished before use. For example, the wood may be sanded and/or painted. Disadvantageously, the wood may deteriorate over time, even if the wood is frequently repainted or refinished. If the wood deteriorates, then it may have to be replaced, which may be very difficult and time consuming.

[0020] In addition, conventional playground equipment constructed from materials such as wood may be relatively heavy, which may make the playground equipment more difficult to install and more expensive to ship and transport. Conventional playground equipment may also include large components that may be heavy and difficult to ship. For example, known playground equipment may include components that are large, bulky and unwieldy to move. Disadvantageously, these large components may significantly increase shipping costs and make the equipment difficult to install and/or assemble.

[0021] Known playground equipment may also be difficult to ship because it may be packaged within a number of large boxes. These boxes may be very heavy and awkward to move. Further, a large amount of unused spaced may be located within the boxes, which may require a large amount of shipping materials to fill the unused spaced. Various portions of conventional playground equipment may also require specialized boxes or containers, which may undesirably increase shipping and transportation costs.

[0022] Conventional playground equipment may also require a significant amount of space for use. Disadvantageously, this may prevent the playground equipment from being used in many desired locations. For example, the playground equipment may be too large to fit within a consumer's yard. In addition, even if the consumer has sufficient space in their yard, the playground equipment may have a configuration that is incompatible with the available space. For instance, the playground equipment may have a length or width that is too large.

[0023] Known playground equipment is typically arranged into a specific pattern or layout. Unfortunately, the pattern or layout may not be in the most efficient or desired configuration for a particular consumer. In addition, conventional playground equipment can include components that the consumer does not desire, while failing to include components that the consumer does desire. Accordingly, in order to allow for the different demands of the consumer, the manufacturer may have to make several different types of playground equipment and the retailer may have to carry several different types of playground equipment. Disadvantageously, the different type of playground equipment may increase manufacturing costs and require additional storage space.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0024] A need therefore exists for playground equipment that eliminates or diminishes the disadvantages and problems described above.

[0025] One aspect is playground equipment that may include a variety of different types of equipment. For example, the playground equipment may include a main structure such as a playhouse. The main structure may include a floor and it may be raised above the ground. The main structure may also include railings, a roof, walls and the like.

[0026] Another aspect is playground equipment that may include a number of components or pieces. For example, the playground equipment may include a main structure, a swing set, a climbing wall, a slide, monkey bars, a picnic table, sandbox, a ladder and/or the like. Advantageously, the playground equipment may include any desired number and type of components. Significantly, the components may be interconnected into any desired arrangement or configuration.

[0027] Still another aspect is the playground equipment may include attachment portions that are sized and configured to facilitate connection of the various components. The attachment portions may assist in connecting the components in the desired arrangement or configuration. For example, the attachment portions may allow components, such as monkey bars or swing sets, to be attached to different portions of the main structure.

[0028] A further aspect is playground equipment that may include one or more components that can be interchangeable. This may allow different configurations and arrangements of the playground equipment to be created. For example, various components may be connected to different structures or components to create various suitable configurations and arrangements. Significantly, this may allow the playground equipment to be customized to accommodate the needs of particular retailers and/or consumers. Further, because the components of the playground equipment may be arranged in a variety of configurations and combinations, this may reduce manufacturing costs.

[0029] A still further aspect is playground equipment that may include a support structure. The support structure may include a platform and the platform may be raised above the ground. If desired, the support structure may include walls, railings, a roof and the like. The support structure may also be sized and configured to allow other components to be attached. For example, one or more swing sets, climbing walls, slides, monkey bars, picnic tables, sandboxes and the like may be attached to the support structure. In addition, one or more of these components may be sized and configured to be connected to a specific portion of the support structure such the frame or platform. This may facilitate attachment of the components in a suitable arrangement or configuration.

[0030] Yet another aspect is playground equipment that may include components with generally the same size. Advantageously, this may facilitate interchanging of the components and/or arranging the components into the desired arrangement or configuration. For example, the climbing wall, the slide and/or the ladder may have generally the same width. In addition, the main structure of the playground equipment may include one or more openings or access portions that have generally the same width as the climbing wall, the slide and/or the ladder. Accordingly, the climbing wall, the slide or the ladder may be attached to the same access portions. This may allow the playground equipment to have the desired arrangement or configuration.

[0031] A further aspect is playground equipment that may include a main structure with a raised platform and one or more walls, railings, barriers and the like. The railings, for example, may include or provide openings or access portions. For instance, the railing may include an opening and/or a portion of the railing may be removable to create an access portion. If desired, the railing may include multiple openings and/or removable portions. The openings and access portions preferably have generally the same size, which may facilitate attachment of the components in the desired arrangement or configuration. In addition, this may facilitate interchanging of the components.

[0032] Still another aspect is playground equipment that may include one or more components constructed from metal tubing. Preferably, the metal tubing has a relatively larger outer diameter. The large diameter metal tubing may be used to construct various portions of the playground equipment, such as the frame, and it may allow a rigid and sturdy structure to be constructed. Significantly, the metal tubing may also be able to support a large amount of force or weight, and the metal tubing may require very little maintenance or repair.

[0033] Still yet another aspect is playground equipment that may include one or more components constructed from plastic. For example, the playground equipment may include walls, roof and/or floor that are constructed from plastic. In addition, the climbing wall and/or slide may be constructed from plastic. The plastic components are preferably constructed using a blow-molding process, which may allow lightweight components to be formed and it may allow the components to have various desired configurations, shapes, sizes and designs. This may also allow components to be constructed that are generally weather resistant and temperature insensitive, which may allow the playground equipment to be used in a wide variety of locations and environments. In addition, this may allow components that are durable, long-lasting and corrosion resistant to be constructed. Further, because components constructed from blow-molded plastic may be relatively strong, these components may be used to support a relatively large amount of weight. Advantageously, these components may form or be part of a structural member of the playground equipment. In addition, these components may be supported by a frame and/or other suitable structures.

[0034] Another aspect is playground equipment that may include a climbing wall. The climbing wall may be adjustably connected to the playground equipment, which may allow the climbing wall to be disposed in various configurations and arrangements. For example, the climbing wall may be connected to the main structure using one or more fasteners and the fasteners may allow the height and/or positioning of the climbing wall to be adjusted. This may facilitate positioning of the climbing wall on uneven surfaces.

[0035] Yet another aspect is a climbing wall that may include a plurality of panels, which may be interconnected. The panels may have a generally curved shape and may be interconnected form a climbing wall with a generally semi-circular configuration.

[0036] Still another aspect is playground equipment that may include a surface with one or more raised and/or lowered portions. For example, the playground equipment

may include a table top with one or more generally planar portions and one or more offset portions. The offset portions may include recesses and/or projections, which are preferably sized and configured to be used to create a design by, for example, tracing. For example, a sheet of paper may be placed upon the offset portions and an instrument may be used to trace and/or shade on the sheet of paper. Exemplary instruments may include pencils, pens, crayons, markers, highlighters, chalks and the like. Exemplary offset portions may include, but are not limited to, animals, insects, plants, trees, flowers, planets, letters, numbers, symbols, objects (such as balloons, presents, birthday cakes, dump trucks, tractors, rockets, books, etc.), shapes (such as diamonds, circles, ovals, hearts, clover leaves, stars, squares, octagons, triangles, polygons, parallelograms, etc.) and the like.

[0037] Advantageously, the offset portions may be integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece structure. For example, the offset portions may be formed in a structure constructed from molded plastic and the offset portions may be integrally formed in the table top during the molding process. The structure is preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic, but other suitable processes may also be used.

[0038] These and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0039] The appended drawings contain figures of preferred embodiments to further illustrate and clarify the above and other aspects, advantages and features of the present invention. It will be appreciated that these drawings depict only preferred embodiments of the invention and are not intended to limit its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[0040] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of playground equipment;

[0041] FIG. 2 is left side view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 1;

[0042] FIG. 3 is a top view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 1;

[0043] FIG. 4 is a front view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 1;

[0044] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another exemplary embodiment of playground equipment;

[0045] FIG. 6 is left side view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 5;

[0046] FIG. 7 is a top view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 5;

[0047] FIG. 8 is a front view of the playground equipment shown in FIG. 5;

[0048] FIG. 9 is a front view of an exemplary portion of a railing that may be used in connection with the playground equipment;

[0049] FIG. 10 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of a connection that may be used in connection with the playground equipment;

[0050] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of an exemplary climbing wall that may be used in connection with playground equipment;

[0051] FIG. 12 is a front view of the climbing wall shown in FIG. 11;

[0052] FIG. 13 is a rear view of the climbing wall shown in FIG. 11;

[0053] FIG. 14 is an enlarged perspective view of an exemplary structure that may be used in connection with playground equipment;

[0054] FIG. 15 is an enlarged perspective view of an exemplary structure that may be used in connection with playground equipment; and

[0055] FIG. 16 is an enlarged perspective view of an exemplary structure that may be used in connection with playground equipment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0056] The present invention is generally directed towards playground equipment. The principles of the present invention, however, are not limited to playground equipment. It will be understood that, in light of the present disclosure, the playground equipment disclosed herein can be successfully used in connection with other types of structures.

[0057] Additionally, to assist in the description of the playground equipment, words such as top, bottom, front, rear, right and left may be used to describe the accompanying figures, which are not necessarily drawn to scale. It will be appreciated, however, that the playground equipment can be located in a variety of desired positions, arrangements and configurations. A detailed description of the playground equipment now follows.

[0058] As shown in FIGS. 1-4, playground equipment 10 may include a main structure 12, such as a playhouse or the like. The main structure 12 may include a platform 14 with a floor 16. The platform 14 may also include a frame 18 that may be sized and configured to support, strengthen and/or reinforce the floor 16. The main structure 12 may also include supports 20, 22, 24 and 26 that are sized and configured to support the platform 14 above a support surface, such as the ground. The main structure 12 may further include railings 28, 30, 32, 34; a roof 36 and/or other suitable components.

[0059] The playground equipment 10 may include any suitable number and combination of components or pieces. For example, the playground equipment 10 may include the main structure 12, a swing set 38, monkey bars 40, a climbing wall 42, a slide 44, a picnic table 46, a sandbox 48 and/or a ladder 50. Advantageously, the playground equipment 10 may include any desired number and type of components. For example, the playground equipment 10 may include all of these components, only some of these components and/or other components. The playground equipment 10 may also include two or more of the same components. For example, the playground equipments 10

may include a pair of climbing walls **42** and a pair of ladders **50**. Of course, the playground equipment could have other suitable combinations, types and configurations of components.

[0060] The playground equipment **10** preferably includes components that can be connected in a variety of suitable configurations and arrangements, such as the arrangement shown in FIGS. **1-4** and/or the arrangement shown in FIGS. **5-8**. Advantageously, this may allow the playground equipment **10** to be customized or arranged for a particular location and/or use. In addition, at least some of the components are preferably interchangeable and/or connectable to different components or structures to facilitate construction of the different configurations and arrangements. Because the components of the playground equipment **10** may be arranged in a variety of configurations and combinations, this may reduce manufacturing costs.

[0061] The playground equipment **10** may include components with generally the same size and/or configuration. Advantageously, this may facilitate interchanging of the components and/or arranging the components into the desired arrangement or configuration. For example, the climbing wall **42**, the slide **44** and the ladder **50** may have generally the same width. In addition, the main structure **12** of the playground equipment **10** may include one or more openings or access portions **52, 54** that may have generally the same width as the climbing wall **42**, the slide **44** and the ladder **50**. Accordingly, the climbing wall **42**, the slide **44** or the ladder **50** may be attached to the same access portions. For instance, as shown in FIG. **1**, the ladder **50** may be attached to the access portion **54** or, as shown in FIG. **5**, the climbing wall **42** may be attached to the access portion **54**. While one or more of the components may have generally the same size and/or configuration, the components could also have other suitable sizes and configurations depending, for example, upon the intended use of the playground equipment **10**.

[0062] In greater detail, the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** may enclose at least a portion of the platform **14** and the railings may include one or more openings or access portions **52, 54**. For instance, as shown in FIG. **9**, a portion or section **56** of a railing may be removable to create an access portion to which the climbing wall **42**, the slide **44**, the ladder **50** or other component may be attached. In particular, the railing may include vertical members **58** and horizontal members **60**, and at least a portion of the vertical and/or horizontal members may be removed to create the opening or access portion. Preferably the removable section **56** includes four or five vertical members **60** and an accompanying portion of the horizontal members **58**. It will be appreciated, however, that the openings or access portions **52, 54** and the removable section **56** may have various sizes and/or configurations depending, for example, upon the type or design of the playground equipment **10**. It will also be appreciated that the openings or access portions **52, 54** may be located in any desired portions of the playground equipment **10**, such as walls, floors, roofs, etc.

[0063] The railings **28, 30, 32, 34** may include multiple removable portions, openings or access portions. For example, the railing **28** may include two removable sections **56** to create two corresponding access portions and the railing **32** may include two removable sections **56** to create

two corresponding access portions. The railings **30, 34**, however, preferably include only a single removable section **56**. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** and other portions of the playground equipment **10** may include any desired number, size and configuration of removable sections, openings and access portions depending, for example, upon the intended use of the playground equipment.

[0064] The removable sections **56** of the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** preferably have generally the same size so that the corresponding openings or access portions have the same size. In addition, the removable sections **56** of the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** are preferably interchangeable. It will be appreciated, however, that the removable sections **56** do not have to be interchangeable and the openings or access portions could have any suitable size and arrangement. It will be appreciated, however, that the removable sections, openings and access portions are not required.

[0065] As discussed above, the various components or pieces of the playground equipment **10** may be interconnected. For example, the playground equipment **10** may include one or more attachment portions that are sized and configured to allow the various components of the playground equipment to be connected. The attachment portions are preferably sized and configured to allow the various components to be selectively connected. For example, the main structure **12** may include attachment portions that allow the selected components to be attached to the main structure. Advantageously, the attachment portions may be sized and configured to allow the components to be attached to the main structure **12** in different configurations and/or arrangements. For instance, as shown in FIG. **10**, the swing set **38** and/or the monkey bars **40** may include an attachment portion **62** that may be sized and configured to be connected to one or more attachment portions of the main structure **12**.

[0066] In further detail, the attachment portion **62** may be attached to one or more of the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** of the main structure **12**. In particular, the attachment portion **62** may be connected to the railing **34** (as shown in the configuration of FIGS. **1-4**) or the railing **32** (as shown in the configuration of FIGS. **5-8**). It will be appreciated that the attachment portion **62** may be connected to any of the railings **28, 30, 32, 34** and/or other portions of the playground equipment **10**.

[0067] The attachment portion **62** may include a first flange **64** and a second flange **66**, and the flanges preferably include openings that are sized and configured to receive fasteners **68, 70**, respectively. The fasteners **68, 70** may allow the attachment portion **62** to be connected to the desired portion of the playground equipment **10**. It will be appreciated that the attachment portion **62** does not require flanges and the attachment portion may have other suitable shapes, sizes and configurations. It will also be appreciated that the attachment portion **62** may be connected to the playground equipment **10** using other suitable devices and means.

[0068] As shown in FIGS. **11-13**, the playground equipment **10** may include a climbing wall **42**. The climbing wall **42** may include one or more openings **76**, which may be sized and configured to provide a grip (such as, handholds and footholds). The climbing wall **42** may also preferably include one or more larger openings **78**, which may be sized

and configured to allow a person to go through the opening. The climbing wall **42** may also include other types of structures such as grips, detents, protrusions and the like depending, for example, upon the intended use of the climbing wall.

[0069] The climbing wall **42** may be constructed from plastic. In particular, the climbing wall **42** may be constructed from blow-molded plastic with a first outer wall, a second outer wall and a hollow interior portion formed during the blow-molding process. The climbing wall **42**, however, could be constructed from other suitable materials and processes.

[0070] The climbing wall **42** may also be constructed from one or more components that are interconnected. For example, the climbing wall **42** may be constructed from two panels **72**, **74** that are interconnected. Advantageously, the panels **72**, **74** may be integrally formed as part of a unitary, one-piece structure during the blow-molding process. In addition, the openings **76**, **78** and/or other structures may be integrally formed with the panels as part of the unitary, one-piece structure. In particular, the openings **76**, **78** may be at least partially defined by a wall extending between a front surface and a rear surface of the panels **72**, **74**, and at least a portion of the wall may be integrally formed during the blow-molding process.

[0071] The panels **72**, **74** may have a generally curved shape and may be interconnected to form a climbing wall **42** with a generally semicircular configuration as shown in FIGS. **3** and **7**. It will be appreciated, however, that the panels **72**, **74** and/or the climbing wall **42** may have other suitable shapes and configurations, if desired. It will also be appreciated that the climbing wall **42** need not be constructed from a plurality of panels and that the climbing wall may be constructed from a single panel, if desired.

[0072] The panels **72**, **74** may also be interchangeable. For example, the panels **72**, **74** may have generally the same shape and configuration. In addition, the panels **72**, **74** could be constructed from the same or substantially similar molds. This may make the manufacturing processes easier and simpler. This may also make the climbing wall **42** faster and less expensive to manufacture. In addition, this may make the panels **72**, **74** easier to repair and/or replace. Further, because the panels may be interchangeable, the panels may be stored together, which may make the storage more efficient. It will be appreciated, however, that the panels **72**, **74** need not be interchangeable and the panels could have any suitable design, shape and configuration.

[0073] The climbing wall **42** is preferably adjustably connected to the playground equipment **10**. In particular, the climbing wall **42** is preferably adjustably connected to a railing **28**, **30**, **32**, **34** and/or the platform **14** using one or more connectors **80**. In particular, the connectors **80** may connect the railing and/or the platform **14** to the climbing wall **42**. The connectors **80** are preferably sized and configured to be adjustably connected to the climbing wall **42**. This may allow, for example, the positioning of the climbing wall **42** to be adjusted relative to the railing and/or the platform **14**. By adjusting the position of the climbing wall **42** relative to a railing and/or the platform **14**, the climbing wall may be used with structures of various heights. In addition, this may allow the climbing wall **42** to be adjusted relative to a support surface, such as the ground. Signifi-

cantly, this may allow the climbing wall **42** to be used in connection with an uneven support surface. If desired, the connectors **80** may be sized and configured to be adjustably connected to any portion of the climbing wall along the height of the climbing wall **42**, and the connectors may be spaced apart from the top and bottom ends of the climbing wall, if desired.

[0074] In greater detail, either or both of the panels **72**, **74** of the climbing wall **42** may be adjustably connected to the playground equipment **10**. For example, the panel **72** may be adjustably connected to a railing and/or the platform **14** using the connectors **80** and the panel **74** may be adjustably connected to the railing and/or the platform using the connectors **80**. If desired, the panels **72**, **74** may be independently connected to the railing and/or the platform **14**, which may accommodate various support surfaces, such as sloped support surfaces. In addition, the panels **72**, **74** may be interconnected in a plurality of relative positions, which may also help the panels **72**, **74** accommodate various support surfaces. As shown in FIG. **13**, the panels **72**, **74** may be interconnected using one or more elongated supports **82**. The panels **72**, **74** may also be interconnected using a snap fit, a friction fit and/or an interference fit, fasteners, adhesives and/or other suitable devices or means.

[0075] As shown in FIGS. **14-16**, the playground equipment **10** may include a picnic table **46** and it may include a table top **84**. The table top **84** may include an upper surface **86** with one or more generally planar portions **88** and one or more offset portions **90**. The offset portions **90** may include recesses and/or projections, and the offset portions may be sized and configured to create designs or patterns. For example, a sheet of paper may be placed upon the offset portions **90** and the design or pattern may be transferred to the piece of paper. In greater detail, an instrument may be used to shade or transfer the design or pattern to the sheet of paper. Exemplary instruments that may be used include pencils, pens, crayons, markers, highlighters, chalk and the like.

[0076] The shapes of the offset portions **90** may advantageously form images that may be traced onto the paper, and the images may advantageously be educational and/or appealing to children. For example, the images may include, but are not limited to, animals, insects, plants, trees, flowers, planets, objects (such as balloons, birthday cakes, dump trucks, tractors, rockets, books), letters, numbers, symbols (such as punctuation marks), shapes (such as diamonds, circles, ovals, hearts, clover leaves, stars, squares, octagons, triangles, polygons, parallelograms) and the like.

[0077] To facilitate tracing, the offset portions **90** may have recesses and/or projections with suitable dimensions. For example, the recesses may have a depth that is about 1 or 2 millimeters to about 10 millimeters, and the projections may have a height that is about 1 or 2 millimeters to about 10 millimeters. In particular, the recesses may have a depth that is about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch (about 1.6 millimeters) to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch (about 6.4 millimeters) or more; and the projections may have a height that is about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch (about 1.6 millimeters) to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch (about 6.4 millimeters) or more. Of course, the recesses and projections may have greater or lesser depths and heights depending, for example, upon the particular configuration of the table top **84**.

[0078] Desirably, the offset portions 90 are integrally formed in the table top 84 as part of a unitary, one-piece structure. For example, the table top 84 may be constructed from molded plastic and the offset portions 90 may be integrally formed in the table top during the molding process. In particular, the table top 84 is preferably constructed from blow-molded plastic and the offset portions 90 are preferably integrally formed in the table top during the blow-molding process, but the table top and offset portions 90 may be formed by other suitable processes and methods.

[0079] As shown in FIG. 1, the picnic table 46 may also include one or more legs or supports 92 that are sized and configured to support the table top 84 and/or benches 94. It will be appreciated that a variety of tables and/or benches with other suitable configurations may be used with the playground equipment 10. It will also be appreciated that the playground equipment 10 does not require any tables or benches.

[0080] The playground equipment 10 may include one or more components constructed from metal tubing. Preferably, the metal tubing has a relatively large outer diameter. Advantageously, the large diameter metal tubing may be used to construct at least a portion of the frame 18 and/or the supports 20, 22, 24, 26. The metal tubing may allow a rigid and sturdy playground equipment to be created. Significantly, the metal tubing may also be able to support a large amount of force or weight, and the metal tubing may require very little maintenance or repair. It will be appreciated, however, that the playground equipment 10 need not be constructed from metal tubing and may be constructed from other materials having other suitable configurations.

[0081] The playground equipment 10 may include one or more components constructed from plastic. For example, the floor 16 and the roof 36 of the main structure 12 may be constructed from plastic. In addition, the climbing wall 42, the slide 44, and/or the table top 84 may be constructed from plastic. The plastic components are preferably constructed using a blow-molding process, which may allow lightweight components to be formed and it may allow the components to have various desired configurations, shapes, sizes and designs. This may also allow components to be constructed that are generally weather resistant and temperature insensitive, which may allow the playground equipment 10 to be used in a wide variety of locations and environments. In addition, this may allow components that are durable, long-lasting and corrosion resistant to be constructed. Further, because components constructed from blow-molded plastic may be relatively strong, these components may be used to support a relatively large amount of weight. Advantageously, these components may form or be part of a structural member of the playground equipment. In addition, these components may be supported by a frame and/or other suitable structures.

[0082] Advantageously, components constructed from blow-molded plastic may be relatively strong because it may include opposing walls or surfaces that are separated by a distance. Preferably, the opposing walls are separated by a generally constant distance, but the walls may be separated by any suitable distance. In addition, because components formed during the blow-molding process may include a hollow interior portion, the components may be relatively lightweight. It will be appreciated, however, that these and

other components of the playground equipment 10 could also be constructed from other suitable processes such as injection molding, rotary molding, compression molding and the like. In addition, these and other components of the playground equipment 10 could be constructed from other suitable materials such as synthetics, composites, wood, metal and the like.

[0083] In addition, the components constructed from blow-molded plastic may include one or more depressions, which may also be referred to as "tack-offs" and "kiss-offs." The depressions are preferably sized and configured to strengthen the blow-molded components. The depressions may extend from one surface of the component toward an opposing surface and the depressions may contact or engage the opposing surface, but the depressions may be spaced apart from the opposing surface. The depressions are preferably integrally formed in the components during the blow-molding process. If desired, the depressions may be arranged into or form part of a pattern.

[0084] Although this invention has been described in terms of certain preferred embodiments, other embodiments apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art are also within the scope of this invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is intended to be defined only by the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. Playground equipment comprising:

a main structure comprising:

a platform;

at least one support sized and configured to support the platform at a height above a support surface; and

a first barrier connected to the platform and including a removable portion that is sized and configured to be removed to provide a first access portion;

a first piece of playground equipment; and

a second piece of playground equipment, the first piece of playground equipment and the second piece of playground equipment being interchangeably connected to the main structure.

2. The playground equipment as in claim 1, further comprising a second barrier connected to the platform and including a removable portion that is sized and configured to be removed to provide a second access portion, the first piece of playground equipment and the second piece of playground equipment being sized and configured to be interchangeably connected to the main structure proximate the first access portion and the second access portion.

3. The playground equipment as in claim 2, further comprising a second removable portion of the first barrier that is sized and configured to be removed to provide a third access portion, the first piece of playground equipment and the second piece of playground equipment being sized and configured to be interchangeably connected to the main structure proximate the third access portion.

4. The playground equipment as in claim 2, further comprising a second removable portion of the second barrier that is sized and configured to be removed to provide a fourth access portion, the first piece of playground equipment and the second piece of playground equipment being

sized and configured to be interchangeably connected to the main structure proximate the fourth access portion.

5. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first barrier further includes a second removable portion that is sized and configured to be removed to provide a second access portion, the first piece of playground equipment and the second piece of playground equipment being sized and configured to be interchangeably connected to the main structure proximate the second access portion.

6. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first piece of playground equipment comprises a slide and the second piece of playground equipment comprises a ladder.

7. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first piece of playground equipment comprises a ladder and the second piece of playground equipment comprises a climbing wall.

8. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first piece of playground equipment comprises a climbing wall and the second piece of playground equipment comprises a slide.

9. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first piece of playground equipment comprises a climbing wall, the climbing wall being sized and configured to be connected to the main structure in a plurality of relative positions.

10. The playground equipment as in claim 1, wherein the first piece of playground equipment comprises a climbing wall, the climbing wall comprising:

- a first panel constructed from blow-molded plastic, the first panel including:
 - a front surface;
 - a rear surface;
 - a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process; and
 - a grip this is integrally formed during the blow-molding process; and

- a second panel constructed from blow-molded plastic, the second panel including:
 - a front surface;
 - a rear surface;
 - a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process; and
 - a grip that is integrally formed during a blow-molding process.

11. The playground equipment as in claim 1, further comprising a table, the table comprising:

- a table top constructed from blow-molded plastic, the table top including:
 - an upper surface;
 - a lower surface;
 - a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process;
- one or more generally planar portions integrally formed in the table top during the blow-molding process; and

one or more offset portions integrally formed in the table top during the blow-molding process, the offset portions being sized and configured to create a design that can be traced; and

a support structure connected to the table top, the support structure being sized and configured to support the table top above a support surface.

12. A climbing wall that is sized and configured to be used in connection with playground equipment, the climbing wall comprising:

- a first panel constructed from blow-molded plastic, the first panel comprising:
 - a front surface;
 - a rear surface;
 - a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process; and
 - a grip that is integrally formed during a blow-molding process; and

a second panel that is sized and configured to be connected to the first panel, the second panel constructed from blow-molded plastic, the second panel comprising:

- a front surface;
- a rear surface;
- a hollow interior portion that is integrally formed during the blow-molding process; and
- a grip that is integrally formed during a blow-molding process.

13. The climbing wall as in claim 12, wherein the first panel has a length, a width and an elongated outer edge;

wherein the second panel has a length, a width and an elongated outer edge; and

wherein the first panel is connected to the second panel so that at least a substantial portion of the elongated outer edge of the first panel is proximate the elongated outer edge of the second panel.

14. The climbing wall as in claim 12, wherein the first panel has a generally curved shape; and wherein the second panel has a generally curved shape.

15. The climbing wall as in claim 12, wherein the climbing wall is connected to playground equipment.

16. A method of transferring a design from playground equipment to a sheet of paper, the method comprising:

placing the sheet of paper upon an upper surface of a blow-molded plastic structure, the blow-molded plastic structure including a hollow interior portion integrally formed during the blow-molding process, the upper surface of the blow-molded plastic structure including at least one generally planar portion and at least one offset portion including a shape, the at least one generally planar portion and the at least one offset portion being integrally formed in the blow-molded structure during a blow-molding process; and

shading at least a portion of the paper with an instrument to transfer at least a portion of the shape onto the paper.

17. The method as in claim 16, wherein the at least one offset portion includes multiple offset portions arranged into a pattern.

18. The method as in claim 16, wherein the at least one offset portion has a height that is at least 2 millimeters.

19. The method as in claim 16, wherein the blow-molded plastic structure comprises a table top.

20. The method as in claim 16, wherein the at least one offset portion includes one or more letters, numbers, symbols, objects or shapes.

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