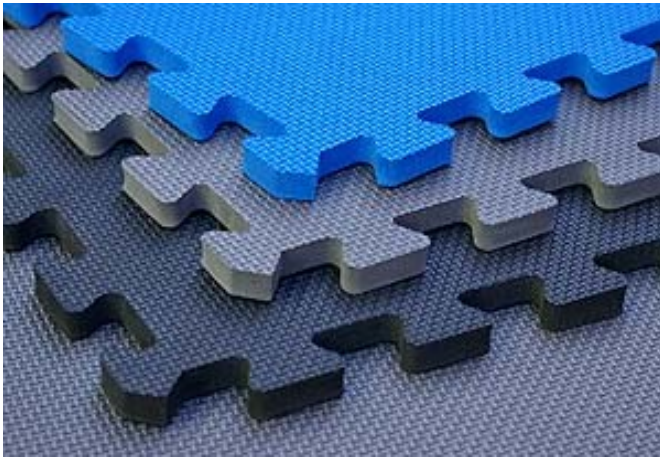


Foam Mats



Foam mats may be used as surfacing beneath playground equipment provided the mat is certified to AS/NZS 4422:1996 and covers the required fall zone. The benefits of using portable mats as surfacing are as follows:

- Allows for versatility and flexibility of where the equipment can be set up eg. indoor play areas and general outdoor areas
- Can be used as required
- Easily stored

Kidsafe NSW does not recommend the use of regular gym mats on top of playground surfacing e.g. surrounding mobile or non fixed equipment items such as trestles and jouncing boards.

Any type of foam mat is great for smaller children to play and tumble on. Younger children love to do forward rolls and tumble around, and this can be great exercise for preschool children.

For toddlers, a foam mat is safe for them to play and crawl on without getting hurt. Find a mat that is padded enough to be soft for the older children, especially if rolls and handstands are being performed.

While the mat itself may have a certified impact attenuating rating the problem with foam mats are:

- The mats can move either when the children run across them, land on them or drag them. This means the dimensional area of the fall zone does not remain the constant recommended distance from the equipment - 1900mm for supervised early childhood settings or 2500mm for other settings
- Adequate fall zone is not achieved due to mats being too small
- If the mats have velcro fasteners, the velcro can become clogged with fluff, leaves and other forms of debris, compromising the strength of the velcro fastener. Should the mats become unattached from each other a child could then fall on a hard surface
- Foam mats can present as a trip hazard
- Vinyl covered foam mats wear on the seams and corners causing trip and entrapment hazards. Zippers that are not closed properly or are broken can also present as a trip hazard

