

## Sandpits

Sandpits are a fun way for children to socialise with others and to build and model objects out of sand. To ensure that children gain the best experience from your sandpit it is important to consider a few basic construction and maintenance guidelines.

### Size

Ideally one large sandpit is preferred to several smaller ones. Size is dependent on the number of children using the service but a general guideline is 15m<sup>2</sup> for 20 children, 30m<sup>2</sup> for 40 children, and 40m<sup>2</sup> for 60 children.

Sandpits should allow for a minimum depth of 500mm sand. Sandpits can be of various shapes and even split level.

### Setting

Sandpits are traditionally seen as part of the quiet play space and it is important they are located so that they are positioned away from the main flow of traffic but can be easily supervised. Corners of playgrounds and against fences are preferable.

The incorporation of natural elements such as boulders, dry creek beds and strappy plantings with sandpit design have become popular.

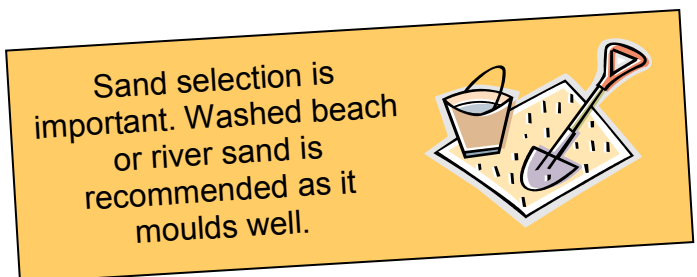
Consider setting boulders into your sandpit or edging. Boulders should be large enough to sit on or to be used as small building decks and should measure from 300-700mm across and 300-450mm high. The boulders should be positioned so they are stable and cannot be moved or tilted. Most importantly any sharp edges of boulders or rocks must be rounded off.



Introduce plantings to at least one edge of the sandpit and include groundcovers, strappy plants, plumed grasses and shade trees. Location of a tap nearby is recommended.

### Shade

Deciduous trees can be used to provide shade in summer with open branches allowing the sun to filter through in winter. A shade structure with removable sails may be preferred whilst the surrounding trees establish.



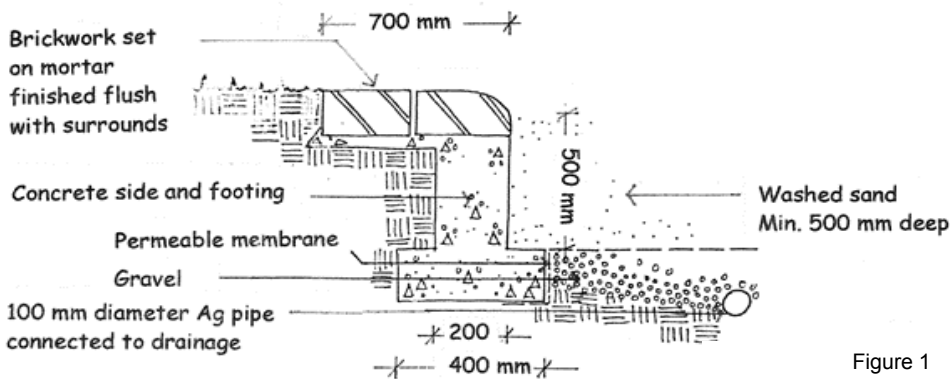


Figure 1

## Construction

The sides may be formed from treated pine logs or concrete with the edge and paved areas constructed from concrete or pavers (refer to Figure 1). The edge facing the sandpit should not present a sharp corner/edge. Ensure that any timber used in construction is not treated with CCA. Refer to the *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheet titled *Timber Treatment*.

## Paved Surround

A 700mm wide paved edge surrounding the sandpit provides an easy to sweep surface that helps keep the sand in place and is good for using moulds or pushing cars around on. Making the edge tiered into two 700 mm wide ledges seems to add to the play experience as children are inevitably drawn to placing their masterpiece on a ledge to dry.

## Drainage

Adequate drainage includes the installation of a drainage membrane /geotextile fabric separating the sand from the gravel sub base (refer to Figure 1). If the site is not free draining install agriculture pipes within the gravel and connect to the storm water system to assist drainage.

## Maintenance

*Kidsafe NSW* recommends that the sandpit is inspected daily and regular maintenance occurs. The sand must be raked over daily to remove debris (sun and fresh air are good disinfectants), turned over monthly to aerate the sand and replenished when the sand level drops 100mm below the top edge of the sandpit. As a guideline, it is recommended that the sand is replaced annually or as required.

Remove sand contaminated by food or other materials, human or animal faeces, blood or other bodily fluids. Wash sand using a neutral detergent and water distributed with a watering can. Where extensive contamination has occurred, all sand should be replaced.



Aeration and sunshine is the most effective way of disinfecting sand

## Covers

Sandpits should be protected with a tight-fitting animal and vermin proof cover when not in use (for example, with a tarpaulin or shade cloth). *Kidsafe NSW* recommends the use of shade cloth for a sandpit cover as it allows water to permeate through without pooling on top of the cover.



For regular shaped sandpits a square piece of shade cloth may be attached to a piece of hollow PVC pipe. For irregular shaped sandpits a cover may be assembled from a piece of shade cloth with a heavy galvanised chain sewn into the hem to keep the cover in place.

Some sandpit covers also function as shade cover when hoisted above the sandpit during the day. Avoid creating trip hazards with placement of fasteners for covers raised within the surrounding play bench.