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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Workshop— Sydney (West Ryde) 13th Sept

Regional Visits—

- Broken Hill 22nd—24th August
- Coffs Harbour 6th—7th September
- Wagga Wagga 21st—23rd November

Visit the website for details - kidsafensw.org



Photo: Test method for identifying potential toggle entrapment on playground equipment

Cords, Drawstring and Toggle ENTRAPMENT

Hazards associated with cords, drawstrings and toggles on children's clothing and hats

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) issued voluntary guidelines for suppliers in June 2011 for the removal of cords, drawstrings and toggles from the manufacturing of children's clothing. These guidelines follow suit from both the United States and the European Union, who have had voluntary standards in place for a number of years. According to the ACCC, concerns regarding children's clothing are where cords and toggles in children's clothing may become entrapped in small gaps whilst using play equipment, exiting transport such as buses and within nursery furniture such as cots.

The Australian Standard for Playground Equipment AS4685:2004 provides specifications for the design and manufacture of playground equipment in order to eliminate cord/toggle entrapment hazards (refer to AS4685:2004, Part 1, Clause 2.2.7.3). Test methods are also provided to assess for potential toggle entrapment hazards (refer to photo above) on playground equipment (refer to AS4685:2004, Part 1, Appendix D, Paragraph D5 Entrapment of Clothing).

Hazards associated with cords, drawstrings and toggles on children's clothing and hats ... Continued from previous page

Hats in playspaces

Kidsafe NSW is aware of a few incidents/near misses where school children were wearing hats and playing on playground equipment. During play, the hat became lodged/entrapped on the play equipment, the child fell from the equipment and was suspended from the straps of the hat. The incidents were not fatal, however, the child/ren did receive severe lacerations to their throat and were at risk of damage to the vocal cords. Similar issues arise with hooded children's clothing.

**Hat selection is critical—
avoid cords and toggles**

Recommended hats for children

Children should always wear hats when playing outside. Sun protection is vital for young skin vulnerable to the dangerous rays of the sun. Kidsafe NSW provides a few pointers to assist with hat selection:

- Bucket hats are a good option; make sure that the hat fits correctly.
- Legionnaires hats offer great protection however they can limit the vision of a child if not fitted correctly, particularly when they are still developing their peripheral vision.
- Broad brimmed hats are recommended to have a safety release mechanism attached to the cord.

Visit the *NSW Cancer Council* for more information on hats and sun protection - cancercouncil.com.au

Suggested practice regarding children's clothing

The guidance provided by the ACCC is suggested practice only and does not represent a standard or mandatory requirement for clothing manufacturers and suppliers. Children's services and schools are encouraged to develop a policy to minimise the use of cords, drawstrings and toggles on clothing and hats worn by children to the service or school.



For more information regarding the voluntary guidelines visit the ACCC Product Safety Australia website - productsafety.gov.au



Labyrinths in Playspaces

What is a Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is a pathway, twisting and curving, that leads to the centre, or the goal. It consists of a single meandering pathway which leads from the entrance to the centre, and back out again.

A labyrinth, unlike a maze, has no dead ends. There is only one path, and while it does have twists and turns, you can't get lost. With a labyrinth you don't have to think, or analyse, or solve a problem. In a labyrinth you just trust that the path will lead you to where you need to be.



Children can easily recognise that they can't get lost in a labyrinth. There are no wrong turns. Although a labyrinth is best walked at a slow pace, a labyrinth has its own energy that calls to children and asks them to run and shout. The joy of a labyrinth can be contagious with children wanting to "walk" them over and over again. Success is achieved by completing a labyrinth with assurance that the children are going in the right direction.

Benefits of a Labyrinth

- Stress reduction
- Quietening of the mind
- Enhanced feelings of well-being
- Improved concentration skills
- Development of problem-solving skills
- Improved creativity
- Practice in conflict resolution
- Engage in spiritual reflection
- A lot of fun!



Value to Children

On discovering a labyrinth for the first time children will often race around the circuits, take short cuts, jump from path to path and generally do their own thing in a rather more exuberant and energetic spirit than adult walkers.

It is perfectly OK for children and teens (or adults) to run the labyrinth. Let children play, skip, hop, or even dribble a soccer ball if not disturbing others using the labyrinth.

A sense of fun can be reflected in the design of the labyrinth by the use of bright elementary colours and exciting patterns that can be incorporated into a variety of shapes including animals.

For those children who are unable to walk or run, the scale of the labyrinth is such that the whole pattern can be seen in its entirety and the different paths followed by eye.

Labyrinths provide a powerful means of introducing restful movement into children's playspaces/playgrounds. Walking a labyrinth is a right brain activity requiring a passive and relaxing mindset.

Labyrinths can be designed in many ways and with different materials as long as there is a single path to follow.



Labyrinth Design

The simple design of the classical labyrinth makes it easy to draw and thus can become the "blueprint" for building your own labyrinth.



Once you know the "seed pattern" for drawing a labyrinth it is easy to lay it out on the ground and use the pattern to construct a labyrinth. Stone makes a good building material but many materials could be used to provide the outline of the labyrinth. The seed pattern with proper dimensions is laid out on the ground with the building material. Paths are then added one at a time until completion.



Correction: The incorrect Standard was referenced in the last issue of Playground News (Issue 36). Identified non-compliances for inspection services provided by the PAU are assessed according to AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management—Principles and guidelines.



Plan the Labyrinth

- Location
- Size
- Type
- Easily accessible
- Reasonably quiet



The amount of actual space required depends upon how large your labyrinth will be and how wide you want the paths to be—500 to 1000mm paths work well. The paths need to be wide enough to allow people going in opposite directions on the path to pass each other but not so wide as to avoid each other.

Temporary Labyrinths

- ◆ Create a rope labyrinth on the grass or open area. Clothesline and/or rope can be purchased inexpensively at many discount stores.
- ◆ Use chalk to draw large and small labyrinths on concrete.
- ◆ Use a stick, broom handle, or pole to carve a labyrinth in sand. This works best when the sand is slightly damp. Of course, if you are at the beach... draw away!!!
- ◆ Create a temporary labyrinth on the ground using bird seed. Then sit back, remain quiet and still, and watch the birds enjoy the feast as they flutter, play and eat the labyrinth!



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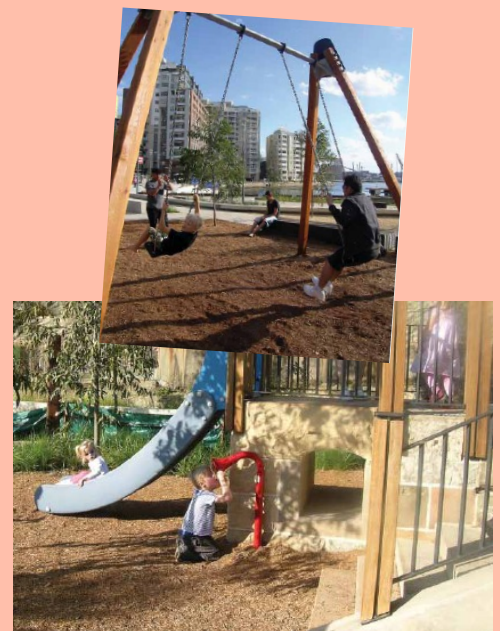
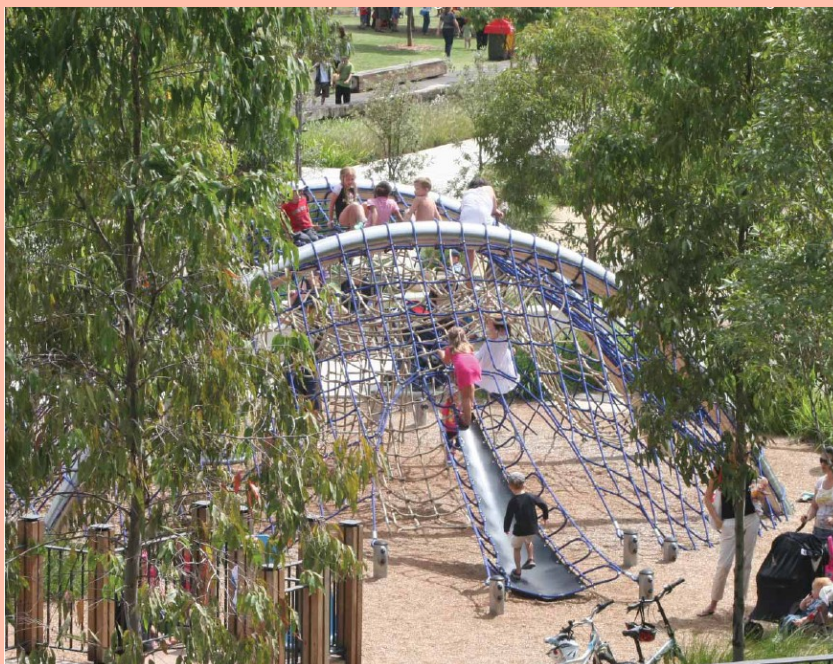
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Playground News is distributed directly to the playground industry, children's services, community health providers, local government, government departments, schools, landscapers and designers, equipment suppliers

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PLAYSPACE PICKS



Piramma Park—one of Sydney's major civic parks on the harbour foreshore at Pyrmont . Winner of the Kidsafe 2010 National Playspace Design Awards category for Public Playspaces in District Parks.

This amazing playground (designed by ASPECT Studios in collaboration with Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects) provides a safe and dynamic environment for a range of ages and abilities. Includes water fountains for children to frolic in and imaginative, attractive play equipment from 'whale bones' to musical instruments. A slice of adventure on the edge of a very busy city!

