

# Playground Development

Planning a new playground or upgrading an existing playground can be time consuming, labour intensive and challenging however starting with research will empower you making informed decisions and result in a safe and exciting playspace for children.

## Research

Before making decisions about a playground project it is important to do your research and collect relevant information.

Visit parks, playgrounds, schools, education and care services and pay attention to details such as the type of equipment and surfacing provided and how both have worn. Look out for interesting, non-traditional play items that make the space unique. Ask questions of playground owners regarding any problems with the playground design, equipment or suppliers.

Involve the community (which may include educators, teachers, parents) and in particular children in the planning of the playspace. Children are more likely to use and enjoy the playspace if they have been involved in the project's design and planning.

## Site Planning

A great way to involve children is to develop a wish list with desired play activities and use a 'mud map'. Selecting a supplier who best fits the needs and style of the school, education and care service or local community can be based on a mix of site observations and desired play activities.

## Australian Standards

If using playground equipment, select playground equipment that complies with the Australian Standard *AS 4685 Playground equipment and surfacing*.

Surfacing is required to comply with *AS 4685 Playground equipment and surfacing* and *AS 4422 Playground surfacing*.

It is important to request the manufacturer's certification of compliance to Australian Standards for each item of equipment and surfacing. File these with your records as part of the playground safety management system.



## Planning

- ☑ Contact Kidsafe for design information and advice regarding playground projects
- ☑ Prepare a realistic budget. Schedule and prioritise stages of works in keeping with the budget and extent of the project
- ☑ Record site observations and existing features
- ☑ Consider engaging a landscape architect or playground designer experienced in designing playspaces for children
- ☑ Provide inclusive play activities suitable for all ages and abilities
- ☑ When selecting playground equipment and surfacing suppliers, ensure they can provide you with evidence their product complies to the Australian Standards
- ☑ Enquire about follow up services and warranty periods. Obtain references from previous customers
- ☑ Visit equipment manufacturers and playspace designer's websites - these websites are full of good ideas and information
- ☑ Submit plans to Kidsafe NSW for a review to identify any design issues prior to installation







### Installation

Nominate an on-site supervisor; someone who is fully briefed on the design and planned location of the equipment and surfacing.

Obtain certification of compliance to AS 4685 and AS 4422 and retain certificates as part of the Playground Safety Management System.

### Comprehensive Post Installation Inspection

AS 4685.0 requires an independent, comprehensive post installation inspection before handover and/or opening of the playground. The purpose of the inspection is to verify the playground complies with the Australian Standards. Hazards identified in the inspection report should be discussed with the installer/manufacturer promptly and appropriate repairs or modifications made. The playground can be opened providing unacceptable risk is not present. Kidsafe NSW provides this service.

Refer to the information sheet *Playground Safety Management System* for information regarding inspection frequencies, maintenance schedules and documentation.



### Evaluation and Monitoring

Once your playground is in use, it is important to evaluate and monitor it regularly to ensure the space is safe, attractive and exciting!

Ask the children what they think of the playground!



If areas are found to be unpopular or not used as anticipated, modifications can be designed and implemented to keep the playspace active and thriving. Similarly, well loved and used activity areas may require additional reinforcing of natural ground surfaces to ensure longevity and safe conditions.



KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.  
Playground Advisory Unit

P: 02 9845 0893  
E: schn-kidsafe@health.nsw.gov.au  
kidsafensw.org