



## FENCING PLAYSPACES

### Public Playspaces

A fence around the outdoor playspace may assist with the containment of children, preventing them running out into a hazard such as a busy road, and keeping animals and undesired traffic out.

While it is not required that a playground has a fence, the playgrounds that do have fences should follow guidelines and meet design requirements for playground safety and consider local government codes.

The need for fencing in public playspaces is determined by conducting a risk assessment to AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009. Some factors to consider:

- Is the playspace adjacent to a busy road?
- Is the playspace near a water way?
- Is a cycle way included in the playspace?
- Is a dog park located near the playspace?
- Is the design of the playspace for younger children?
- Are full or partial barriers required?
- Is there an opportunity to design garden beds/hedges as barriers?



Where it has been assessed that a fence is preferred around a public playspace, the fence is usually installed around the boundary of the playspace. This enables the children to use the playground equipment and the surrounding open space without fear of injury by misadventure outside the perimeter of the designated play area.

Designers should assess the most appropriate form of protection. A boundary can make a playground appear tidier and more defined, though this of course may not necessarily be a fence. Possible measures include simple one or two rail fences, bollards, landscape planting, garden beds, hedges, mounding, stone/brick wall or combinations of these.

It is important to consider that the selected fence type does not introduce an additional hazard. Kidsafe WA recommends the fence meets (as a minimum requirement) AS 2423:2002 Coated steel wire fencing products for terrestrial, aquatic and general use or AS 1926.1-2007/Amdt 1:2008 Swimming pool safety - Safety barriers for swimming pools.

Many fence contractors will be familiar with these standards. It is important to note that playground fencing is NOT the same as swimming pool fencing and may have a different opening threshold between vertical or horizontal members. Most fences are not designed to withstand the force of an automobile gone astray.

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## Children's Services

Minimum height requirements for fencing in children's services is not defined in the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011.

Kidsafe WA recommends a minimum height of 1200mm for perimeter fencing, however it is best to check with your local council for requirements for fencing including minimum and maximum height, type of fence, construction material and method.

Where fences are used to divide play areas or surrounding veranda's etc. the minimum height recommended is 900mm.

Avoid horizontal rails less than 700mm apart as rails may provide unintended access to the top rail. To prevent unintended access to the top of the fence by children, it is recommended to place items/equipment a minimum 1000mm from the fence.

## Schools

Many WA schools have provided security fencing surrounding the perimeter of the school. Schools may have requirements for internal fences, mainly for playgrounds and/or sports pitch surrounds.

Schools should assess for the most appropriate type of fence for these areas and consider recommended fencing specifications on this fact sheet.



## Recommended Fencing Specifications

**Fence Height:** It is recommended that the fence be at least 1200mm – 1800mm in height.

**Fence Material:** The fence can be constructed of a variety of materials such as timber, colourbond, metal bars or chain link. The chain-link versions can be covered with a polyvinyl coating that gives the chain link a softer feel. Select materials that are less likely to be climbed/scaled by children.

**Gates:** It is recommended that playground fence gates have self-closing hinges on the gate certified to AS 2820:1993. Gate units for private swimming pools. The latch must also automatically catch when the gate closes. Ensure that a gap of at least 12mm is present at each side when in use to avoid finger crush hazards. Monitor in ongoing maintenance inspections to ensure gates remain in sound working order.

**Rails:** Kidsafe WA recommends the lower horizontal rail be positioned at the bottom of the pickets or panel to reduce the likelihood of tunnelling under the fence and preventing unintended access to the top horizontal rail. Avoid a mid-horizontal rail where possible.

**Top rail profile:** A flat top rail is recommended. Loop top or rod top may potentially create a hanging point for a child's head between the pickets protruding above the top rail. For existing fences with protruding loops or rods at the top, ensure that climbing access is not provided for children to the top of the fence.