

NQS2 Children's Health & Safety Procedure Outdoor learning environment safety

General responsibilities

Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge (RPIC) will:

- Regularly monitor teacher/educator compliance with this procedure.
- Follow the Clean Safe and in Good Repair Procedure, including:
 - Submit and track maintenance requests via Maintenance Register.
 - Promptly dispose of broken equipment that cannot be repaired.
 - Maintain gardens and lawns via external contractor.
- Lead the assessment, documentation (via Risk Assessment). Include risk assessments in teacher/educator induction materials.
- Display Outdoor Safety Poster in a prominent location(s).
- Display Look Before You Lock Poster on shed doors.
- Consult Qld Government Poisonous Plants Information before introducing new plants. Do not introduce category 1, 2, and 3 plants.
- Deter insects and minimise water in tyres by painting interiors white and drilling holes (via a maintenance request).
- Store emergency gate keys in an accessible, known location.
- Purchase age-appropriate equipment that meets Australian Standards.

Teachers and educators will:

- Encourage an active lifestyle with daily physical activity, minimal sedentary time, and safe and responsive sleep routines as per the Australian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years). Consider conducting an annual Active Play Audit and if needed, set improvement goals.
- Implement outdoor learning that promotes:
 - Gross motor skills e.g. running, jumping, climbing, etc.
 - Manipulative skills e.g. throwing, catching, kicking, etc.
 - Balance and coordination e.g. bending, stretching, swinging, etc.
- Involve children in risk management and expected behaviour discussions that promote children's independence and ability to self-regulate, discover, and connect, while acting safely and responsibly.
- Support children to care for equipment and learning environments.
- Supervise children at all times as per the Supervision Procedure.
- Use, maintain, and store equipment according to manufacturer guidelines and age suitability, including storing equipment out of the weather.
- Be and support children to be 'sun safe' as per the Sun Safety Procedure.
- Complete and document a Daily Safety Checklist before children's arrival or use of learning environment. Promptly notify Director or RPIC when items are identified.
- Never use broken or unmaintained equipment e.g. torn soft fall mats, rusted climbing frames, splintered wooden planks, frayed swings.
- Regularly sweep surfaces to reduce slip hazards, involving children when appropriate.

Fixed and moveable climbing equipment and structures

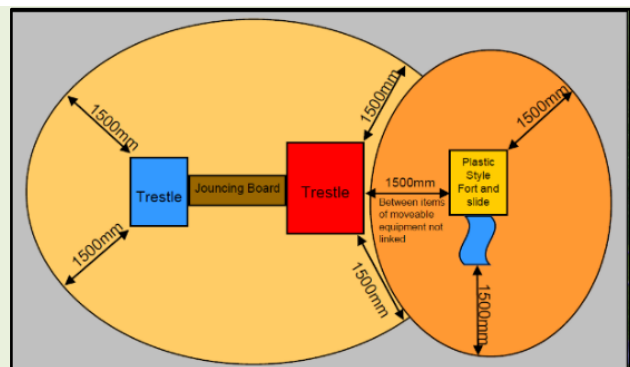
e.g. fixed structures, trestles, planks, slides, ladders, swings, ropes, safety matting.

The following information reflects Kidsafe Moveable Play Equipment (2021) safety guidelines.

Teachers and educators will:

- Place moveable equipment 60cm or higher on an obstacle free, 1.5m safety impact zone i.e. synthetic soft fall, safety mats or loose fill soft fall such as sand, mulch or woodchips.

Refer to Appendix 1 of this procedure and Kidsafe diagram (2021) to right.



- Closely supervise children arranging and using climbing equipment.
- Place moveable equipment on level, stable surfaces per product specifications.
- Ensure adequate space between and above equipment to reduce injury risk.
- Position equipment in shade when possible, and regularly check for hot surfaces. Reposition, remove or restrict access during high temperatures to prevent burns.

Fall height and safety impact surfaces

Teachers and educators will:

- Ensure moveable equipment does not exceed a 1.5m fall height (highest foot support and/or platform), and fixed structures do not exceed a fall height of 1.8m.
- Regularly rake loose soft fall to maintain a 30cm depth in high-impact areas; submit a maintenance request for top-ups and restrict access if necessary.
- Use safety mats that meet Australian Standards (AS 4422); repair worn (not torn or split) edges temporarily (up to 12mths) with waterproof cloth tape, and document a replacement plan in maintenance register.
- Lay safety mats flat and ensure mats are 'joined' or placed against one another to prevent trip hazards.
- Regularly inspect synthetic soft fall and promptly report any damage or diminished cushioning to Director/RPIC.

Access to equipment and materials

Teachers and educators will:

- Provide ample equipment and materials responsive to children's abilities and interests.
- When safe and appropriate, encourage independence by allowing children to select equipment from sheds.
- Keep sheds clean and clutter-free for safe, easy access to equipment.
- Closely supervise younger children using climbing equipment designed for older children; if supervision is not possible, redirect them to age-appropriate items.
- Conduct a thorough "Look Before You Lock" check before closing storage sheds; inspecting all areas and behind equipment.



Perimeter fencing and gates

Any outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier of such height and design that children, preschool-age or younger, cannot go through, over or under it. (Reg.104) (not applicable to OSHC).

Teachers and educators will:

- Complete a daily check (via *Daily Safety Checklist*) of **perimeter fencing and gates** to ensure they are safe, maintained and in good working order.
 - Check gate self-closing mechanisms work properly.
 - Confirm fencing panels are secure and maintained.
 - Verify gates and fences are at least 1.2m high (measured from the bottom railing).
 - Keep gardens maintained (via Centre Director regularly engaging an external contractor) to:
 - Prevent soil buildup at fence base that may compromise fence height.
 - Avoid vegetation footholds that children could use to open gates or scale fences.
 - Improve visibility of perimeter fencing and gates.
 - Do not hang or place items against fences or gates.
 - Keep equipment at least 90cm away from fences or gates.
 - Check emergency gates are unobstructed, locked, and keys are accessible.
 - Ensure there are no gaps in fences to prevent children from crawling under or squeezing through.

Climbable trees within centre playgrounds

A 'climbable tree' is a tree:

- Children are able to access independently, without adult assistance, ladders or steps **AND**
- Surrounded by an obstacle-free 1.5m safety fall zone with mulch, synthetic surface or safety mats.

Teachers and educators will:

- Never permit children climb a tree that does not meet the above criteria.
- Identify 'climbable trees' in the playground.
- Develop, document and review a Climbable Tree Risk Assessment in consultation with children and families.
- Guide children to assess which branches are safe for climbing.
- Determine how many children can safely climb based on tree size and branch number.
- Limit climb height to 1.5m (highest foot support).
- Encourage children to climb independently. Never lift children into tree.
- Teach children to maintain 3 points of contact when climbing.
- Supervise closely by standing physically next to tree when children are climbing. Teach children that tree climbing is only permitted when a teacher/educator is standing close to tree and is supervising.
- Regularly check tree safety; if safe, remove damaged branches OR submit a maintenance request. If necessary, restrict access until repairs are made.

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Rebounders

Teachers and educators will:

- Use rebounders as per product instructions.
- Perform a safety check before use:
 - Ensure springs are covered by matting.
 - Check matting for holes.
 - Confirm springs and framework are rust-free, intact and securely attached.
 - Confirm leg braces are locked.
- Place rebounders less than 60cm high on grass or sand.
- Surround rebounders 60cm or higher by an obstacle-free 1.5m safety fall zone with mulch, synthetic surface or safety mats.
- Allow only one child to use the rebounder at a time.
- Teach children to jump in the centre of the rebounder.



Not permitted:

Jumping castles and trampolines are not permitted at any time including at special events and on excursions



Wheeled/Ride on Equipment

Teachers and educators will:

- Consider the environment, space, and riding surface e.g. distance from slopes, stairs, and bumps; the maximum number of children to ride safely.
- Ensure children wear securely fastened helmets.
- Ensure suitability for the child's age and size e.g.
 - Use as per product instructions.
 - Both feet should be able to touch the ground when seated.
 - Children should be able to reach the handlebars comfortably when seated.
 - Scooters with larger wheels are more stable for young children.



References

- Australian Government, Department of Health (2022) - [*Australian 24-hour movement guidelines for the early years \(birth to 5 years\)*](#)
- Adventure Plus (2024) – [*Australian Playground Standards Basics*](#)
- Kidsafe (2024) - [*Playground Safety Information Sheets*](#)
- Kidsafe (2021) - [*Moveable Play Equipment*](#)
- QLD Govt (2024) - [*Creating effective outdoor learning spaces*](#)
- QLD Govt (2024) - [*Poisonous Plants Information*](#)

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Appendix 1 – Safe use and placement of climbable equipment

Source: Kidsafe (2021) - [Moveable Play Equipment](#)

✘ Unsafe

Unsafe safety impact zone. Inadequate distance between moveable equipment items and pole.

Immediate actions

Move trestle and balance beam away from pole – minimum distance of 1.5 metres.



✘ Unsafe

Trip hazard present as safety mat is not flat. Safety mat not required as equipment is set up on synthetic soft fall.

Immediate actions

Remove mat

Upturned mat edges - trip hazard



✘ Unsafe

Possible entrapment, trip, slip and fall hazards due to placement of yellow trestle within the frame of the blue trestle.

Immediate actions

Remove or reposition yellow trestle.



✘ Unsafe

Possible entrapment or trip hazard.

Immediate actions

Reposition plank on correct side of trestle.

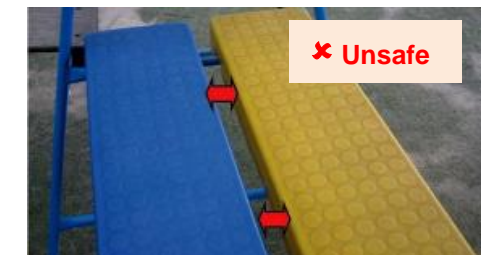


✘ Unsafe

Possible entrapment hazard. A crush zone is present between the planks.

Immediate actions

Remove second plank or replace both planks with a wider plank.



✓ Safe

Adequate safety impact zone (of 1.5m or more) surrounds climbing equipment that is 60cms or higher.

