



Tel 03 8846 4111
Email info@playaustralia.org.au
Web www.playaustralia.org.au

promoting the value of play

PATHS FOR BIKES AND WHEELED TOYS

Paths provide opportunity for the use of wheeled toys, including bikes, so that pathways will frequently be used for as bike tracks. If bikes are to be part of the play equipment then pathways need to:

- ◆ circulate around perimeter of main play area and have direct access to the storage shed;
- ◆ be wide enough for two bikes to pass each other;
- ◆ enable use of walkers or a block trolley;
- ◆ safe use of prams and strollers;
- ◆ use of wheelbarrows for sandpits; and
- ◆ be provided with some shade.

Small children need paths with smooth flat surfaces without too many curves and with interesting planting and play features along the borders.

Older children can be provided with more challenges such as curves, inclines, rougher surfaces of gravel or dirt. Paths can also meander to play spaces with parking areas to encourage more complexity in the bike play.

Avoid:

- ◆ circular loops around the yard that can interfere with all the other activities they surround;
- ◆ paths that can cut a play area into two smaller and less useful spaces; and
- ◆ siting paths too close to fixed or movable play equipment constituting a safety hazard.

Surfaces

There are many surfaces to choose from:

- ◆ smooth, sealed surfaces such as concrete, or paving tiles where all-weather, everyday access is required. (Paving is considered to be a hard surface and generally, 1800 mm space is required between a hard surface and climbing equipment (and further from a swing).
- ◆ dirt paths over irregular terrain and around tree roots;
- ◆ gravel, lilydale topping or granitic sand which crunches underfoot and drains quickly;
- ◆ pebbles (for small sections);
- ◆ natural mulch from native trees;
- ◆ timber rounds and stepping stones; and
- ◆ different paving materials (colours, textures and shapes) used in one path

It should be noted that smaller children can have difficulty with surfaces such as gravel and pebbles.

Barbara Champion
Executive Director