

Sandpits are a fun way for children to meet other children and to build and model objects out of sand. To ensure that children gain the best experience from your sandpit it is important to consider a few basic construction and maintenance guidelines.

Size

Ideally one large sandpit is preferred to several smaller ones. Make sure you have enough space for your sandpit and make it as large as possible. Size is dependent on the number of children using the service but a general guideline is 15m² for 20 children, 30m² for 40 children, and 40m² for 60 children.

Sandpits should have a minimum depth of 500mm sand.

Setting

Sandpits are traditionally seen as part of the quiet play space and it is important they are located to discourage others from running through them. Corners of playgrounds and against fences are preferred sandpit locations.

The inclusion of natural elements such as dry creek beds and plantings has become popular. If you are considering incorporating boulders into your sandpit, the rocks should be large enough to sit on or to be used as small building decks and should measure from 300-700mm across and 300-450mm high. The rocks should be positioned so they cannot be moved or tilted and any sharp edges rounded off. Plantings added to at least one edge of the sandpit such as groundcovers, strappy plants and shade trees can provide another dimension to the setting. Access to water can provide wet sand play.

Construction

The sides of sandpits may either be formed from timber logs or concrete, with the edge and paved areas constructed from concrete or pavers. The edge facing the sandpit should not present a sharp corner/surface.

Paved Surroundings

A 700 mm wide paved edge surrounding the sandpit provides an easy to sweep surface that helps keep the sand in place and is good for pushing cars around on.

Drainage

Water is an essential ingredient in sand play, so ensure that your sandpit has access to water, and that it has adequate drainage. Adequate drainage includes the installation of a drainage membrane /geotextile fabric separating the sand from the gravel sub base. If the site is not free draining install Ag pipe located within the gravel and connect to the storm water system to aid drainage.



Your sandpit should be inspected daily and maintained regularly. The sand should be raked over to remove debris, turned over to aerate sand and replenished when the sand level drops.

Cleaning

If there is an accident in the sandpit (such as a child or pet going to the toilet, or contamination by an unsanitary object), or if your sandpit has just become gradually dirty over time, you will need to disinfect your sandpit. Remove the sand in the immediate area of the contamination and dispose of it in a plastic bag. Then, disinfect the rest of the sandpit by using a mild detergent diluted in water: fill a watering can with this disinfectant solution and spray it evenly over the sandpit, then rake and allow the sand to dry in the sun. Lastly, once finished playing in the sandpit, ensure that children wash their hands thoroughly with water and soap.

Covers

Sandpits should be protected with a tightfitting animal and vermin proof cover when not in use (for example, with a tarpaulin or shade cloth). Kidsafe SA recommends the use of shade cloth for a sandpit cover as it allows water to permeate through without pooling on top of the cover.

For regular shaped sandpits a square piece of shade cloth may be attached to a piece of hollow PVC pipe. For irregular shaped sandpits a cover may be assembled from a piece of shade cloth with a heavy galvanised chain sewn into the hem to keep the cover in place.

Some sandpit covers can also function as shade when hoisted above the sandpit during the day. Avoid creating trip hazards with the placement of fasteners for covers raised within the surrounding playspace.

Shade

Kidsafe SA recommends that sandpits should be adequately shaded. Deciduous trees can be used to provide shade in summer with open branches allowing the sun to filter through in winter. A shade structure with removable sails may be preferred whilst the surrounding trees become established.

Sand Selection

Sand selection is important. Washed beach or river sand is recommended. Builder/brick sand is not recommended.



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Need more help? Kidsafe SA provides a playground inspection service. Contact us for a quote to organise an inspector to visit your playspace and provide specific advice.