



ROADS AND PLAYSPACES

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Members often seek our advice regarding the location of playspaces in relation to roads. If you are designing, developing and managing playspaces near roads, here are some issues to consider:

- access of users to playspace, locals and visitors
- proximity to neighbourhood centres, early childhood centres or schools who may wish to regularly use the park and need direct safe walking access
- the nature of the road, amount of traffic
- the speed of the traffic
- access to parking
- the size of the proposed playspace
- the age related intended use of playspace
- the relationship to other activities in the park
- supervision issues
- the topography of the land in the proposed location and proximity of playspace to the road
- the integration of "obstacles" i.e. substantial vegetation / hedges / minor fencing to separate road from playspace - site context
- vegetation that potentially creates a barrier to noise, pollution, errant vehicles

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- the impact of air pollution on young children particularly when engaged in physical activity outdoors

Play Australia believes that there can be no hard and fast rules, except a significant dose of common sense.

“The reality is that we are too nice to strongly remind parents that children are in their care and that the playground is a group experience and not a staff free child-minding service”.

Playgrounds too far from roads and viewing, have other issues of inappropriate use by older children and adults so as always in public realm design, it is a balancing act.

Bringing these issues down to hard rules and set distances encourages mindless adhesion to the rules and reduce the ability for people to arrive at new and better solutions.

Barb Champion is the Executive Director of Play Australia.



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