FENCING

Early Childhood Education and Care Services
Fact Sheet

Kidsafe Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia Northern Territory

Fencing in Early Childhood Education and Care Services

Under Regulation 104 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), services providing education and care to children under school age must ensure that any outdoor space is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under.

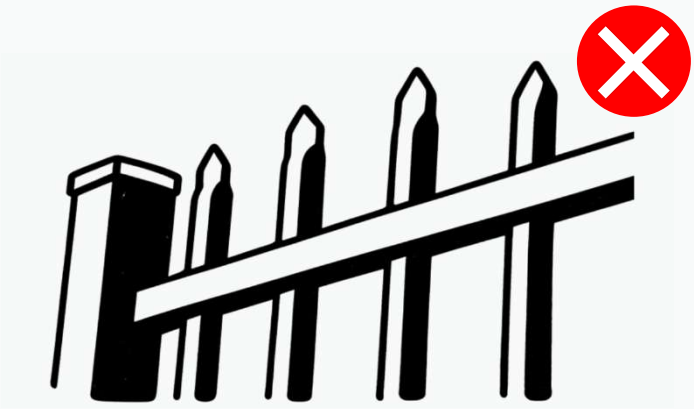
A fence around an outdoor play space helps keep children safe. It is important to choose a fence or barrier that does not create any new safety risks. At a minimum, the fence should comply with Australian Standard AS 1926.1, which sets safety requirements for swimming pool barriers.

If an early childhood education and care service is located within a leased property, the landlord should assess the most appropriate fencing requirement and consider the recommendations in this fact sheet.

Fencing recommendations:

- a minimum height of 1800mm for boundary fencing
- a minimum height of 1200mm where fencing is dividing play areas or surrounding enclosed verandahs
- a maximum of 100mm wide openings between vertical bars or under the fence
- climbable objects must be at least 900mm from the fence line
- avoid horizontal rails that are climbable other than the top and bottom rails
- flat-top fencing is to be used
- rail-loop-top or rod-top fencing is not to be used as it may present an entrapment or strangulation risk
- self-closing gates that open inwards, towards the play area

Example of flat-top fencing



Example of rod-top fencing

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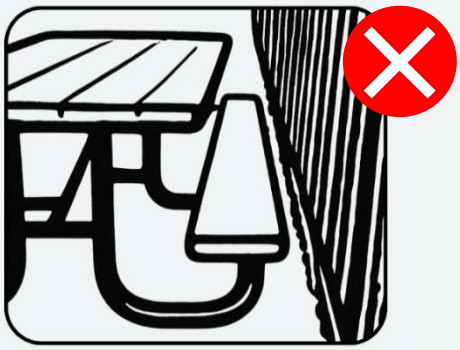
What can be done if your existing fence does not meet these requirements?

ISSUE	ACTION
If the fence does not meet any of the Kidsafe recommendations	Replace the existing fence with a fence that meets the recommended safety requirements.
If there is a loop-top or rail-top fencing profile	Remove the loop-top or rod-top section of the fence by cutting off the ends and sealing any holes left behind. This will help prevent children's fingers from getting trapped. Make sure the fence is structurally sound and remains at the recommended height after the changes.
If the fence is not high enough	Install fence extension panels along the top of the existing fence to increase its height, such as the example shown below.

Other safety recommendations:

- Ensure children can be seen and heard at all times through active supervision. Regularly check and monitor blind spots or areas that are hard to see, if they are unable to be eliminated. This could be supported through the development of a visual supervision plan.
- Before going inside, do a thorough check of the outdoor area. Check places where children may be hidden, such as tunnels, slides, cubby houses, and any other hiding spots.
- Gates should close by themselves, be child-resistant, and open inwards towards the play area. They should also have finger guards to help prevent children from trapping or injuring their fingers. The latch should not be accessible and be 1500mm above ground or on the outside of the gate.
- Ensure moveable equipment, such as chairs, tables and seating is placed away from fences so children cannot use it to climb over the fence.

Example of fence extension panels (if fence is not high enough)



Example of climbable object too close to the fence line. Climbable objects must be at least 900mm from the fence line