



BIKE TRACKS

The introduction of wheeled toys into a play space is an ideal way of encouraging social and fantasy play as well as active play. However, providing a pathway for wheeled toy play within a play space requires careful consideration to minimize potential conflicts of use.

Ideally a bike track should be located independent of other activity areas, preferably to the rear or side of the site, away from the main site and building access points and avoiding disturbance to the intention and purpose of quiet areas and other specific activity zones.

The track should be designed to traverse points of interest to make the riding activity enjoyable, encourage a sense of exploration and extend play opportunities.

Tracks can be designed to cater for a variety of capabilities, providing equally and simultaneously for young children (to ride and use push / pull toys), for more capable and adventurous riders and for children who may have special needs.

Bike tracks with special features, such as speed humps and a variety of surfacing finishes, give different sensations and noises as children ride or wheel over them.



Limiting a track to one-way usage will help minimize the occurrence of collisions. However, segregated usage may also be needed to minimize conflicts between users of differing ages and capabilities. Provision of a wider track, sufficient for wheelchair access, will allow children with special needs to experience ride activity.



Bike tracks require a hard surfaced path for good traction, approximately 1200-1500mm wide and graded to allow easy movement along the route. Ideally the track surface should be of variable texture to allow children the opportunity to experience both vibration and sound as they travel along the track. Such sensory play experience is very important and can be invaluable in early childhood settings, particularly where children with special needs are part of the community.





An array of surfaces has been successfully incorporated as rumble strips in bike tracks. Such materials include:

- Timber sleepers laid across the width of the track, butted together
- Timber decking constructed flush with ground level
- Expansion strips laid across the width of the track, butted together
- A panel of corrugated iron embedded in concrete
- A panel of pool fence / iron grille laid in concrete
- Stone flagging
- Granite / timber setts
- Brick / unit pavers
- Compacted crushed sandstone
- Exposed aggregate concrete



With the use of any of these materials care must be taken to avoid the introduction of substantial trip points along the length of the bike track.

Many hard surfaces are renowned for radiating heat in summer. Whilst shade from adjacent plants/structures can reduce this potential problem, it is worthwhile considering this issue in the final selection of track materials.

Edging of the track with materials such as bull nosed bricks or concrete kerbing will also enhance definition of the activity zone from the rest of the play space and identify it as a feature as well as providing a further sensory zone to encourage users to stay on the track.

Line markings and pedestrian crossings can be painted onto tracks for added interest, complemented by accessories such as reduced sized road signs and traffic lights to add a third dimension to the play feature.

Activity stations with parking bays, such as shop fronts, bus stops, petrol stations, car wash bays, low level bridges for fishing off and raised scented gardens can be scattered along the route to further the possibilities for role play and social interaction.

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