

## What Do You Want From a Play Area?

### The Child

The child is looking for fun, challenge, physical and mental stimulation, together with learning opportunities.

- The playground must be fun. This vital play ingredient is largely provided by the equipment.
- The play surface can also make a valuable contribution to the total quality of the play experience. Flat areas such as tarmac or synthetic surfaces do not have much to offer in this respect, although coloured surfaces are better than black. They can, however, be marked out for games such as hopscotch etc.
- Loose fill surfaces such as sands and barks have a high 'playability factor' in themselves.
- Suitable combinations of different surface types are popular.

### The Play Provider

The play provider requires compliance with legal requirements, ease of installation and aftercare, financial viability and a challenging environment for children to develop play skills.

- Installation and after care should ideally be straight forward and uncomplicated.
- Careful consideration must be given to ensure that within the budget available, best value for money is achieved. This includes the cost of the equipment and surfacing, installation and aftercare, both in the short and long term.

### The Parent

The parent requires safety, cleanliness, education, happy children and peace of mind.

The surface should:-

- Provide the highest level of protection against injury e.g. cushioning falls, minimising slip, and in most cases, preventing friction burns.
- Deter instances of vandalism and animal fouling.
- Comply with all statutory legal requirements.
- Comply with appropriate British and European standards, when possible.

However, although the provision of an impact absorbing surface will help to reduce serious head injury from playtime accidents, it will not guarantee 100% safety or eliminate all accidents, especially long bone fractures.

The purpose of all LIAS is to prevent serious head injury to a child falling head first and all testing of LIAS is directed towards this aim.



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