

This is a summary of the National Playing Fields Association's Minimum Children's Playing Space Standard (based on "The Six Acre Standard" 2002)

Detailed recommendations on play area design can be found in NPFA publications, but the following pointers on siting and design are derived from page 37 of their 1992 publication "The Six Acre Standard" and updated with reference to page 26 of their publication.

- Play areas should be:
  - i sited in open, welcoming locations, not on backland with accesses along high-fenced narrow alleyways;
  - ii separated from areas of major vehicle movements and accessible directly from pedestrian routes;
  - iii sited on land suitable for the type of play opportunity intended. For example, slopes too steep for building can provide one kind of experience, but are not suitable for most play equipment. Conversely, a flat kickabout area can be too bland a setting for other types of equipment;
  - iv normally overlooked by houses or from well-used pedestrian routes;
  - v far enough away from houses to reduce the likelihood of general disturbance, noise and other nuisances; and
  - vi linked, as far as possible, with other open spaces, footpath systems, amenity planting areas and other devices to provide the maximum separation from nearby residences;
  - vii accessible by firm-surfaced footpaths.
  - viii surfaced in a manner that is able to withstand the intensity of use and with impact absorbing surfaces beneath and around all play equipment;
  - ix provided with seating for carers but designed to exclude dogs;
  - x fitted with play equipment, fencing, seating and other fixtures that comply with the latest standards.
- Play areas should be designed in a way which is attractive and safe for children, and meets their needs, including those with special needs, and of those living nearby;
- Selection of play area sites should be integrated into the design process;
- Sites should be accessible within the specified walking distance on practicable, not notional, routes;
- Emphasis should be placed on the importance of community safety, accessibility, play value, the setting, and good neighbourliness; and
- High climbing equipment or equipment on mounds should be sited sensitively, well away from nearby windows. Very popular items sited as far away as possible from houses can help to make play areas more acceptable to neighbours.

# Children's Play Space Standards

Facility	Time	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance	Minimum Size Activity Total Zone (inc Buffer)	Nearest House	Characteristics
<b>LAP</b> (Local Area for Play)	1 min	100m	60m	100m <sup>2</sup> 400m <sup>2</sup> (0.04 ha)	5m from Activity Zone	Small, low-key games area (may include "demonstrative" play features)
<b>LEAP</b> (Local Equipped Area for Play)	5 min	400m	240m	400m <sup>2</sup> 3,600 m <sup>2</sup> (0.36 ha)	20m from Activity Zone	About 5 types of equipment. Small games area
<b>NEAP</b> (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)	15 min	1,000m	600m	1,000m <sup>2</sup> 8,500 m <sup>2</sup> (0.85 ha)	30m from Activity Zone	About 8 types of equipment. Kickabout and cycle play opportunities

**A Local Area for Play (LAP)** is a small area of open space for young children (mainly 4-6 year olds) to play games such as tag, hopscotch, French cricket or play with outdoor toys. The activity zone should be reasonably flat, have a grass surface, and minimum area of 100m<sup>2</sup>. There should be seating for carers and appropriate landscaping/buffer zones.

**A Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)** is a play area equipped for children of early school age (mainly 4-8 year olds). The activity zone should have a minimum area of 400m<sup>2</sup>, with grass playing space and at least five types of play equipment with appropriate safety surfacing. There should also be seating for accompanying adults.

**A Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)** is a play area for 8-14 year olds which should include a grassed kickabout area, a hard surfaced area for a ball games or wheeled activities, 8 types of play equipment appropriate to children in this age group and seating, including a youth shelter. This requires an activity zone of at least 1000m<sup>2</sup>.

Buffer zones are necessary around LEAPs and NEAPs in particular to reduce potential disturbance to nearby households. Distances of 20 metres and 30 metres respectively between the edge of the "activity zone" and the boundary of the nearest residential property are recommended. This will mean that the potential total area required for a LEAP may be about 3,600m<sup>2</sup> and for a NEAP 8,400m<sup>2</sup>. These buffer zones could include footpaths and planted areas, planting schemes which create wildlife habitat will be particularly appropriate.

**It should be emphasised that the deciding factor in locating the facilities is time. When using radii as straight line distances, the design of the estate footpath network and busy crossing points needs to be taken into account. For example, a group of houses outside the radial straight line distance may well be within the walking distance because of the provision of a pelican crossing.**