

Selecting Playground Surfaces

Guidelines for decisions to the best
surface for play areas for children



Why is surfacing at public play areas for children so important?

Play areas are fun — and they're great for learning and community togetherness — but they must be safe and appropriate for children. Each year, over 200,000 children require emergency room care due to playground injuries (Hanway 2016; Tuckel et al. 2017). Playgrounds often present some of the highest surface temperatures with an urban area, amplifying heat extremes - and most playgrounds lack shade (Bloch, 2019, Vanos, et al., 2016; & Olsen et al. 2019).



What are factors to consider when selecting play area surfacing for children?

NPPAS researchers have studied playground surfacing for over 30 years, creating the *S.A.F.E. Surfacing Decision-Making Model* in 1999 (Hudson & Thompson) — a framework that continues to evolve with new research and emerging insights. There are four factors to make concerning the surface of play areas for children. If any factor is a no, the surfacing is not the best decision for the play area.

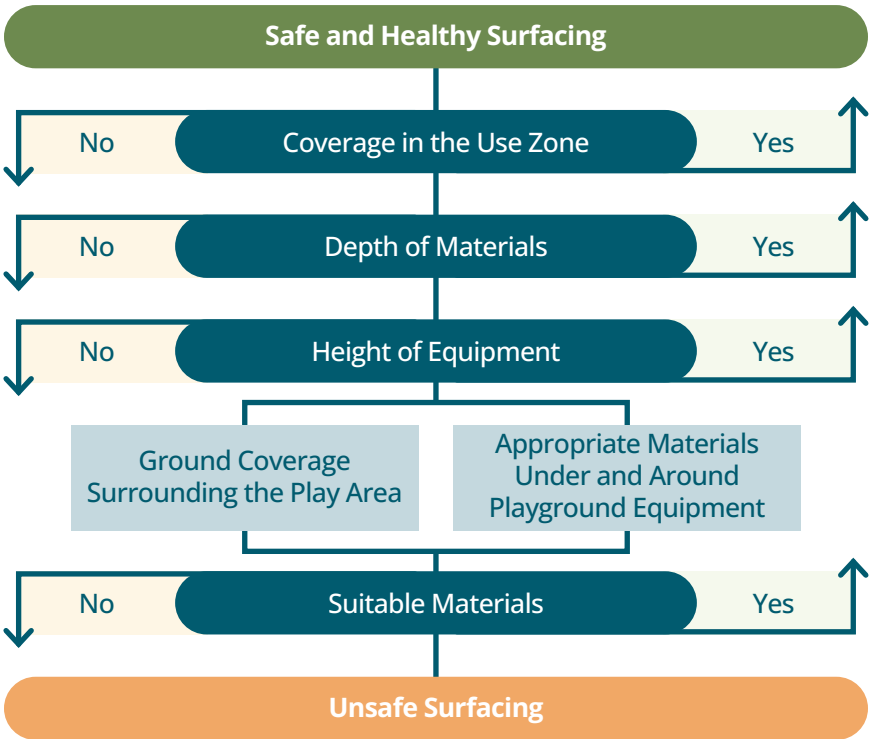


Figure 1. The *S.A.F.E. Surfacing Decision-Making Model*

Interested in learning more?

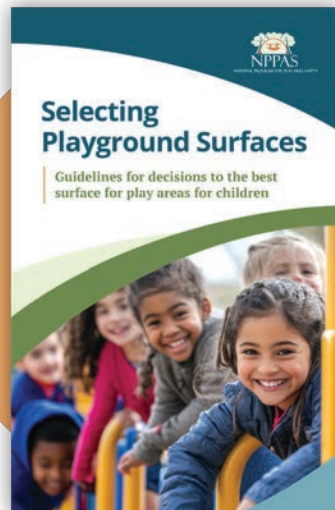
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Selecting Playground Surfaces booklet.**



Selecting Playground Surfaces Booklet

This brochure brings together the latest research and safety guidance to help you evaluate materials, compare options, and make confident decisions that support children's safety and active play.

- 5.5"x8.5" booklet
- 14 pages
- Full color



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