

Visitors, children and traffic

Fencing and Safe Play Areas

Where fences are used to restrict children's access to hazards (such as dams, effluent ponds or vehicle tracks) or demonstrate boundaries (such as around the house) choosing the fencing materials is important. Well-strained chicken wire is a good option because it is more difficult to climb than plain wire, ring lock or hinge joint fences.

Farms with young children living or visiting should also have a Safe Play Area. This is a securely fenced area which can be used by toddlers in safety, in general use or in the event of an emergency. It might be a smaller area within the house yard, which can be dismantled once the children have grown.

The Safe Play Area It should be securely fenced, without any water bodies or drowning hazards inside it, and with toys and equipment to make it a fun place for young children to be.

The fence should be made of materials that are sturdy and are not easily climbable by children. There should be no gap greater than 100mm between the fence and the ground and it should be high enough to prevent children climbing over it (without anything nearby that can be climbed on like pots, BBQs, chairs or vegetation).

The gate to the child Safe Play Area should be self-closing and self-latching and should never be propped open under any circumstances. Fences and gates should be regularly maintained to ensure they are always in good working order.

Child safe play areas do not replace active adult supervision and should be in an area that is easily observable by parents and carers.

Tip



The fence of the child safe play area should be made of materials that are sturdy and are not easily climbable by children. There should be no gap greater than 100mm between the fence and the ground and it should be high enough to prevent children climbing over it (without anything nearby that can be climbed on like pots, BBQs, chairs or vegetation).

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For guidance and ideas about play safe areas from farming families see:

http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/Child%20Safety%20Resources/aghealth_spa_booklet.pdf

Learn more



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In a research project funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), a range of fence designs were collected from farmers, fencing manufacturers and contractors and assessed by an expert panel to provide guidance on the pros and cons of each design. Four examples from this study are shown here:

Example 1

- › The most cost effective pool compliant fencing of this type consists of vertical members that are either 8mm wire, or round/rectangle hollow section steel.
- › The distance between vertical members is usually 80 – 90mm.

The distance between the furthest apart horizontal supports is a minimum of 900mm, which makes it difficult for a child to scale this fence.



	Comments Against Key Criteria
1. Effectiveness as a child resistant barrier.	› These fence designs are pool fence compliant, and are therefore considered to be highly child resistant.
2. Potential to injure a child attemptin to scale the fence.	› Risk of injury is low.
3. Robustness, corrosion and wear resistance.	› This product is hot dip galvanised, and is therefore long lasting.
4. Material cost and availability.	› Cost is over \$60 per metre for materials only. › There are standard pool fencing designs, which are widely available.
5. Ease of installation, maintenance requirements.	› Installation is straight forward, with low maintenance requirements.
6. Aesthetics and potential to customise.	› This product is typically powder coated, with a range of colours and decorative upper styles available.
› These designs offer a highly child resistant fence.	
› If this type of fencing is considered too expensive for large area, a smaller play area could be considered.	

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Example 2

- › Corrugated iron, or colourbond steel panels (shown) or other solid materials (e.g. used conveyor belting) provide an attractive child resistant fence. Any necessary supporting horizontal structure should be on the outside of the fence.
- › In high winds gates made of solid material may swing open under sustained pressure.



Comments Against Key Criteria

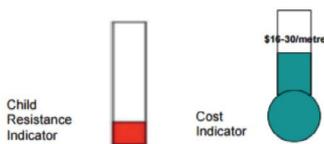
- | Key Criteria | Comments Against Key Criteria |
|---|---|
| 1. Effectiveness as a child resistant barrier. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › This fence makes a very good barrier, and meets the pool standards at a minimum height of 1.2m. › In high wind gates made of solid material may swing open if latches are not suitably robust. |
| 2. Potential to injure a child attempting to scale the fence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The risk of injury is low if top and bottom rails are used to protect the sharp edges as shown. |
| 3. Robustness, corrosion and wear resistance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › This is a robust and long lasting fence. |
| 4. Material cost and availability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Colorbond comes at a higher cost than corrugated iron. Both materials are readily available. |
| 5. Ease of installation, maintenance requirements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Installation is straight forward. |
| 6. Aesthetics and potential to customise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Cannot see through the fence - whether this is seen as an advantage or disadvantage will depend on what is on the other side. › The fence may be used to block noise, wind and dust. › Colourbond comes in a range of colours and styles. |
- › This fence is of moderate cost, and provides a high level of child resistance. Part of the fence could be constructed using these materials, particularly to screen noise, dust, wind and to provide privacy.

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Example 3

- › The 'chain wire' fence is popular, and used in various configurations. It often accompanies a round hollow section steel frame, or a post and rail arrangement, as shown.
- › This material has been at heights of 1.2m and 1.8m.



Comments Against Key Criteria

- | Key Criteria | Comments |
|---|--|
| 1. Effectiveness as a child resistant barrier. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › This fence does not meet the pool standard, and is easily climbable, due to the large aperture sizes, and the sturdy construction. › At 1.8m, the fence provides a higher degree of child resistance. |
| 2. Potential to injure a child attemptin to scale the fence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › At 1.8m, there is an increased risk of child injury if they fall in an attempt to climb over the fence. |
| 3. Robustness, corrosion and wear resistance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Chain wire is sturdier than chicken wire, and is durable and with a long life. |
| 4. Material cost and availability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Chain wire is low cost and is readily available. However, the most common supporting structure is round hollow section galvanised pipe, which is approximately \$20 per metre for materials only. › This cost is naturally higher for a 1.8m fence. |
| 5. Ease of installation, maintenance requirements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Installation is straight forward, with low maintenance requirements. |
| 6. Aesthetics and potential to customise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A wooden post and top rail is often used to improve the appearance of this kind of fence. |
- › The "chain wire" fence is popular, and used in various configurations. It often accompanies a round hollow section steel frame, or a post and rail arrangement, as shown.
 - › This material has been used at heights of 1.2m and 1.8m.

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Example 4

- › This fence is manufactured in panels 3m wide, by 1.2m high. The wire thickness is 5mm, and is erected by tech screwing the panels to RHS posts.
- › This can be seen as an example of any mesh fence, where the horizontal wire supports are close enough together to provide a sturdy climbing support.



	Comments Against Key Criteria
1. Effectiveness as a child resistant barrier.	› This fence is not effective as a child resistant barrier, and is easily climbable.
2. Potential to injure a child attemptin to scale the fence.	› The risk of injury is low.
3. Robustness, corrosion and wear resistance.	› This product is galvanised and is therefore long lasting.
4. Material cost and availability.	› The cost is less than similarly designed pool compliant fences. › Currently this product is widely distributed.
5. Ease of installation, maintenance requirements.	› Installation is straight forward, with low maintenance requirements.
6. Aesthetics and potential to customise.	› It is possible at additional cost to paint or powder coat this product to improve the appearance.
› This design is not effective as a child resistant barrier, and is easily climbed.	

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