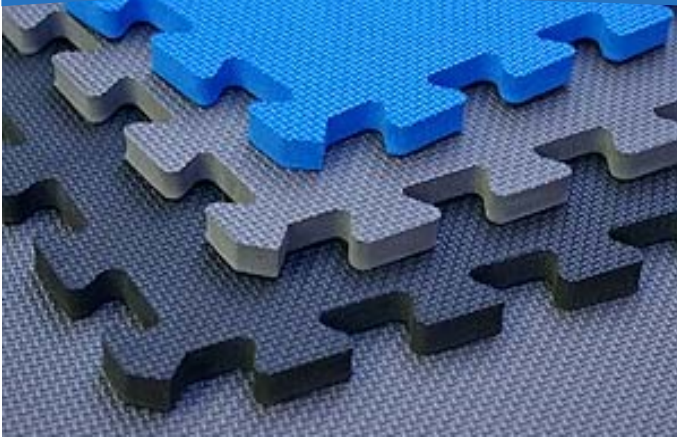


Portable Mats



Portable mats such as foam or vinyl covered foam mats may be used in the falling space and impact area of playground equipment. When used for equipment that is 600mm or more above ground level, mats must be tested to AS/NZS 4422. Request certificates of conformance that indicate the fall height rating and test results of the mats. File with the records for your playground safety management system.

The benefits of using portable mats as impact attenuating playground surfacing are as follows:

- Allows for versatility and flexibility of equipment and where the equipment can be set up e.g. indoor play areas and general outdoor areas
- Can be used as required
- Easily stored

Kidsafe does not recommend the use of regular gym mats on top of playground surfacing e.g. surrounding moveable equipment items such as trestles and jouncing boards.



The problems with gym mats are:

- The mats can move either when the children run across them, land on them or drag them. This means the impact area does not remain the required 1500mm impact area (AS 4685) surrounding the equipment
- Adequate impact area is difficult to achieve due to mats being small and many are required
- If the mats have loop and hook fasteners, the loops and hooks can become clogged with fluff, leaves and other forms of debris, compromising the strength of the fastener. Should the mats become unattached from each other a child could then fall on a hard surface
- Portable mats can present as a trip hazard
- Vinyl covered foam mats usually wear on the seams and corners causing trip hazards. Zippers that are not closed properly or are broken can also present as a trip hazard



Any type of portable mat is great for smaller children to play and tumble on. Younger children love to do forward rolls and tumble around, and this can be great exercise for preschool children.

For toddlers, a foam mat is safe for them to play and crawl on without getting hurt. Find a mat that is padded enough to be soft for the older children, especially if rolls and handstands are being performed.