



ChildCareBC

**B.C. Ministry of Education
and Child Care**

Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres



Territorial Acknowledgment

The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges the territories of the First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

As the Ministry is committed to reconciliation, we acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit - respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, and rights. We are committed to creating a child care system in which all First Nations, Métis and Inuit children have access to culturally safe care.

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1.0 Background and Context

1.1 Introduction

Child care is an essential service for families and provides an environment that supports children's well-being and learning. British Columbia is committed to building child care as a core service available to every family that wants it, when they need it, at a price they can afford.

The Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres ("the Design Guidelines") were developed by the Province of British Columbia to inform the design of new child care centres where this essential service will be delivered. Design plays an important role in providing a centre that is welcoming, inclusive, safe, enriching and joyful for children, families, caregivers, and early childhood professionals. Thoughtful and quality design enables learning, play and the building of social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills essential to a child's healthy development.

The Design Guidelines provide recommendations and considerations for child care specific design elements. The Design Guidelines consider the mandatory program requirements required by the [BC Building Code](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation and Standards of Practice](#) that regulate the building and licensing processes of a child care centre, respectively. However, the Design Guidelines do not repeat or replace regulatory requirements, nor do they guarantee that applications for building permits or child care program licensing will meet regulatory requirements.

Regulatory Requirements for Licensed Child Care

Regulatory requirements for the design and construction of new buildings and the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings in B.C. are found in the [Building Act](#), the [BC Building Code](#), the [BC Fire Code](#) and relevant local government bylaws. Regulatory requirements for the design and construction of new buildings and the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings on federal land or reserves in B.C. are found in the [National Building Code of Canada](#).

Regulatory requirements for licensed child care programs in B.C. are found in the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) and the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practice](#).

Project leads and design teams as well as all applicants for a child care licence are responsible for meeting the relevant requirements of building a child care centre. These include, but are not limited to the [Building Act](#), the [BC Building Code](#), the [BC Fire Code](#), the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practices](#), relevant local government bylaws and any other applicable requirements.

The Regional Health Authority licensing program provides further resources and guidance related to child care licensing mandatory requirements.

ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund

The Government of British Columbia's [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund](#) provides funding to create new licensed child care throughout the province. The ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund web pages provide information on eligibility, funding guidelines and the application process.

1.2 Intent of the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are intended to provide consistent guidance for the design of child care centres. They provide detail above and beyond regulatory requirements with the goal of achieving a higher and more consistent quality of child care centres throughout B.C. that are accessible and inclusive for all. The Design Guidelines provide principles, guidelines and considerations to support project teams and design teams with the design of child care centres. In addition to providing design guidance, this document also includes information and resources to support users through the planning and design process.

The Design Guidelines are intended to support the full design process and can be a common point of reference and baseline for everyone participating in the design of a child care centre, including the project team and the design team.

The Design Guidelines do not provide guidance on the development or operation of a child care program. Consultation with the future operator (if known) or other child care consultants may lead to time-savings and/or efficiencies in later project stages. A thorough business plan should be considered alongside the design phases, including considerations for ongoing operations that meet the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

Design Guidelines Scope

The Design Guidelines were developed to inform the design of new child care centres delivered through ground-up builds, modular builds, major renovations and/or additions.¹ The Design Guidelines provide guidance for child care centres that offer licensed group child care for children aged birth to 12 years.

Much of the design guidance provided in this document may also be informative for child care space creation projects delivered through renovations; however, the smaller scope of these projects may limit the degree to which the principles, guidelines and considerations apply or may be achieved.

The design principles, guidelines and considerations in this document are general and apply broadly to the design of child care centres that include both indoor and outdoor areas; however, they are not exhaustive or appropriate for every situation. Additional design elements or strategies may be applicable depending on the unique considerations of the child care project. This may include specific site conditions, constraints, location, cultural context, new advancements within building design and specific community needs. There may be opportunities for the project and design teams to enhance the quality of the built environment and user experiences.

Design and construction professionals are expected to rely on their professional judgment in applying these guidelines to support project planning, design and development.

Intended Users

The Design Guidelines were developed for a variety of audiences, such as:

- Prospective applicants of provincial child care space creation funding
- Architects, engineers and other design and building professionals
- Child care owners and operators
- First Nations
- Métis Nation BC and local Métis chartered communities
- Indigenous organizations

¹ Refer to provincial child care space creation funding guidelines to ensure current requirements for applications are met.

- Local governments
- Public sector organizations, such as school districts, post-secondary institutions and Health Authorities
- Non-profit organizations
- Provincial Government staff
- Health Authority Licensing Officers
- Early Childhood Educators and other child care staff
- Child Care Consultants
- Families and caregivers
- Community members
- Interested parties in the child care sector

1.3 Navigating the Design Guidelines Document

The Design Guidelines are intended to support a variety of audiences and include several distinct sections. It is a resource that can be referenced throughout the project to inform different phases. See Table 1 for a content overview and summary of each section to navigate the Design Guidelines.




Table 1: Design Guidelines Sections Overview and Summary

Section #	Title	Content
1	Background and Context	Introductory information that contextualizes the Design Guidelines document
2	Planning and Designing a Child Care Centre	Overview of process elements for gathering teams, planning stages and design phases
3	Site Plan	Description of schematic diagram incorporating critical site elements
4	Interior Spaces	Design guidance, considerations, minimum space allocations and functional relationship diagrams for interior child care spaces
5	Exterior Spaces	Design guidance, considerations, minimum space allocations and functional relationship diagrams for exterior child care spaces
6	Acknowledgements	List of organizations who supported the development of the document
7	Appendices	Glossary, minimum space allocation charts and resources

Definitions of Principles, Guidelines, and Considerations

The Design Guidelines provide three categories of design guidance. The following table outlines the definitions of these three categories and their corresponding symbols used throughout this document.

Table 2: Defining Principles, Guidelines and Considerations

 Design Principle	General value statements guiding a fundamental objective or outcome for quality, inclusive child care centres considered in all phases and elements of the design.
 Design Guideline	Essential design elements that guide the development and design of quality, inclusive child care centres.
 Design Consideration	Design elements recommended for consideration in the design of quality, inclusive child care centres. Design considerations may or may not be feasible to implement in all child care projects depending on project-specific factors.

Child Care Programs

Licensed child care programs are defined in the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), which form the basis of the child care programs referred to in this document.

For the purposes of this document, child care programs are referred to as infant/toddler, ages 3-5, school age, or multi-age care programs. To maximize design efficiencies, the Design Guidelines use the maximum group sizes allowable under the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) when referring to one child care program. A child care centre may have more than one child care program.

The child care programs commonly referred to throughout the Design Guidelines align with the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) as follows:

Table 3: Child Care Programs Definition

Child Care Programs Referred to in the Design Guidelines	Child Care Licensing Regulation – Care Programs	Child Care Licensing Regulation – Maximum Group Size
Infant/Toddler	Group Child Care (Under 36 Months)	12 Children (3 adults)
Ages 3-5	Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age)	25 Children (3 adults)
School Age 5-12	Group Child Care (School Age) if any child in Kindergarten or Grade 1 is present	24 Children (2 adults)
School Age 7-12	Group Child Care (School Age) if no child in Kindergarten or Grade 1 is present	30 Children (2 adults)
Multi-Age	Multi-Age Child Care	8 Children (1 adult)

Note: Refer to [Schedule E](#) of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) in considering program sizes and permissible variations. The number of adults listed aligns with required licensing ratios and does not consider other adults who may support the program (e.g., Elders and Knowledge Keepers, support staff, practicum students).

The Design Guidelines are intended to inform the design of new child care projects in B.C. and projects eligible to receive provincial funding, specifically full-time centre-based care. The Design Guidelines were not developed for child care programs in personal residences and other types of care, such as occasional or recreational care.

Functional Relationship Diagrams

Functional relationship diagrams are used throughout the document to illustrate how interior and exterior spaces can be arranged to support the flow of activities that take place at a child care centre. They are representational graphics that identify the rooms and spaces in a child care centre, help illustrate the potential adjacencies and highlight the important functional connections between them.

Functional relationship diagrams are not floor plans and are not drawn to scale. Additionally, the diagrams are illustrative and are not intended to be templates. Every child care centre is unique, and the layout of spaces must be designed to accommodate the unique characteristics of the site and program.

In this document, the functional relationship diagrams should be consulted while reading the associated narrative provided.

1.4 Child Care Design Principles

The Design Principles are intended to support and align with the principles identified and described in the B.C. [Early Learning Framework](#), the Early Childhood Educators of BC [Code of Ethics](#), the federal [Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#) and the federal [Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#).

The following Design Principles inform the foundational objectives and outcomes for the design of child care centres. The Design Guidelines are intended to reflect these principles in all aspects of design guidance, including those for the interior and exterior spaces of a child care centre.



Design Principles

1

Child care centres are culturally rich, welcoming and responsive to the communities in which they are situated. They foster a strong sense of belonging and cultural safety for children, families, caregivers and early childhood professionals using the space.

2

Child care centres facilitate children’s respectful living and learning together through an inclusive and accessible design that enables relationships, play and learning.

3

Child care centres enable early childhood professionals to deliver quality, inclusive care and learning environments and facilitate healthy workplaces that support early childhood professional recruitment and retention.

4

Child care centres are functional, durable and long-lasting, cost- and energy-efficient to run, incorporate climate-resilient strategies and consider environmental impacts over the lifetime of the centre.

5

Child care centres are safe and accessible and promote the health and well-being of all children, early childhood professionals and families.

Human Rights and Inclusion

British Columbia’s [Human Rights Code](#) helps make sure everyone can participate equally in daily life in B.C. Child care centres must comply with all applicable laws, including the B.C. [Human Rights Code](#).

Consistent with the Province’s commitment to reconciliation, the recommendations, considerations, and resources in the Design Guidelines are intended to encourage and support an approach to design that is consistent with the collective and individual human rights of Indigenous Peoples expressed in the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

The design of child care centres should consider how the space and the program operating in it will be consistent with the code for all who may regularly access and use the space, inclusive of all children, early childhood professionals, families, caregivers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, other professionals and support staff. Centre design should also consider appropriate integration of Indigenous perspectives and worldviews.

Figure 1: British Columbia Human Rights Code

British Columbia Human Rights Code

The B.C. Human Rights Code protects individuals from harmful treatment called discrimination. The Code protects individuals in certain areas of daily life based on parts of their identity. See British Columbia's [Office of the Human Rights Commissioner](#) for further information.

Figure 2: Inclusion and Accessibility

Inclusion and Accessibility

An inclusive child care environment that is designed to celebrate diversity and accessibility benefits everyone. A child care centre is part of a larger community, playing an important role in fostering a sense of belonging for all families.

Inclusion is a fundamental human right. It happens when people feel that the unique differences that make them up as individuals are valued and celebrated. This includes race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, family structure, values, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, learning needs and health care needs. Inclusion enhances empathy and communications skills. It gives children, families and early childhood professionals the opportunity to learn and grow, build a sense of community and enrich relationships.

A well-designed facility is essential in enabling inclusion and accessibility, and may consider:

- Designing the child care centre with flexibility and accessibility in mind to accommodate the evolving needs and preferences of individuals and groups.
 - Example: ensuring all spaces are easy for people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices to move makes it easier for everyone, including early childhood professionals, families, and children to participate now and in the future.
- Considering culturally appropriate design that goes beyond cosmetic features and instead considers unique ways of inhabiting spaces informed by cultural factors.
 - Example: designing environments to allow for cultural practices reflective of the community, such as cultural cooking practices.
- Using universal images or pictures in signage such as washroom signs to support wayfinding regardless of an individual's spoken language(s), and/or functional communication for people with various cognitive, physical and/or communication challenges.
- Incorporating the written language(s) on signage in the centre that reflects the community it is serving.
 - Example: First Nations language(s), Michif, Braille and/or other language primarily spoken by the community.

[See Section 7.3](#) Resources for more information and resources to support inclusive design.

2.0 Planning and Designing a Child Care Centre

2.1 Introduction

Developing a child care centre includes many activities beyond the design and construction of the physical child care building and outdoor play spaces. Planning for the child care centre should occur in the early stages of development and include:

- Engaging with the community;
- Determining the type(s) of programs and number of spaces to be created; and
- Understanding the requirements to become licensed under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

See the ChildCareBC website for further information on steps to [open a licensed child care facility](#).

Section 2.0 Planning and Designing a Child Care Centre provides information on:

- Establishing a Project Team
- Choosing a Design Team
- Early Planning
- Site Evaluation and Project Feasibility
- Design Phases, including:
 - Pre-Design
 - Schematic Design Phase
 - Design Development Phase
 - Construction Documents Phase

Overview of the Development of the Child Care Centre

The following figure outlines the typical process and steps involved in developing a new licensed group child care centre through a ground-up build, modular build, addition, expansion or major renovation. This diagram focuses on the early planning and design processes. Activities associated with construction and child care operations are not included.

The phases in this diagram appear to be distinct, but phases can overlap and blend into one another as a project's development is not always linear. Depending on the project and organizations involved, there may be other steps, requirements or pathways not shown in this diagram.

Figure 3: Project Design Phases



2.2 The Project Team and Design Team

Establishing a Project Team to Guide the Project

The first step in developing a child care centre is to gather a team of relevant professionals and individuals to support the development of a child care centre. This begins with the project owner (e.g., local government, First Nation, school district, post-secondary institution, not-for-profit organization) who is typically responsible for informing major decisions and securing funding for payment. The project owner forms the project team listed in Table 4.

The project team is responsible for preparing project deliverables on behalf of the project owner. The project team is responsible for ensuring a high-quality environment and developing the full scope of the child care centre including:

- Planning for the operations of the child care program;
- Delivering the project;
- Ensuring it meets its objectives, budget and timelines;
- Meeting all local government requirements;
- Meeting all relevant building and construction Acts and bylaws; and
- Licensing the child care centre under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

The following table provides an overview of likely roles within the project team. The composition of the project team will vary depending on project-specific requirements, roles may overlap, and the following table is not an exhaustive list.

Table 4: The Project Team

Project Team Roles	Responsibilities
Project Owner	The entity that determines the vision, goals and objectives for the project and has the authority to make decisions with respect to the construction of the child care centre. The project owner is typically responsible for signing contracts, securing funding and making payments for services. The project owner may or may not be a key decision maker for the program (e.g., building location, child care program maximum size).
Project Lead	Responsible for all aspects of the project and ensures the project aligns with the identified vision, goals and objectives of the project owner. This role may be assigned to the project owner or a representative and may be an authorized signatory.
Project Manager or Management Team	Ensures all aspects of the project are delivered on time and within budget and approved scope. The project manager coordinates the various project activities (including those of the design team) such as design of the centre, construction, child care program development work and licensing. This role may be assigned to the project owner, the project lead or could be contracted by the project owner for the project.

Early Childhood Professional	Ensures the project aligns with early childhood education pedagogy and the B.C. Early Learning Framework and provides valuable perspective related to child and educator functional use of spaces.
Advisory Body	May be considered to help guide the development of the child care centre and ensure the design meets the needs of multiple user groups. Members may include key partners or interested parties that have expertise or valuable perspectives in guiding the design and development of the child care centre, such as the anticipated child care operator, Early Childhood Educators, representatives from local First Nations, Métis Nation B.C. or Indigenous organizations, Licensing Officers, families from the community and/or others identified as beneficial to the project.
Other Members	Additional members of the team may support the project deliverables and might include employees of the project owner, or contractors that support the project, such as a child care consultant.

Choosing the Design Team

The project team will be responsible for selecting a design team that will lead the design of the child care centre.

Choosing an appropriate design team is essential to ensure the project design aligns with the vision, goals and objectives of the project. An experienced design team can positively impact project timelines, budget, and the quality of the build.

Often, an architect is responsible for assembling and leading a multidisciplinary team of design and construction professionals who form the design team. Determining the appropriate professionals needed for the design team will depend on the unique considerations and requirements of individual projects. The choice of architect for the project is important because of their lead role in the design phases of the project. See the [Architectural Institute of British Columbia](#) for more information about architects in B.C., including an [online directory](#).

Capital procurement approaches and requirements vary by organization and impact how the design team is selected. The process used and the design professionals selected must meet the unique requirements of the project owner. Examples include using a Request for Proposal process, soliciting competitive proposals directly from architectural firms or using other methods.

The following are considerations when selecting a licensed and registered architect² to support the design a child care centre:

- The portfolio of the architect should demonstrate that they have relevant experience in similar projects and understanding of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).
- The references provided by the architect should demonstrate an understanding of people they may need to consult.
- The architect should demonstrate their ability to meet the goals and objectives of the project(s).

²Architects must be licensed and registered with the [Architectural Institute of B.C.](#)

The following table provides a list of design and construction professionals who may be included on the design team or be involved in the design process depending on the project:

Table 5: The Design Team

Design Team Roles	Responsibilities
Architect	Acts as the Coordinating Registered Professional, integrating municipal requirements and different design documents from the design team to create a cohesive and coordinated design that meets the criteria for the project. The architect typically supports the bidding/tender process and acts as the contract administrator through the Construction Phase, coordinating the field reviews of the design team and architectural team.
Construction Manager	Plans, organizes, leads and evaluates the activities of a construction project. They typically manage construction projects from start to finish, including overseeing the schedule, budget and resources. Construction managers facilitate phasing, buildability and cost mitigation ideas during the design and construction phase to support the budget and scope of the project. They correspond with local governments for permits and zoning requirements. This service is usually arranged by the project lead or project manager.
Geotechnical Engineer	Assesses the physical, mechanical and chemical properties of soil and rock to inform the design of foundations, retaining structure and earthwork. This service is usually arranged by the project lead or project manager rather than through the architect.
Civil Engineer	Plans, designs and supervises the construction of infrastructure and services for a project.
Landscape Architect	Creates a detailed plan of the outdoor spaces, indicating new topography, vegetation, walkways, water drainage, play areas, built or fixed play equipment, etc.
Structural Engineer	Designs the building structure, optimizes for efficiency of material use, performs field reviews of the construction work and reviews documentation for compliance of the work with the design documentation.
Mechanical Engineer	Designs the plumbing, heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems for the building. Participates in construction phase field reviews of the work and reviews documentation for compliance of the work with the design documentation.
Electrical Engineer	Designs electrical service and provisions for equipment, lighting, switches, outlets and data locations in the building. Participates in construction phase field reviews of the work and reviews documentation for compliance of the work with the design documentation.
Fire Suppression Engineer	Designs the fire safety plan and sprinkler system layout when required. Participates in construction phase field reviews of the work and reviews documentation for compliance of the work with the design documentation.

Energy Modeler	Creates an energy model of the building to ensure that the project will meet any applicable energy targets. Reviews and may also conduct field testing of building performance and issues reports on performance of the building, according to the requirements of the energy model.
Envelope Engineer	Reviews the construction details to ensure the integration of building envelope components and their best practices as they relate to current building science for contemporary building envelopes.
Quantity Surveyor	A third-party estimator who ensures the costs of large construction and infrastructure projects are accurately estimated, based on project drawings and specifications throughout the different phases of design.

Note: Depending on the unique needs of each project, additional, different or fewer professionals may be required.

2.3 Early Planning

During the Early Planning phase, the concept for the child care centre is developed. This work may include establishing a vision for the child care centre, guiding child care program philosophies and/or specific goals and objectives. Consider [Section 1.4 Child Care Design Principles](#) to inform this work. The Early Planning phase of a child care centre may vary from project to project due to unique factors, such as the community it serves.

Typical activities involved in Early Planning may include:

- Considering community need;
- Engaging the local child care community;
- Engaging with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities;
- Determining the type(s) and number of child care program spaces to create;
- Understanding local government requirements and existing plans;
- Understanding all relevant building and construction Acts and bylaws; and
- Understanding the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) and consulting the Regional Health Authority Community Care Facility Licensing office.

More information on the typical Early Planning activities is provided in the following sections.

Considering Community Need

When planning a child care centre, identify the unique needs of the community it will serve, including rural and remote, urban and suburban. Consider how the community may interact with the space. This includes understanding the characteristics and needs of the families and caregivers who may access the licensed child care centre, and whether any specific design elements could support or meet their identified needs.

Children and early childhood professionals spend large portions of their day in the child care centre. Families, caregivers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, other professionals and support staff may regularly access and use the space. A well-planned and designed child care centre should consider the needs of all user groups, as well as how they interact with the space.

Figure 4: Who Uses the Child Care Centre

Children	Children spend a large part of their day in the child care centre. The environment, sometimes referred to as the “third teacher,” shapes children’s experiences. The design of the child care centre should be informed by a child’s worldview and consider the unique needs of children, including their health, safety, well-being and development. Good design can foster a sense of connection and belonging, as well as promote learning, exploration, creativity and play.
Families and Caregivers	Children come from diverse family structures with diverse household membership and social ties who care for a child. Design should consider how the variety of family members, caregivers and others accessing the space interact with the centre such as during drop-off and pick-up. This can support a sense of cultural safety, welcoming, belonging and connection for all types of families, caregivers and others accessing the child care centre.
Early Childhood Professionals	Early childhood professionals spend long hours each day in the child care centre. The design of the centre should facilitate the health, safety and well-being of early childhood professionals and support functional use of space. This in turn supports recruitment, retention and quality service. The design should also consider others who interact with the space, such as Elders and Knowledge Keepers and professionals (e.g., occupational therapists, speech therapists).

When planning a child care centre, it is important to consider how the space and the program are inclusive and consistent with all applicable laws, including the B.C. [Human Rights Code](#), the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) and the concept of inclusion.

Approaches such as trauma-informed care may be helpful to inform Early Planning and the design process.

Figure 5: Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care is a universal precaution that recognizes the wide-reaching impacts of trauma and creates environments that seek to lessen the potential for re-traumatization for all people.

The physical environment can impact feelings of safety, comfort, sense of identity, dignity and empowerment, attitude, mood, and behaviour. Overly formal or institutional settings should be avoided. Design can be used to create welcoming, safe, and healing environments. For example:

- Including design elements that support family and caregiver connections such as approachable and comforting colours, warmer materials and finishes, soft seating and spaces where children and adults can sit together.
- Minimizing known stressors and stimuli, particularly stressors that may suggest control and concealed observation such as one-way glazing and/or building elements that appear institutional.
- Promoting connectedness to the natural world such as using natural light, natural materials, and plants.

Design elements supporting trauma-informed practice are reflected throughout the document. The design of each centre should reflect the specific needs of the program and community.

Engaging the Local Child Care Community

To identify and better understand unique community needs, it is important to conduct early and meaningful engagement with anticipated users of the child care centre, as well as organizations who support the development and operations of the program. It is important to hear from First Nation(s) on whose territory the child care centre will be built.

When engaging, there are many perspectives that can provide valuable input, such as:

- First Nations, including potential future families and caregivers
- Métis Nation British Columbia and local Métis chartered communities
- First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit community members and organizations
- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
- Regional Health Authority Child Care Licensing Officer
- Child Care Resource and Referral programs
- Local government
- Local school district
- Local community, including potential future families and caregivers, community centres, neighbourhood houses and other family services
- Local post-secondary Early Childhood Educator programs
- Local child care or early years tables or committees
- ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund program staff
- Local Early Childhood Educators of B.C. branch
- Other relevant organizations (e.g., School Age Care Association of B.C., Aboriginal Head Start Centres, local immigrant and refugee organizations, local cultural centres)

Engaging Effectively with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities

The Province acknowledges the diversity of Indigenous Peoples, recognizing and respecting distinct languages, cultures, customs and practices, rights and legal traditions, institutions and governance structures, as well as relationships to territories and knowledge systems.

The child care centre should provide culturally safe and respectful programs so that First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families feel safe and supported.

Engage with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit families early on in the planning process.³ Learn about the First Nation(s) territories that may be served by the child care centre. Make sure this planning includes opportunities for multiple perspectives to be shared, including First Nation leaders, prospective families, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, staff and child care professionals. The project lead can also explore opportunities to hire local First Nations, Métis or Inuit architects and experts throughout the design process.

Engagement with Indigenous communities and/or organizations may include:

- First Nations
- Métis Nation British Columbia and local Métis chartered communities
- First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit community members and organizations
- B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society

³ See [Section 7.3 Resources: Engaging with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Communities](#)

- B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
- Aboriginal Head Start Association of B.C.
- First Nations Health Authority
- Aboriginal Supported Child Development
- Local Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Aboriginal/Indigenous learning department at the local school district

Determining the Type(s) and Number of Child Care Spaces Needed

When planning for a child care centre, it is critical to understand community need for child care, including the demand for the type and number of spaces planned to be offered. Consider the services provided by existing child care centres in the community and whether there are services gaps or additional demand for child care services. Conducting or accessing a recently developed child care needs assessment⁴ can help inform demand for the project.

Sources of information to help determine community need may include:

- The [Statistics Canada Census Profile](#) community profiles for population statistics;
- Local child care plans and needs assessments developed by local government, if available and relevant;
- Provincial child care data from [B.C. Child Care Data and Reports](#) portal;
- The B.C. [Child Care Map](#) to identify nearby licensed child care facilities;
- The local [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) program to determine what child care centres already exist in the community and whether they have waitlists;
- The Licensing Officer for a Regional Health Authority; and
- If considering the creation or expansion of school age child care, the local school district may be able to provide projections for children aged birth to 12 in the community and share whether they are planning for school age child care.

A thorough business plan should be considered after determining the type(s) and number of child care spaces needed to ensure operational and financial viability.

Understanding the Child Care Licensing Regulation and Consulting the Regional Health Authority Community Care Facility Licensing Office

Child care facilities in B.C. must be licensed under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). A child care centre must be designed such that the centre and the program it hosts can meet all licensing requirements. The project team and design team are responsible for ensuring that the centre and the program comply with all regulatory requirements and all applicable laws. The Design Guidelines do not replace regulatory requirements, nor guarantee centres will meet regulatory requirements.

During Early Planning, project teams should consider the requirements of a licensed child care program that may impact the design of the space, such as the future operating capacity, the child care program requirements and how the child care program will use and interact with the space. This may include:

- Maximum group sizes and child to staff ratios: as part of the planning for the type, number, and age groupings of child care spaces in the centre, consult Schedule E of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) to understand the requirements for maximum group sizes and minimum employee-to-child ratios.

⁴ See Resources for [Union of B.C. Municipalities Child Care Planning Guides for B.C.'s Local Governments](#) to learn more about building a community profile.

- **Recruitment and retention:** understanding the required number and qualifications of early childhood professionals for the type and number of child care spaces in the centre will assist project teams in planning future hiring and recruiting. Project teams should also consider the child care workforce in the local community to ensure staffing needs can be met to deliver and operate the planned child care services. Depending on the type of care provided, early childhood professionals may be required to hold specific certifications to deliver the services (e.g., Infant Toddler Educator Certificate). Considerations should also be made for future workforce retention strategies.
- **Staffing models:** unionized environments may have additional requirements regarding staff entitlements to spaces such as access to break rooms and washrooms. Project teams are responsible for ensuring the design of the child care centre meets the requirements of applicable collective agreements.

The Regional Health Authority Community Care Facility Licensing office can provide information about licensing requirements and the [rules for operating a licensed child care program](#). A Licensing Officer may also be able to provide additional project-specific guidance such as the suitability of a potential site and other early considerations to facilitate licensing of the future child care program. Engaging with licensing early in the process helps to determine the extent of their participation in the project.

See [Section 7.3 Resources](#) for information related to licensing and opening a child care program.

2.4 Site Evaluation and Project Feasibility

Careful evaluation of the proposed site for a child care centre can help avoid major project challenges that may result in an incomplete project due to expense, difficulty or impracticality or inability to license under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

Evaluation of site conditions prior to committing to child care on the site is key to successful project completion. Consider conducting a feasibility study to evaluate site considerations related to the site location and access, zoning and development requirements, health and well-being, and environmental factors. Feasibility studies are usually led by a design team. Early identification of potential issues allows the project lead to make informed decisions about whether to proceed with the project or not, helps mitigate financial risks and sets realistic expectations for design. This phase can help avoid costly mistakes and ensure that the project is completed on time, within budget and to a high standard of quality.

Ensure local First Nations are included early when evaluating the site and determining project feasibility. Take a distinctions-based approach when creating partnerships to develop spaces. See [Section 7.3 Resources](#) to learn more about engaging effectively.

Considerations for evaluating the suitability of a site for child care may include:

- **Size:** The size of the site must accommodate the building, outdoor play area and the exterior support spaces. Wherever possible, the interior and exterior spaces should be adjacent and at the same grade so that children and adults can easily and safely transition between indoor and outdoor activities.
- **First Nations Territories:** Consider the site, the land on which the child care centre is to be situated, and how the use of the land may impact First Nations interests and communities. Learn about traditional land uses as well as any planned developments.
- **Local Government processes:** Review local bylaws, zoning, development and building code requirements to determine other site requirements, such as the number of parking spaces, building setbacks and fire access, and to determine a total required area for the project. Assess availability of utilities and municipal services to support the facility. See the [Local Government Requirements: Handbook for Child Care Providers](#) for more information.
- **Licensing requirements:** Consider whether child care on the site will be able to meet [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) requirements, including child and educator health and safety.

- **Archeological and historical significance:** Use available resources to assess any archaeological and historical significance of the site. If initial research indicates potential archeological significance, an archaeological study may be recommended.
- **Ground and/or soil conditions:** Review previous uses of the site to assess the likelihood of environmental soil contamination and prepare a geotechnical study. This will help inform the subsurface soil and rock conditions of the proposed development site.
- **Site suitability:** Determine whether any existing structures are hazardous or contain hazardous materials and how reasonable and cost-effective it will be to mitigate the issues. Consider potential for radon and carbon dioxide exposure.
- **Climate risks and resiliency:** Consider the site’s risk for wildfire and whether the site sits on a flood plain.

Attributes of a site can either support or hinder the development of a child care centre and ultimately the success of the child care program itself. The following is a list of attributes to consider and to potentially avoid when evaluating a site for child care. This list is not exhaustive and not all the attributes need to be avoided. Furthermore, available sites may be limited, dependent on location, local context and budget. Mitigation strategies may be considered with the design team.

Table 6: Site Attributes to Consider and Potentially Avoid

Attributes to Consider	Attributes to Potentially Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient size for the desired child care program and services. • Allows the outdoor play space to be adjacent and at the same grade as the building. • Topography allows contiguous indoor and outdoor spaces. • Enables accessibility. • Access to daylight and/or views. • Natural vegetation that provides privacy and shade. • Walkability and/or pedestrian access. • Proximity to public transportation. • Proximity to other community resources and amenities. • Proximity to services such as water, sanitary systems and fire service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-traffic intersections and high-volume roadways. • Brown field sites (i.e., land that is abandoned or underutilized due to pollution from industrial use, potential hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant). • Locations that previously had a building with deep foundations on it (i.e., geotechnical issues). • Locations heavily shaded by adjacent natural features or built environment. • Locations with potentially dangerous natural features such as steep embankments or waterways. • Locations in close proximity to noisy, noxious or dangerous activities such as industrial activity, commercial loading area, mechanical plants, building exhausts fans, electrical substations or major above-grade electrical lines, transformers. • Sites requiring significant regrading of topography, cutting or filling. • Sites that are environmentally sensitive. • Sites with poor drainage.

2.5 Design Phases for the Child Care Centre

The design of a child care centre goes through multiple phases. The design team will lead the design phases and should regularly engage the project team to ensure the design aligns with the project vision, goals, scope and objectives. Different classes of cost estimates for construction costs can be obtained at the end of each progressive design phase.

The accuracy of cost estimates improves as the project progresses through the various design phases. Class D is generally the preliminary estimate with the lowest degree of accuracy in cost, whereas Class A is the final estimate with the highest degree of accuracy in cost. Depending on the scope of the project, not all classes of cost estimates may be required.

This section describes the typical design phases and the class of cost estimates that can be obtained at the end of each design phase.

Pre-Design

The design of the center begins with the Pre-Design Phase. During this phase, the design team works closely with the project team to understand the needs and requirements of the project. The guidelines and considerations in this document can help inform this process by providing a common starting place for the project team and the design team.

At the end of this phase, a Class D cost estimate can be prepared. This is a preliminary order of magnitude estimate of construction costs performed at the early stages of a project, often before significant project details or designs are finalized. Class D cost estimates provide a broad cost range, often expressed as a percentage of the total construction costs, which typically vary from +/-20% of the construction cost. They serve as a preliminary tool for the project lead to gauge the feasibility of a project or to secure initial budgetary approvals.

Typical activities involved in the pre-design phase include:

1. Determining the type(s) and number of child care spaces needed to determine the appropriate site size. See [Section 2.3 Early Planning](#) for more information regarding determining community need.
2. Development of a preliminary site plan to determine how the site will be laid out, including building orientation and how the building and interior and exterior spaces will be situated on the site. This is done to establish a functional flow and connection to local infrastructure and services. See [Section 3.0 Site Plan](#) for additional details.
3. Development of a preliminary design concept for the interior and exterior spaces based on the project vision, goals, scope and objectives.
4. Establishment of a preliminary project schedule and estimated timeline for completing the project.
5. Development of a risk management plan to identify potential risks and strategies to mitigate them.
6. Development of a communication plan and consideration of how and when communication will flow to relevant parties, such as decision makers and community members.
7. Development of a preliminary project budget based on a Class D cost estimate. This may include adjustments to the project scope and objectives to stay within budget.

Note: Project goals and objectives may include elements of sustainability to minimize the environmental impact of the project. The design team can advise on how to meet this objective within the project budget.

Schematic Design Phase

During the Schematic Design Phase, the design team will create a schematic design of the site, and interior and exterior spaces. Typically, this is iterative work and should include regular opportunities for the project team to provide input on the floor plans, size, shape and materials to be used in the building. During this phase, the goal is to identify a preferred design that meets the project objectives and establishes the general look of the building. Work in the Schematic Design Phase contributes to a development permit submission document which may coincide with the Schematic Design Phase.

At the end of this phase, a Class C cost estimate for construction costs can be prepared based on the schematic design and comprehensive list of project requirements. Class C cost estimates typically provide a cost range of +/-15% of the construction cost.

Typical activities involved in the Schematic Design Phase include:

1. Finalization of a project concept plan based on information gathered in the pre-design phase.
2. Identification of any municipal and regulatory requirements that must be met before construction can begin.
3. Identification of any potential issues with the site that may affect construction, such as zoning restrictions, firefighting regulations and/or environmental concerns.
4. Development of the schematic design including drawings, diagrams and other visual aids to communicate design ideas. There may be several iterations with opportunities for the project team to guide the design and select a preferred design.
5. Identification of potential construction materials and systems that can be used to construct the project and make recommendations based on project goals and budget.
6. Development of an initial detailed schedule for construction.
7. Refinement of the project budget and/or scope based on a Class C cost estimate.

Design Development Phase

During the Design Development Phase, the final schematic design is further developed. The interior layouts are confirmed, dimensions of all spaces are finalized, and the exterior aspect of the building will be more fully designed. Typically, at this stage the architect will involve the other design professionals so they can begin the design of their scope of work and coordinate the general systems of the building.

At the end of this phase, a Class B cost estimate for construction costs can be prepared based on design development drawings and specifications for the preliminary design of all major systems and subsystems. Class B cost estimates provide a cost range of +/-10% of the construction cost.

Typical activities involved in the design development phase include:

1. Refinement of the design based on feedback from the project team. The design team may also explore alternative design concepts and evaluate their feasibility. Design elements typically developed during this phase include:
 - Building systems such as mechanical, electrical and plumbing.
 - Structural system.
 - Building envelope, considering project requirements for aesthetics, performance, safety and durability.
 - Interior spaces, considering project requirements for flexibility, functionality, health, safety, aesthetics and accessibility.

2. Preparation of the technical specifications for all aspects of construction. These specifications will provide detailed information on materials, equipment, installation methods and quality control measures.

Construction Documents Phase

During the Construction Documents Phase, the construction documents are prepared, This includes detailed drawings of the final design project along with notes and construction specifications. The construction documents formalize the scope of work, architectural design and construction specifications for the construction phase. These are the documents that are submitted to obtain building permits.

At the end of this phase, a Class A cost estimate for construction costs can be prepared based on completed construction drawings and specifications. This estimate is sufficient to allow a detailed reconciliation and/or negotiation with a construction tender submission. Class A cost estimates provide a typical cost range of +/- 5% of the construction cost.

The typical activities involved in the construction documents phase include:

1. Preparation of documents (issued for construction and building permit) to formalize the scope of work permitting through authority having jurisdiction and construction specifications to begin the construction phase.
2. Provide Construction Documents, which form the basis of a construction contract of a successful bid process. These documents typically include Drawings, Specifications, Supplemental General Conditions and Addenda issued during the tender process, as outlined by the [Canadian Construction Documents Committee](#).

3.0 Site Plan

Every site plan is unique to the specific site. Site planning involves the development of drawings that detail the layout of the overall site. This includes the building, exterior spaces and how they will be situated to establish a functional flow between the different spaces of the project. See [Section 4.0 Interior Spaces](#) and [Section 5.0 Exterior Spaces](#) for more information on the design of interior and exterior spaces.

When developing a site plan, the design team, led by the architect, will review and evaluate many factors, including access to daylight, positioning of exterior play space, positioning of access points and circulation around the site. A site plan will identify how the building is situated on the site, emergency access and evacuation considerations, the play space, parking and snow-clearing, setbacks, site access for vehicles and pedestrians, fencing and other pertinent information (e.g., regional climate). It will also consider relationships to the local and adjacent built and natural environment, as well as local government amenities and services. This may include water, sewer and electrical hook-ups, street/sidewalk access, and a representation of compliance with relevant municipal bylaws.

A site plan should also include child care specific considerations such as:

- The interior and exterior spaces are adjacent and at the same grade, so that children and adults can easily and safely see and transition between inside and outside activities.
- Site orientation that maximizes natural daylight, especially in winter months with shorter days.
- Sufficient shade during peak high temperature periods of the year.
- Access by road and by foot positioned for functionality, considering accessibility needs and safe pick-up and drop-off zones.
- Efficient circulation around the site, with clear paths for pedestrians.

For additional considerations when evaluating a site's suitability for child care, see [Section 2.4 Site Evaluation and Project Feasibility](#), including zoning and other regulations, site utilities, access, topography, daylight, views, wind, and other factors that should be considered when selecting a site for child care.

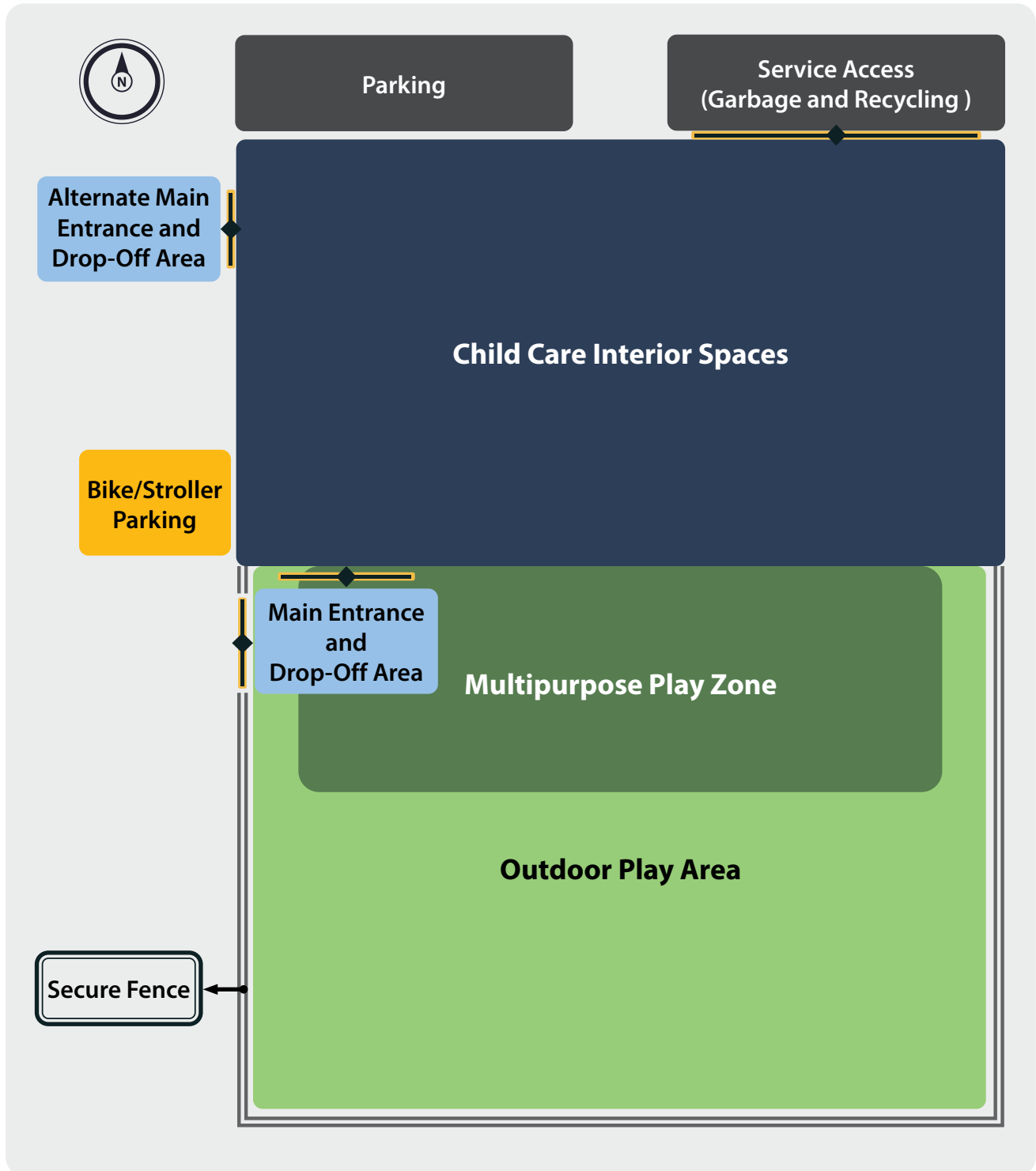
Municipal Zoning Bylaws can instruct the form and character of a planned building and may require specific characteristics of building form, parking arrangements and landscape features.

The following functional relationship diagram illustrates potential relationships of interior and exterior spaces on a site and the ideal site orientation to maximize daylight. Every site is unique, and the functional relationship diagram illustrates one example of a site layout.

Diagrams found within [Section 4.0 Interior Spaces](#) and [Section 5.0 Exterior Spaces](#) illustrate additional layout considerations.

Figure 6: Functional Relationship Diagram: Example Site Layout

- Functional relationship diagram showing potential relationships of interior and exterior spaces on a site and the ideal site orientation.



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.

Source: Resource Planning Group

4.0 Interior Spaces



4.1 Introduction

Design plays an important role in providing a place that is welcoming, inclusive and enriching as well as functional and safe for the people who regularly use and interact with the child care centre, including children, early childhood professionals, families, caregivers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, other professionals, and support staff.

A well-designed child care centre considers the location and design elements of each of the key spaces within the child care centre to support accessibility and inclusion, learning and development, elements of care, health and safety, and the functional flow of daily activities within the space. The Design Guidelines are intended to provide consistent design guidance with the goal of achieving a higher and more consistent quality of child care centres throughout B.C that are accessible and inclusive for all.

Section 4.0 Interior Spaces includes design guidelines, design considerations and recommended minimum space allocations that inform the design of the interior spaces of a child care centre. The design guidance in this section applies across multiple child care programs; however, where applicable, specific design guidance addressing a particular program is provided. See [Section 4.5 School Age](#) care for information on designing for school age child care programs.

Table 7: Definitions for Guidelines and Considerations

 Design Guideline	Essential design elements that guide the development and design of quality, inclusive child care centres.
 Design Consideration	Design elements recommended for consideration in the design of quality, inclusive child care centres. Design considerations may or may not be feasible to implement in all child care projects depending on project-specific factors.

Recap: Regulatory Requirements for Licensed Child Care

The Design Guidelines provide design guidance that considers the Regulatory requirements for licensed child care programs in B.C. which are found in the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) and the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practice](#).

Project leads and design teams as well as all applicants for a child care licence are responsible for meeting the requirements of the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), and the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practices](#). They are also responsible for meeting relevant local government bylaws and any other applicable requirements. The Regional Health Authority licensing program provides resources and guidance related to mandatory licensing requirements.

4.2 General Design Guidance for Interior Spaces

This section includes design elements and strategies that apply generally across the interior spaces of the child care centre. See [Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces](#) for details about each interior space.

Designing for Child Care Programs

Designing the interior space to support a successful child care program requires consideration for the people who regularly use and interact with the child care centre, including children and early childhood professionals, families, caregivers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, other professionals, and support staff.

An accessible and functional design supports intentional caregiving practices and the efficient flow of activities throughout the day across key spaces of the centre. The result is a well-functioning, efficient and safe child care centre.

● Guidelines

- The design of the centre maximizes space allocation in the Activity Area, which is the main space within a child care centre.
- The centre includes design elements that are home-like and foster a sense of belonging and comfort for those accessing the space. Examples include soft flooring, painted walls, natural light, and spaces for home-like decor.
- The overall design of the centre is informed by a child's view of the world. This includes using appropriately sized furniture and building elements for children as well as visual designs that reflect children's cultures.
- Sightlines are maximized through design elements such as internal windows or lower walls to ensure that early childhood professionals can maintain sightlines while performing necessary daily functions (e.g., preparing food in the Kitchen, supporting the toileting of a child in the Children's Washroom). See [Figure 7: Functional Relationship Diagram: Sightlines Between Program Components](#) for example sightlines across interior and exterior spaces.
- Furnishings are selected for their safety, functionality, cultural relevance and for the population of children being served, rather than visual appeal alone.
- Materials, finishes and hardware are durable and long-lasting.
- The design of the centre includes access to an internet connection, technology equipment and safe and ample electrical outlets throughout relevant areas of the centre to support program functions. Examples include electronic devices used for sign-in activities in the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area and computer and phone requirements in the Office.

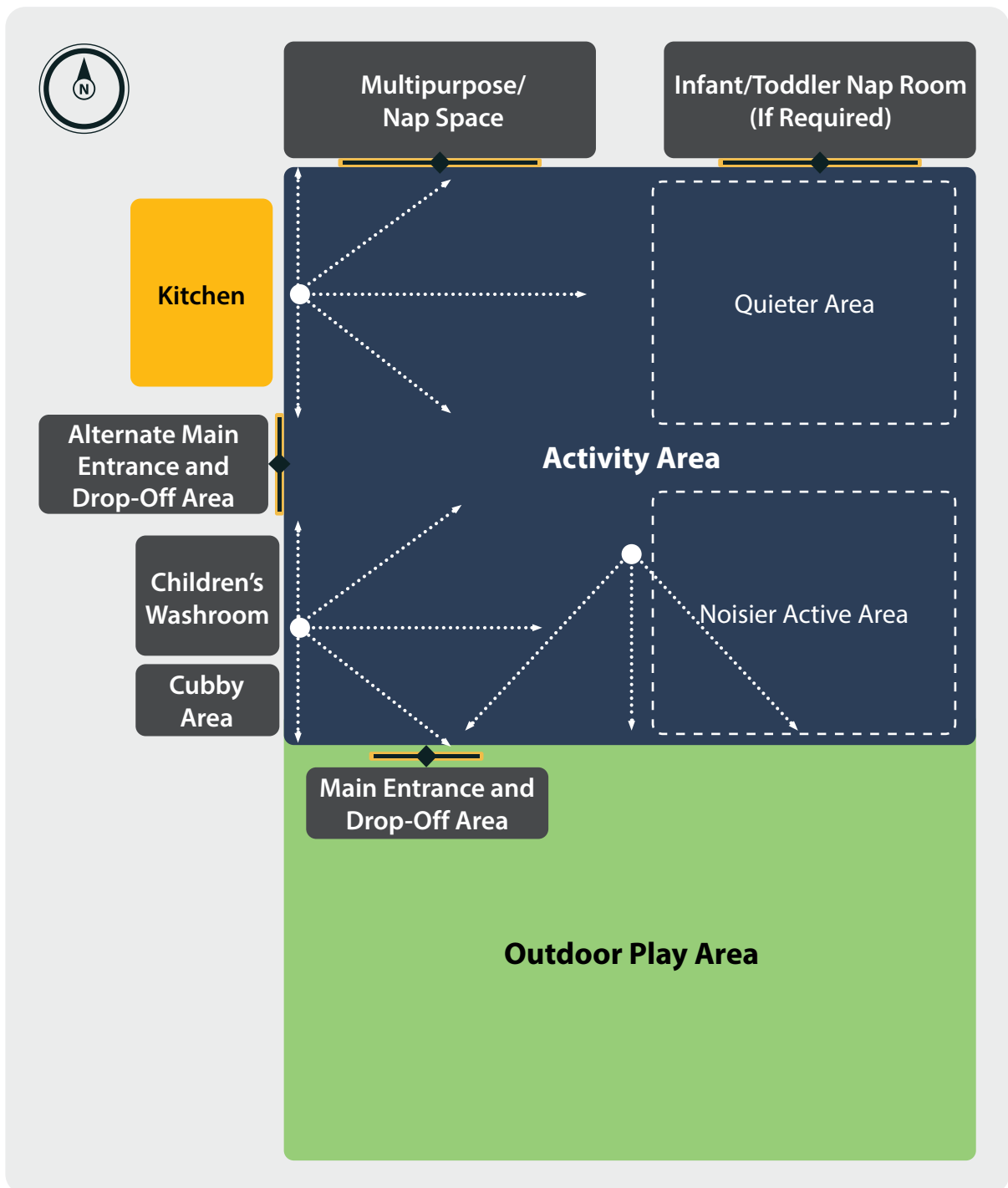
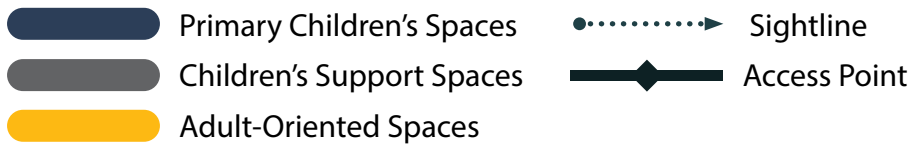
▲ Considerations

- Consider the use of internal windows and lower walls for support spaces to ensure that early childhood professionals can maintain sightlines while performing necessary daily functions such as preparing food in the Kitchen and supporting the toileting of a child in the Children's Washroom.
- Consider how to create a calming environment, such as using natural light and neutral paint colours. Overhead and low-quality lighting should be avoided as the main lighting source.
- Consider softer floor surfaces for comfort and safety.
- Consider millwork or wainscoting along the lower part of the walls for durability.

Figure 7: Functional Relationship Diagram: Sightlines Between Program Components

- Functional Relationship Diagram: Sightlines between Program Components highlights possible sightlines within Interior Spaces and to the Exterior.

Key



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.
 Source: Resource Planning Group

Simple Building Shape and Floor Plan

The overall building shape should be simple in design to support effective operations, optimize cost-effectiveness, allow for energy efficiencies and offer the most flexibility to adapt as needs of children and communities change over time.

● Guidelines

- The design of the centre includes a simple floor plan, such as a rectangular shape with limited bump-outs for maximized sightlines and a focus on the essential design elements needed for a quality child care centre.

Accessibility

Everyone – children and adults – should feel that they are welcome and belong and can participate meaningfully in the activities held at a child care centre. This includes people with diverse abilities and people with support needs.

An accessible design enables the participation of all children in typical activities offered at the centre. Discuss practical modifications with the project team to improve accessibility for all children and adults who use the space.

Project teams are encouraged to review the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) and the [Building Accessibility Handbook](#) which provide frameworks to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Additionally, the [Inclusive Child Care Toolkit](#) provides information on how to support high quality, inclusive practice in child care settings throughout B.C.

● Guidelines

- The child care centre and the spaces within it are accessible to all children and adults, providing appropriate access and egress and safety railings for all who may use assistive devices.
- Principles of universal design are applied to prevent or remove barriers to meaningful participation and accommodate a diverse range of ages, sizes and abilities. The design follows the latest physical accessibility standards and principles. See [Section 7.3 Resources](#) for examples.
- The design accommodates a wide range of individual sensory sensitivities such as sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch. Examples may include softened lighting and acoustics, separate bathroom light and fan switches, a designated quiet space/zone within the Activity Area and open floor space for movement breaks.
- The child care centre incorporates various strategies and tools into the design to support individuals with differing language abilities. Examples may include American Sign Language visuals, Braille, picture schedules, letter boards and symbol boards.

Natural Light and Views to the Exterior

Increasing opportunities to connect with nature through natural light, views to exterior and fresh air has positive health benefits, which include reduced stress levels and improved well-being for both children and early childhood professionals.

● Guidelines

- The centre includes large windows that maximize access to natural light and provide children and early childhood professionals with expansive views of the outdoors from a standing, seated or lying position.
- Where a child care centre is integrated within a multi-use building, generous access to natural light is provided, particularly for primary activity spaces.

▲ Considerations

- Consider durable building materials for window ledges to accommodate play at child height.
- Consider access to fresh air.
- Depending on site orientation and climate, consider the impacts of direct sunlight.

Efficient Circulation Between Spaces

Early childhood professionals constantly move from one area to another within a child care centre. Efficient circulation between spaces can reduce the amount of time spent moving between spaces and may reduce adult injuries.

● Guidelines

- Circulation pathways through the centre allow room for children, adults and those using mobility aids to move.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating support spaces such as the Cubby Area, Kitchen and Children's Washroom directly adjacent to the Activity Area. With this layout, there is no need for corridors to access each of these support spaces as the Activity Area acts as the connection point between each of them. This configuration allows for greater space allocation to the Activity Area rather than to the corridors and ensures that early childhood professionals are always near the Activity Area.

Health and Safety

The safety of children is paramount both in and outside the child care centre. Appropriate building materials, childproofing measures and other considerations ensure the well-being and safety of children. See the [Director of Licensing Standard of Practice for Safe Play Space](#) for additional information related to injury prevention.

Ergonomically appropriate design can also reduce or prevent adult injuries as they navigate interior and exterior spaces.

● Guidelines

Health

- The design of the centre is informed by Infection Prevention and Control measures, with specific attention to spaces used repeatedly by children and adults throughout the day. Providing adequate hand washing sinks and air filtration in appropriate locations (e.g., Activity Area and Kitchen) can limit the transmission of infections.
- The centre uses an air filtration system to improve indoor air quality and protect against smoky conditions and airborne pathogens. Design team members with heating, ventilation and air conditioning expertise can help find a balance between filtration grade and system efficiency.
- Design elements and interior finishes enable early childhood professionals to easily clean and disinfect surfaces. Examples include reducing or eliminating seams and corners that are difficult to clean and utilizing finishes and surfaces that are non-porous and that can withstand repeated use of cleaning agents.

- The design of the centre helps to discourage rodents or other animals from entering the program areas.
- Non-toxic and durable materials for finishes and fabrics are selected for safe use, ease of cleaning and maintenance, and longevity. These include materials that are low in volatile organic compounds and excludes materials that have been red-listed by the International Living Future Institute.⁵

Safety

- The child care centre eliminates undue risk through its design and construction (e.g., removing choking or entrapment opportunities that may be created by cords for blinds and window coverings, eliminating the potential for falling objects, including by securing furniture to walls or floors post-construction).
- The centre includes easily accessible and sufficiently wide exits so children and adults can exit the child care centre safely and quickly during an emergency. Particular attention should be given to the design and egress of child care facilities located on upper floors and rooftops as well as infant/toddler programs.
- The design of the centre includes design elements to reduce children’s exposure to sharp corners and edges, such as the use of corner guards for walls, countertops and other cabinetry and rounded corners for tables, shelves and equipment.
- The design of the centre eliminates all hardware that can cause injury, such as coat hooks placed on bare walls in spaces and heights accessible by children.
- Soft-close hinges and soft-door closers are used to reduce impact, minimizing the pressure on pinched fingers. They also minimize noise which can be more calming for children, particularly for those with auditory sensitivities and those who are napping.
- Slip-resistant and waterproof floor finishes are used in areas that may become wet with appropriate considerations to local climate.
- Millwork and other finishes are durable, moisture resistant and can withstand high impact and frequent cleaning.
- Glass and window interior glazing is tempered for safety from high impact.
- Windows have a limit on how far they open to prevent children from climbing through or being entrapped. This is particularly important for child care centres above the ground floor.
- Windows have screens to prevent pests from entering and debris from blowing inside when the windows are open.
- Tamper-proof electrical outlets are used in areas and at heights accessible to children.
- The centre includes secure, lockable storage for cleaning supplies and other materials that may be hazardous for children. This includes storage for adult belongings that may contain personal items that are hazardous to children, such as medications, cigarettes, matches, etc.
- Each program has lockable storage out of reach by children for items such as medication.

▲ Considerations

- Consider whether access to a generator may be necessary to ensure lighting and heat in the event of power outages.
- Consider using low glare light fixtures and low glare floors, so that early childhood professionals and children can see clearly and comfortably.

⁵ As per the International Living Future Institute, “the Living Building Challenge® (LBC) Red List represents the “worst in class” materials, chemicals, and elements known to pose serious risks to human health and the greater ecosystem that are prevalent in the building products industry.” Source: <https://living-future.org/red-list/>

Security

Ensuring a secure child care centre includes keeping children in and keeping unsafe objects and unauthorized people out. Security protocols can vary widely based on the location, size and individual considerations of the child care centre. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is based upon the theory that effective design and use of the built environment can reduce the incidence of crime. See the [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Canada](#) website for resources on designing with these principles in mind. Consider how to help children, families, caregivers, early childhood professionals and visitors feel safe but not surveilled.

● Guidelines

- The child care centre has sightlines from the interior to the exterior play area.
- The child care centre includes adequate security measures based on the location and conditions of the site to ensure safe and authorized entry and prevent children from exiting without assistance. This may include locking devices, such as fob access, key pad, press release buttons, chimes, alarms and video intercom at all interior entrances, elevators, garages and main exterior gates.

Environmental Considerations and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency

Climate change is impacting communities throughout B.C. Some climate impacts are related to sudden disastrous events, such as flooding and wildfires, while others occur more slowly over time such as sea level rise, species and ecosystem shifts and water shortages. Climate resilience is “the capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure”.⁶

Infants and young children may be particularly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, including extreme heat and cold events and poor air quality, requiring additional design elements or strategies to maintain healthy and safe environments. Designing child care centres for climate change resiliency is about proactively understanding the changing climate and preparing for and reducing climate-related risks to people and to the natural and built environment.

The [BC Building Code](#) includes requirements for energy efficiency and carbon reductions, such as the [BC Energy Step Code](#) and the [Zero Carbon Step Code](#). See the [BC Building Code](#) and the [BC Energy Step Code](#) for more information.

Some projects may have distinct sustainability objectives that consider the centre’s impact on the environment. There are many effective approaches to environmental sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction, which can be considered alongside these child care focused Design Guidelines. Some common and cost-effective opportunities to support environmental sustainability objectives are included as considerations.

● Guidelines

- The centre supports the maintenance of a healthy and safe environment for its users during extreme weather conditions, such as extreme heat events, poor air quality (e.g., related to wildfire smoke), extreme cold, extreme storms, drought and low water availability. The centre has active cooling capability, uses heat recovery ventilation (HRV) and provides a variety of cooling options as suggested by the mechanical engineer.

⁶ IPCC, 2012: Glossary of terms. In: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation [Field, C.B., et al. (eds.)]. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, pp. 555-564. https://archive.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srex/SREX-Annex_Glossary.pdf

- Use materials that may reduce flooding impacts to allow the child care to remain open and accessible in the event of a flood.
- Use clean energy for primary heating and cooling, such as heat pumps.

▲ Considerations

- Consider practices that actively restore and revitalize natural systems such as operations that reduce waste.
- Consider using recycled or recyclable building materials.
- Consider construction materials that are low in embodied energy and carbon, such as wood, mass timber, and Portland-limestone cement.

Refer to [Section 5.2 Exterior Spaces](#), Environmental Considerations and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency for information about outdoor spaces.

Acoustic Environment

The acoustic environment contributes to the inclusion, health and well-being of all occupants and should be considered an integral part of planning and design. See the [BC Building Code](#) for specific requirements.

● Guidelines

- Noise within the child care centre is no more than the allowable noise level defined by local zoning bylaws for residential living units.
- The centre includes exterior walls, doors and windows with acoustic treatment appropriate to mitigate noise infiltration to the interior from exterior sources.
- Limit the transfer of noise between spaces through measures such as using commercial-grade sound absorbing materials and finishes, installing acoustic batt insulation, and installing solid core doors.

▲ Considerations

- Consider selecting appliances including dishwashers, washing machines, and hand dryers that emit lower levels of sound. If electric hand dryers are the main method of hand drying, provide an option to use paper towels.
- Where appropriate, consider using acoustic tiling, acoustic panels, and lower ceilings to reduce and modulate noise levels.

4.3 Key Interior Spaces

This section includes design guidance for each of the interior spaces that support a quality, inclusive child care centre. The main Activity Area supports the central function of every child care centre and there are several support spaces that are required to support daily functions, such as the Kitchen, the Washrooms, the Multipurpose/Nap Space or Infant/Toddler Nap Room and staff spaces.

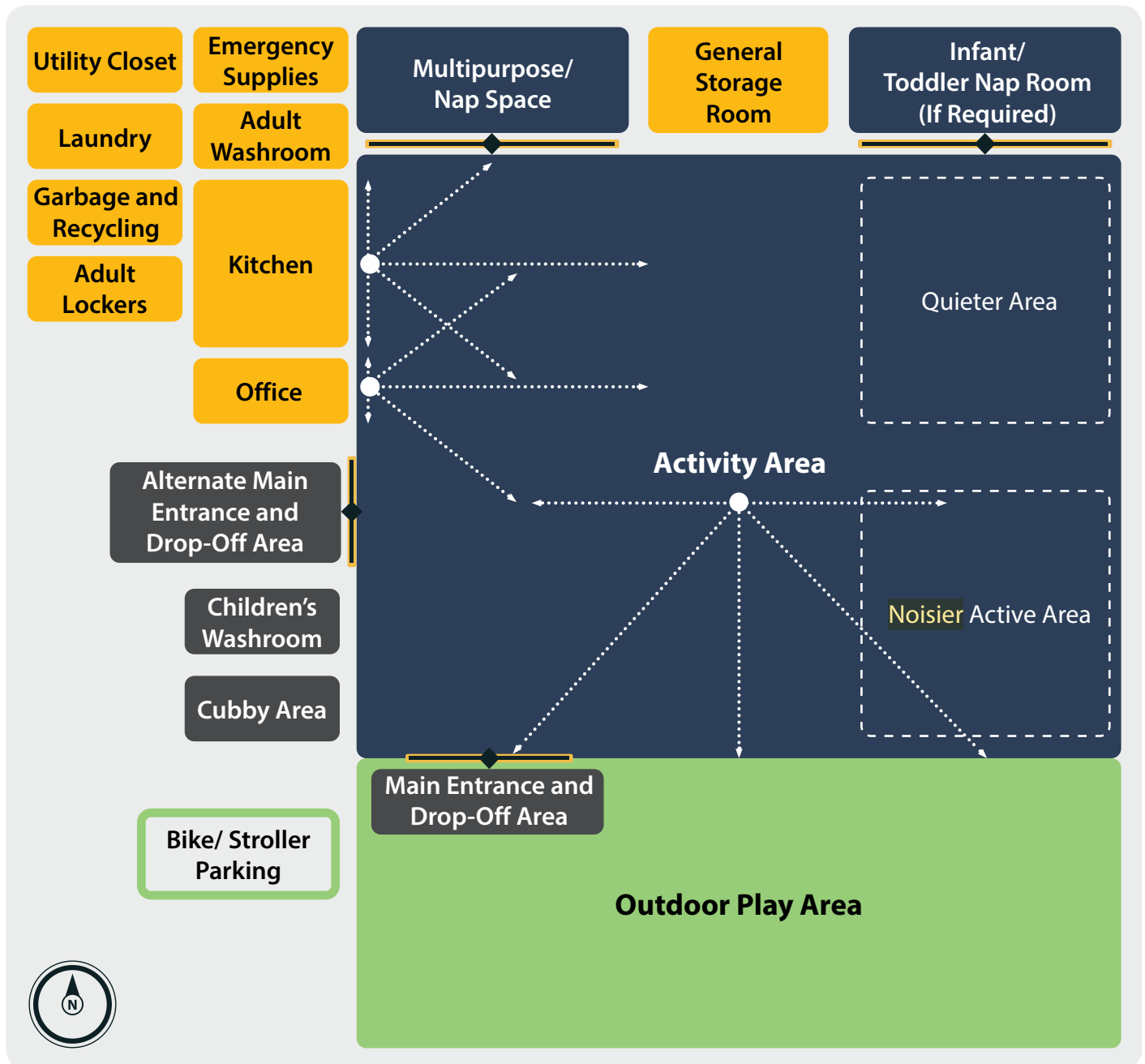
Figure 8 illustrates the functional relationships between the interior spaces of a single child care program. It highlights that the Activity Area is central to almost all functions, including the overall zoning of children and staff-oriented spaces. It also illustrates the key relationship between the Interior Space and the Outdoor Play Area.

Figure 8: Functional Relationship Diagram: Key Interior Spaces

- Functional Relationship Diagram: Key Interior Spaces highlights possible organization of Key Interior Spaces and efficient relationships between spaces.

Key

- Primary Children’s Spaces
- Adult-Oriented Spaces
- Children’s Support Spaces
- Sightline
- Access Point



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.

Source: Resource Planning Group

Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area

The Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area accommodates the drop-off and pick-up of children by family members and caregivers. Activities supported by this space include access to the child care centre, greeting family members and caregivers, sign-in activities and sharing information about the day's events and information regarding children.

● Guidelines

- The Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area is located close to the Cubby Area and has a visual connection, but slight separation, from the Activity Area, so that activities are not disrupted while drop-off/pick-up is taking place.
- The Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area is designed to promote safe entry to the centre, such as through a vestibule or a secondary gate.
- The centre includes sufficient space to accommodate multiple families and caregivers dropping-off or picking-up at the same time to encourage interaction and connection between children, families, caregivers, early childhood professionals and Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Access to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area is accessible by modes of transport such as strollers, bicycles, wheelchairs and other assistive devices.
- The Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area has adequate outdoor lighting, as pick-up and drop-off may occur during times of the year when it is darker in the mornings and evenings.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating access to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area through the Outdoor Play Area to ease transitions and reduce the number of exits.
- Consider incorporating the Cubby Area into a vestibule as part of the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area to ease transitions.
- Consider minimizing movement through a series of entrances and creating ease of flow to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area if the child care centre is in a multi-use building.
- Consider incorporating parking and storage for personal strollers and bicycles based on the needs of the families, caregivers and staff accessing the centre. Parking and storage for personal strollers and bicycles are often located in the exterior of the centre with cover. See [B.C.'s Active Transportation Design Guide](#) for information regarding end-point facilities and refer to [Section 5.3 Exterior Support Spaces: Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage](#).

Recommended Minimum Space Allocations

No recommended allocation. This area may be taken from a combination of the Activity Area and grossing factor.⁷

Cubby Area

The Cubby Area provides dedicated storage for personal belongings and is a place for both children and early childhood professionals to change into and out of outdoor clothing and footwear. It is also used as a gathering space before going outdoors and after returning. It may also be used for sign-in activities and notice boards, depending on the layout of the space.

⁷The grossing factor is an estimate of the additional space over and above the listed room areas needed to develop a functional child care centre. It includes wall thicknesses, internal corridors and circulation and mechanical and electrical rooms.

● Guidelines

- The Cubby Area is located close to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area and Outdoor Play Area with a visual connection to, but slight separation from, the Activity Area.
- The Cubby Area includes security measures to ensure children do not exit unnoticed.
- An accessible cubby is provided for each child with enough space to store their outdoor clothing, bags and other personal items.
- The Cubby Area includes space for adults to store their clothing and outdoor gear.
- The Cubby Area includes extra hooks and appropriate wall finishes to hang wet clothing.
- The Cubby Area includes sufficient space for multiple children and adults to use the space simultaneously and for adults to assist with changing.
- The Cubby Area includes space for adults and children to sit on the floor and on benches.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Cubby Area close to the Children’s Washroom to support children’s toileting and handwashing needs as a natural transition point from outside to inside.
- Consider the relationship between the Cubby Area, the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area and the Outdoor Play Area to ease transitions.
- For centres with more than one child care program, consider providing separate Cubby Areas for each program with dedicated shoe storage and room for boots on a boot tray to contain water and dirt. Where possible, consider adequate space between the Cubby Areas for the different programs to reduce congestion.
- Consider additional cubbies for Elders and Knowledge Keepers, practicum students or part-time children.
- Consider incorporating higher lighting levels in the Cubby Area for visibility.
- Consider adding slats towards the bottom of cubbies to allow sand to fall through to the floor for ease of cleaning.
- Consider planning for bulky clothing in cold weather climates.
- Consider locating the laundry area near the cubby area for ease of drying wet clothing or incorporating a single dryer into the cubby area.

Table 8: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Cubby Area

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	10.5
Ages 3-5	25	12.5
School Age 5-12	24	10.0
School Age 7-12	30	12.0
Multi-Age	8	8.5

Activity Area

The Activity Area is the central space in a child care centre where children live and learn together. Children explore, play and learn through engagement with the space, peers, early childhood professionals, Elders and Knowledge Keepers and materials. The layout within the Activity Area should be flexible so group sizes can be adjusted, and the space and materials within can be arranged based on needs and interests of the group.

The Activity Area may include a space intentionally created to support sensory needs, self-regulation and engagement in the child care program. See [Figure 9: Sensory Spaces](#) below for more information.

The Activity Area includes a multipurpose space that can also be used for napping. More information on the [Multipurpose/Nap Space](#) can be found in the following section.

The Activity Area and the Multipurpose/Nap Space minimum space allocations are combined to form the overall activity area. See [Table 25: Activity Area Size by Child Care Program](#) for more information.

See [Figure 10 Functional Relationship Diagram: Activity Area Components](#) for a possible arrangement of the Activity Area, including the Multipurpose/Nap Space.

● Guidelines

- The Activity Area is the central activity space in the centre. It is located directly beside the Multipurpose/Nap Space and adjacent to the Cubby Area, Kitchen, Children's Washroom and the Outdoor Play Area.
- The Activity Area is as large as possible, with multiple internal spaces that encourage exploration and creativity. This may be achieved by designing the space to accommodate the program setting up flexible activity centres or zones to support different kinds of activities, enabling children to choose what they want to do (e.g., art, dramatic play, building blocks, puzzles, books).
- The Activity Area features an open, flexible layout, allowing for strategic separation of key spaces when needed, while maintaining sightlines, easy access to support spaces (e.g., Kitchen, Children's Washroom) and carefully considered connections to the Outdoor Play Area.
- The Activity Area includes a focused area for quieter activities. Active play areas are separate from quieter play areas to promote focus and safety.
- The Activity Area includes both a child-height and adult-height sink for hygiene with an adult-height counter.
- Storage units or shelving are incorporated into the Activity Area for children's toys, materials and supplies.
- The Activity Area has ample natural light and views to the exterior because it is the indoor space where children and early childhood professionals spend the most time.

▲ Considerations

- Where appropriate, consider orienting the Activity Area to the south to increase natural light, while accounting for regional needs for sun control and shading.
- Consider patio doors or double doors that lead from the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone to increase the flow between indoors and outdoors.
- The Activity Area may include a space for an adult communications centre where information related to each child is maintained, while also being mindful of confidentiality. This may require access to power and an internet connection.
- The Activity Area may include a quiet alcove area for children who are unwell and waiting for pick-up, allowing for supervision.

Table 9: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Activity Area

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	51.9
Ages 3-5	25	98.9
School Age 5-12	24	87.6
School Age 7-12	30	106.0
Multi-Age	8	37.1

Figure 9: Sensory Space

Sensory Space

Sensory spaces are intentionally created safe spaces that children may access to support their health and well-being. Sensory spaces can reduce sensory overload or provide increased sensory input for children who require more stimulation, supporting children in sensory regulation, supporting behavioural needs and enabling engagement and participation. Sensory spaces can be beneficial to all children, and especially to those who have been exposed to trauma, chronic stress and/or who have specific sensory needs.

Sensory spaces are designed to stimulate all senses and should be flexible and adaptable to differing needs. Sensory spaces are not intended to be rooms for restraint or seclusion and should not be designed for use for time-out, containment or as punitive spaces.

Within a child care program, the Sensory Space may be incorporated into the larger Activity Area or another suitable area. When designing this space, consider how furniture and furnishings can be used to create a sense of division between the Sensory Space and broader area. Environmental factors to consider when creating a Sensory Space include acoustics, lighting, organization of the space in a logical manner, creating division or separation for a neutral sensory environment, equipment and storage to reduce clutter. A Sensory Space may include a variety of multi-sensory equipment. Examples include fiber optic lighting, bean bag chairs, weighted blankets, pop-up tents, headphones and fidget toys.

Multipurpose/Nap Space within the Activity Area

The Multipurpose/Nap Space is a dedicated space that can be separated from the larger Activity Area to accommodate a variety of activities when a distinct space is needed. It is independent from the Infant/Toddler Nap Room required for infant/toddler programs (see [Infant/Toddler Nap Room](#)).

The Multipurpose/Nap Space aligns with the nap requirements of children ages 3-5 and offers a secondary nap space for infant/toddler programs, accommodating variable napping schedules for both age groups. See [Infant/Toddler Nap Room](#) Guidelines and Considerations to support a quality napping environment.

This space can also be used for gross motor, quieter activities, sensory space and an extension of the Activity Area when not used for napping. This may also be a space used for one-to-one therapies and supports when needed. The Multipurpose/Nap Space should be included in all child care programs.

The Multipurpose/Nap Space and the Activity Area minimum space allocations are combined to form the overall activity area. See [Table 25: Activity Area Size by Child Care Program](#) for more information.

● Guidelines

- The Multipurpose/Nap Space is located next to the Activity Area and can be connected or separated using dividers such as Dutch doors.
- Activities within the Multipurpose/Nap Space are visible from the Activity Area, so that adults can monitor activities.
- The Multipurpose/Nap Space includes windows for air flow and natural light to accommodate various activities. If relevant, consider placing window coverings so they can be adjusted from the Activity Area for supervision that does not disrupt napping.
- There is sufficient storage for items such as mats, napping supplies and toys.
- The Multipurpose/Nap Space can serve as a gross motor space, particularly when located in areas that experience extreme weather conditions (e.g., heat, cold, wildfire smoke) when outdoor play may not be possible.
- The Multipurpose/Nap Space includes good acoustic separation from surrounding areas of activity and noise to support children napping and use of the space for other quiet activities, including one-to-one therapies and supports when needed.
- The Multipurpose/Nap Space contemplates safety considerations such as placement and type of electrical outlets while ensuring sufficient outlets for program needs.
- Particular attention should be paid to the provisions for adequate ventilation and the ability to regulate air temperature to heat and cool spaces used for napping to support the health and safety of children.

Table 10: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Multipurpose / Nap Space within Activity Area

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler ⁸	12	11.2
Mat Storage	-	3.0
Ages 3-5	25	16.7
Mat Storage	-	5.0
School Age 5-12	24	14.4
Mat Storage	-	-
School Age 7-12	30	19.2
Mat Storage	-	-
Multi-Age ⁹	8	9.3
Mat Storage	-	2.0

Note: The mat storage area allocation is additional to the Activity Area allocation, as it is not a usable floor area, as defined by the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). See [Figure 12: Usable Floor Area Calculations for Licensing Requirements](#) for more information.

Infant/Toddler Nap Room

The Infant/Toddler Nap Room is a separate napping space for infants and toddlers and aligns with the nap requirements for infant/toddler and multi-age child care programs. It is in addition to the Multipurpose/Nap Space recommended for all centres. Infant/toddler program furniture, such as cribs for infants, may be permanently set up, so this nap room is not easily convertible for other activities and functions and is not included in the Activity Area calculation.

In an infant/toddler program, the Multipurpose/Nap Space may be used in addition to the Infant/Toddler Nap Room to accommodate variable napping schedules.

The Infant/Toddler Nap Room is required by licensing for infant/toddler child care programs only. Therefore, space allocations for ages 3-5 and school age programs are not included. See [Multipurpose/Nap Space](#) for these child care programs.

● Guidelines

- The Infant/Toddler Nap Room is an enclosed room adjacent to the Activity Area but located away from areas where noisier activities take place (e.g., Outdoor Play Area).
- Children in the Infant/Toddler Nap Room are visible to adults from the Activity Area through direct supervision, monitors, windows or dutch doors.
- Safe black-out window coverings are installed to prevent light from entering through windows during nap times.

⁸ Infant/Toddler Multipurpose/Nap Space allocation is in addition to dedicated Infant/Toddler Nap Room

⁹ Multi-Age Multipurpose/Nap Space allocation is in addition to dedicated Infant/Toddler Nap Room

- The Infant/Toddler Nap Room includes additional soundproofing measures for walls, any interior windows and doors.
- The design includes adequate floor space to allow sufficient room around mats and/or cribs. The floor space accounts for the needs of early childhood professionals to move around the mats and/or cribs to access children who may wake up early or require assistance.
- Adequate storage is provided for sleeping mats and other napping supplies, and children’s bedding can be stored separately.
- In supporting the health and safety of children, particular attention should be paid to adequate ventilation to ensure fresh air and the ability to regulate air temperature to heat and cool spaces used for napping.

▲ Considerations

- Consider how to play music or white noise (e.g., a small shelf or built-in speakers) while ensuring outlets and cords are out of children’s reach.
- Consider placing window coverings so they can be adjusted from the Activity Area for supervision that does not disrupt napping.
- Consider locating the Infant/Toddler Nap Room close to the Children’s Washroom for focused transitions.

Table 11: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Infant/Toddler Nap Room

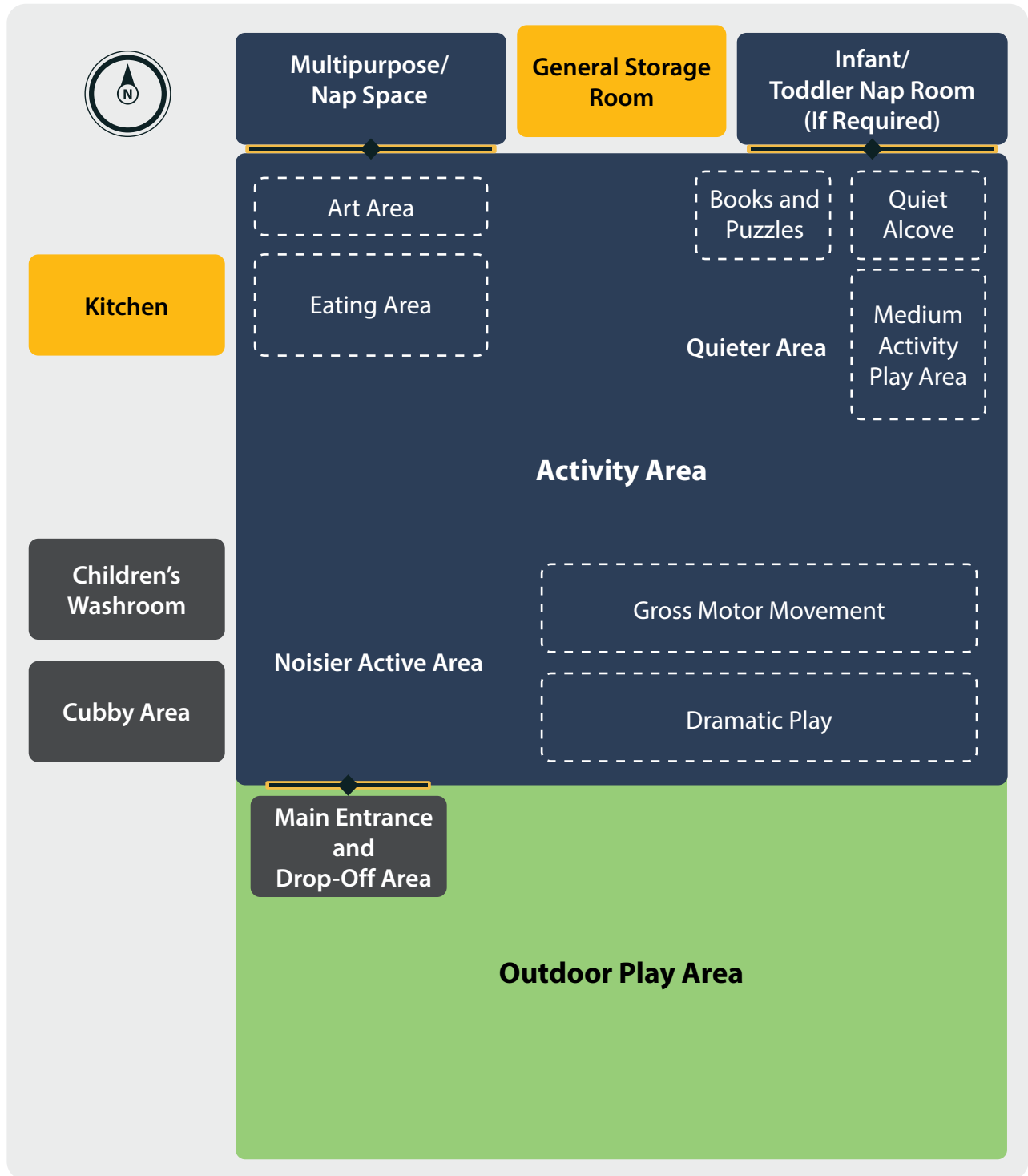
Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	15.8
Ages 3-5	25	0
School Age 5-12	24	0
School Age 7-12	30	0
Multi-Age	8	10.2

Figure 10: Functional Relationship Diagram: Activity Area Components

- Functional Relationship Diagram: Activity Area Components highlights possible zoning of Activity Area

Key

- Primary Children's Spaces
- Adult-Oriented Spaces
- Children's Support Spaces
- Access Point



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.

Source: Resource Planning Group

Children's Washroom

The Children's Washroom accommodates toileting, washing and changing children, including potty training, toilet training, toilet learning, toileting, hand washing, diaper changing, washing down children and changing of children's clothes. The design of the Children's Washroom should accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of the children accessing the centre. More information on best practices for inclusive bathroom design can be found in the [Inclusive Bathroom Design Considerations](#) resource.

● Guidelines

- The Children's Washroom is located adjacent to the Activity Area, Multipurpose/Nap Space, Cubby Area and the Outdoor Play Area. This location enables adults to easily communicate as well as observe the entrance to the Children's Washroom from the Activity Area (i.e., the Children's Washroom should not be down a corridor).
- The Children's Washroom entrance is separated by a half-height gate with a child-proof latch.
- The Children's Washroom includes toilets in a variety of heights, hand wash sinks, child-proof soap dispenser, mirrors, hand dryer/paper towel dispenser, waste bins and soiled clothes container and child-sized furniture (e.g., stable step stools) that are accessible to children at different stages of development to promote independence.
- The number of toilets and sinks in the Children's Washroom meet or exceed requirements in the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).
- Fixtures and equipment used in the space are mounted at appropriate heights and distances for the age of the children accessing the washroom to facilitate ease of access.
- The Children's Washroom includes, at minimum, one screened stall for privacy for ages 3-5 programs.
- The Children's Washroom includes a changing surface at adult standing height adjacent to an adult-height sink, storage for supplies that are inaccessible to children and a covered container for garbage.
- The Children's Washroom provides sufficient room for an adult to assist a child with toileting and changing. Change tables or areas should not be outside or adjacent to the Children's Washroom.
- There is adequate ventilation (e.g., ceiling fan, window) to remove odours without drafts.
- There is sufficient heat for children's comfort while changing.
- The Children's Washroom includes a floor drain.
- The Children's Washroom is a universal washroom, and uses gender-neutral language, avoiding bias toward a particular sex or gender and is a safe space for any person to use.
- The Children's Washroom design for school-aged care programs include individual stalls with doors to allow privacy for older children.
- The Children's Washroom includes at least one wheelchair-accessible stall with an optional ceiling lift in school-aged care settings.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Children's Washroom away from the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area for privacy.
- When selecting equipment and fixtures for the Children's Washroom such as fans, lights, hand dryers and automatic flush toilets, consider sensory sensitivities (e.g., auditory, visual, olfactory or otherwise).
- Consider how to maximize access to sinks, such as a trough design, which may also limit pooling of water.
- Consider positioning the changing surface so adults have sightlines from within the Children's Washroom to the Activity Area.

- Consider placement of the storage in relationship to changing surface to ensure safety and ease of movement for children and adults.
- Consider a changing surface that includes steps (e.g., custom millwork stairs on rolling casters that can tuck under the surface when not in use) for children to promote independence and reduce the likelihood of injury.
- Consider a changing surface that includes a hole cut in the millwork for soiled diapers to maximize space and limit child access to waste bins.
- Consider incorporating a washer and dryer in the bathroom for ease of access.

Table 12: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Children’s Washroom

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m²)
Infant/Toddler	12	8.8
Ages 3-5	25	12.4
School Age 5-12	24	13.3
School Age 7-12	30	13.3
Multi-Age	8	6.0

Note: Areas provided in the table above relate to a single child care program. Children’s Washrooms may be shared by multiple child care programs, of the same age or of different ages, with some resulting space efficiency. Areas are not included when calculating space requirements. Refer to the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) for specific requirements.

Adult Washroom

The Adult Washroom is separate from the Children’s Washroom and accommodates toileting, hand washing and changing for all adults, including early childhood professionals, practicum students, therapists, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, families, caregivers, support staff and others accessing the space. Where a shower is provided for early childhood professionals, it may be adjacent to the Adult Washroom.

● Guidelines

- The Adult Washroom is located close to the Activity Area, Office and Break Room in centres with multiple child care programs.
- In addition to the toilet and sink, the Adult Washroom should accommodate a changing surface for families and caregivers accessing the space, hand dryer or paper towel dispenser, mirror, waste bins and storage.
- The Adult Washroom is wheelchair-accessible and large enough to permit assisted toileting.
- There is adequate ventilation to remove odours without drafts and sufficient heat for comfort while changing.
- The Adult Washroom includes a floor drain.
- The Adult Washroom is a universal washroom, and uses gender-neutral language, avoiding bias toward a particular sex or gender and is a safe space for any person to use.

▲ Considerations

- If a shower is provided, consider locating the shower in proximity to the Adult Washroom, Break Room and Adult Lockers.
- In centres with multiple child care programs, the Adult Washrooms may be located near the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area for visitors.
- In centres with multiple child care programs, the Adult Washrooms may be located close to the infant/toddler area to better maintain staffing ratios.

Table 13: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation: Adult Washroom

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	-	4.6

Note: A single Adult Washroom is assumed to serve up to two programs. If more are included on a single site, or the Activity Area of the program is not nearby, additional washrooms should be provided.

Kitchen

The Kitchen accommodates meal and snack preparation and clean up and serves as a key sanitization function for the child care program. Activities may include receiving and storing food and supplies, preparing and cooking meals and snacks, and cleaning and sanitizing. Carefully consider the layout, functionality and adjacent spaces of the Kitchen based on the needs of the child care program and the ages of children served. Guidance above and beyond the Design Guidelines will be needed if the child care program requires a commercial-grade Kitchen.

● Guidelines

- The Kitchen is located adjacent to the Activity Area (not down a corridor from the Activity Area) and may be close to a service entrance, if applicable. The location and design of the Kitchen supports sightlines to the Activity Area for adults to supervise children while in the Kitchen.
- The Kitchen should enable hot food to be prepared and cooked for children and the design of the Kitchen must meet Health Authority environment health requirements such that a food service permit can be obtained, if required.¹⁰
- The following elements are included in the Kitchen:
 - Dry storage area in cupboards
 - Counter preparation area
 - Refrigerator appropriate for volume of meals
 - Range/oven with ducted exhaust hood to the exterior
 - Drying racks
 - Microwave
 - Triple sink for sanitation
 - Waste, recycling, and organics centre
 - Dishwasher
 - Handwashing sink
 - Floor drain
- The Kitchen layout is efficient and ergonomic so that adults can easily and comfortably move around while preparing snacks and meals.
- Appliances are appropriately sized to support program needs (i.e., cold storage for lunches and safe storage and heating of bottles).

¹⁰ Applicants should check with the local Environmental Health Office early on matters related to food premises and permitting.

- Appliances are safely anchored to the wall and/or floor.
- The Kitchen provides sufficient storage to support the program size and adult dish and drinkware.
- The Kitchen provides sufficient storage to support the program size for food storage.
- The Kitchen includes adequate ventilation to remove odours, steam and heat without drafts.
- Separate and secure storage for things such as cleaning supplies (away from food items), medication, sharp objects or knives.

▲ Considerations

- In infant/toddler programs, if the kitchen is not adjacent to the main activity area, consider including a Kitchenette, such as a small fridge and microwave, for food preparation while maintaining ratio.
- Consider secure access to the Kitchen (e.g., half-height gate with secret gate latch).
- Where appropriate, consider incorporating a commercial dishwasher with low temperature chlorine-based sanitizer in combination with a triple sink. See the [Guidelines for Mechanical Warewashing in Food Service Establishments](#) for more details.
- Consider including sufficient storage (e.g., refrigerator and freezer), food preparation areas and ventilation based on need including for those with allergies, dietary restrictions, medical needs, cultural needs and religious considerations.
- Consider a Kitchen layout that accommodates cooking and baking with children.
- Where appropriate, consider safe child access to refrigerator for independent retrieval of lunches.

Table 14: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Kitchen

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	One child care program	8.5
All programs	Two child care programs	10.2
Infant/Toddler Kitchenette –	12	3.6

Note: The Kitchen may be shared by two programs, with a resulting space efficiency while potentially accommodating additional elements (e.g., refrigerator). Additional kitchens may be added if there are more than two programs. Kitchenette may be added to an infant/toddler program if main Kitchen is not adjacent Activity Area.

Office

The Office accommodates administrative tasks and small meetings, including meetings with families. It is also used as a Break Room for child care centres with a single program. The Office is used to store confidential files and therapy materials, and supports scheduling, confidential conversations, accessing emails, taking phone calls, pedagogical work and documentation and collaboration with co-workers.

● Guidelines

- The Office is acoustically well-insulated to ensure it remains quiet.
- The space includes a desk or table and chair, along with additional accessible seating for other educators, professionals, visiting families, caregivers and Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

- For single child care programs where the Office is also used as a Break Room, the seating is comfortable to support early childhood professionals' break activities.
- The Office includes a lockable filing cabinet for secure storage, personal storage and/or additional general storage.
- The Office includes information technology tools and services for efficient communication and administrative responsibilities including access to power and internet connection.
- The space includes general and task lighting, and sufficient electrical outlets to support administrative activities.
- The Office includes options for communication in emergencies and power outages.

▲ Considerations

- The design of the Office is sufficiently sized and furnished to accommodate staffing ratios and practicum students.
- Depending on needs and preferences, consider locating the Office so there is easy access to main circulation routes and to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area. Some programs may prefer that the Office is located with sightlines to the Activity Area.
- The Office may include a lockable medicine cabinet.
- The Office may be used as a quiet space for individual or family needs such as breastfeeding.

Table 15: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation: Office

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	-	7.0

Break Room

The Break Room accommodates early childhood professionals' break activities and is a separate space for centres with two or more child care programs. It will accommodate general respite, eating and collaboration with co-workers.

● Guidelines

- The Break Room is located near the Adult Lockers and the Adult Washroom and is accessible from a main circulation route.
- The Break Room includes a small preparation counter and for larger Break Rooms, an area with fridge, microwave oven, sink, and storage.
- This space includes an eating area with tables and chairs.
- The Break Room includes adequate ventilation to remove odours.

▲ Considerations

- Consider providing soft seating and quieter areas, particularly in larger Break Rooms supporting multiple programs.
- Consider the appropriate proximity of the Break Room to child care centre Activity Areas based on needs and preferences.
- Consider access to natural light where possible.

Table 16: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Break Room

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	Base area for two programs	5.6
All programs	Additional allocation per additional program	2.0

Adult Lockers

Adult Lockers accommodate the secure storage and access to personal belongings including the belongings of early childhood professionals and visitors or guests, such as practicum students, therapists and Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

● Guidelines

- The Adult Lockers are in proximity to the Break Room and, if provided, shower facilities.
- Adult Lockers are easily accessible by early childhood professionals and are away from children's areas.
- Secure half- or full-sized lockers are provided depending on the centre's needs.

▲ Considerations

- Consider including additional Adult Lockers for visitors or guests.
- Consider including a bench close to the Adult Lockers.

Table 17: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Adult Lockers

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	1.8
Ages 3-5	25	1.8
School Age 5-12	24	1.0
School Age 7-12	30	1.4
Multi-Age	8	1.0

Note: When two or more programs are located at a centre, the locker allocations for each program can be added together.

General Storage Room

The General Storage Room accommodates the storage and retrieval of items that are used less often, too large to fit in other storage areas or not in rotation depending on child preference or need. It is an adult-only area that supports the activities of each child care program.

● Guidelines

- The General Storage Room is located adjacent to the Activity Area so that items can be easily accessed and moved to and from these areas.
- The General Storage Room is enclosed, has large doors and is lockable.
- The General Storage Room includes an open area for larger items that are best stored on the floor, has open and enclosed shelving units, as well as hooks.

▲ Considerations

- Consider deep, adjustable shelving where possible for large bins.

Table 18: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: General Storage Room

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	7.0
Ages 3-5	25	8.0
School Age 5-12	24	8.0
School Age 7-12	30	10.0
Multi-Age	8	7.0

Note: Each program should have its own allocated General Storage Room.

Laundry Area

The Laundry Area accommodates laundering items used in the child care centre and children's clothing as required. It supports washing and drying clothing and other items used by the child care program, as well as storing laundry detergent and supplies.

● Guidelines

- The Laundry Area is located close to the Activity Area. Laundry Areas serving multiple programs are located central to the program, in the adult-only area.
- The Laundry Area is generally inaccessible to children and is lockable, or machines can be secured.
- The Laundry Area includes a large capacity washer, clothes dryer, utility sink and layout table or folding counter.
- The Laundry Area is not accessed through the Kitchen or Children's Washroom due to health and safety concerns.
- The Laundry Area includes adequate power to support the washing machine and dryer.

- The Laundry Area includes adequate ventilation to remove heat and humidity.
- The Laundry Area includes sound and vibration control.
- The Laundry Area includes a floor drain.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Laundry Area close to the Children’s Washroom and Cubby Area, while away from the Infant/Toddler Nap Room.

Table 19: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation: Laundry Area

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	Serving up to two Programs	3.5

Note: Based on design, a single Laundry Area may be able to serve two programs. If a centre has more than two programs, multiple or larger Laundry Areas could be provided.

Utility Closet

The Utility Closet accommodates cleaning chemicals, cleaning supplies and portable cleaning equipment.

● Guidelines

- The Utility Closet accommodates the needs for cleaning the facility and may include a floor sink, hand hygiene sink and utility sink.
- The space includes chemical dispensing units, open shelves for supplies and hooks for cleaning equipment such as mop heads. It also includes an open area to store cleaning equipment such as a vacuum, burnisher, cleaning cart and mop bucket.
- The Utility Closet is inaccessible to children and is lockable.
- The Utility Closet includes adequate ventilation to remove humidity and odours.
- The Utility Closet includes a floor drain.

▲ Considerations

- Consider providing a discrete or disguised doorway to the Utility Closet to reduce attention.

Table 20: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation: Utility Closet

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
All programs	-	1.6

Note: Based on design, a single Utility Closet of may be able to serve two programs.If a centre has more than two programs, multiple or larger Utility Closets should be provided.

Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area

The Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area accommodates temporary waste holding and sorting, and recycling. [Section 5.3.2 Exterior Support Spaces: Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area](#) includes additional information related to the child care centre's exterior Garbage and Recycling Area.

● Guidelines

- The Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area is located adjacent to the service entrance or dock (where applicable), in proximity to the Kitchen.
- The Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area is generally inaccessible to children but allows children to assist in recycling activities where appropriate.
- The Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area includes adequate ventilation to remove odours and humidity.

▲ Considerations

- Consider including a bin wash area, along with a floor drain.

Table 21: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	2.0
Ages 3-5	25	2.0
School Age 5-12	24	2.0
School Age 7-12	30	2.0
Multi-Age	8	1.0

Note: The allocations are for single programs; where multiple programs are located together, the areas may be combined to an overall total area of 4.0 m².

Emergency Supplies Storage

Emergency Supplies Storage accommodates the storage of emergency supplies and sealed comfort kits for each child at the centre. See [PreparedBC](#) for additional information regarding emergency preparedness.

● Guidelines

- Emergency Supplies Storage is located close to the Office and Break Room, as well as to the Activity Area and Kitchen.
- Emergency Supplies Storage is an enclosed lockable room that is located away from children's areas.
- Emergency supplies are stored so they can be easily moved when and if needed (e.g., totes or backpacks).

▲ Considerations

- Consider how the location of Emergency Supplies Storage enables easy access in the event of different emergencies as well as how temperatures may impact the use of various supplies.

Table 22: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Emergency Supplies Storage

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	3.0
Ages 3-5	25	4.0
School Age 5-12	24	2.0
School Age 7-12	30	3.0
Multi-Age	8	2.0

Note: For centres with two or more programs, the Emergency Supplies Storage can be consolidated into a single, larger space, potentially resulting in space efficiency.

4.4 Area Guidelines for Interior Spaces

This section will help to determine the size of interior spaces in the child care centre. A space allocation is provided for most spaces in the child care centre as a reasonable starting point for the iterative design process. These recommended spaces may not work or be appropriate in all centre designs, depending on the individual project. All space sizes must meet or exceed the requirements of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

Overall Space Allocations for Interior Spaces

Table 23 provides overall space allocations for common group child care programs and assumes a maximum group size for each program type. A child care centre can include multiple programs across ages and group sizes. Consult [Schedule E of the Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) for requirements on maximum group size and minimum educator to child ratios.

The overall space allocation is based on the areas provided for each space in Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces and accounts for space requirements for the Cubby Area, Activity Area, Multipurpose/Nap Space, Infant/Toddler Nap Room, Children's Washroom, Adult Washroom, Kitchen, Office, Adult Lockers, General Storage Room, Laundry Area, Utility Closet, Garbage and Recycling Area and Emergency Supplies Storage. The grossing factor includes additional area required for interior walls and partitions, the main entrance, corridors, mechanical and electrical rooms and exterior walls.

Table 23: Total Interior Child Care Area Guidelines by Program

Program Type	Infant/Toddler	Ages 3-5	School Age 5-12	School Age 7-12	Multi-Age
Maximum No. of Spaces per Program Type	12	25	24	30	8
Overall Area (m ²)	180	240	215	250	140

Note: Interior Child Care Area Guidelines may assist with the preliminary site evaluation as well as other phases of design.

Impact on Area Guidelines When Co-locating Two or More Child Care Programs

Space efficiency is gained when two or more child care programs are co-located in a child care centre resulting from sharing spaces. However, in centres with more than one program there are space additions as well, such as a separate Break Room to support more early childhood professionals. Careful consideration is required to retain effective program design and sightlines while limiting cross-contamination as well as acoustic or other sensory impacts.

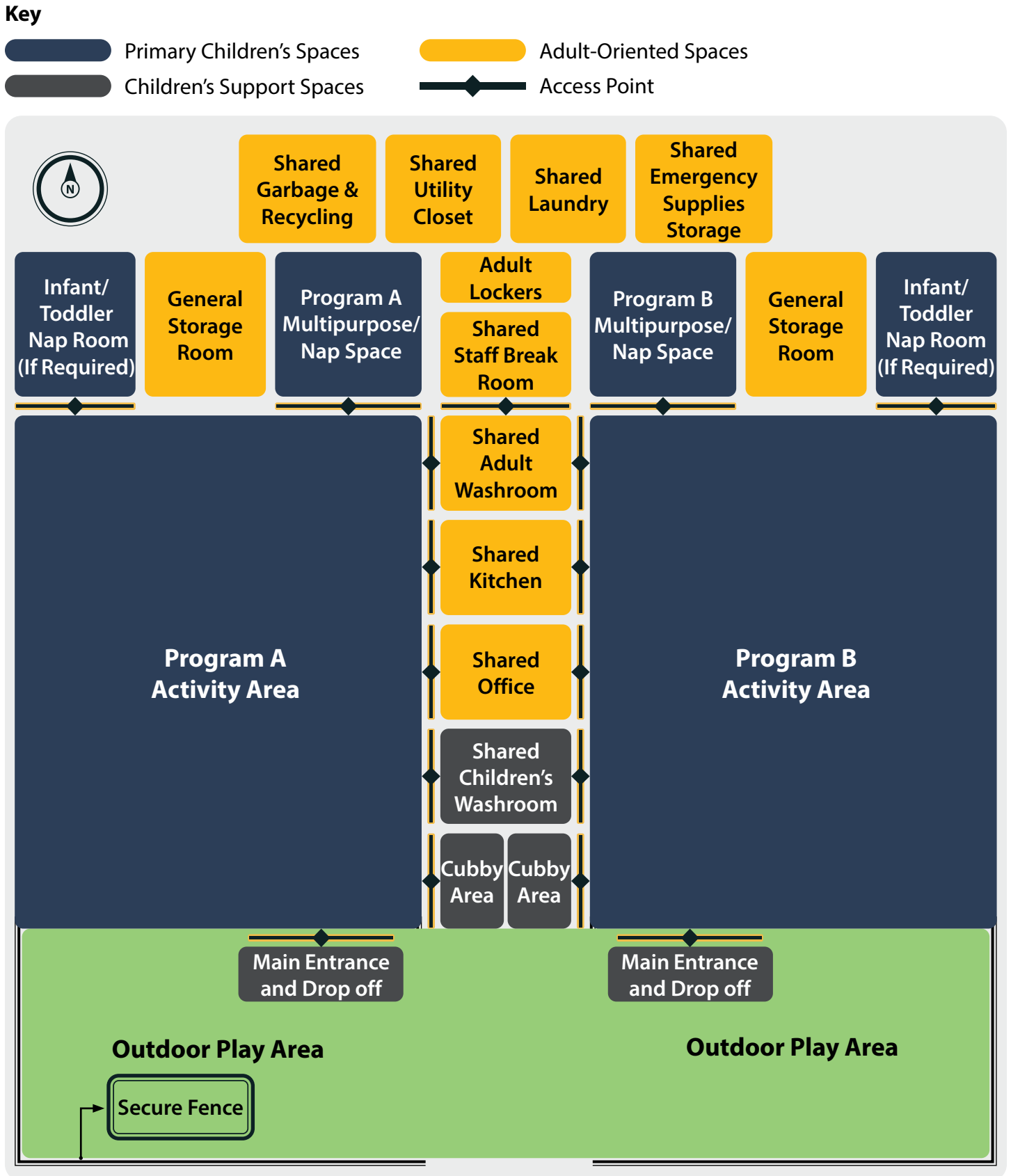
Spaces that may be shared and result in a slightly lower total area per child include:

- Children's Washroom
- Adult Washroom
- Kitchen
- Office
- Laundry Area
- Utility Closet
- Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area
- Emergency Supplies Storage

Any space sharing should consider the guidelines and considerations set out in [Section 4.2 General Design Guidance for Interior Spaces: Efficient Circulation Between Spaces](#) as well as the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

Figure 11: Functional Relationship Diagram: Co-location

- Co-location highlights spaces that can be shared by multiple child care programs and possible organization.



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.
 Source: Resource Planning Group

Table 24 provides overall area requirements (m²) for co-located child care programs and considers opportunities for sharing support spaces. See [Section 2.3 Early Planning – Determining the Type\(s\) and Number of Child Care Spaces to Create](#) for consideration of the community need for child care, including the demand for the type and number of spaces planned to be offered. For additional information regarding total area allocations, see [Section 7.2 Space Area Allocation Charts](#).

Table 24: Overall Interior Area Requirements for Co-Located Programs

Child Care Program	Infant/Toddler	Ages 3-5	School Age 5-12	School Age 7-12	Multi-Age	Total Number of Children at the Centre	Overall Area (m ²) Required for the Centre
Maximum No. of Spaces per Program	12	25	24	30	8	-	-
No. of Spaces for Common Combinations	-	-	-	-	8+8	16	250
	12+12	-	-	-	-	24	330
	12+12	25	-	-	-	49	560
	-	-	24	30	-	54	440
	12	25	24	-	-	61	600
	-	25	24	30	-	79	665

Note: Area requirements in table include 30% grossing factor

Activity Area Space Allocation

The Activity Area is the main interior space in a child care centre and should be maximized through the design process. Table 25 identifies a reasonable starting size for the iterative design process of the Activity Area for each child care program. All Activity Area sizes must meet or exceed the requirements of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). Refer to [Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces: Activity Area](#) for more details on Activity Area guidelines and considerations.

Table 25: Activity Area Size by Child Care Program

Area Type (m ²)	Program Type (No. of Spaces)				
	Infant/ Toddler (12)	Ages 3-5 (25)	School Age 5-12 (24)	School Age 7-12 (30)	Multi-Age Child (8)
Activity Area (m ²)	51.9	98.9	87.6	106.0	37.1
Multipurpose/ Nap Space (m ²)	11.2	16.7	14.4	19.2	9.3
Overall Activity Area (Activity Area + Multipurpose/Nap Space)(m²)	63.1	115.6	102.0	125.2	46.4
Area Per Child (m²)	5.3	4.6	4.2	4.2	5.8

The [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) (see Part 2, Division 2 – Facility Requirements) requires 3.7 m² of usable floor area per child within the Activity Area.

The usable floor area of 3.7 m² can be calculated by excluding the following elements from the overall activity area:

- Space for counters and millwork.
- Space adjacent to counters for staff to work.
- Space required for door swings and to access adjacent spaces.
- An internal pathway through the space for the movement of children and early childhood professionals in which activity centres or zones cannot be set up or installed.

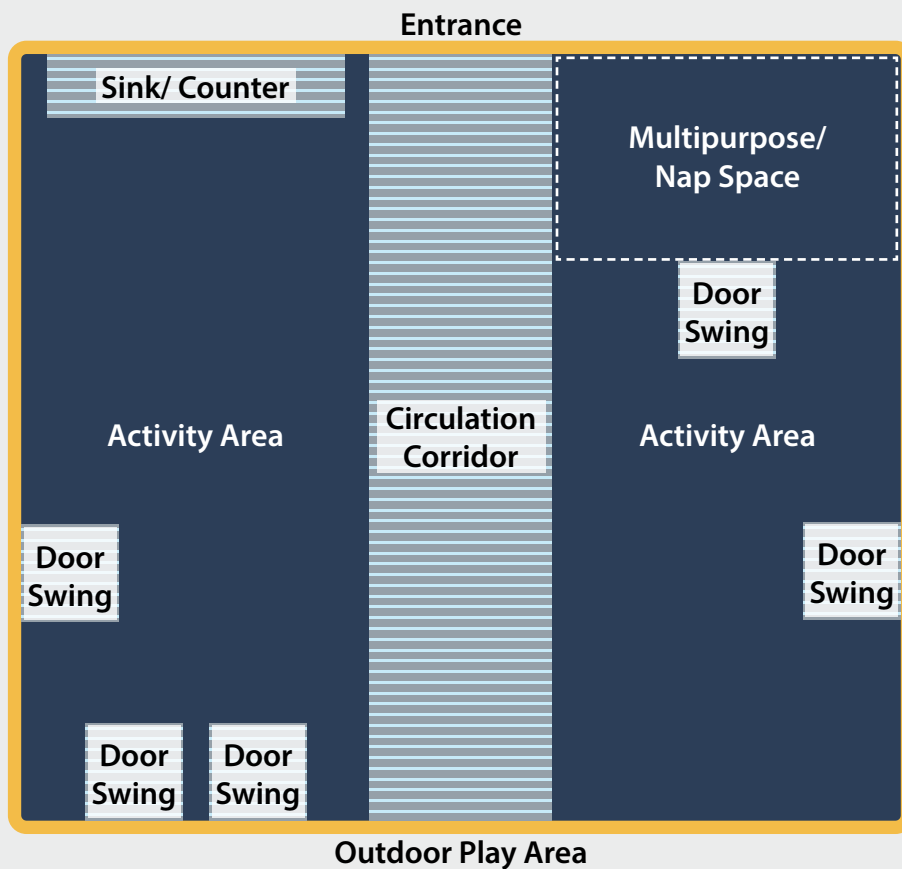
The figure below is an example activity area for an ages 3-5 program licensed for 25 children. The figure illustrates how to calculate the usable floor area.

It may be helpful to estimate an overall activity area allocation, in addition to the usable floor area, depending on the design phase of the project.

Figure 12: Useable Floor Area Calculations for Licensing Requirements

	Area Type	Description	Total Area Required	Area per Child
	Useable Floor Area	Activity Area, Multipurpose Nap Space	92.5m ²	3.7m ²
	Non-Useable Floor Area	Door swings (5) 0.91m x 0.91m each	5.0m ²	19.2m ²
		Sink/Counter 3.66m x 1.22m	4.5m ²	-
		Circulation Corridor 1.5m x 9.62m (min. length)	14.4m ²	-
		Total Non-Useable Floor Area	23.1m ²	0.92m ²
	Total Required Activity Area	Useable Floor Area and Non-Useable Floor Area	115.6m²	4.62m²

Ages 3-5 (25 children) Activity Area



Note: Diagram is for calculation purposes. It is not to scale and does not indicate functional relationships. Within this example, the square denotes door swings to four primary areas off the Activity Area. (1) Kitchen, (2) Washroom, (3) Multipurpose/Nap Space, (4) Storage Room – double doors. Non-useable floor area, including number of door swings, may vary by project, layout and design.

4.5 School Age Care

The design guidance provided throughout the Design Guidelines applies to school age care programs. However, there are some unique design options and strategies when designing spaces for school age children. These programs are ideally located close to or on school grounds. Alternatively, the provider has a safe and viable plan to transition children between school and an off-site location.

School age care may be purpose-built, but in many instances will be in shared school or community spaces (e.g., classroom, gyms, multi-purpose rooms, libraries). Designing child care in these shared spaces requires consideration of the dual use of space, which is not addressed in this document. Design for these spaces requires discussion and coordination between the project team, design team, school district or project owner (as applicable) to identify and address the unique needs in each situation.

Where possible, the design of school age care should be reflective of the age, interests and development of the children the program will serve. Space considerations for school age care may include:

- Provision of sufficient and accessible storage, particularly in shared spaces, while the space is being used for an alternative function (e.g., classroom, lunch room). Storage is designed to provide access to support the timely and efficient set-up and take-down of the child care program and, where appropriate, lockable storage is included.
- Include adequate personal storage for children's backpacks and supplies that is appropriately sized for the age of children in the program.
- The centre includes space for a variety of activities. The design supports various development stages and ages, promoting flexibility, choice and, when appropriate, autonomy. Activities may include social and interactive games, imaginative play, art projects, reading and writing.
- Child care centres in schools are welcoming and foster a sense of belonging. Design elements such as reading or lounge areas with large and comfortable furniture support the creation of a cozy environment.
- A portion of the area may be designated or visually identified as a space for older children.
- Where possible, the Outdoor Play Area for school age care is designed and suitable for children aged five to 12 years old and is contiguous with the child care centre.
- School age care programs do not require a nap space.

5.0 Exterior Spaces



5.1 Introduction

Access to a high-quality Outdoor Play Area is as important as indoor child care space in contributing to a child’s healthy development. Outdoor Play Areas can include constructed and natural elements and environmental conditions that change with the seasons.

Quality Outdoor Play Areas encourage safe play and exploration and foster curiosity, imagination and self-expression. Children develop a sense of place when they connect with their local communities and outdoor environment. Through physical activity and imaginative play, children develop a variety of skills while building confidence and learning about the natural world.¹¹

Section 5.0 Exterior Spaces includes design guidelines, design considerations and minimum space allocations that inform the design of the exterior areas of a child care centre.

Table 26: Definitions for Guidelines and Considerations

 Design Guideline	Essential design elements that guide the development and design of quality, inclusive child care centres.
 Design Consideration	Design elements recommended for consideration in the design of quality, inclusive child care centres. Design considerations may or may not be feasible to implement in all child care projects depending on project-specific factors.

Recap: Regulatory Requirements for Licensed Child Care

The Design Guidelines provide design guidance that considers the regulatory requirements for licensed child care programs in British Columbia, which are found in the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) and the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practice](#).

Project leads and design teams as well as all applicants for a child care licence are responsible for meeting the requirements of the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practices](#) as well as the [BC Building Code](#), relevant local government bylaws and any other applicable requirements. The Regional Health Authority licensing program provides resources and guidance related to mandatory licensing requirements.

¹¹ See Resources for the [7Cs: An informational Guide to Young Children’s Outdoor Play Spaces](#), Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development

5.2 General Design Guidance for Exterior Spaces

Throughout this section, design guidance is organized into two categories of exterior areas:

1. Outdoor Play Area

The Outdoor Play Area includes the various outdoor play zones that a child care centre may choose to incorporate into the exterior space depending on available space, location, program type and other unique considerations of the project. For more information on the different zones that may be included in the Outdoor Play Area, refer to [Section 5.3.1 Key Exterior Spaces: Outdoor Play](#)

2. Exterior Support Spaces

Exterior Support Spaces include the spaces exterior to the child care centre that support the operation, maintenance and functional activities of the centre. Exterior Support Spaces include Outdoor Storage, Program Stroller Storage, Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage and Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area. For more information on the different Exterior Support Spaces, refer to [Section 5.3.2 Key Exterior Spaces: Exterior Support Spaces](#).

Designing for Child Care Programming

Designing exterior areas to support a successful child care program requires consideration for both the children and adults who access the centre. A good design supports the functional flow of activities throughout the day across key spaces. This includes designing for sightlines to monitor children, resulting in a well-functioning, efficient and safe child care centre.

Special consideration must be given to function and safety if designing rooftop outdoor play areas. See [Figure 14: Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas](#) for more information.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The child care centre includes an Outdoor Play Area to support children's physical activity, growth and development, and the design of the Exterior Spaces maximizes the Outdoor Play Area.
- The design elements foster a sense of belonging and comfort for those accessing the space and support intentional caregiving practices. Examples include seating for adults, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as well as collective spaces where children and adults can sit together to foster connection.
- The overall design of the centre is informed by a child's view of the world. This includes using appropriately sized design elements, nature-based softscape, hardscape, and play structures and equipment.
- The Outdoor Play Area is designed to meet the needs of children at different ages and developmental stages served by the centre. Ensure fixed and free-standing toys and equipment are age- and developmentally-appropriate, and are intended for the proposed use (i.e., manufacturer's instructions state commercial versus residential use).
- The exterior spaces include meaningful integration of cultural elements that reflect the community, children, families and caregivers that access the centre, including Indigenous cultures. People with lived experience are directly involved in developing cultural components in exterior spaces, such as small versions of cultural buildings, modes of transport and cultural designs.

- Land-based learning is a critical component to Indigenous cultural programming. In consultation with community, exterior design for all child care programs should provide opportunities for land-based learning whenever possible.
- The Outdoor Play Area of a child care centre includes covered and uncovered areas.
- There are sightlines to all areas of the Outdoor Play Area for supervision of children.
- Play equipment and materials selected are long-lasting and easy to maintain. See [Figure 13: Play Structures](#) for further considerations regarding play structures.

Exterior Support Spaces

- The exterior design considers the maintenance required and the impacts of these maintenance activities on the overall operation and operational costs of the child care centre. Maintenance activities should not require significant periods of time when areas of the centre or playground cannot be accessed.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider the site's natural topography and features to create playful elements using grade, rocks and vegetation.
- Consider the site's location and geography and how weather impacts the space including the selection of surfacing materials.
- Consider opportunities in the Outdoor Play Area for variation in the size of spaces to accommodate different uses and numbers of children, including spaces that allow children to play individually and in large groups.
- Consider the location of the play area in relation to roads, thoroughfares and neighbouring properties as well as natural noise and privacy barriers.

Figure 13: Play Structures

Play Structures

The provision of large, fixed play equipment is not mandatory in B.C. as outlined in the [Director of Licensing Standards of Practice – Safe Play Space](#).

Large, fixed play structures can be costly to replace and become outdated as safety requirements evolve. Additionally, play structures often require the provision of fall zones, which reduces the area that children can play freely.

Alternatives to large play structures may be considered for Outdoor Play Areas within child care centres. Ideally, outdoor play environments mirror the natural environment and include natural materials or creative structures. Incorporating materials that children can manipulate such as sand, dirt, gravel and water allows children to use their imagination and shape their play experience. It can also be more cost-effective to install and maintain.

If large, fixed play equipment is included in the child care centre, it must be carefully selected to be developmentally- and age-appropriate. Sun exposure and the potential for surfaces to become too hot to touch should be kept in mind when locating play equipment. Proper installation and ongoing maintenance of play structures are necessary to ensure safety.

Additional information to support outdoor play design can be found in [7Cs: An informational Guide to Young Children's Outdoor Play Spaces, Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development](#).

Layout

A well-planned layout of the exterior space supports a functioning centre, adequate outdoor time, connection to nature and efficient transitions from the Indoor Activity Area to the Outdoor Play Area. A good layout and well-organized space promotes sightlines across areas, reduces congestion, and supports accessibility and flow.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The Outdoor Play Area is directly adjacent to the Indoor Activity Area, so there is physical and visual connection between the spaces. This proximity promotes opportunities for adults to easily move and communicate between the inside and outside of the centre.
- The Outdoor Play Area is at the same grade as the Indoor Activity Area to allow for easy and immediate access to the outdoors.
- The Outdoor Play Area incorporates a variety of different play zones that support children's needs for active play, rest and quiet time (refer to [Section 5.3.1 Outdoor Play Area](#) for further information on the different play zones).
- The various outdoor play zones enable visual and functional cohesion between each of the zones, ultimately creating a unified Outdoor Play Area.

Exterior Support Spaces

- Exterior Support Spaces are arranged to support the efficient functioning of the child care centre and to maximize the use and enjoyment of the Outdoor Play Space.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- The Outdoor Play Area may be located near a Children's Washroom for ease of access.
- Outdoor play zones may be organized with noisier and more active zones away from quieter zones. Where appropriate, softscape materials or elements can be used to distinguish different zones with consideration for sightlines.
- When a larger Outdoor Play Area is available, consider incorporating an increased percentage of softscape and natural play spaces such as bushes, small trees, grass and other natural materials and a decreased percentage of hard surfaces, which can add to noise and stress levels.
- Consider an outdoor handwashing station for hand hygiene while outdoors.
- Wherever possible, the Outdoor Play Area is located away from parking lots and roadways to reduce contact with pollutants and for physical safety.

Accessibility

The design of exterior spaces in the child care centre can enable both children and adults to access the space. The exterior space design encourages the meaningful participation of children of various ages and with a diverse range of developmental and physical abilities.

When designing the exterior space, it is essential to plan for the necessary physical accommodations to allow every child to participate. Project teams are encouraged to review the [Inclusive Child Care Toolkit](#) for additional information on how to support high quality, inclusive practice in child care settings throughout B.C., as well as the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), which provides a framework to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The Outdoor Play Area, including installed equipment, enables children of all abilities to participate meaningfully in activities. The Outdoor Play Area eliminates barriers to participation and is based on universal design principles that facilitate the participation of children with mobility needs and those, including adults, who may use assistive devices such as wheelchairs.
- The design and placement of softscape enables children with assistive devices to move around easily.
- The Outdoor Play Area incorporates a range of activities that support the abilities of all children, including those who are neurodivergent. Examples may include areas for groups and individual play, areas for active and quiet play and areas of quiet refuge.

Health and Safety

The safety of children and adults is paramount both in and outside the child care centre. Appropriate building materials, childproofing measures, regional climate and other considerations ensure the well-being and safety of children. Outdoor Play is also where children have developmentally appropriate opportunities for challenge, risk and experimentation. See the [Director Licensing Standard of Practice for Safe Play Space](#) for additional information related to injury prevention.

Special consideration must be given to function and safety if designing rooftop outdoor play areas. See [Figure 14: Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas](#) for more information.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The Outdoor Play Area is located away from mechanical exhaust vents and other sources of noxious fumes, including building loading docks.
- Children playing in the Outdoor Play Area are not at risk from objects or snow falling from adjacent balconies, roofs, decks or trees.
- Play equipment selected for a child care centre is age-appropriate and follows maximum height requirements outlined by the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

- Protective surfacing for a fall zone is provided beneath and around play equipment and play elements to cushion jumps and falls as approved by the Child Care Licensing program.
- The Outdoor Play Area for infant/toddler programs includes a higher percentage of resilient energy-absorbing material, such as rubber mats, rubberized flooring, grass, dirt, sand, and mulch/wood chips.
- Pea gravel is avoided for infant/toddler programs due to safety concerns with ingestion, putting gravel into ears and noses as well as durability over time in rainy and wet conditions.
- Outdoor lighting is provided throughout the Outdoor Play Area to support the use of the Outdoor Play Area and improve the ability to monitor activities during darker winter days.

Exterior Support Spaces

- Outdoor lighting is glare-reducing and provided around the perimeter of the child care centre for parking areas, walkways and the entrance. This is to increase safety and visibility during pick-up and drop-off when it is dark and when early childhood professionals are opening and closing the centre.

Figure 14: Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas

Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas

Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas are sometimes used in densely populated areas where a site selected for a child care centre would not otherwise have sufficient area for outdoor play space. These play areas allow the centre to have access to outdoor space that is separated from the noise and traffic of the surrounding area. However, Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas present specific challenges related to the health and safety of children, including exposure to sun and wind and risk of falling. Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas often require unique design considerations to address constraints.

The project lead and the design team are responsible for meeting the requirements of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) as well as the [BC Building Code](#), local government bylaws and/or any other applicable requirements. Design and construction professionals are expected to rely on their professional judgment in applying the Design Guidelines to support project planning, design and development and ensuring the safety of their designs.

Examples of design considerations applicable to Rooftop Outdoor Play Areas may include:

- Place the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area at the same grade as the Indoor Activity Area to allow for easy and immediate access to the outdoors.
- Ensure a substantial portion of the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area is shaded in the summer months.
- Shield the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area from strong winds by providing screens or deflectors and by anchoring trees, shrubs, structures and shading devices.
- Minimize risk of falls, for example by locating taller equipment at the centre of the deck, securing taller equipment so that it does not tip, providing perimeter fencing that conforms to applicable requirements (e.g., not climbable).
- Provide view ports/vision panels to provide opportunities for children to view their surroundings.
- Locate the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area away from rooftop mechanical equipment and building exhaust systems, as well as skylights and roof vents.
- Locate the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area away from adjacent parkades to reduce exposure to vehicle exhaust.
- Locate the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area away from noisy equipment to help mitigate risk of hearing damage in children.
- Incorporate sufficient drainage into the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area to prevent pooling of water.
- Ensure the roof structure is designed to carry the weight of the Rooftop Outdoor Play Area, including play equipment such as sand, water, as well as landscaping and snow.
- Establish an emergency evacuation route and plan to effectively move to safety with consideration for the number of stairs children and educators can navigate.
- Consult with local fire and life safety officials to ensure the space meets safety requirements.

Security

Ensuring a secure child care centre includes keeping the centre free from unsafe objects and unauthorized people. Security protocols can vary widely based on the location, size, and individual considerations of the child care centre. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is based on the theory that effective design and use of the built environment can reduce the incidence of crime. See the [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Canada](#) website for additional resources on designing with these principles in mind.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- Access to and from the Outdoor Play Area is secure with measures such as childproof latches, self-closing gate and electronic access.
- Alarms, such as fire and building alarms, are audible in all areas of the Outdoor Play Area.

Fencing/Boundaries

Proper fencing can help ensure the exterior of the child care centre is a safe and secure space for children. This includes keeping children in and keeping unauthorized people, objects and wildlife out. The size, spacing, and material selected for fencing will depend on local requirements and codes, licensing requirements, site-specific conditions and aesthetics.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- Fencing cannot be climbed and, where appropriate, allows children to observe the activities of the neighbourhood and appreciate views.
- The Outdoor Play Area has a dedicated on-site fence that is planned with consideration of access and connection to the Indoor Activity Area.
- Fencing which separates multiple Outdoor Play Areas provides openings to allow children to see through and communicate with each other.
- The safety of children should be considered when placing climbable play elements and structures near or against fencing in accordance with [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#).

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider integrating design elements in fencing. For example, culturally-specific designs, literacy elements and interactive components such as sound, texture, and art.
- Where an Outdoor Play Area supports more than one program, such as an infant/toddler program and an ages 3-5 program, consider using non-climbable, low fences or gates to separate the play areas by child care program to support interactions.
- Consider including a large gate where appropriate for maintenance access.

Environmental Considerations and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency

A child care centre's exterior spaces must be designed for the local environmental conditions to support outdoor play throughout the year. Designing the exterior spaces for climate change resilience means proactively understanding the changing climate, as well as preparing for and reducing climate-related risks to people and to the natural and built environment. Infants and young children may be particularly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, including extreme heat and cold events and poor air quality. Infants and young children require additional design elements or strategies to maintain healthy and safe environments.

See [Figure 15: Exterior Design for Centres in Rural and Remote Communities](#) for additional considerations for child cares in rural and remote communities.

Projects may have distinct sustainability objectives that consider the centre's impact on the environment. There are many effective approaches to environmental sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction that can be considered alongside these child care focused Design Guidelines. Some common and cost-effective opportunities to support environmental sustainability objectives are included as considerations.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- Shade elements are designed to provide protection from sun and UV exposure, rain and snow throughout the year. Shade is provided throughout all Outdoor Play Area zones using a variety of means, including permanent and movable canopies, deciduous trees and shade created from the child care centre itself.
- Outdoor Play Area absorption and drainage is sufficient to accommodate the infiltration and runoff of rain and snow melt events and has provisions to mitigate and/or control drain clogging.
- Design elements, hard scape, play equipment and surfacing materials are selected for environmental conditions and are resilient and long-lasting in relevant conditions. For example, artificial turf may become too hot for infants with sustained sun exposure.
- Trees within and surrounding the Outdoor Play Area are assessed and reviewed to ensure they are windfirm and able to withstand strong winds when anchored. Trees are assessed and reviewed to determine the risk of branches breaking in an extreme wind event and are pruned accordingly.

Exterior Support Spaces

- Access to the child care site is well-drained and not prone to pooling water and ice buildup to support pedestrian access.
- The design of the exterior includes a well-placed area for snow storage. The location of the snow storage area should be considered in relation to the Outdoor Play Area, such that snow clearing and storage is easily facilitated and accommodated for snow play. The design accommodates equipment access to the Outdoor Play Area to remove, clean up and store snow.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider materials for hardscape and play equipment that are low in embodied energy and carbon, such as locally sourced wood and timbers, logs, rocks and sand.
- The placement of trees and landscaping within and surrounding the Outdoor Play Area considers wildfire safety. See [FireSmart BC](#) for additional details.
- Consider designing areas and utilizing materials to reduce flooding impacts.

Exterior Support Spaces

- Consider providing charging infrastructure that supports electric vehicles, bicycles and/or scooters.
- Consider practices that actively restore and revitalize natural systems, such as growing food, plantings that promote biodiversity and operations that reduce waste.

Figure 15: Exterior Design for Centres in Rural and Remote Communities

Exterior Design for Centres in Rural and Remote Communities

In B.C., child care centres in rural and remote areas often face more extreme environmental conditions including extreme weather and close proximity to wildlife. This may require additional design considerations to enable access to safe and appropriate Outdoor Play Areas for as much of the year as possible.

Examples include:

- Creating a microclimate to capture the warmth of the sun on a southern exposure that is out of the wind.
- Considering how snow may impact accessibility and function by ensuring necessary equipment can be accessed to clear space and that snow piles are stored out of the way or located to be used for snow play.
- Including bear and cougar resistant fences.
- Storing garbage and recycling in bear-resistant enclosures.

Landscaping

Landscape design is an important element of the Outdoor Play Area. It should consider how the design meets and supports children's developmental and play needs. Nature-based elements such as dense planting, thickets, trees and a variety of natural materials promote engagement with the natural world and support well-being and play.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The landscape design does not include the use of toxic plants. See the [Canadian Child Care Federation Toxic Plant List](#) for details.
- Use native plants for outdoor landscaping that are hardy, inexpensive to maintain over time, require little to no watering, can endure heavy use and can be used as shelters for play.
- Avoid invasive plantings.
- Grass and sod are not used in high-traffic areas where they can be easily damaged and trampled by repeated contact.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider performance testing the surfacing, if available. For more information, see the [ASTM F1292 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment](#).
- Consider including natural or naturalized landscape wherever possible, incorporating natural play zones with opportunities for informal nature play.
- Where possible, consider using natural elements, such as small hedges, short bushes or gardens to separate defined play zones while considering sightlines.
- Where possible, consider including natural materials that children can interact with, such as native plants, shrubs, trees, raised planters, food gardens, soil, rocks, logs, sand, water and mud.

Acoustic Environment

The acoustic environment contributes to the health and well-being of those using the exterior spaces and should be considered an integral part of planning and design.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- The Outdoor Play Area is located away from sources of noise, such as major roads and mechanical systems.
- Landscaping and acoustic fencing are used to mitigate ambient noise levels and sources of noise offsite.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider the acoustic impact of children playing in the Outdoor Play Area on surrounding neighbours, particularly in densely populated environments. An example is using acoustic screening, orienting noisier activities away from neighbouring residences or businesses and fewer hardscapes such as concrete.

Access to Water

Outdoor access to water supports utilitarian functions, such as cleaning and watering plants, but also supports water play across the various outdoor play zones. Water play provides children with the opportunity to develop fine and gross motor skills across all age ranges.

● Guidelines

Outdoor Play Area

- Water used in the Outdoor Play Area is potable.
- Consider age and development of children when incorporating water elements, such as shallow water in container at toddler height, small waterfall, rain chains, rain bowls or misting faucet, and monitor for standing water.
- The exterior design includes a provision for containing flowing water and diverting all water to a drain with a sand trap. Collected or flowing water could also be used to water plants.

Exterior Support Spaces

- A water source is available to clean outdoor equipment and to water plants.

▲ Considerations

Outdoor Play Area

- Consider including a space with a water source to clean dirty boots and hands prior to entering the interior space of the child care centre from the Outdoor Play Area. This is particularly convenient if the Outdoor Play Area includes a large Natural Elements Play Zone or Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone.
- Consider supporting children to explore various activities related to water as well as mixtures of water and sand, including water tables, sand play, art and wet and messy areas.
- If more than one water play area is included in the Outdoor Play Area, consider a single water source located central to all water play areas for efficiency.

5.3 Key Exterior Spaces

This section includes design guidance for each of the exterior spaces that support a quality, inclusive child care centre. The exterior spaces of a child care centre include the Outdoor Play Area and Exterior Support Spaces.

The Outdoor Play Area can be composed of outdoor play zones, which may differ to reflect the size and shape of the outdoor spaces and the community the centre serves. The Exterior Support Spaces support the functionality of the centre and the health and safety of those accessing the space.

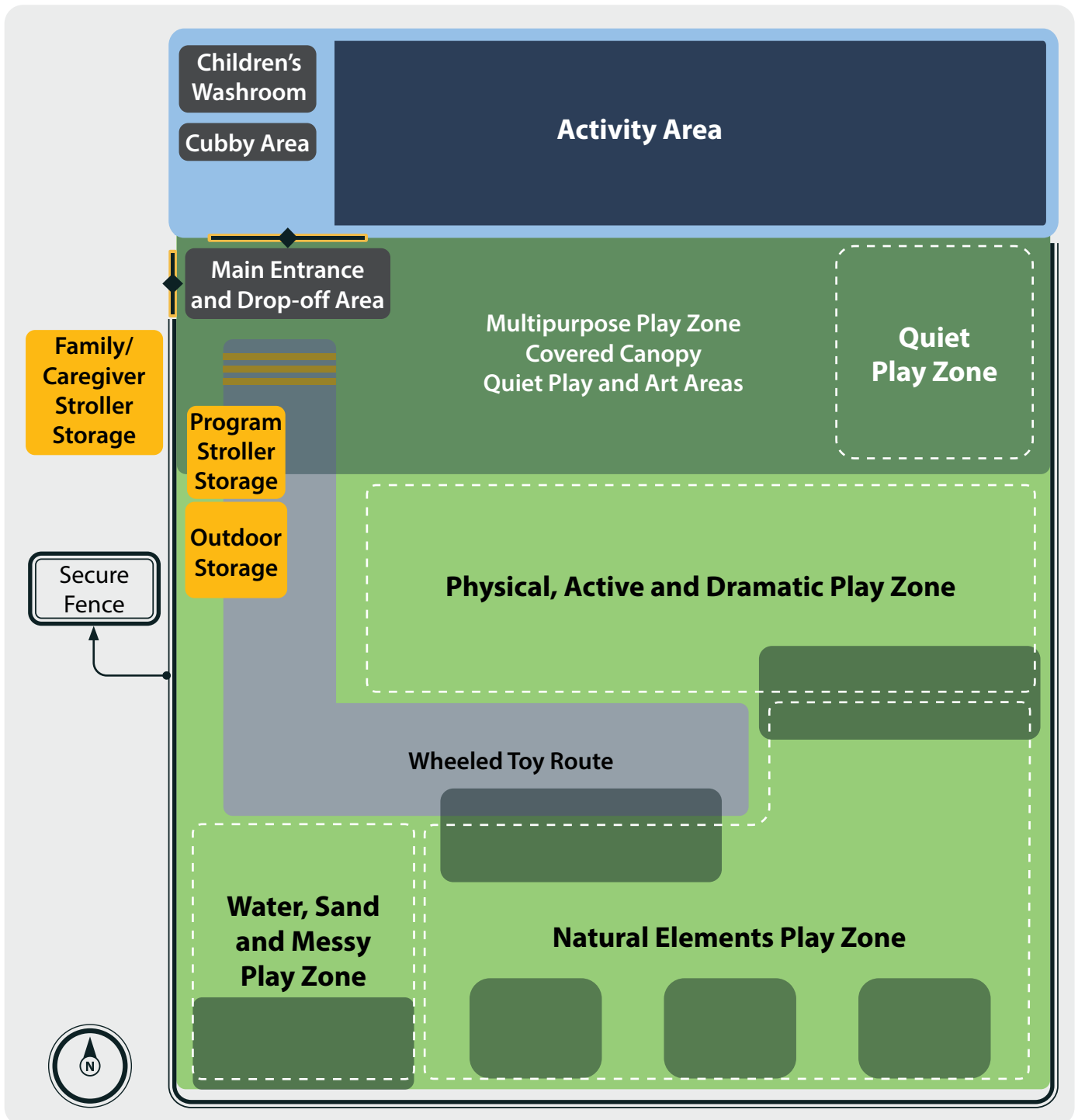
Figure 16 illustrates an example of a potential organization of the child care centre's exterior areas, including the Outdoor Play Area and Exterior Support Spaces. It shows adjacencies between the various outdoor play zones and considers movement patterns for children, early childhood professionals and others visiting the centre. The diagram is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not intended to be used as a model. Each site is unique, and designs must suit the site. Play zones are flexible and can vary in size, use and location depending on unique project considerations.

Figure 16: Functional Relationship Diagram: Outdoor Play Area

- Shows potential relationships between Outdoor Play Area and Exterior Support Spaces

Key

- Child Care Interior Spaces
- Indoor Primary Children’s Spaces
- Children’s Support Spaces
- Adult-Oriented Spaces
- Outdoor Primary Children’s Spaces
- Shade elements
- Access Point



Note: This is not a sample floor plan and is not to scale.

Source: Resource Planning Group

Outdoor Play Area

Under the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), child care centres are required to provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of indoor and outdoor activities that support the development of the child. Factors such as location, space availability, ages and number of children, budget and other individual project considerations impact the size and composition of the Outdoor Play Area.

The Outdoor Play Area may be organized into outdoor play zones that can accommodate a variety of uses to support the full range of children's developmental needs. See the Director of Licensing Standards of Practice for [Safe Play Space](#) and [Active Play](#) and Schedule G in the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

The size, number and type of play zones incorporated into the design will depend on factors such as location, availability of space, ages and number of children, budget and other individual project considerations.

Common types of play zones and their associated guidelines and considerations are highlighted in the following section. The project and design teams should consider how selected play zones relate to each other. The teams should also consider how these zones can be modified over time to accommodate changing uses based on children's interests and the overall needs of the centre.

Covered Multipurpose Play Zone

The Covered Multipurpose Play Zone is a distinct, covered activity area that functions as a transition zone from the interior to the exterior with outdoor space for activities in sunny and inclement weather. Activities supported by this space may be quieter and more focused, such as art, clay/water table activities, other messy activities, outdoor meals, small social gatherings and active play.

The Covered Multipurpose Play Zone is useful for all child care programs and sizes of Outdoor Play Areas.

Note: The covered canopy area cannot be counted towards [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) area requirements for the Indoor Activity Area.

● Guidelines

- The Covered Multipurpose Play Zone includes ambient lighting for year-round visibility.
- The Covered Multipurpose Play Zone includes seating for both adults and children to allow for social gatherings and social connections.

▲ Considerations

- Consider orienting the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone for a balance of sunlight and shade that maximizes access to daylight. Consider southern or south east exposures.
- Where possible, consider locating the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone directly adjacent to the Indoor Activity Area. This is so children can access the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone without getting wet on rainy days and as a transition space.
- Consider including hooks to hang and dry wet clothing and shoes/boots to prevent tracking of water and dirt indoors.
- Consider including a sound system for music and a power outlet.

Quiet Play Zone

The Quiet Play Zone supports less active and more sedentary individual and small group play activities. It may enable children with diverse abilities and needs to engage in play. The Quiet Play Zone may serve a similar purpose as the indoor Sensory Space. See [Section 4.3 for Figure 9: Sensory Space](#).

Where possible, a Quiet Play Zone is incorporated in all child care programs and sizes of Outdoor Play Areas.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Quiet Play Zone close to the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone for ease of access, particularly for those who may need assistance moving.
- Consider shaded and unshaded parts of the Quiet Play Zone to allow for quieter activities in warm and cool weather.

Wheeled Toy Route

The Wheeled Toy Route, together with the secondary paved or unpaved paths, is a paved or hard surface path or route for wheeled toys, tricycles and bicycles. The Wheeled Toy Route winds around other activity areas and provides primary access and organizing structure to the Outdoor Play Area. This is a space for children to engage in gross motor movement. A Wheeled Toy Route may be incorporated into all child care centres if supported by the unique project considerations and design of the Outdoor Play Area.

● Guidelines

- The Wheeled Toy Route is located close to Outdoor Storage where toys will be stored when not in use.
- The Wheeled Toy Route includes a variety of experiences for children such that the path widens, narrows, gently rises and slopes down and dips for puddles. Also consider varied surfacing materials for interest and building physical development.
- The Wheeled Toy Route is level and separated from other play zones in infant/toddler programs to separate children who are mobile from those who are not to reduce the risk of injury.

Natural Elements Play Zone

The Natural Elements Play Zone uses natural elements and soft surfaces in spaces between play elements as well as in feature areas. It is intended to foster informal nature play, exploration and discovery.

A Natural Elements Play Zone is a suitable design element for all child care programs. It is an element that can be made proportionately larger, more complex and engaging in centres with larger outdoor spaces. Larger Natural Elements Play Zones will also be more durable and not easily trampled by foot traffic.

● Guidelines

- The Natural Elements Play Zone includes native plant species that are non-toxic, low-maintenance and budget-friendly. Examples include trees and plants with seasonal interest, edible plants, evergreens, fragrant flowers, and plants with sensory and play value. Depending on the climate and space available, this may include raised planters or other places for children to grow food or plants.
- The Natural Elements Play Zone includes natural elements such as soil and sand, logs and rounded boulders and water and wind elements such as flags and chimes.
- The Natural Elements Play Zone has inclusive design elements for children in wheelchairs and with other assistive devices.

- The Natural Elements Play Zone includes trees and shrubs for shade.
- The Natural Elements Play Zone includes a water source for the maintenance of plants. This water source can also be used for play activities and can be shared with water activities that may occur in the Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone.

▲ Considerations

- In larger Outdoor Play Areas, consider including open running areas, exploration routes with bushes and small grassy knolls.
- Consider how access to the Natural Elements Play Zone aligns with program vision and philosophy when determining placement and size.

Water, Sand, and Messy Play Zone

The Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone supports imaginative and fantasy play, giving children the opportunity to easily shape their environment. The Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone can support both a smaller sand play space that allows children to manipulate sand with their hand and tools, as well as a larger space that accommodates whole-body activities such as digging, shoveling and moving sand with larger tools and on a larger scale. In addition to sand play, this zone also supports water-based play and other messy activities such as mud kitchens.

● Guidelines

- Water play is likely to be used during times with higher temperatures and more potential for increased sun exposure. The Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone includes both shaded and sunny areas or the provision for movable shade devices.
- The Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone is located away from areas that would be negatively impacted by the overspill of sand, such as the Wheeled Toy Route.
- Provisions are made to contain sand within the Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone. For example: a raised lip or barrier, perimeter mat that can be integrated with hard surfacing, wood edging or below-grade area.
- Include a large enough Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone to support multiple children in collaborative play using sand and water.

▲ Considerations

- Consider placing the Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone adjacent to a Physical, Active and Dramatic Play Zone to promote imaginative play.
- Consider providing a raised and movable sand table with space surrounding the table for those using assistive devices.
- Consider incorporating a covering, such as a roof or sail, to shelter from weather.
- Consider including one or more water sources for sand/water play. The water source(s) can be used to support water activities that may occur in the Natural Elements Play Zone and Water, Sand and Messy Play Zone.
- Consider adequate drainage and ensure the area can be kept free of standing water over time.
- In areas with animals, consider how the area is protected and covered.
- Consider including child-operated controls for the water source at reduced flow and pressure.

Physical, Active and Dramatic Play Zone

The Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone encourages different forms of play, including free play, imaginative play, and the development of movement skills. The Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone includes more physically intensive activities including running, jumping, sliding, and balancing. It also includes cooperative activities such as parachute, ball games, and chase that require larger open spaces. See the [Play Today Handbook](#) for more information about play.

The Physical, Active and Dramatic Play Zone is an appropriate zone for all child care programs. A greater variety of functions and activities may be accommodated in larger Outdoor Play Areas.

● Guidelines

- The Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone includes open space for running, jumping and other physical activities. It also includes space for imaginative play and space for structured play equipment such as playhouses or tables.
- Play equipment in the Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone is inclusive. This allows children of all abilities to participate and provides graduated challenges that are age- and skill-appropriate.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone close to or together with the Natural Elements Play Zone, so children can easily move from one area to another.
- Consider locating elements of the Physical, Active, and Dramatic Play Zone, such as imaginary play (house, stage, or similar) or structured play equipment near the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone, so these elements can be easily accessed in inclement weather. Alternative forms of weather protection could also be provided.
- Consider providing a roof and similar weather protection over structured play equipment to support use in inclement weather and heat.
- Consider providing play elements that can be moved and reassembled, such as large blocks, interlocking construction toys, and drumming logs.

Outdoor Circulation and Traffic Paths

The design of the exterior space of a child care centre should consider clear circulation and traffic paths for both people and wheeled toys. Outdoor Circulation and Traffic Paths provide access to each of the outdoor play zones and are accessible by children who require wheelchairs and other assistive devices. Outdoor Circulation and Traffic Paths also include design elements that designate outdoor play zones to separate activities and prevent collisions.

Note: The Outdoor Circulation and Traffic Paths is not a play zone. It provides access to each of the play zones and can help separate play zones as necessary. It does not need to be a continuous and consistent path but is provided so that children can move into and out of the various play zones.

● Guidelines

- Circulation and traffic paths allow all children and adults to have access to all outdoor play zones.
- Elements that separate and define outdoor play zones allow easy monitoring of all activities and areas of the Outdoor Play Area.
- Circulation pathways are well lit.

▲ Considerations

- Consider integrating visual (e.g., signs with imagery), auditory (e.g., wind chimes), and olfactory elements (e.g., fragrant flowers and plants) along circulation pathways as markers for each play zone. This is to promote accessibility and support diverse sensory needs.

Exterior Support Spaces

The Exterior Support Spaces include the spaces outside the child care centre that primarily serve a utilitarian function. These support the operation, maintenance, and functional activities of the centre.

Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area

The Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area accommodates the drop-off and pick-up of children by family members and caregivers. This space includes design elements related to both the interior and exterior of the child care centre and is located in [Section 4.0 Interior Spaces](#) for ease of navigation. Refer to [Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces](#) for more information on the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area, including information on access guidelines and considerations and storage for strollers and bicycles.

Outdoor Storage

Outdoor Storage provides the storage of toys and portable equipment used by children and early childhood professionals in the Outdoor Play Area.

Note: Outdoor Storage is included in the calculation of the Exterior Support Spaces and not in the calculation for Outdoor Play Area.

● Guidelines

- Outdoor Storage is positioned along the perimeter of the Outdoor Play Area, and generally adjacent to the child care centre to maintain sightlines and ensure child safety.
- Outdoor Storage is located close to the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone and the Wheeled Toy Route to conveniently move toys between these areas.
- The Outdoor Storage enclosure is protected from rain and wind to prevent equipment from degrading or getting water-logged and dirty.
- Outdoor Storage is secure and lockable to prevent unauthorized entry.
- Outdoor Storage is built to keep rodents and other animals out.
- Toys and equipment can be easily retrieved and stored in a way that prevents injuries, including not having to lift heavier items overhead or with an extended reach.
- Outdoor Storage includes adequate lighting and protected tamper-proof electrical outlets.

▲ Considerations

- Consider providing adjustable shelving, bins, and wall hooks to maximize the use of storage space. For small sites, this allows for the use of smaller storage units, maximizing the Outdoor Play Area.
- It is preferable that Outdoor Storage is not located under the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone to maximize the covered area for children's activities.
- Based on climate and storage needs, consider Outdoor Storage for emergency supplies.

Table 27: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Outdoor Storage

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	8.0
Ages 3-5	25	12.0
School Age 5-12	24	12.0
School Age 7-12	30	14.0
Multi-Age	8	8.0

Program Stroller Storage

Program Stroller Storage accommodates strollers and associated items that are used by the early childhood professionals to take children to offsite locations.

● Guidelines

- Program Stroller Storage is secure, covered and located with easy access to public sidewalks and pedestrian routes.
- Program Stroller Storage provides shelving for items used to travel to offsite locations, such as safety vests and walking ropes.

▲ Considerations

- The Program Stroller Storage may be combined with the Outdoor Play Area's Outdoor Storage if easy access can be provided to circulation pathways, while ensuring that children are not able to leave the Outdoor Play Area through the combined areas.

Table 28: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Program Stroller Storage

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	5.0
Ages 3-5	25	-
School Age 5-12	24	-
School Age 7-12	30	-
Multi-Age	8	3.0

Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage

Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage is optional and accommodates the strollers and associated items that are used by the families and caregivers of children as they bring children to and from the child care centre. It may not be required in all child care centres. If included, ensure Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage is located outside of the Outdoor Play Area to maximize play space for children.

▲ Considerations

- Consider locating the Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage adjacent to the Main Entrance and Drop-Off Area.
- Consider ensuring access to the Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage is secure.

Table 29: Recommended Minimum Space Allocations: Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage

Program	No. of Spaces	Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler	12	4.0
Ages 3-5	25	2.0
School Age 5-12	24	-
School Age 7-12	30	-
Multi-Age	8	2.0

Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area

The Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area accommodates the temporary holding of waste and recycling for pick up. Activities in this area include sorting and collecting bins for pick up. [Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces](#) includes additional information related to the child care centre's Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area.

Note that if the child care centre is in a multi-use building, the Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area may be shared with other building users and may not be the responsibility of the program.

● Guidelines

- Locate the Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area with easy access to the Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area.
- The Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area is in a lockable enclosure to ensure the area is secure and inaccessible to children and animals.
- The Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area has adequate lighting.

5.4 Area Guidelines for Exterior Spaces

This section will help determine the size of the exterior spaces of the child care centre.

Table 30: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation for Exterior Areas in the Child Care Centre provides recommended space allocations for the exterior spaces of the child care centre, including the Outdoor Play Area and some Exterior Support Spaces. A space allocation is provided for the exterior spaces of the child care centre as a reasonable starting point for the iterative design process. These recommended areas may not work or be appropriate in all centre designs, depending on the individual project. All space sizes must meet or exceed the requirements of the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

The Outdoor Play Area includes all the outdoor play zones and the Covered Multipurpose Play Zone. The Covered Multipurpose Play Zone has been differentiated from the other outdoor play zones to demonstrate the suggested covered area within the Outdoor Play Area.

The size of each play zone in the Outdoor Play Area is not included in this table as the size will depend on the context of the child care centre, such as where the centre is located and the availability of space.

Table 30: Recommended Minimum Space Allocation for Exterior Areas in the Child Care Centre

Area Type (m ²)	Program Type (Number of Spaces)				
	Infant/Toddler (12)	Ages 3-5 (25)	School Age 5-12 (24)	School Age 7-12 (30)	Multi-Age (8)
Covered Multipurpose Play Zone	33	45	43	54	24
Outdoor Play Zones	135	305	293	366	88
Total – Outdoor Play Area	168	350	336	420	112
Area per Child – Outdoor Play Area	14	14	14	14	14
Outdoor Storage	8	12	12	14	8
Program Stroller Storage	5	-	-	-	3
Total – Exterior Support Spaces	13	12	12	14	11
Total Exterior Area	181	362	348	434	123

Note: The recommended Total Exterior Area does not include bicycle and vehicle parking, Family/Caregiver Stroller Storage, Outdoor Garbage and Recycling Area or outdoor circulation, such as sidewalks and pathways, which may add to the child care centre site area requirements. Area guidelines have not been developed for these spaces given the wide range of contexts that these Design Guidelines are expected to serve.

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City of Richmond
City of Vancouver
Developmental Disabilities Association
Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC
Early Childhood Educators of BC
First Nations Health Authority
Métis Nation British Columbia
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Disclaimer

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7.0 Appendices

7.1 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of the Design Guidelines document, the following terms and definitions apply:

Accessibility: “Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities. Accessibility is important for everyone, especially people with disabilities. Accessibility is about removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone.” Definition provided within plain language summary of [Accessible British Columbia Act](#).

Barrier: “Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.” Definition provided by [Accessible British Columbia Act](#).

Building envelope: The physical barrier separating the inside of a building from the outside.

Child care needs assessment: An assessment of the community’s child care needs. Often includes statistics on population and growth of children in the community, available child care spaces and provides strategies, actions and partnerships that will support and address child care.

Co-located: Two or more child care programs placed in the same building.

Cultural safety: Culturally safe child care meets the distinct needs and interests of First Nations, Métis, Inuit people and Indigenous organizations with equitable access to affordable, inclusive, quality, and culturally relevant programs and services.

Design team: The team of design professionals, usually led by an architect, who is responsible for the design of the child care centre, including the site plan, interior spaces and exterior spaces. The composition of appropriate professionals will depend on the unique considerations and requirements of individual projects.

Fall zone: The area around playground equipment that is designed to protect children from serious injuries if they fall off the equipment.

Feasibility study: An assessment and analysis of the suitability of the proposed project for child care. Assessments and analysis may include bylaw reviews, geotechnical reviews, archeological studies, legal and topographical surveys.

Functional relationship diagram: A schematic graphic that identifies the rooms and spaces in a child care centre and the key functional connections between the rooms and spaces. Functional relationship diagrams are included throughout the Design Guidelines to illustrate important connections between various spaces of the centre. They are not floor plans. They should be consulted while reading the associated narrative provided in the document.

Grossing factor: An estimate of the additional space over and above the listed room areas needed to develop a functional child care centre. It includes wall thicknesses, internal corridors and circulation and mechanical and electrical rooms.

Hardscape: The built features used in landscape architecture, such as paths or walls.

Inclusion: Supporting all people to participate fully within society regardless of their abilities, identities or backgrounds. Inclusion means that all people of all abilities have equitable access and the supports needed to fully participate and belong.

Meaningful participation: A child's role is valued by all those involved in the activity including the child themselves. Meaningful participation is more than being present in various environments and activities. Children must be actively engaged, and their involvement must be more than an appearance of equity in activities and environments.

Net area: Area of a programmed space, typically measured from the inside wall surface to inside wall surface.

Project owner: The entity that determines the vision, goals and objectives for the project and has the authority to make decisions with respect to the construction of the child care centre.

People with diverse abilities: The term "diverse abilities" may be used in place of "disabilities" based on the personal preference of a child and their family. Diverse abilities are inclusive of all people and children and positively focuses on all people and children being different, but able.

People with support needs: People who are experiencing, or at risk of, developmental delay or disability and require support to optimize their development, functional abilities and quality of life. This definition is not limited to people with a diagnosis. For many children, the need for support surrounds behaviours that challenge staff. Children communicate through behaviour, and behaviours may be responses to factors in their environment.

Project budget: Considers all costs related to the child care project, such as cost estimates, professional fees, contingency, applicable taxes, capital expenses, fixtures, furnishings and equipment.

Project lead: Responsible for all aspects of the project and ensures the project aligns with the identified vision, goals and objectives of the project owner. This role may be assigned to the project owner or a representative and may be an authorized signatory.

Project team: The people who will deliver the project deliverables on behalf of the project owner. These may be direct employees of the project owner or contractors that support the project from start to finish, such as a project manager or child care consultant.

Schematic design: A schematic design includes a complete description of building systems (structural, mechanical, HVAC, plumbing and electrical), interior and exterior finishes and the building site.

Site plan: A graphic representation of all existing and proposed improvements to a site with site elements, including buildings and outdoor play areas drawn to scale. It will include anticipated landscaping, access pathways and sidewalks, terrain, parking as required and access to utilities as required. It will illustrate any zoning requirements.

Softscape: The live horticultural elements of a landscape, such as grass/sod, plants, shrubs and trees.

Space allocation: Amount of area in square metres that should be provided for the specified space. It excludes non-functional elements such as a long corridor within the space that may be required to access main functional elements.

Universal design: The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. See the [Universal Design Network of Canada](#).

7.2 Space Area Allocation Charts

The following space area allocation charts are organized by program and include the overall activity area, the activity area per child and the minimum space allocations for individual space identified in [Section 4.3 Key Interior Spaces](#), as well as the total net area and area per child. A total area is also included, which includes a grossing factor of 30%. The grossing factor includes wall partitions and external walls, any necessary corridors and circulation, mechanical and electrical rooms and other building service rooms that are not included in the list of spaces.

The following space allocation chart identifies the areas in a single program child care centre.

Table 31: Minimum Space Allocation: Single Child Care Program

Area Type (m ²)	Child Care Program (No. of Spaces)				
	Infant/Toddler (12)	Ages 3-5 (25)	School Age 5-12 (24)	School Age 7-12 (30)	Multi-Age (8)
Overall Activity Area	63.1	115.6	102.0	125.2	46.4
Activity Area Per child	5.3	4.6	4.25	4.17	5.8
Cubby Area	10.5	12.5	10.0	12.0	8.5
Activity Area	51.9	98.9	87.6	106.0	37.1
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	11.2	16.7	14.4	19.2	9.3
Mat Storage	3.0	5.0	-	-	2.0
Infant/Toddler Nap Space	15.8	-	-	-	10.2
Children's Washroom	8.8	12.4	13.3	13.3	6.0
Adult Washroom	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Kitchen	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5
Office	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Adult Lockers	1.8	1.8	1.0	1.4	1.0
General Storage	7.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	7.0
Laundry Area	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Utility Closet	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	3.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
I. Total Net Area	140.2	186.0	163.5	192.1	109.3
II. Area per Child	11.7	7.4	6.8	6.4	13.7
Grossing Factor	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
III. Total Area	180	240	215	250	140
Area per child	15.0	9.6	9.0	8.3	17.5

Multiple Child Care Programs

The following list identifies the areas necessary for more common child care centres where there are multiple programs to demonstrate some of the space efficiencies gained when two or more programs are co-located.

Table 32: Minimum Space Allocation: Two Infant/Toddler Programs (24 Children)

Area Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler (12 children)			
Cubby Area	10.5	2	21.0
Activity Area	51.9	2	103.8
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	11.2	2	22.4
Mat Storage	3.0	2	6.0
Infant/Toddler Nap Space	15.8	2	31.6
Children's Washroom - Shared	12.0	1	12.0
General Storage	7.0	2	14.0
Shared Spaces			
Adult Washroom	4.6	1	4.6
Kitchen – Shared by Infant/Toddler programs	10.2	1	10.2
Office	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	5.6	1	5.6
Adult Lockers	3.2	1	3.2
Laundry Area	3.5	1	3.5
Utility Closet	1.6	1	1.6
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	2.0	1	2.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	5.3	1	5.3
I. Total Net Area			253.8
II. Area per Child			10.6
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			330
IV. Total Area per Child			13.8

Table 33: Minimum Space Allocation: Two Infant/Toddler Programs and One Ages 3-5 Program (49 Children)

Area Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler (12 children)			
Cubby Area	10.5	2	21.0
Activity Area	51.9	2	103.8
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	11.2	2	22.4
Mat Storage	3.0	2	6.0
Infant/Toddler Nap Space	15.8	2	31.6
Children's Washroom - Shared	11.0	1	11.0
General Storage	7.0	2	14.0
Ages 3 - 5 (25 children)			
Cubby Area	12.5	1	12.5
Activity Area	98.9	1	98.9
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap space	16.7	1	16.7
Mat Storage	5.0	1	5.0
Children's Washroom	12.4	1	12.4
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
Shared Spaces			
Adult Washroom	4.6	2	9.2
Kitchen – Shared by Infant/Toddler programs	10.2	1	10.2
Kitchen – Ages 3 – 5 program (not shared)	8.5	-	8.5
Office	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	7.6	1	7.6
Adult Lockers	5.4	1	5.4
Laundry Area	3.5	2	7.0
Utility Closet	1.6	2	3.2
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	3.0	1	3.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	7.4	1	7.4
I. Total Net Area			431.8
II. Area per Child			8.8
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			560
IV. Total Area per Child			11.4

Table 34: Minimum Space Allocation: One School Age 5-12 Program and One School Age 7-12 Program (54 Children)

Area Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
School Age 5-12 (24 children)			
Cubby Area	10.0	1	10.0
Activity Area	87.6	1	87.6
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap space	14.4	1	14.4
Children's Washroom	13.3	1	13.3
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
School Age 7-12 (30 children)			
Cubby Area	12.0	1	12.0
Activity Area	106.0	1	106.0
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	19.2	1	19.2
Children's Washroom	13.3	1	13.3
General Storage	10.0	1	10.0
Shared Spaces			
Adult Washroom	4.6	1	4.6
Kitchen – Shared by programs	10.2	1	10.2
Office	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	5.6	1	5.6
Adult Lockers	2.4	1	2.4
Laundry Area	3.5	1	3.5
Utility Closet	1.6	1	1.6
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	3.0	1	3.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	5.0	1	5.0
I. Total Net Area			336.7
II. Area per Child			6.2
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			440
IV. Total Area per Child			8.1

Table 35: Minimum Space Allocation: One Infant/Toddler Program, One Ages 3-5 Program, and One School Age 5-12 Program (61 Children)

Area Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
Infant/Toddler (12 children)			
Cubby Area	10.5	1	10.5
Activity Area	51.9	1	51.9
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	11.2	1	11.2
Mat Storage	3.0	1	3.0
Infant/Toddler Nap Room	15.8	1	15.8
Children's Washroom - Shared	8.8	1	8.8
General Storage	7.0	1	7.0
Ages 3 - 5 (25 children)			
Cubby Area	12.5	1	12.5
Activity Area	98.9	1	98.9
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	16.7	1	16.7
Mat Storage	5.0	1	5.0
Children's Washroom	12.4	1	12.4
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
School Age 5-12 (24 children)			
Cubby Area	10.0	1	10.0
Activity Area	87.6	1	87.6
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	14.4	1	14.4
Children's Washroom - Shared	13.3	1	13.3
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
Shared Spaces			
Adult Washroom	4.6	2	9.2
Kitchen – Shared by I/T and Ages 3 - 5 Programs	10.2	1	10.2
Kitchen – School Age	8.5	1	8.5
Office	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	7.6	1	7.6
Adult Lockers	4.6	1	4.6
Laundry Area	3.5	2	7.0
Utility Closet	1.6	2	3.2
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	3.0	1	3.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	7.4	1	7.4
I. Total Net Area			462.7
II. Area per Child			7.6
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			600
IV. Total Area per Child			9.8

Table 36: Minimum Space Allocation: One Ages 3-5 Program, One School Age 5-12 Program, and One School Age 7-12 Program (79 Children)

Area Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
Ages 3 - 5 (25 children)			
Cubby Area	12.5	1	12.5
Activity Area	98.9	1	98.9
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	16.7	1	16.7
Mat Storage	5.0	1	5.0
Children's Washroom	12.4	1	12.4
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
School Age 5-12 (24 children)			
Cubby Area	10.0	1	10.0
Activity Area	87.6	1	87.6
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	14.4	1	14.4
Children's Washroom - Shared	13.3	1	13.3
General Storage	8.0	1	8.0
School Age 7-12 (30 children)			
Cubby Area	12.0	1	12.0
Activity Area	106.0	1	106.0
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Space	19.2	1	19.2
Children's Washroom	13.3	1	13.3
General Storage	10.0	1	10.0
Shared Spaces			
Adult Washroom	4.6	2	9.2
Kitchen – Ages 3 - 5 Program	8.5	1	8.5
Kitchen – Shared by School Age Programs	10.2	1	10.2
Office	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	7.6	1	7.6
Adult Lockers	4.2	1	4.2
Laundry Area	3.5	2	3.5
Utility Closet	1.6	2	3.2
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	3.0	1	3.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	7.4	1	7.4
I. Total Net Area			514.6
II. Area per Child			6.5
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			670
IV. Total Area per Child			8.5

Table 37: Minimum Space Allocation: Two Multi-age Programs (16 Children)

Space Type	Area Per Program (m ²)	Number of Units	Total Area (m ²)
Multy Age (8 Children)			
Cubby Area	8.5	2	17.0
Activity Area	37.1	2	74.2
Activity Area: Multipurpose/Nap Room	9.3	2	18.6
Mat Storage	2.0	2	4.0
Infant/Toddler Nap Room	10.2	2	20.4
Shared Spaces			
Children's Washroom	8.0	1	8.0
Adult Washroom	4.6	1	4.6
Kitchen - Shared	10.2	1	10.2
Office - Shared	7.0	1	7.0
Break Room	5.6	1	5.6
Adult Lockers	2.0	1	2.0
General Storage	7.0	2	14.0
Laundry Area	3.5	1	3.5
Utility Closet	1.6	1	1.6
Indoor Garbage and Recycling Area	1.0	1	1.0
Emergency Supplies Storage	2.0	1	2.0
I. Total Net Area			193.7
II. Area per Child			12.1
Grossing Factor			1.3
III. Total Area			250
IV. Total Area per Child			15.6

7.3 Resources

Additional resources that may be helpful in designing a child care centre are listed in this appendix. Many of these have been referenced throughout this document.

ChildCareBC Information

- [ChildCareBC](#)
- [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund](#)
- [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund Resources](#)
- [Providing Child Care Services](#)
- [Open a Child Care Business](#)

Child Care Programming Resources

- [BC Early Learning Framework](#)
- [Early Childhood Educators of BC Code of Ethics](#)
- [Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale](#)
- [Early Years Indigenous Cultural Safety Resource Guide](#)
- [Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [Inclusive Child Care Toolkit](#)
- [Play Today Handbook](#)

Child Care Licensing

- [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)
- [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#)
- [Director of Licensing Standards of Practice](#)
- [Director of Licensing Standard of Practice – Active Play](#)
- [Preventing Injury in Child Care Settings](#)
- [Toxic Plant List - Canadian Child Care Federation](#)

Engaging with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Communities

- [British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Interactive Map](#)
- [Distinctions Based Approach Primer](#)
- [Profile of Indigenous Peoples - Consultation Areas](#)

Federal Frameworks

- [First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#)
- [Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#)
- [Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#)
- [Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#)

Human Rights, Inclusion and Accessibility Legislation

- [Accessible British Columbia Act](#)
- [Declaration Act](#)
- [Federal Accessible Canada Act](#)
- [Human Rights Code](#)
- [Office of the Human Rights Commissioner](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

Planning, Design, and Construction

- [7 Universal Design Principles and 9 Goals - Universal Design Network of Canada](#)
- [ASHRAE Standard 241, Control of Infectious Aerosols](#)
- [ASTM F1292 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment](#)
- [Architectural Institute of British Columbia](#)
- [BC Building Code](#)
- [BC Fire Code](#)
- [BC Building Accessibility Handbook](#)
- [British Columbia FireSmart](#)
- [British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide](#)
- [Building Act](#)
- [Canada Standards Association B651-18 Accessible Design for the Built Environment](#)
- [Canadian Construction Documents Committee](#)
- [CleanBC](#)
- [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#)
- [Energy Step Code](#)
- [Guidelines for Mechanical Warewashing in Food Service Establishments](#)
- [LEED - Canada Green Building Council](#)

- [Living Building Challenge® Red List](#)
- [Local Government Requirements: Handbook for Child Care Providers](#)
- [National Building Code of Canada](#)
- [PreparedBC](#)
- [Rick Hansen Foundation](#)
- [The 7 C's: An Informational Guide to Young Children's Outdoor Play Spaces](#)
- [University of Victoria CanAssist – Inclusive Bathroom Design Considerations](#)
- [Zero Carbon Step Code](#)

Resources for Determining Child Care Need

- [Child Care Data and Reports](#)
- [Child Care Map](#)
- [Child Care Resource and Referral](#)
- [Statistics Canada Census Profile](#)
- [Stepping Stones: Child Care Planning Guides for B.C.'s Local Government](#)

