

Early Learning Quality Fund

Washington, D.C.



Design Recommendations Child Development Center

February 2018



REINVESTMENT
FUND



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Learning Environment Design Overview

The Early Learning Quality Fund (ELQF) is a program for licensed early learning providers in Wards 7 and 8 in the District of Columbia. It is designed to help them improve their facilities to provide safe, high-quality early environments for infants and toddlers (ages 0 to 3). The fund, a partnership between the Bainum Family Foundation and Reinvestment Fund, aims to add 625 high-quality early learning seats in Wards 7 and 8 by 2020.

Facility upgrades can be complex, time-consuming and costly. That's why the ELQF will provide both technical assistance and financing to help providers make the necessary improvements. These upgrades will help providers meet the highest level of quality in the District's new Capital Quality rating system and achieve Early Head Start standards.

One of the initial steps in the ELQF program is producing this design guide to help D.C. providers understand relevant regulations and design principles for creating optimal environments for young children in centers and homes.

Optimal Child Development Environments

This reference guide supports the concept that a Child Development Center should encourage a child's social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development through play and learning in a healthy, stimulating, aesthetically pleasing environment. This guide also supports the concept that a Child Development Center's space should comfortably accommodate adults who may occupy or access the center (i.e., teachers, administrators, other personnel and parents). The design of center spaces should highlight the high-quality early childhood care, education, mission and vision of the center. In addition, this reference manual will provoke thought on what you may want to include in your design when considering elements that will translate into quality enhancement and program efficiencies for your Child Development Center as well as meet basic licensing requirements.

Child Development Center: *A facility located in the premises other than the residence of the operator of the facility that serves more than 12 children. Unless otherwise exempt, a Child Development Center must have a license from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) in order to legally operate.*

This guide may provide a current operating providers or a prospective provider with information for the planning and design of early childhood spaces that conform to the licensing regulations of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Unless otherwise indicated, regulatory requirements are from the *D.C. Municipal Regulations, Title 5-A, Chapter 1 (Child Development Facilities: Licensing), Final Rulemaking published 12/2/2016*.

Learning Environment Design Overview

This guide applies to providers that seek to:

- Renovate or expand interior spaces in a current program
- Renovate or reconfigure infant and toddler classroom spaces
- Purchase or reconfigure infant and toddler furniture, equipment and materials
- Renovate or expand exterior facility attributes or outdoor spaces for current program

References throughout this guide will be made to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Environment Rating Scale (ERS), Head Start Design and Performance Standards, and Caring for Our Children, as well as other resources that will/may apply to centers operating in the District. In addition to published resources, the experience of working in the early childhood field has allowed for many of the recommendations herein.

Note: The information contained related to some renovations of a center should be reviewed with licensed professionals such as architects, engineers, code officials and other licensing agencies that have jurisdiction over Child Development Centers prior to planning for a construction project. When selecting a licensed design professional, refer to the materials provided by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to assist in this process (see [Appendix 1](#)).



Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this reference guide is to help current and aspiring providers move from an idea to a completed physical space that will allow them to raise the bar in Child Development Centers. These spaces will display standards of infant and toddler child development classrooms and ancillary spaces based on the recommended design guidelines that meet and exceed the District's OSSE licensing regulations for the establishment of a high-quality Child Development Center. In addition, standards from NAEYC, ERS and the Early Head Start program will be incorporated to better allow programs to achieve these expectations. To aid centers in meeting these goals, this guide will provide recommendations as follows:

Design Process

1. Promote the design of adjacent child care space that supports the children's classrooms.
2. Provide learning spaces and common areas that accommodate the required child group sizes and staff-to-child supervision ratios.
3. Provide examples of ancillary and classroom space planning with suggested equipment content and proximities to allow for supervision of children at all times during the day.
4. Incorporate, whenever possible, sustainable, energy-efficient, recycled and durable materials in the design to be responsible stewards of the environment.
5. Promote easy accessibility to families for function, as well as provide spaces that will encourage family involvement. Promote the thought process and consider the following functions in a quality Child Development Center:
 - a. Activity areas that will allow children to choose from a variety of age-appropriate activities.
 - b. Location of activities within the classroom that incorporate wet and dry regions, and quiet and messy spaces.
 - c. Exterior areas with boundaries that allow for movement of children in a manner that does not restrict opportunities and freedom to explore but also allow for privacy.
 - d. Storage that is flexible to allow for changes in room layout, children's needs, children's interests or programming.
 - e. Equipment and materials that are of high quality and that both educate and stimulate children's play.
 - f. Safe drop-off/pickup of children and adequate parking facilities for staff and families.
 - g. Security at the center including secure access to the facility and playground areas.
 - h. Development of indoor and/or outdoor gross motor space with consideration of the safety surface and equipment to be utilized. Outdoor spaces should also consider fencing, water play and shade areas within the playground space.

Best Practice for Child Care Operations

1. Incorporate health and safety guidelines in the design to create quality environments for children. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings; Early Head Start 1302.31)
2. Guide the creation of environments that encourage social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development in appropriate, well-crafted, aesthetically pleasing spaces. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings; Early Head Start 1302.31)
3. Consider how the space invites the development of relationships and communication between family members and caregivers. (ITERS-R Parents and Staff; Early Head Start 1302.34, 1302.50)
4. Enhance the children's perceptual awareness, and provide places for wonder, curiosity and expression of their ideas. (ITERS-R Activities; Early Head Start 1302.31)
5. Young children need a lot of personal attention to thrive. The space should be designed to reduce conflict, allow children to independently access materials and allow teachers easy access to what they need. (ITERS-R Interaction; Early Head Start 1302.31)
6. Consider how to design the space in ways that facilitate the easy performance of personal care routines in order to minimize supervision challenges and transition times. (ITERS-R Personal Care Routines; Early Head Start 1302.47)
7. Take into consideration all aspects of the environment for its educational potential. (Early Head Start 1302.31)
8. Recognize the safety concerns that may jeopardize the safety of the children in the program while being mindful of the age, developmental level and diverse individual needs of children in care. (ITERS-R Personal Care Routines; Early Head Start 1302.47)
9. Provide a checklist to ensure that all aspects of licensing regulations are considered prior to the final design and construction of the child care spaces.



Predevelopment Activities and Best Practices

The Do's of Planning

There are a number of steps that need to be considered prior to renovating or expanding a Child Development Center. Many of these steps listed below require a significant amount of the provider's/owner's time, resources and funds, and should be considered and developed prior to moving forward. These steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Do:** Discuss with local and regional agencies that connect families to Child Development Centers. Understand the need and type of program accommodations that may be needed and can be successful in your footprint.
2. **Do:** Evaluate the supply of child care providers in the proposed area of operation, and determine the overall child care needs of the community serviced.
3. **Do:** Determine the affordability of your services to families in your current or potential geographic area of operation.
4. **Do:** Determine the availability of governmental or other financial assistance for families with lower incomes in your area.
5. **Do:** Investigate all zoning, building and fire codes; environmental assessments; and all other governmental requirements needed prior to the start of the project. **Zoning and building code requirements are significant issues.** Prior to beginning a project, you should seek professional assistance from an architect or engineer to guide you through the process. You should not enter into a contract or begin renovations until the above issues are thoroughly investigated.
6. **Do:** Develop the project's renovation budget. A renovation budget is generated by determining the cost of renovations and equipment needed to bring the project to fruition and within all licensing requirements. It is also suggested that you calculate prerenovation costs, such as the costs of licensing, permits, architect fees, etc., in developing your renovation plans.
7. **Do:** Estimate the amount of funding available for the project to fund the renovation budget from internally generated funds, bank financing, and any grants or awards that may be applied for, to allow for the follow-through on this project.
8. **Do:** Develop a three- to five-year operating budget projection for the center, incorporating the information derived from items 1 through 4 above (capacity, ages of children served, ratios, slot funding, etc.). The operating budget will allow you to estimate the center's revenues from tuitions and other sources, develop the corresponding costs associated with operating the center, and incorporate deferred maintenance expenses to maintain the facility.
9. **Do:** If the project is a renovation of an existing Child Development Center, evaluate and plan for the impact of the construction, including temporary space accommodations and safety issues.

10. **Do:** If architectural design services are needed, interview architects that have experience in designing Child Development Centers, if possible, and request an estimate of fees and timelines for the design services.
11. **Do:** Ensure that the new or renovated classrooms will meet all licensing and regulatory requirements established by OSSE (please refer to the checklist in [Appendix 4](#)).
12. **Do:** Ensure that the facility and classrooms will meet Early Head Start design guidelines, should you choose to provide Early Head Start services.
 - Early Head Start Design Guide can be viewed at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/node/4689>.
13. **Do:** Plan for the center to provide gross motor space that will meet the square footage requirements for licensing of such space.
 - Child Development Centers shall provide, or have access to, a minimum of sixty square feet (60 ft²) of outdoor play space per child, based on the maximum number of children scheduled to play outdoors at any one time. (OSSE 163.7)
14. **Do:** Solicit the input of your center staff. What do they envision for the design that will promote the center's educational philosophy while upholding the vision and mission of the program? What design enhancements would allow for efficient programming and facilitate meeting best-practice standards for a child's learning, health and safety needs?
15. **Do:** Review your staffing plan for each age group. Employed staff must meet OSSE minimum qualifications (OSSE 164 to 166) or exceed by following the recommended qualifications established by ERS, Early Head Start (EHS) and/or NAEYC, including staff qualifications for the center staff.

Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

As mentioned in the previous section of the guide, prior to renovations or expansion, licensed professionals such as architects and/or engineers should be engaged to discuss your plans for the building improvements and enhancements. A new Certificate of Occupancy (CO) will be required if the renovation being conducted involves a use change that deviates from what was originally issued. It is advisable that you develop the estimated timeline for the completion of all the required permitting with your architect to ensure that all the approvals will be in place to facilitate your anticipated occupancy date. A DCRA plans examiner can guide you on the requirements for D.C. and all applicable building codes required for facilities in the District. Utilize the DCRA Review of Child Development Centers Application — Process Map when completing renovations or expansions to your early learning program (see [Appendix 2](#)).

Predevelopment Activities and Best Practices

Below are several items, particularly important for child care facilities, related to the CO that must be considered prior to renovations:

1. Building code challenges for a Certificate of Occupancy include:
 - a. Fire code upgrades
 - b. Accessibility requirements
 - c. Sprinklers
2. There must be direct egress at grade level for more than five children under 2½ years old.
3. Fire Safety Inspection: Ensure that fire safety equipment, emergency lighting and lighted exit signs are present and functioning. Each of these systems will need to be inspected by a licensed person before you can receive your Certificate of Occupancy. Each of these systems must be inspected annually and will need to be budgeted for in the center's operating budget. The inspections may be the responsibility of the owner of the facility or may be passed on to the child care tenant. This responsibility should be clarified in the lease for the facility.
4. Building permits are **required prior** to the beginning of a renovation or alteration project. Building permit information can be located online at <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/546012>.
5. Application for Building Permit: <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1234411>

Classroom Square Footage Requirements and Configuration

Regulatory Requirements

The minimum interior square footage requirements for a Child Development Center are established by OSSE and are currently established at a minimum of 45 square feet per infant, 35 square feet of unencumbered program space per toddler or 45 square feet of encumbered space per child. The number of children allowable in each classroom is calculated by taking the square footage of a room and dividing by 45 (OSSE 122.2). The indoor space is measured within the permanent stationary partitions or walls of a classroom. Measured space within a classroom excludes halls, restrooms, offices, kitchens and any locker rooms.

Classroom Definition: A classroom is defined as a well-defined space in a facility or within a larger room that occupies a group of children and their teacher(s).

Best Practice Recommendations

When developing a high-quality Child Development Center program space, the designer needs to consider calculating the square footage of a classroom space using the dictates of

Predevelopment Activities and Best Practices

best practice in the profession. To allow for optimal classroom configuration and spacing, the design of classrooms should aim for the following average square footage allotments:

	State Licensing Requirements	Best Practice
Infants	45	85 – 95
Toddlers	35	50 – 65

Classroom Definition: Early Head Start defines a classroom as a space that is separated by partitions or full (floor to ceiling) walls or nonpermanent barriers that allow controlled visual or acoustical connections to other groups. (Head Start Design Guide, chapter 5.8)

Lessons Learned

A common error in the design of a child care center or specific classrooms is a lack of consideration of all the factors that will play into the function of a classroom space. Allowing for lockers/cubbies, teacher and food preparation areas, restrooms and diapering facilities, infant cribs, etc., is critical in the final design to meet or exceed best practice in the child care center and licensing requirements. In addition, ancillary spaces such as reception areas, offices, staff lounge, resource library and adult restrooms must also be accounted for in the final square footage design and calculation. [Appendix 5](#) demonstrates a sample space plan that was used to calculate the area/square footage requirements needed for a new or expanding center.

In addition to the square footage requirements listed, the size and the configuration of the classrooms are vital to the design.

- The design should avoid creating spaces that may cause supervision issues. L-shaped rooms or walls within the room that inhibit the supervision of children should be avoided. In designing the space, consider how teachers will be able to adequately supervise the group during meals and personal care routines while maintaining health practices like hand washing. Renovations or expansion into existing facilities may prevent ideal layouts from being present. When this occurs, other means for supervision must be employed. (ITERS-R Indoor Space and Personal Care Routines; Early Head Start 1302.47)
- If possible, avoid a design that produces long, narrow rooms. This configuration makes it difficult to place learning centers and activities. (ITERS-R Indoor Space; Early Head Start 1302.47)
- Attempt to avoid any columns within the classroom since they create supervision and safety issues. (ITERS-R Indoor Space; Early Head Start 1302.47)
- Consider that active older infants and toddlers need adequate space and furnishings to engage in active gross motor play within the classroom. (ITERS-R Activities; Early Head Start 1302.31)



Design Considerations

General Design

Each age group's classroom will be the primary space where the children will spend most of their day with creative experiences, active play, eating and resting. The design of a space must consider the safety of children and teachers, and allow for proper supervision of the children at all times. The quality and selection of the equipment for each classroom age group should provide for all areas of interest as prescribed by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating System (ECERS), the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and NAEYC to ensure the goal of a high-quality program for children.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Every building or part thereof that is used as a child development facility is constructed, used, furnished, maintained and equipped in compliance with all applicable requirements established by District and federal laws and regulations, with written certification of compliance from the appropriate regulatory bodies governing zoning, building construction and safety, sanitation, and fire safety. (122.1)
2. Provide adequate room for all program activities, and: (a) arrange the space to permit the easy accommodation of the entire range of activities offered by the program; (b) arrange the space so that various activities may occur simultaneously without disruption of one by another; and (c) ensure that there is adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and the personal possessions of enrolled children and facility staff. (163.4)
3. A minimum of 45 square feet (or 35 square feet for toddlers) of usable space (free and open, not including storage spaces) per child. (122.2)
4. Gross motor space of 60 square feet per child of outdoor space. (163.7)
5. Child Development Centers serving infants, toddlers or preschoolers shall provide suitable age-appropriate outdoor play space. This play space shall be at (a) an enclosed area, including a yard or playground, on the facility's premises; (b) a nearby park or playground; or (c) a rooftop play space that meets requirements. (163.6)
6. (a) All access points to stairs are restricted by gates; (b) all doors or windows are protected with guards that prevent exit by a child; and (c) all blinds have child protective coverings ensuring cords are not accessible to children. (122.12)
7. Maintain adequate storage space for play and teaching equipment, supplies, records, and children's possessions and clothing. (122.25)
8. Carpeting in the facility shall be nonflammable, nontoxic, and maintained by the licensee in clean condition and good repair. (124.4)
9. Children under the age of two (2) years, or nonambulatory children, may only occupy center space that (a) is on street level; (b) has two (2) means of egress; and (c) if the

Design Considerations

means of egress involve steps, has ramps in place to enable staff to put children in evacuation cribs or flat strollers to roll them out in the event of an emergency, unless the lack of a ramp at any means of egress has been approved by Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS).

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Consider Early Head Start ratios in the design: “An Early Head Start or Migrant or Seasonal Head Start class that serves children under 36 months old must have two teachers with no more than eight children, or three teachers with no more than nine children. Each teacher must be assigned consistent, primary responsibility for no more than four children to promote continuity of care for individual children. A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child’s enrollment, whenever possible, and consider mixed age group classes to support continuity of care.” (Early Head Start 1302.21)
2. Provide easily navigated corridors for strollers and buggies by reducing or eliminating any barriers.
3. Provide indoor play space in addition to outdoor play space to allow for variation and gross motor activities during inclement weather. (ITERS-R Activities; Early Head Start 1302.31)
4. Provide at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child. (Early Head Start 1302.22(d))
5. Design a traffic pattern that allows for children to get to the gross motor play space safely. Consider a door leading directly from the classroom area into the gross motor play space. (ITERS-R Activities; Early Head Start 1302.31)
6. Develop the classroom spaces to allow for eating and sleeping, and taking into consideration the materials used in those areas along with the supervision during these activities. Consider that infants eat and sleep on their own schedules, and there is a need to balance individual needs, those of the group and supervision. (ITERS-R Indoor Space and Personal Care Routines; Early Head Start 1302.31)
7. Provide clearly visible documentation spaces that exhibit the children’s artwork/classroom projects. (NAEYC 9.A.09)
8. Provide mailboxes dedicated to the needs of families/staff. (ITERS-R Parents and Staff)
9. Provide a central, relaxed location that promotes the investigation, conversation and collaboration among families in a home-like setting. (NAEYC 9.A.09 and 9.A.10)
10. Provide private spaces for conferencing of staff, children and/or families. (NAEYC 4.E.03; Early Head Start 1302.34)
11. Provide spaces for teacher preparation. Include wall-mounted telephone and computer data outlets at an adult height surface for use in documentation. (ITERS-R Parents and Staff)

Design Considerations

12. Allow and plan for adequate storage.

- a. Each classroom should provide locked storage for the teacher's coat and personal items. (ITERS 34, 5.2)
- b. A general storage area, inaccessible to children, should be provided to store cots, bedding and classroom materials. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings)

Lessons Learned

1. Sound-absorbing materials, such as acoustical tiles, area rugs, etc., should be considered in order to minimize noise, especially in open concept centers. (NAEYC 9.D.04)
2. The general design process needs to consider all spaces that are required or desired in the planning stages. Restrooms, storage, hallways, offices, kitchens, food storage and staff areas must be considered.

Flooring

Flooring is an important aspect of the child care center since it is utilized daily by all. Careful consideration is to be made when deciding on the flooring product since great expense can occur if it is damaged, needs repair or is difficult to clean. Therefore, please consider the following.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. A licensee shall maintain floors that are free from bare concrete, dampness, splinters and sliding rugs. (124.5)
2. A licensee shall ensure that all floors, walls and ceilings are in good repair and easy to clean when soiled. Only smooth, nonporous surfaces shall be permitted in areas that are likely to be contaminated by body fluids, including (without limitation) lavatories and toilets, and areas used for food preparation or consumption or for diaper changing. (124.6)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Prior to selecting a flooring material, investigate the maintenance costs going forward and its useful life.
2. Consider use of low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in addition to materials that are sustainable. (Caring for Our Children 5.2.1.5)
 - a. High-quality resilient plank, engineered wood and tile flooring products are preferred due to their durability and low maintenance.
 - b. Alternatively, traditional welded seam sheet linoleum is made entirely of natural, mostly rapidly renewable materials. It is preferred to all vinyl products.
 - Linoleum also has antibacterial properties that will be an added health consideration.

Design Considerations

- c. Rubber is a natural material. It is also very durable and is third in preference after linoleum.
 - d. Area rugs provide comfort and are economical for inclusion in a classroom. Tripping/slipping hazards created by rugs must be addressed through the use of proper underlayment pads designed for rugs or by the use of effective edge binding and transitions. Nonslip surfacing on the reverse side of “throw” rugs is essential. (NAEYC 9.C.07)
3. Flooring in wet areas, in general, should be slip-resistant. (ITERS-R Personal Care Routines)
- a. Ceramic tile is a durable, hard surface that is traditionally used in restrooms to allow for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - b. Larger-size tiles minimize grout joints, which must be sealed upon initial installation to maintain a clean surface.
4. Floor tile should be slip-resistant to prevent injury. (ITERS-R Personal Care Routines)

Lessons Learned

- 1. Installed carpeting will be limited to use only in the director’s office and staff areas and should be a dense loop with antimicrobial properties.
- 2. Consider use of carpet tiles to allow for replacement if some tiles become heavily soiled.

Ceilings

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

- 1. A licensee shall ensure that all floors, walls and ceilings are in good repair and easy to clean when soiled. (124.6)

Best Practice Recommendations

- 1. Depending on the building’s structure, a standard acoustic ceiling tile is a good material selection for ceilings because it is easily replaced and allows for sound absorption.
- 2. Painted drywall is appropriate for use in areas with soffits, ceiling height changes or vaults.
- 3. General recommended ceiling heights:
 - a. Learning environments — 9'-0"
 - b. Multipurpose/corridors — 10'-0" to 12'-0"

Lessons Learned

A program that is aware of sound will reap the benefit of classrooms and ancillary spaces that allow children to focus on the opportunities present within their space rather than being distracted by sound or noise surrounding them. Building additions stated in the Best Practice Recommendations will prevent sound-related design flaws.

Wall Finish

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. A licensee shall ensure that all floors, walls and ceilings are in good repair and easy to clean when soiled. (124.6)
2. A licensee shall ensure that a facility is free of any lead-based paint hazards. (122.8)
3. Maintain record of certification or clearance report issued by a District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE)-certified lead-based paint inspector, risk assessor or dust sampling technician no more than thirty (30) days before the date of the facility's application to be licensed, confirming that the facility does not contain any lead-based paint hazards. (129.2c)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Use low- or non-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints to reduce allergies and any chemical sensitivity. (Caring for Our Children 5.2.1.5)
2. Interior walls shall be constructed using abuse-resistant drywall.
3. Walls between the classrooms and other spaces should be insulated to reduce the sound transmission between spaces. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings)
4. Use of materials that will buffer or reduce excessive levels of internal or external noise.
5. Consider how the use of wall space will be used for child-related display at the children's eye level. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings)
6. No sharp edges within children's areas. All corners on trim, counters, partitions and shelving must have rounded edges. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings)
 - a. Corner guards shall be installed to protect squared corners from damage and lessen injury.
 - b. Any columns that are required should be protected with an impact-absorbing material to reduce or eliminate any child injuries.

Lessons Learned

1. Wall colors have an impact on children's behavior, and overstimulation could be an issue with certain colors. Color selection should be warm and varied throughout the center. Accent walls within a classroom will also add to the warmth of a room.
2. The addition of wall protectant is important to maintain the wall surface.
 - a. Semi-gloss paint, linoleum or other durable material wainscot should be used instead of vinyl or other wall coverings where possible.
 - b. Textiles on vertical surfaces within reach of children are not recommended but work well for surfaces such as documentation panels located above children's reach.
 - c. Glazed ceramic tile is appropriate for wet areas such as restrooms.

Design Considerations

- d. Display surfaces such as chalkboards, marker boards and magnet boards may be provided as a wainscot up to 36" or higher.
 - Display systems requiring tacks are not permitted due to the risk of injury.
 - Use of tape or contact paper on walls is not recommended due to the damage caused to the paint and drywall, thereby causing peeling and increased risk of children removing paint/drywall and mouthing/eating.
3. Maintain a file that includes documentation on any facility environmental assessments or reports.

Windows

The introduction of natural light into the interior space is an important aspect of the early childhood classroom. Visual connections from the interior to the exterior of the building and visual connections within the center itself (windows between classrooms, and windows between classrooms and circulation paths) are positive additions to the child's classroom experience. (NAEYC 9.C.04)

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Ventilate program space by mechanical ventilation, such as fans, air conditioning or at least one (1) operable window. (122.15)
2. Windows, including windows in doors, when utilized for ventilation purposes, shall be securely screened to prevent the entry of insects. (122.15b)
3. All doors or windows are protected with guards that prevent exit by a child. (122.12b)
4. Windows that are accessible to children under five (5) years of age that are above ground level of the building shall be adjusted to limit the opening to less than 6" or shall be protected with guards that do not block natural lighting. (122.15c)
5. All blinds have protective coverings ensuring cords are not accessible to children. (122.12c)
6. Tempered glass shall be used for all glass with a bottom edge that is 24" or less above the finished floor in accordance with the International Building Code (IBC).

Best Practice Recommendations

1. The height and scale of windows, the type of glass, a clear view (no horizontal members blocking the view of either adults or children), control of light, and safety factors must all be weighed. (Caring for Our Children 5.2.1.1, 5.1.3.2)
 - a. When allowing for access to natural light, one must consider how natural light will be controlled at certain times of the day (e.g., nap, extreme heat in the classroom due to direct sunlight). (ITERS-R Personal Care Routines)

Design Considerations

2. Window treatments should be installed on all learning environment exterior windows to control light.
 - a. Attention must be paid to how the window treatments are closed to prevent long cords or other materials that can potentially harm a child from being installed.
3. Horizontal mullions should not be located between 24" and 44" above the finished floor because they could be used as climbing support.

Lessons Learned

1. Where possible, windowsills should provide generous space for the placement of children's artwork, displays, artifacts, etc., but should be less than 24" or greater than 48" to prevent unsafe climbing practices.
2. A minimum 10% of the square footage of the learning space interior wall can be considered for one-way viewing glass to allow for discreet family viewing of learning activities.

Doors

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. All access points to stairs are restricted by gates. (122.12a)
2. All doors or windows are protected with guards that prevent exit by a child. (122.12b)
3. Install finger-pinch protection devices on doors, cupboards, cabinets and gates that are accessible to children, except on doors, cupboards, cabinets, and gates that are fully closed and locked. (124.8)
4. Ensure that exits are (a) clearly identified, (b) free of all obstructions, and (c) arranged or marked so the path to exit the building is visible and clear. (122.3) Review the required distance to an exit from an interior space with your architect to ensure compliance with building and safety codes.
5. A facility with glass doors shall place decals at the eye level of the children in its care. (122.15d)
6. The opening and closing directions of classroom doors should be reviewed by your architect to ensure that they comply with existing building codes.

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Main entrance doors shall have an electronic strike release with an access control device, and a remote release located in a normally occupied space (director's office, administrative area, etc.).

Design Considerations

2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant lever-type door handles shall be provided for all door locks and latch-sets.
3. To prevent injury, all doors will have closers that restrict the speed of door closure. (NAEYC 9.C.03)
4. All children's bathroom (toddler and preschool) doors shall be a maximum of 32" in height to allow for staff supervision. In addition to a half door, a half wall may also be necessary. (NAEYC 9.A.05)
5. Doors accessible to children must have hardware operable from both sides, with components having smooth edges and no sharp protrusions.
 - a. An exception to this recommendation is for the hardware on the toddler bathroom doors. This hardware should allow adults to open the door from the side facing the bathroom to help prevent inadvertent access to the bathrooms by the children.
6. Doors in all interior rooms designated for use by children shall remain unlocked.
7. All doors to the exterior should be properly sealed to safeguard against rodent/insect entry.
8. Exterior doors should be equipped with a push bar to facilitate exit from the facility. This type of hardware may be required to facilitate compliance with fire codes. Providers may have issues with this type of hardware since it can allow children to exit to other spaces. It is suggested that the center install a door-release system that will allow only center staff to unlock the door (usually placed 60" from the floor). This system will disengage if the fire alarm system is activated so that children and staff may safely exit the facility.

Lessons Learned

1. Children's fingers must be protected from being crushed or otherwise injured in the hinge space of a door by installing protective hinge guards on all doors that children pass through (entry doors, bathroom doors, classroom doors). (Caring for Our Children 5.1.3.5)
2. Door openings intended for adult-only use shall have hardware installed at adult height.
3. All classroom doors shall have large, see-through windows for viewing into and out of each space.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Center temperature and air quality are important to the children and staff while present in the center space, and will ultimately affect how they feel and perform throughout the day. OSSE-mandated temperatures must be maintained to allow for the center to be operational.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. All program space that children use shall be heated, cooled and ventilated to maintain the required temperatures, and to allow for air exchange to avoid accumulation of odors and fumes. (122.11)
2. The following are the OSSE-acceptable indoor temperature ranges for child care centers (124.2):
 - a. 68°F–75°F during the winter months (October–March)
 - b. 68°F–82°F during the summer months (April–September)
3. Ventilate program space by mechanical ventilation, such as fans, air conditioning or at least one (1) operable window. (122.15)
4. A freestanding fan shall be placed in a stable location, have a stable base, be equipped with a protective guard, and be inaccessible to children. (122.15a)
5. Portable space heaters are not permitted; any use of space heaters shall be approved in writing by a local fire safety professional (FEMS). (122.16)
 - a. Maintain documentation of approval on file at the child care center.
6. Ensure that fireplaces and fireplace inserts are inaccessible to children at all times. (122.17)
7. Protrusions, such as pipes, wood ends or long bolts that may catch a child's clothing, are prohibited. (124.3)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Temperature levels are measured at lower-than-normal heights (1-3 feet) above the floor in order to accommodate children.
 - a. Individual classroom thermometers and/or thermostats are recommended to monitor temperature.
 - b. Controls to be inaccessible to children to prevent accidental changes in temperature.
2. Each classroom and some of the ancillary spaces should be equipped with individual controls for heating and cooling. (ITERS-R Space and Furnishings)
3. Recommend installing ceiling fans in areas that do not receive adequate airflow.
4. Humidifiers should be provided in all air handling units to maintain proper humidity levels in the learning environment.
5. Radiant floor heating is preferred in order to provide an efficient, effective heating solution for the center that allows for the heat to be present where the children are most often present.
6. Each space should be supplied with outside air to control odors.
7. Proper exhaust venting is required for the kitchen range, clothes dryer, changing stations and the mildly ill child room.
 - a. None of this air is to be returned to the rest of the building.

Lessons Learned

1. Noise levels, service and efficiency should all be taken into consideration when locating heating and cooling equipment.
2. Building renovations projects or centers located in basement locations are to complete an air quality test to ensure the safety of the children and staff present.
 - a. Testing of the air quality during any construction period must also be conducted at regular intervals to ensure the safety of children and staff.
 - b. Maintain documentation of testing results on file in the child care center.

Plumbing and Accessories

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Maintain hot and cold running water under pressure. Hot running water shall be maintained at one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F). (122.18)
2. Ensure that designated hand-washing areas are equipped with sinks with running water, soap, and single-use paper towels or an air hand dryer, and are restricted from use for washing utensils and bottles. (144.5)

Best Practice Requirements

1. Sensor-operated toilets, sinks, soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers are favored to reduce cross-contamination from occurring.
 - a. Consider the ongoing cost of maintaining (if battery-operated) and time to service (change batteries, fix jams, etc.) when you are selecting sensor-operated devices.
2. Provide easily reached cleanouts for all waste piping.
3. Provide a shut-off valve for each fixture so maintenance does not affect multiple plumbing facilities.
4. Provide a floor drain in each restroom, kitchen, laundry and water play activity area.
5. Provide a hot water supply of 185°F for the dishwasher by utilizing a properly sized, instantaneous hot water heater.
6. Provide hot and cold water at each sink.
7. Solder for domestic water piping shall be lead-free.
8. Centers that are renovating must have documentation stating that piping is lead-free.
9. Sink/countertop heights:
 - a. Preschool — 24-26" above floor finish (AFF)
 - b. Toddler — 22" AFF
 - c. Diaper changing — 30" AFF

Lessons Learned

1. Provide areas for children to witness the inner workings of the HVAC/plumbing systems.
 - a. Drywall can be cut out and polymer/Plexiglas installed to view these technical areas to increase awareness and encourage questioning about how these types of systems work.
2. Water testing may be required and results should be maintained at your center.
 - a. Determine whether your center's water has fluoride, as this is information that families often need to share with their child's health care professional.

Restrooms

Restrooms are to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. The location of the ADA-compliant adult toilet must be accessible from floors without an elevator. The children's toilets are not required to be ADA-compliant, since adult assistance is available by the staff. Therefore, some floors could have no ADA-compliant toilets. Signage may need to be provided if the toilet provided is not ADA-accessible, i.e., "ADA-accessible toilets are located on floors 2 and 4" or a similar sign that indicates where ADA-accessible toilets would be located.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Maintain hot and cold running water under pressure. Hot running water shall be maintained at one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F). (122.18)
2. Maintain diaper-changing areas within close proximity of a properly maintained source of potable, running hot and cold water and soap, and that is not in or near the facility's kitchen or eating areas. (145.1)
3. Provide one (1) or more diaper-changing areas that have surfaces made of nonporous material. (145.6)
4. When caring for preschoolers, provide at least one (1) flush toilet and one (1) sink for every ten (10) children, based on the license capacity of the facility. (123.1)
5. When caring for infants, toddlers or preschoolers, provide at least one (1) changing table for every ten (10) children who are not independently using toilet facilities, based on the license capacity of the facility. (123.6)
6. Provide bathroom facilities for use by adults separate from those used by children. (123.2)
7. Facility shall be accessible for children and adults with disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accessibility includes access to buildings, toilets, sinks, drinking fountains, outdoor play areas, meal and snack areas, and all classroom and therapy areas. (122.10)

Design Considerations

8. Provide toilet paper, soap and single-use paper towels at each bathroom in a manner accessible for independent use by children. (123.5)
9. Provide a block or step for a child's use for each toilet and sink at a facility if the sink or toilet is too high to be used by one (1) or more enrolled children without assistance. (123.3)
10. At the discretion of the facility, provide toilet training chairs or seats (or both), for use by any child or children who require them. Training chairs shall be emptied promptly and sanitized after each use. Training chairs shall be made of nonporous, synthetic products. Training chairs shall remain in the bathroom facilities. (123.4)
11. Ensure that all floors, walls and ceilings are in good repair and easy to clean when soiled. Only smooth, nonporous surfaces shall be permitted in areas that are likely to be contaminated by body fluids, including (without limitation) lavatories and toilets, and areas used for food preparation or consumption or for diaper changing. (124.6)
12. Exhaust fans, toilet partitions and ADA-compliant grab bars should be included in the design. Refer to local building codes.

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Provide properly designed, well-located toilet and hand-washing facilities. (Head Start Design Guide chapter 4.1.8)
2. Toilets and sinks are at child height.
3. Restrooms are to contain floor drains.
4. Consider the placement of toilets and sinks in each classroom, even as it pertains to toddlers, including handwashing sinks that are outside of the bathrooms.
5. Walls in all restrooms should be installed to resist water and moisture.
 - a. Fiberglass-reinforced panels 48" high is an economical product.
 - b. Ceramic tile is a durable, hard surface that is traditionally used in restrooms.
 - Larger-size tiles minimize grout joints, which must be sealed upon initial installation to maintain a clean surface.
6. Provide shatterproof mirror surfaces when utilized in classrooms or bathrooms spaces, etc.

Lessons Learned

1. Allow for bathroom spaces, in toddler and preschool classrooms, that have half walls and doors to facilitate supervision of the space.
2. Restrooms and other areas with running water should have floor drains to alleviate water damage in the event of overflow.

Plumbing and Restroom Best Practices

Room Name	Best Practices
Adults and Family Areas	
Mildly Ill Room (if needed)	One adult sink, one child sink, one toilet, one floor drain
Staff Lounge	One adult sink, one dishwasher connection and drain
Restrooms (adults)	One adult sink, one toilet, one floor drain
Lactation Room	One adult sink
Learning Environments	
Infant Rooms	Two adult sinks (hand wash/food prep, changing station), one dishwasher connection and drain
Young/Older Toddler Rooms	One adult sink, two child sinks (classroom, bathroom), one child-sized toilet, one floor drain
Preschool Rooms	One adult sink, three child sinks (two restrooms, two classrooms), two toilets, two floor drains
Atelier/Art Space	One child sink
Room Name	Plumbing Connections
Service Areas	
Kitchen	One adult hand sink, one pre-rinse sink, one three-compartment sink, one garbage disposal, one dishwasher connection and drain, one floor drain
Laundry	One adult sink, one washing machine connection and drain, one floor drain
Janitor's Closet	One mop sink
Outside Areas	
Play Yard	Connections for water play, drinking fountains

Electrical

The project objective is to provide all required electrical systems including, but not limited to, power distribution, lighting control, communications, security, fire and emergency systems to support the child care center. All systems will be designed and installed in accordance with the latest adopted edition of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and other governing federal, state and local codes.

1. Ensure that electrical outlets that are not in use and are accessible to children are fitted with appropriate child-proof protective outlet covers that meet the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. standard for Safety of Receptacle Closures (UL 2255). (124.10)
2. Install ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in areas accessible to children where electrical products may come into contact with water. (124.11)
3. Ensure that strings and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck are not accessible to children. (124.9)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. All electrical outlets shall be tamper-resistant, and an appropriate number should be available to limit the need for electric extension cords. Maintain documentation of the tamper-resistant receptacles installed.

Lighting

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Rooms, hallways, stairways, outside steps, porches and ramps shall be lighted by artificial or natural light.
2. Lightbulbs shall be shatterproof or appropriately shielded to prevent product contamination and injuries due to breakage. (126.10)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. To the extent possible, the quality of light should remind children of a residential environment.
2. To achieve the maximum natural light in the learning environments, every attempt should be made to locate the rooms on the exterior perimeter of the center to allow for exterior windows.
 - a. When this is not possible, adding skylights, windows that lead to areas with natural light, or windows to other areas of the center will allow for the space to feel less constricted.
3. The amount and orientation of natural light need to be considered in the design. Lighting design studies are recommended and will include photometric calculations of the learning environments.
4. Light levels in all rooms, including sleeping areas, must be maintained at a sufficient level to provide observation of the space from adjoining spaces.
 - a. Use of dimmers allows for light to be lowered but present during nap times, which allows for proper observation and supervision of the children present.
 - b. When possible, multiple light switches/lighting circuits should be installed to allow for different levels of lighting in each classroom if dimmers are not used.
5. When possible, use LED lighting rather than fluorescent. If not feasible, indirect fluorescent lighting is preferred.
6. Light fixtures in all learning environments are to have a protective shield in the event there is a breakage of the bulbs.
7. Parking areas, pedestrian walkways or other exterior portions of the premises subject to night use by the center's occupants shall be illuminated to provide safe entrance/egress from the center.

Design Considerations

8. At a minimum, lighting levels should be in accordance with required levels suggested in *Caring for Our Children* as follows:
 - a. Reading, painting and other close work areas: 50 to 100 foot-candles on the work surface
 - b. Work and play areas: 30 to 50 foot-candles on the surface
 - c. Stairs, walkways, landings, driveways, entrances: at least 20 foot-candles on the surface
 - d. Sleeping and napping areas: no more than five foot-candles during sleeping or napping, except for infants and children who are resting in the same room where other children are involved with activities

Lessons Learned

1. Install track lighting in certain areas of the center to create interest areas to display art or other activities.
2. Where practical, task lighting should be provided for reading, painting and close work.

Fire Protection

Regulatory Requirements

1. The installation of a building sprinkler system must be evaluated in conjunction with your architect and a fire protection professional to ensure compliance with all building codes. At a minimum, a sprinkler system is often required if your center cares for children under the age of 2½ and/or your center is 12,000 square feet or more. The system should be designed per all applicable codes and Fire Marshal requirements. Building construction materials, exits, distances from exits, etc., will dictate the need for sprinklers.
 - a. Provide sprinkle guards when needed.
 - b. When sprinklers are installed, 18 inches of open space must be maintained between the sprinkler and all other materials, furnishings or walls.
 - c. Sprinkler system is to be inspected annually and serviced as needed.
2. A fire alarm system shall be installed throughout the building. The system should be designed per all applicable codes and Fire Marshal requirements. Smoke detectors should be provided throughout the center. The system should be both visual and audible. Emergency lighting must also be provided.
3. Provide fire extinguisher per local building codes.
 - a. Consider semi-recessed that prevent child access.
4. Fire extinguishers are to be serviced regularly to ensure functionality. Consider setting up a contract with a local company that can provide this service. Provide the cost of the service in your operating budget.

Design Considerations

5. Undergo a fire safety inspection annually; obtain certification from FEMS that the premises conform to all applicable fire safety and related codes. (OSSE 122.6)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Required exits are to be clearly identified/marked. (CFOC 5.1.4.6)
2. A minimum of two exits from the child care program must lead directly outside of the building. (CFOC 5.1.4.1).
3. The travel point between any point in a sleeping room and an exit access door in the room shall not exceed 50 feet.
4. Each learning and activity space should, ideally, be provided with one direct outdoor exit.
5. Provide the capacity for permanent carbon monoxide monitoring. (NAEYC 9.C.11)
6. Interior/exterior classroom doors shall utilize “push button or push bar” release mechanisms that are located a minimum of 72" above the finished floor. These door release mechanisms shall be tied into the building’s fire alarm system and release when the system is in alarm.
7. Fire drills are to occur monthly.
8. Budget for annual sprinkler system inspections. The responsibility for costs of sprinkler servicing should be addressed in your lease.

Security

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Limit entry to the center to one to two doorways to allow for the doors to be well observed by center staff.
2. The entry should be visible to the adults inside the center. The lobby area should be adjacent to the director’s office.
3. Entry shall be controlled either manually by center personnel buzzing families in, or electronically through an access control system.
 - a. All doors will be locked from the exterior at all times.
 - b. If manual entry by center personnel is to occur, means to allow for center staff to view the person requesting entry is necessary to assure who is being permitted into the center.
4. Provide an access control device at the entrance for authorized access to the center without relying on center personnel if budget permits. A communication system should be installed in each classroom to allow for emergency calls.
5. The design must ensure that a child will be unable to exit the center without staff knowledge.
6. To control outside personnel from entering and exiting the building, the mechanical space(s) should be located with maintenance access available from the exterior of the facility.

Design Considerations

7. Emergency panic buttons shall be installed in areas of the building to alert authorities of unauthorized entry. These panic buttons shall be tied into the building's security system.

Telecommunications/Computer Technology

Best Practice Recommendations

1. A hard-wired/wireless data network LAN connection and telephone communication system will be provided in all adult and child learning spaces.
2. All classrooms will be provided with a minimum of two (2) data outlets for children's technology stations.
3. Phone systems are to have multiple lines and ideally equipped with an intercom feature.
4. The administrative area will be equipped with adequate reprographic equipment.
5. A telephone/data closet will be constructed to house all telecommunications equipment.
6. Provide a sufficient number of wireless access points to provide coverage throughout the center.

General Safety

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Locked storage for medications, cleaning products or other hazardous materials must be provided.
2. Childproof interior hardware devices must be mounted on the interior of cabinets and drawers within children's reach.
3. Furnishings that are top-heavy shall be secured to prevent tipping.

Age-Specific Classroom Spaces

Infant

When addressing spaces for infants, one must consider the fact that infants spend an inordinate amount of time on the floor, require varying times of the day to sleep and eat, and have food preparation and sanitary needs that are to be incorporated into the final design. A high-quality program shall allow for 85 to 95 square feet per child.

1. Provide space for cribs in the design based on the maximum group size prescribed by the licensing agencies and Best Practice. Allow for the distance between cribs per state licensing to 2 feet and 2 feet from any window, and 2 feet from any radiators. The 2 feet

Design Considerations

of separation required shall be measured on all sides of each crib or cot. (OSSE 126.15b) The Environmental Rating Scale dictates at least 36 inches of open space from other napping children or furniture/equipment is required on three sides of nap equipment. The expectation is for all children to be separated in this manner to prevent the spread of germs during sleep as well as to ensure adequate space for access in case of an emergency.

2. Ensure sufficient separation between crib and cot areas and play space to prevent access to sleeping areas by children at play. (OSSE 126.14d)
3. Cribs located under soft, preferably dimmer-controlled lighting. (Head Start Design Guide chapter 3.5.1)
4. Design adequate workspace in infant rooms for dishwasher, refrigerator, diaper storage and a work station for food preparation.
 - a. Countertop to be made of a solid surface material that is easily cleaned and sanitized.
 - b. It is suggested that this space is sectioned off from the activity and sleep areas of the infant room. If the dishwasher or other appliances are open to the classroom, millwork enclosure should be incorporated into the design to limit children's access.
 - c. Allow for a counter height surface with ground fault interrupters (GFI) electrical outlet to allow for a bottle warmer to be present without the use of extension cords and to allow for the warmer to be maintained at a height that is not accessible to the children to prevent injury.
5. Design or placement of the diaper-changing table should be accessible to the adult diaper hand-washing sink and be situated to allow for supervision of infants in the classroom.
 - a. Ventilation over the infant changing area should be provided.
 - b. Allow for a solid barrier (clear) or three feet of open space around the changing table to discourage play in this location to minimize the risk of cross-contamination. (NAEYC 5.A08)
6. The room should be warm and inviting and have a variety of textures for infants to experience.
 - a. Each classroom should have lockers/cubbies, not accessible to infants enrolled, and should be wall-mounted, for children's coat storage, personal papers and change of clothing. Lockers/cubbies should be located near the entry point of the classroom.
7. Infant classroom should provide for an adult bench/area and shoe rack located outside of the classroom to allow adults to remove shoes or put on shoe covers before entering the room. (NAEYC 5.C.06)
8. A gross motor area away from the main area of circulation, with a soft mat that can be cleaned. The area should be defined by a low (12-18 inches) padded bumper. (Head Start Design Guide chapter 3.5.1)

Design Considerations

9. Areas of mirrored ceiling tiles in the infant areas are preferable.
10. Provide grab bars in front of mirrors for infants and toddlers within a classroom.
11. Toys should be on low, open shelving where the infant can see and grasp them.
12. In addition to the sample furniture and fixture provided in [Appendix 6](#), manipulatives, mirrors, tunnels, balls, musical items, push toys, etc., should be provided.
13. Areas designated for infant cribs or resting cots should be separated from active spaces and have dimmable lighting. If walls separate active areas from sleeping areas, sleep areas should have low walls to allow teachers to see, hear and assess children at all times.
14. Classroom space will provide an area not accessible to children for cot or mat storage (for children more than 12 months of age).
15. Providing a space to store car seats and strollers is not only convenient to families but also prevents injuries and obstruction from egress from occurring. If a place for storage is not provided, often families will place these items in areas that look appropriate but can be dangerous during emergency situations.
16. Provide special accommodations for infant feeding and nursing. (Head Start Design Guide chapter 4.1.9)

Toddler

As children enter the ages of 12 to 36 months, they expand their exploration both physically and cognitively. Furniture and fixtures need to be selected to be appropriate for this group of children. A high-quality program for toddlers shall allow for 50-65 square feet per child.

1. Design or placement of the diaper-changing table should be accessible to the adult diaper hand-washing sink and should be situated to allow for supervision of infants in the classroom.
2. In all learning spaces, there shall be an attached, handicapped-accessible bathroom that includes at least one toilet and one sink scaled for children. (ECERS 12, 5.2) Recommend additional toilets and sinks to assist in the daily operation of the classroom.
3. Each classroom should have lockers/cubbies for children's coat storage, personal papers and change of clothing. Lockers/cubbies should be located near the entry point of the classroom.
4. Cots shall be used only for children more than twelve (12) months of age who can walk. (OSSE 126.17a)
5. Classroom space will provide an area not accessible to children for cot or mat storage.
6. Children's restrooms should be open to allow for staff supervision. This may be accomplished by using half walls, half doors, etc. (NAEYC 9.A.05)
7. Provide quantity of sinks in accordance with NAEYC 5.A.09. Sink height for toddlers should be mounted 18" to 20" above the floor.

Design Considerations

8. All countertops located in wet locations should be made of a solid surface material that is easily cleaned and sanitized.
9. Provide grab bars in front of mirrors for young toddlers within a classroom.

Furnishings

The child care classrooms shall include the items listed below to allow for the space to meet the age groups' developmental needs, and to provide a homelike environment for the children to thrive in. Attached as [Appendix 6](#) are sample furniture layouts for infant and toddler classrooms.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Provide a variety and sufficient quantities of materials, equipment and supplies for indoor and outdoor activities, consistent with the numbers, ages and needs of the infants, toddlers, preschool or school-age enrolled children. (126.1)
2. Materials, equipment and supplies accessible to children shall be age-appropriate, safe, in good repair, clean and nontoxic, and shall be accessible to and appropriate for children with special needs, if the facility provides care to such children. (126.2)
3. All playthings, equipment, supplies, furnishings and other materials provided by a licensee for use by children shall meet the standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the American Society for Testing and Materials, and shall (a) be sturdy enough that they will not splinter; (b) not have sharp points or rough edges; (c) have lead-free, nontoxic paint or finishes; (d) be washable, regularly washed and maintained in good repair; and (e) comply with Federal standards regarding small toys and objects for use by children. (126.3)
4. Prohibit the use of the following at all times:
 - a. Infant walkers
 - b. Crib gyms
 - c. Collapsible cribs
 - d. Playpens
 - e. Projectile toys (126.5)
5. For children under 3 years old, ensure that toys and materials (a) are large enough that they cannot be swallowed, and (b) do not have small parts that may loosen and fall off, such as buttons on stuffed animals. (126.6)
6. Remove and repair, or discard, all furniture, equipment and materials that are not usable because they are broken or hazardous. (126.9)
7. Have available a sufficient number of strollers or carriages with appropriate restraints for infants and nonambulatory enrolled children. (126.12)

Design Considerations

8. High chairs, if used, have a wide and securely locking base, a crotch bar/guard, and a safety strap that is fastened with every use. (126.13a)
9. High chairs are used only during meal times. (126.13b)
10. Cribs must meet all requirements of the U.S. CPSC and documentation must be maintained.
11.
 - a. Each crib shall have a firm, fitted mattress of proper size for a crib, covered with a fitted sheet, provided by the facility.
 - b. Infant monitors shall not be placed in cribs.
 - c. Crib gyms, crib toys, mobiles, mirrors and other toys shall not be placed in, attached to or hung over an infant's crib.
 - d. Cribs shall be used only for sleep purposes. (126.15)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Learning environments will have flexible furnishings so the environment can adapt to children's needs.
2. General criteria recommended for furnishings and equipment are as follows: (NAEYC 9.A)
 - a. Developmentally appropriate
 - b. Sufficient quantity
 - c. Sufficient variety
 - d. Durable (to allow for longevity and ease of cleaning)
 - e. Readily accessible for children of varying abilities
 - f. Allow for appropriate supervision
 - g. Meets the program's curriculum
 - h. Allow for comfort
3. Additional general criteria for center furnishings and equipment are listed below:
 - a. Child-scale for child use
 - b. Adult-scale for adult use
 - c. Safe
 - d. Able to be easily cleaned
 - e. Adaptable, flexible, movable
 - f. Does not convey an institutional impression
 - g. Soft and cozy where appropriate
 - h. Optimal usage of natural materials
 - i. Contain minimal amounts of formaldehyde and other chemicals that may affect children (particularly those with allergies)
 - j. Texture rich
 - k. Calm, soothing, coordinated color schemes
4. Items that have been recalled are to be removed from the program immediately.

Ancillary Center Spaces

Center renovations may allow for the opportunity to add ancillary spaces that are not currently present in the center. In addition, many of the spaces described below should be designed into a new center to increase the functionality of the center for both adults and children.

Lobby Area

In many cases, this is the first space a family will visit when a center is introduced and can set the stage for the family's overall feel of the child care center. This space should be designed to meet the following:

1. Warm and inviting with general information about the center, accreditations, QRIS participation, etc., displayed for family viewing.
2. Visible from director's or other administrative individuals' workspaces.
3. Have seating for adults and some limited activity for children to engage in.
4. Access to the adult restrooms.
5. Allow for opportunities for family gathering and activities.

Atelier

An atelier is defined as a workshop or studio, typically used by an artist or designer. In child care centers, this space is often where children can "create." If space is available in the project, the atelier concept is a great addition but not required by licensing or Best Practices.

1. The area should be designed to accommodate the maximum group size that the center offers, in order to allow for all children to participate.
2. Permanent wall storage or closets should be designed to store art supplies. If not feasible, mobile equipment may be utilized.
3. Child-height bulletin boards to display children's art will be installed on walls.
4. Mess sinks at child height that allow for a high faucet and deep basin will allow for easy clean-up in these spaces after art or science experiments occur.

Nursing Room

Mothers who choose to nurse their children at the child care center shall be provided with a comfortable and private area. (NAEYC 5.B.09) This area will include:

1. A hand-washing sink
2. Comfortable chair
3. Electrical outlet

Administrative Offices/Spaces

Space should be provided for all administrative personnel employed at the center. Adequate room for desks, file cabinets and computer equipment should be provided. The director or administrator of the center should also have space to conduct conferences with families and/or staff for up to four (4) individuals. (Head Start Design Guide, chapter 4.1.4)

1. Access to computers and electrical power for equipment
2. Wi-Fi availability to access external training
3. Access to adult and children's restrooms

Multipurpose/Training Room

If possible, the design should include a multipurpose room that can be utilized for the meeting and training of staff. The size will be determined by the number of staff employed at the center. (Head Start Design Guide, chapter 4.1.4) The room should have:

1. Enough space to accommodate the staff at the center comfortably with adult-size table(s) and chairs
2. Storage for table and chairs, or equipment that can be stacked or reduces in size (this will allow for the space to have flexibility should it be needed for other activities or events)
3. Access to computers and electrical power for equipment
4. Wi-Fi availability
5. Access to adult and children's restrooms

Staff/Resource Room

NAEYC and ERS both require a space for staff to allow for privacy and the ability to plan curriculum and activities. The size of the space will be contingent on the size of the center staff but should include the following:

1. Access to adult restrooms
2. Adequate storage for all center resource materials
3. Computer and Wi-Fi access
4. Adult-size tables and chairs for staff use
5. Kitchenette area with a refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher to allow for staff meals
6. Lockable staff cabinets or lockers for personal items and clothing

Mildly Ill Room

Separating a child who becomes sick while at the center can help keep all children and staff healthy while allowing for the comfort of the ill child. If space permits, the room should be designed to provide the following:

1. Rest mat or cot for a sick child
2. Adult chair or rocker for the staff person accompanying the child

Design Considerations

3. Adult sink for hand washing
4. Counter to be used as a work-space with an under-the-counter refrigerator
5. Cabinet storage for diapers, latex gloves and infant wipes, etc.
6. Visibility by center leadership for appropriate supervision

Laundry Room

On-site washers and dryers are a bonus to staff and a plus from a health standpoint. The ability to clean and sanitize clothing that has been soiled is advantageous, especially in programs that care for infants and toddlers.

1. The equipment installed in the laundry rooms should be energy efficient and able to handle high volumes.
2. Floors should be similar to restroom finishes, washable and resistant to moisture.
3. If possible, a floor drain should be included in the space.
4. Ventilation/mechanical exhaust in the laundry room needs to be considered due to moisture in a limited space, and the dryer needing to be vented to the exterior.
5. Shelving or cabinets should be provided to store laundry supplies.
6. A counter should be designed to allow staff to have sufficient workspace. It should be a solid surface that allows for cleaning and sanitizing.
7. A full, lockable door should be installed to ensure that children do not have access to the area.

Car Seat and Stroller Storage

Stroller and child car/safety seat storage areas shall be provided. It is recommended that this is in an area outside but adjacent to classrooms. Center demographics will guide how much space will be needed. For example, in an urban setting where most families walk to the center, a large stroller storage area will be needed.

1. Millwork shelving will be installed to store car seats at 36" from the floor. The depth of the shelves will be approximately 24" to 30".
2. Large hooks may also be used for hanging car seats if shelving is too costly.
3. Walls should be durable, utilizing linoleum, plastic laminate or fiberglass-reinforced panels, to limit wall damage in the space.
4. Dutch door/half door should be installed at the entry point.
5. Hooks for folding and storing strollers are to be considered to ensure adequate floor space.

Janitor Closet

1. The floor should be similar to flooring used in all restrooms and other wet areas.
2. Plastic laminate, fiberglass-reinforced panel or other nonporous material should be provided at a minimum 48" on all walls.

Design Considerations

3. A floor drain should be provided.
4. Lockable full door should be installed.
5. Floor-mounted mop sink should be provided.

Telephone/Data/Security Closet

1. Dedicated space with easy access to adults.
2. Lockable full door.
3. Additional temperature controls may be needed due to the heat that is generated by the various systems/equipment operating in the closet.
4. Install plywood or other solid material to the walls that will allow for the various telephones and data lines to be secured.
5. Security or computer panels to be installed and secured.
6. A dedicated electrical outlet for each of the items listed above will need to be provided.
7. The security and fire alarm system will need to have a telephone/data outlet.

Kitchen/Food Preparation Area

A licensee that stores, prepares, handles and serves food shall comply with, or ensure that any entity providing food complies with, the requirements consistent with the District of Columbia Food Code, as explained in the District of Columbia Food Code, Title 25-A DCMR, and shall obtain and maintain all certifications or licenses required under the applicable laws and regulations of the District of Columbia. (OSSE 155.1)

The design of the kitchen/food preparation area will depend on the type of food service the center will offer to children. Centers that use a catering service or that require families to “brown bag” their children’s lunches may have modified design and equipment needs. A center that will prepare meals on-site will need significantly more equipment, but in either case, the center will need to conform to District of Columbia Food Code requirements for the operation of a food service establishment. The design of a kitchen space for a full-service kitchen is more extensive and will need appropriate commercial-grade equipment to provide a full-service food operation. It is strongly suggested that the center seek design assistance from a kitchen design firm/provider to evaluate traffic flow, equipment needs, storage, etc., prior to the final design of the space.

Regulatory Requirements (additional requirements in licensing)

1. A certified Food Protection Manager (such as Serv-Safe or other approved training) on site at all times when children are in care. Certificate must be valid, current and posted on site.

Design Considerations

2. Meals and snacks comply with all Child and Adult Care Food Program standards.
3. Refrigerated foods shall be maintained at 35°-40°Fahrenheit.
4. Drinking water shall be made continuously available to the children or served on demand.
 - a. Ensure that water temperature accessible to children is 100°Fahrenheit or less.
5. The child care facility shall maintain a three-day supply of water, staple food and supplies for each enrolled child and staff member. (OSSE 148.10)
6. A designated, separate handwashing sink.

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Adequate space to accommodate equipment needs for the operation.
2. Safe storage for chemicals separate from food and food prep areas.
3. Back flow diverter device in the food prep area.
4. Evaluate how deliveries will be made to the center that would not interrupt the classroom activities and a normal day's operation.
5. Based on your food vendor's delivery schedule/cycle, design adequate storage space for dry food, refrigerated and freezer products for the center.
6. Provide space for recycled items and food waste with the approved covered trash receptacles.
 - a. Plan for recycling
 - b. Plan for trash removal, storage and pickup
7. Recommended that floor is quarry tile, but sheet vinyl would be the alternative.
8. Kitchen shall have a floor drain.
9. All walls in the kitchen area are to be fiberglass-reinforced panels or other durable product.
10. Storage for food carts for delivery to each classroom should be included in the design and included in the food service area.
11. Suggested equipment listed below will depend on the type of food service provided and the licensed capacity of the center:
 - a. Commercial sanitizer
 - Determine detergents and appropriate hookups needed
 - Ensure for water temperature to meet unit needs in the kitchen area
 - b. Commercial upright freezer with built-in unit thermometer
 - c. Commercial upright refrigerator with built-in unit thermometer
 - A thermometer in each refrigerator and freezer to maintain appropriate temperatures that are logged daily
 - d. Commercial can opener installed on a stationary surface
 - e. Commercial 4- to 6- burner range — gas or electric depending on utilities available
 - f. Commercial microwave

Design Considerations

- g. Commercial convection oven
- h. Warming cabinet
- i. Exhaust ventilation system in food preparation area and warewashing area
- j. Stainless steel work tables that allow for proper cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces
- k. Wire shelving that allows for food items to be stored a minimum of 6 inches off the floor
- l. Three-compartment sink
- m. Hand-washing sink
- n. Food carts for meal delivery to the classrooms (folding units allow for carts to take up less space in the kitchen when not in use)
- o. All necessary small wares that are National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) approved (plates, cups, bowls, flatware)
- p. Eating and drinking utensils are free from cracks and chips
- q. Disposable cups, plates, bowls and utensils are not reused
- r. Styrofoam cups, plates and bowls are not used
- s. Storage for equipment and dry goods (usually wire shelves on wheels)
- t. NSF-approved food storage bins

Facility Upkeep and General Health and Safety Services

Consider expenses associated with routine facility maintenance services such as cleaning and extermination, as well as ongoing expenses for servicing building systems such as:

1. Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
2. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems
3. Fire alarm and sprinkler systems
4. Painting
5. Trash removal

Incorporating such services into the center's operating budget will allow for the health and safety of children and staff to be maintained, in addition to having the necessary funds set aside to replace or repair big-ticket facility items.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. A licensee shall ensure that the facility is free of any lead-based paint hazards. (122.8)
2. A licensee shall ensure that waste receptacles have a hands-free opening mechanism, are kept clean, lined with plastic bags, in good repair and emptied at least daily. (122.14)

Design Considerations

3. A licensee shall ensure that the facility's premises remain clear of insects, rodents and other pests and excrement of insects, rodents and other pests. (122.19)
4. A licensee shall maintain preventive measures to control insects, rodents and other pests to comply with best practices and to prevent and eliminate harborage, breeding and infestation at the facility's premises. If a harboring, breeding or infestation of insects, rodents or other pest occurs on the premises of the facility, the licensee shall immediately report the infestation to OSSE as an unusual incident and take immediate steps to have the insects, rodents or other pests eliminated from the facility. (122.20)
5. A licensee shall maintain at the facility a log documenting the use of extermination services, which shall be provided only by a licensed pest control professional. Children shall not be present while pesticides are being applied or within twenty-four (24) hours of application. (122.21)
6. A licensee shall install and maintain working carbon monoxide detectors if there is any gas service in the building. Carbon monoxide detectors shall be tested every six (6) months with a written log of testing records maintained at the child development facility. (122.22)
7. A licensee shall install and maintain an appropriate number of working smoke detectors located in locations consistent with District code requirements and shall ensure they are in working order at all times. Smoke detectors shall be tested quarterly, with a written log of testing records maintained at the child development facility. (122.23)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. Use low- or non-VOC paints to reduce allergies and any chemical sensitivity.
2. Spaces should be well-ventilated when being painted, and children may not be present while spaces are painted.
3. Trash services that allow for regular pickup to prevent odor are highly recommended. Although emptying trash once daily is required, emptying of diaper trash cans is to occur twice per day to greatly reduce odor in classrooms and risk of cross-contamination from overfilled trash receptacles.
4. Consider developing a plan to prevent means for insects and rodents to enter the facility, to limit the amount of pesticides that may be needed — for example, sealing cracks in structures, keeping all food containers closed, proper sweeping after meals, etc.

Outdoor Play Space/Playgrounds

Having access to an outdoor play space is essential to meeting the gross motor developmental needs of all children in care at the facility. The outdoor space of a child care program should be viewed as an extension of the children's classroom. Centers that are typically seen within a classroom can be recreated in a new and exciting way outdoors! An outdoor kitchen can be a mud pie bakery or a leaf and grass stew can simmer over a bundle of kindling. Collections of shells, rocks and leaves from surrounding trees can be categorized, patterned or counted to provide math opportunities. Center gardens can be planted to allow children to tend to their vegetables and flowers, teaching them about the environment, food sourcing and beauty, and provide them with an opportunity to work together to cultivate items that can be shared throughout the center and with their families.

Allowing for children to move beyond the classroom walls allows them to use their imagination, and in turn provides learning opportunities to which they would not otherwise have access.

Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Child Development Centers shall provide, or have access to, a minimum of sixty square feet (60 ft²) of outdoor play space per child, based on the maximum number of children scheduled to play outdoors at any one time. (163.7)
2. A licensed facility shall be accessible for children and adults with disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accessibility includes access to buildings, toilets, sinks, drinking fountains, outdoor play areas, meal and snack areas, and all classroom and therapy areas. (122.10)
3. A licensee serving infants, toddlers, preschool children or school-age children shall separate the outdoor play spaces used by infants, toddlers and preschool children from the play spaces used by school-age children. The separation shall be done in a way that does not limit the activities of either age group. (125.12)
4. A licensee shall maintain outdoor play space free of standing water, litter, broken glass, wooden splinters, weeds, high grass and conditions that are, or might be, hazardous to the health, safety or welfare of children enrolled. (125.1)
5. A licensee shall ensure that all outdoor play areas and equipment conform to the standards established by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and by the American Society for Testing and Materials. (125.5)
6. A licensee utilizing an outdoor play space at the facility premises shall enclose the

Design Considerations

outdoor play space with a fence or natural barrier that shall be at least four (4) feet high, with a space no larger than three and one-half (3-1/2) inches between its bottom edge and the ground, and designed to prevent climbing. (125.6)

7. A licensee shall provide at least two (2) exits from each outdoor play space. At least one of these exits shall be remote from the facility building(s). (125.7)
8. A licensee shall ensure that all outdoor gates have positive self-latching closure mechanisms that are at least four (4) feet off the ground or constructed in a manner so that they cannot be opened by a preschool-age child. (125.8)
9. A licensee shall ensure that the design, construction and installation of all outdoor play equipment are consistent with the guidelines published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's current Public Playground Safety Handbook. (125.9)
10. A licensee shall ensure that all surface areas beneath, and in the fall zones of, climbing equipment, slides, swings and similar equipment are covered in resilient material that diminishes the impact of falls. (125.13)
11. A licensee shall ensure that all outdoor equipment is securely anchored and installed properly to prevent tipping or collapsing. (125.14)
12. A licensee shall ensure that all outdoor play equipment is free of pinch, crush or shear points on all surfaces that are or may be accessible to children. (125.15)
13. A licensee shall provide only swing seats constructed of durable, lightweight, relatively pliable material. (125.16)

Best Practice Recommendations

1. A center-based program must provide at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child. (Early Head Start 1302.22 (d))
2. Completion of a playground safety checklist prior to children utilizing an outdoor play space to ensure for safety (see [Appendix 7](#)). (Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition)
3. Annual Playground Safety Inspections should be completed by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector to ensure identification of areas of concern. (NAEYC)
4. Incorporating classroom centers on a playground or other outdoor space will allow for increased learning opportunities.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments

The Early Learning Quality Fund (ELQF) is a partnership between the Bainum Family Foundation and Reinvestment Fund. The ELQF will be managed by Reinvestment Fund and its partner organization Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC). This investment is part of the Foundation's ongoing commitment to improve the odds for the District's infants and toddlers, especially those at greatest risk.

Credits

Early Learning Quality Fund (ELQF) wishes to thank William Grant for lending his expertise to the research and development of this Child Development Center Design Recommendations guide.

We are grateful to OSSE Licensing and Compliance staff for reviewing the guide and providing helpful comments and suggestions throughout its creation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – How to Select an Architect, Engineer or Interior Designer for Your Next Project



How to Select an Architect, Engineer or Interior Designer for Your Next Project

Selecting an architect or designer can be stressful. How can you be sure the professional is qualified to complete your project? In using this guide, we hope to alleviate some of that stress by educating you on what to look for when hiring an architect or designer for your next project.

1. In the District of Columbia, design professionals must have a valid license through the appropriate accreditation board. Check the licensing board for license verification here:
 - a. http://www.pearsonvue.com/dc/arch_intdes
 - b. <http://www.pearsonvue.com/dc/engineers>

Find out if the designer has any complaints or litigation filed against them? Send inquiries to Avis.Pearson@dc.gov.

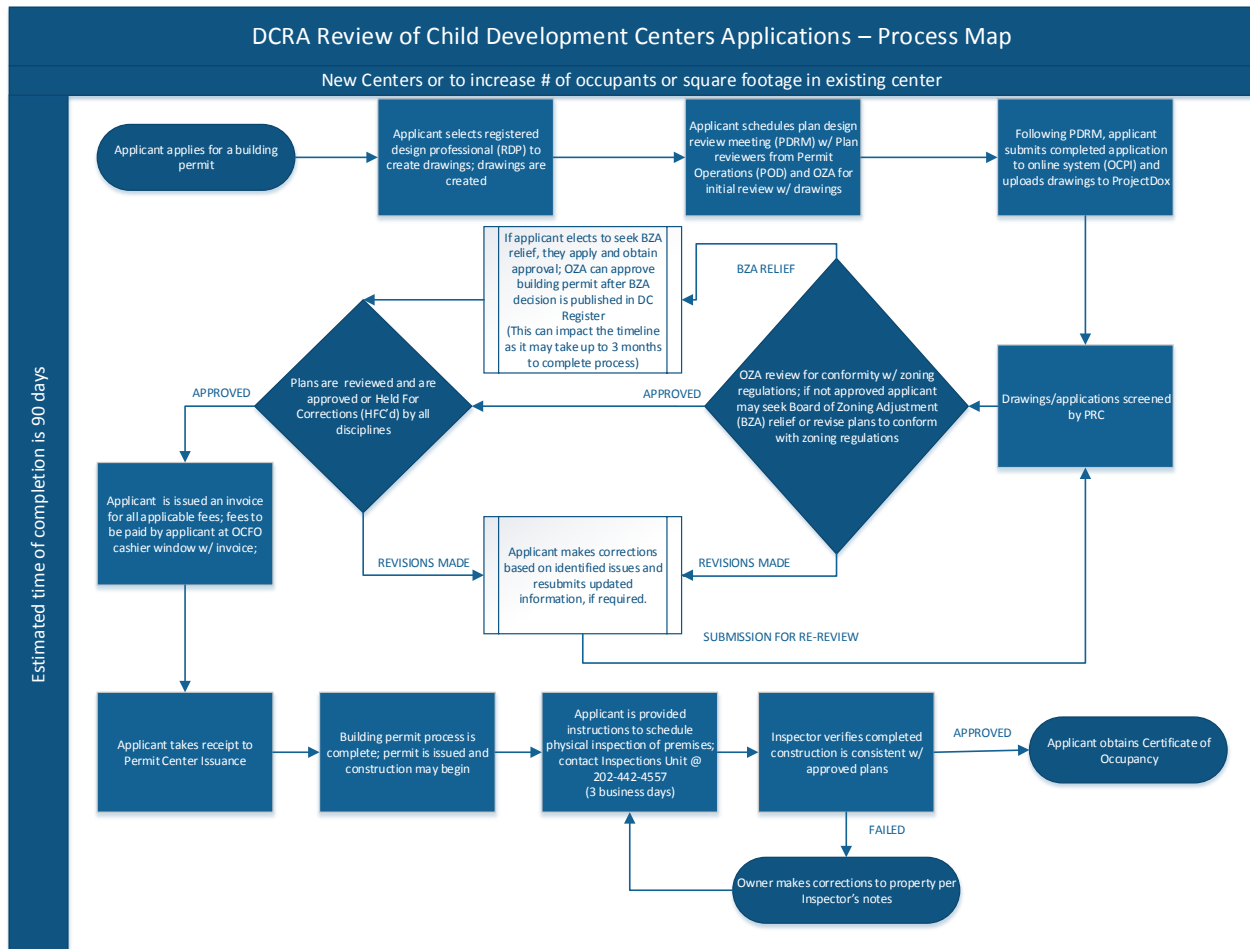
2. When you qualify your architects for larger projects (multi-level additions, roof decks, 2-Family Flat conversions, and underpinning), request a list of recently permitted projects of similar scope listed by address. You can contact DCRA for the permit review history of the project submission. If every project has an extensive comment list and extended review time, this is a way you can compare designers. Some designers have a better understanding of DC building codes and requirements.

Contact DCRA (Yukia Richardson) for inquiries:
202.442.8558
Yukia.Richardson@dc.gov

3. Take a look at a set of the drawings, is the architect's stamp on the drawings or is someone else? The unlicensed designer may work under the supervision of the designer with the license. They should be under direct employment of that licensee, not a contractor.

4. Does the designer, PLC have a business license?
5. Contractor offering design services and drawings in addition to construction. Does someone at the firm have a design license, do they use unlicensed designers or do they contract with someone else?
6. Architect requesting fees for an initial consultation. Designers will meet with a client to determine the scope of work. Don't expect them to come the initial meeting with plans. You have to pay for that.
7. Does the Architect understand how the Zoning Regulations impact the project design? Does s/he understand the Zoning Processes?
8. Verify that the building as depicted on the architectural drawings is consistent with the footprint of the building depicted on the DC Surveyor's plat. The DC Surveyor's plat should depict all existing and proposed construction and be to scale.
9. Verify that the application scope of work on the building permit application includes the proposed work shown on the plans.
10. Take advantage of the opportunity to schedule a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with a Zoning Technician to verify that your project is in compliance with the Zoning Regulations. This meeting is helpful when a plain reading of the zoning regulations does not fully address your zoning questions. There is a fee for this meeting. To schedule a zoning PDRM, contact Ms. Evon Epps, Program Support Specialist in the Office of the Zoning Administrator, at 202.442.4576 or by email Evon.Epps@dc.gov.

Appendix 2 – DCRA Review of Child Development Centers Application – Process Map



Appendix 3 – Initial Child Development Center Licensing Requirements Checklist



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF
EDUCATION

INITIAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER LICENSING REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

1. ORIENTATION

☐ Complete *the child development center licensing orientation*. Completing an orientation in person or through the online licensing webinar is required prior to applying for a child care license (5 DCMR 103.2). A copy of your certificate must be submitted with your application. Certificates will only be given to those individuals who complete the session. Submitting an application prior to completing the required orientation may result in suspending the processing of the application until this requirement is met.

2. CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

☐ Select a location and obtain a *Certificate of Occupancy* from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), Building and Land Regulation Administration, Zoning Division at 1100 Fourth Street, SW, Second Floor (see 5 DCMR 103.5 (a)). Your Certificate of Occupancy should include the following information: Child care center, the maximum number of infants and children to be cared for, hours of operation, and number of staff. Note: If you apply for a 24-hour child development center license, you must inform the Zoning Division when you apply for the Certificate of Occupancy.

3. INITIAL APPLICATION

☐ Submit the following document to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Early Learning, Licensing and Compliance Unit (LCU):

- ☐ Child Development Center Application, application fee of \$75, and all applicable forms which include the following (See 5 DCMR 103.4, 103.5, 108.2):
- ☐ Documentation of completion of Criminal Background Checks and Child Protection Register Checks for applicant
- ☐ Clean Hands Act Certification (Within 30 days of the date the application is submitted)
- ☐ Director Qualifications (if hired by time of application)
- ☐ Proof of insurance that includes a reasonable coverage (i.e., commercial general liability, umbrella "Follow Form" liability, sexual abuse and molestation liability, and vehicle liability)
- ☐ Fire Safety Inspection Certification from D.C Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS)
- ☐ Lead-based Paint Certification or Clearance Report by Department of Energy and Environment
- ☐ Notarized Building Use Agreement (if applicable)
- ☐ Safe Evacuation Site with facility closure consent statement (if applicable)
- ☐ If you are incorporated or plan to be incorporated, you must submit an original Certificate of Good Standing (valid for 30 days) from the DCRA, Corporation Division at 1100 Fourth Street, SW, Second Floor.

- A. ☐ Original Certificate of Occupancy
- B. ☐ Develop and submit your program policies and procedures for review and approval (See 5 DCMR 127)
- C. ☐ Develop an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in the event you need to evacuate the premises. The owner of your approved contingency location (Building Use Agreement) must sign the plan. The plan must also be notarized and updated annually. (Official OSSE template can be found in the application package).
- D. Sample 5-day menu following the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern for review and approval (see 5 DCMR 155 and DC Food Code Title 25). *You must include additional meals and snacks for evening, nighttime, and/or a 24-hour child care.*

4. INITIAL INSPECTION

☐ The licensing specialist will call you within 10 business days of receiving the application from the supervisor and schedule an appointment to conduct the initial onsite inspection. At this time, you may receive statement of deficiency(ies) if the facility is out of compliance with the licensing regulations that must be corrected within the timeframes in the regulations before a license can be issued.

810 First St. NE, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20002 • Phone: (202) 727-1839 TTY: 711 • osse.dc.gov

Appendix 4 – General Child Development Center Licensing Checklist

The following checklist summarizes the OSSE child development licensing regulations referenced through the guide.

Health and Safety Standards for a Facility's Premises: General Requirements

- ☐ Indoor space is measured to meet a minimum of 45 square feet per child. (122.2)
- ☐ Exits must be clearly identified and free of obstruction, and the path to exit is visible and clear. (122.3)
- ☐ Center is to be free of any lead-based paint hazards. (122.8)
- ☐ All access points to stairs are restricted by gates. (122.12)
- ☐ All doors and windows are protected with guards that prevent exit by children. (122.12)
- ☐ All blinds have child-protective coverings to ensure that cords are not accessible to children. (122.16)
- ☐ Center is free of moisture, mold and mildew. (122.13)
- ☐ All waste receptacles allow for hands-free opening; are clean, lined with a plastic bag and in good repair; and are emptied daily. (122.14)
- ☐ Child care spaces have natural or mechanical ventilation. (122.15)
- ☐ If fans are used, they are placed in stable location with a stable base, equipped with protective guards, and inaccessible to children. (122.15)
- ☐ If windows are opened they shall have screens and screens are in good repair. (122.15 b)
- ☐ Windows above the ground floor, accessible to children under 5, are modified to limit opening to 6", or are be protected with guards that do not block natural light. (122.15 c)
- ☐ Glass doors to have decal at eye level of children. (122.15 d)
- ☐ Hot and cold running water under pressure must be present. (122.18)
- ☐ Hot water temperature not to exceed 100°F in areas accessible to children. (122.18)
- ☐ Center shall be free of insect or rodent infestation. (122.19)
- ☐ Facility Log for documentation of extermination services with a licensed pest control professional to be maintained. (122.21)
- ☐ If pesticides are needed to control insects or rodents, children may not be present during application or within 24 hours of application. (122.21)
- ☐ Adequate storage must be present for play and teaching equipment, supplies, records and children's possessions and clothing. (122.25)

Appendices

Fire Safety

- ☐ Exits are unobstructed (stairways, hallways, etc.). (122.3)
- ☐ Fire Inspection annually, obtain certification from FEMS that premises meet fire safety and related codes. (122.6)
- ☐ No portable space heaters unless written approval from official FEMS. (122.16)
- ☐ If approval is provided in writing by FEMS, the space heater will be attended while in use and off when unattended; inaccessible to children at all times; have protective covering to keep hands and objects away from heating element; be placed on the floor; be placed at least 3 feet away from curtains, papers, furniture or other flammable objects; be properly vented as required per the manufacturer; not used with an extension cord; and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. (122.16 a-g)
- ☐ Fireplaces and fireplace inserts are inaccessible to children. (122.17)
- ☐ Center to install and maintain carbon monoxide detectors if gas service is in the building. Detectors to be tested every six months. Written log of testing records to be maintained. (122.22)
- ☐ Center to install and maintain an appropriate number of smoke detectors. Smoke detectors to be tested quarterly (four times per year). Written log of testing records to be maintained. (122.23)
- ☐ Fire drills shall occur monthly. Written log of drills to be maintained. (122.24)

Health and Safety Standards for a Facility's Premises: Lavatory Space and Equipment

- ☐ Bathroom facilities for use by adults separate from use by children to be provided. (123.2)
- ☐ Toilets and sinks must be at proper heights for children to use or must be easily accessible by means of platforms or steps. (123.3) Ensure that these surfaces are non-skid and are easily cleaned.
- ☐ If toilet training chairs or seats are used, they are to be provided by the program. Training chairs and seats are to be made of nonporous synthetic products and to be maintained in the bathroom areas. Training chairs are to be emptied promptly, cleaned and disinfected after each use. (123.4)
- ☐ Toilet paper, soap and single-use paper towels are present in bathroom areas and able to be accessed by children independently. (123.5)
- ☐ In programs where children are enrolled who are not independently using toileting facilities, one (1) changing table for every 10 children is to be present. (123.6)
- ☐ Changing tables are to meet the following requirements: impervious, nonabsorbent smooth surface; sturdy and stable; convenient height for staff; and equipped with railings or barriers. (123.6)
- ☐ Changing table surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Health and Safety Standards for a Facility's Premises: Indoor Environment

- ☐ Indoor space designated for children allows for free movement and active play. (124.1)
- ☐ Indoor temperature is to be maintained between 68°F and 75°F from October through March; indoor temperature is to be maintained between 68°F and 82°F from April through September. (124.2)
- ☐ Protrusions, such as pipes, wood ends or long bolts that may catch on children's clothing, are prohibited. (124.3)
- ☐ Carpeting is nonflammable, nontoxic and maintained in clean condition and good repair. (124.4)
- ☐ Center floors are free from bare concrete, dampness, splinters or siding rugs. (124.5)
- ☐ All ceilings, walls and floors are in good repair. (124.6)
- ☐ Nonporous surfaces are present in areas where they may be contaminated by bodily fluids. (124.6)
- ☐ Shoes are removed prior to entering spaces used by infants. (124.7)
- ☐ Finger-pinch protection devices in place on all doors and cabinets accessible to children; otherwise, doors, cabinets and gates are fully closed and locked. (124.8)
- ☐ No strings or cords that may encircle a child's neck are present. (124.9)
- ☐ Electrical outlets accessible to children and not in use are fitted with childproof protective outlet covers. (122.10)
- ☐ Ground fault circuit interrupters are present in areas where electrical products may come into contact with water. (124.11)

Health and Safety Standards for a Facility's Premises: Outdoor Environment

- ☐ Outdoor space is free of standing water, litter, broken glass, wood splinters, weeds, high grass, and conditions hazardous to health, safety and well-being of children enrolled. (125.1)
- ☐ Outdoor play areas and equipment meet the standards of U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and American Society for Testing and Materials. (125.5)
- ☐ Outdoor space enclosed with a fence or natural barrier at least 4 feet high, with a space no greater than 3½ inches between the bottom edge and ground, and designed to prevent climbing. (125.6)
- ☐ Two exits from outdoor play space. One exit shall be removed from the building. (125.7)
- ☐ All outdoor play space gates have positive latching closure, installed four feet off of the ground or constructed to prevent a preschool-age child from opening. (125.8)
- ☐ Daily inspection of outdoor play space, written log to be maintained. (122.10) Any hazard noted during inspection is to be corrected immediately or removed from use until corrected. (122.11)
- ☐ School-age children shall have a separate play space from infants, toddlers and preschool children. (125.12)
- ☐ Surface area beneath fall zones, climbing equipment, slides, swings, etc., is covered with

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resilient material that reduces the impact of falls. (125.13)

- ☐ All outdoor equipment is securely anchored. (125.14)
- ☐ All outdoor equipment is free of pinch, crush or shear points. (125.15)
- ☐ Swings are constructed of durable, lightweight, pliable material. (125.16)
- ☐ No trampolines. (125.17)
- ☐ Sandbox is in safe and sanitary condition, completely covered when not in use. (125.18)
- ☐ No lawn mowers, hedge clippers, shears, etc., used or stored unlocked in outdoor space when children are present. (125.19)
- ☐ Rooftop play space is enclosed with sturdy fence at least 6 feet high and designed to prevent climbing. (125.20)
- ☐ Fire escape present leading from rooftop play space. (125.21)
- ☐ Rooftop play space; written approval to be present from DCRA or FEMS to allow for use (125.22), including approval from DCRA regarding fence (125.23). Annual inspection from DCRA or FEMS to occur and certificate to be posted on premise. (125.24)

Health and Safety Standards for a Facility's Premises: Equipment, Materials and Furnishings

- ☐ Sufficient play equipment and materials are present, age-appropriate and accessible to enrolled children. (126.1)
- ☐ Play equipment and materials are in good repair, clean and nontoxic. (126.2)
- ☐ All play items, equipment, furniture and materials meet the standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the American Society for Testing and Materials. (126.3)
- ☐ Items are sturdy and will not splinter, no sharp points or rough edges, lead free, nontoxic paint or finish, washable, are regularly washed and in good repair, meet federal standards regarding small toys and objects for use by children.
- ☐ No infant walkers, crib gyms, collapsible cribs, playpens or projectile toys. (126.5)
- ☐ Items used by children under 3 years of age are large enough that they cannot be swallowed and do not have small parts that may loosen and fall off. (e.g., buttons). (126.7)
- ☐ Play materials shall include items from the following categories: social and emotional development, cognitive development, language development and communication skills, independence, creative expression and fine and gross motor skills. (1276.8)
- ☐ Broken or hazardous furniture, equipment and materials removed or repaired. (126.9)
- ☐ Light bulbs are shatter-proof or shielded. (126.7)
- ☐ Helmets provided for children while using wheeling equipment wiped with damp cloth after each use. (126.11)
- ☐ Sufficient number of strollers or carriages for nonambulatory children. (126.12)

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- ☐ Highchairs have wide, securely locking base, crotch bar/guard and safety strap fastened with every use. (126.13 a) Used only during meal times and never to restrain children. (126.13 b)
- ☐ Children have an individual crib, cot or bed (126.14) and do not share bedding. (126.14 a)
- ☐ No child sleeps on a bare, uncovered surface. (126.14 b)
- ☐ Bedding is kept clean and sanitary. (124.14 d)
- ☐ Sleep areas are separate from play areas. (124.14 e)
- ☐ Cribs meet CPSC standards. (126.15 a)
- ☐ Cribs, cots and beds are labeled with the child's name to whom it is assigned. (126.14 c)
- ☐ Cribs, cots and beds are placed 2 feet apart from others and 2 feet away from windows and radiators; 2 feet of separation is required on all sides of the cot, crib or bed. (126.15 b)
- ☐ Cribs have a firm, fitted mattress, proper size for the crib, with a fitted sheet provided by the program. (126.16)
- ☐ No infant monitors in the crib. (126.16 b)
- ☐ No crib gyms, crib toys, mobiles, mirrors or toys in or attached to a crib. (126.16 c)
- ☐ Crib is only used for sleep and is not used for time-out or disciplinary purposes. (126.16 d, e)
- ☐ Cots are only used for children over 12 months of age, easily cleaned and nonabsorbent. Seasonably appropriate bedding that may be provided by the program. (126.17)
- ☐ All play equipment is properly constructed and installed to ensure for safety and will not entrap a child. (126.18)
- ☐ Equipment is free of pinch, crush or sharp points on or under such equipment. (126.18 b)
- ☐ Toys that have been exposed to saliva, or soiled with blood, stool, urine or vomit, are removed from the play area and cleaned and sanitized with an appropriate germicide and air dried before being returned to the play area. (126.20)
- ☐ All tricycles or riding equipment are in good condition, free of sharp edges or protrusion. When not in use, stored in a manner that does not present obstacles. Items are to be inspected before use. (126.21)
- ☐ Helmets are worn by children more than 1 year of age when using wheeled equipment. Helmets are properly fitted and approved by the CPSC. (126.22)

Safe Sleep (127.4 p)

- ☐ Infants placed to sleep on their back.
- ☐ No covers or soft items in cribs.
- ☐ Infants are not swaddled and positioning devices are not in use.

Appendix 5 – Sample Space Plan Grid

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Program Assumptions					Interior Space Requirements (SF)									
Space Name	# of Rooms	Required SF per Area	Required Activity SF per Child	Licensed Occupancy	Activity	Crib/Nap	Cubbies	Diaper Changing Station	Restroom	Activity Counter	Food Prep	Storage	Nursing Area	Total Required SF
Ancillary Spaces														
Lobby	1	100			100									100
Director's Office	1	120			120									120
Assistant Director	1	50			50									50
Conference Room	1	75			75									75
Staff Lounge	1	100			75						25			100
Central Storage	1	25										25		25
Ancillary Space Area Subtotals:				0	420	0	0	0	0	0	25	25	0	470
Classroom Spaces														
Infant Rooms	1		45	8	360	280		32			40	25	50	787
Young Toddler Rooms	1		35	12	420		15	32	40	20		25		552
Older Toddler Rooms	1		35	16	560		15	32	40	20		25		692
Preschool Rooms	1		35	20	700		20		80	20		25		845
Classroom Space Area Subtotals:				56	2,040	280	50	96	160	60	40	100	50	2,876
Support Spaces														
Kitchen & Pantry	1	275									206	69		275
Laundry	1	25			25									25
Support Space Area Subtotals:				0	25	0	0	0	0	0	206	69	0	300
Totals:				56	56	280	50	96	160	60	271	194	50	3,646

Total Children and Net Interior Area: 50 3,646 sq. ft.
 Net to Gross Factor ¹: 35% 1,276 sq. ft.
 Total Exterior Gross Building Area ²: **4,922** sq. ft.
 98 sq. ft. / child

1. Gross Building Factor includes the building walls, mechanical / electrical equipment spaces, circulation and adult restrooms.

Appendix 6 – Sample Furniture Layouts



Sample Infant Classroom
8 Children/2 Caregivers
Approximately 500sq ft

3/21/2017
1 Square = 1 sq foot



Appendix 7 – Daily Playground Safety Checklist

Week Starting: _____ (mm/dd/yyyy)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Comments
1. Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or have mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.						
2. Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. Make sure that slide exits are clear from all equipment / objects.						
3. Make sure play equipment more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.						
4. Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.						
5. Make sure spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.						
6. Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.						
7. Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.						
8. Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls.						
9. Check all areas of the playground to verify that they are in good condition. This may include, but is not limited to checking for animal feces, garbage and standing water.						
10. Check to make sure that there are no areas that create supervision issues on the playground.						

V - Item checked

X - Item checked, Issue noted

N/A - Not applicable, Item not checked

* Attach additional comments on separate sheet.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this reference guide is provided as suggestions/ recommendations for the design of a high-quality Child Development Center. Information related to the licensing by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education is developed from current documents provided by that agency and their regulations for licensing. Changes may be put forth by the referenced agencies, and a provider should refer to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the related agencies responsible for Child Development Center licensing prior to starting a renovation project. The provider should consult with professionals including architects, engineers and health officials to review up-to-date promulgations that may be put forth by any and all licensing agencies. This guide is not intended to be inclusive of all possible design methods and materials but used as a guide to enhance the quality of an already existing child development facility.



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