

# Early Learning Quality Fund

Washington, D.C.



## Design Recommendations

### Child Development Home and Expanded Child Development Home

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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 Home 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 Home space should comfortably accommodate adults who may occupy or access the home (i.e., teachers, other personnel and parents). The design of home space should highlight the high-quality early childhood care, education, mission and vision of the home. In addition, this reference manual will encourage you to consider what you may want to include in your design when considering or selecting elements that will translate into quality enhancement and learning program and facility-related efficiencies for your Child Development Home as well as meet basic licensing requirements.

***Child Development Home:*** *A private home that provides a child development program for children. Child Development Home also includes those facilities classified as "Expanded Child Development Homes."*

***Expanded Child Development Homes:*** *A Child Development Home in which child care is provided by two (2) or more caregivers for up to twelve (12) children.*

This guide may provide a current operating provider 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.**

This guide applies to providers that seek to:

- Renovate or expand interior program spaces in a currently licensed Child Development Home
- Renovate or reconfigure infant and toddler learning program areas
- Purchase or reconfigure infant and toddler furniture, equipment and materials
- Renovate or expand exterior facility attributes or outdoor spaces for a currently licensed Child Development Home

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 Child Development Homes 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 Child Development Home should be reviewed with licensed professionals such as architects, engineers, code officials and other licensing agencies that have jurisdiction over Child Development Homes prior to planning for a construction project. See [Appendix 1](#) for information on selecting a licensed design professional.





## Home Occupation Permit (HOP)

## Home Occupation Permit (HOP)

A home occupation is a business, profession or other economic activity conducted on either a full-time or part-time basis in the primary residence of the operator.

Prior to renovating or reconfiguring your Child Development Home, licensed design professionals such as architects and/or engineers should be engaged to discuss your plans for the building improvements and enhancements.

The Child Development Homes and Expanded Homes shall obtain approval from OSSE for use of all program space, and may offer child care only in approved space. (OSSE 167.11)

As an existing operator, your home will already have been issued a Home Occupation Permit; however, when undertaking facility enhancements or alterations that enlarge the space or increase the occupant load over what was previously allowed on your existing HOP, a new HOP will be needed.

Pursuant to V-251.1(b)(2)(A-C) of DCMR 11, District of Columbia zoning regulations, a Child Development Home or Expanded Child Development Home is permitted as an accessory use in the operator's principal residence subject to the following requirements:

- No structural alterations to the dwelling's interior, if they would make it difficult to return the dwelling to exclusive residential use
- No more than two vehicles can be used
- No parking or storage of commercial vehicles
- One exterior sign, unlit and flush-mounted, of no more than 144 square inches
- Prepared evacuation plan for the building

### **Child Development Home**

- No more than 25 percent of the dwelling's floor area, or 250 square feet, can be used
- No more than two nonresidential caregivers

### **Expanded Child Development Home**

- A minimum of 35 square feet of floor area per individual, including the basement, but excluding any accessory structure
- No more than three nonresidential caregivers
- A maximum of 320 square feet of floor area to be utilized for the Expanded Child Development Home, including the basement, but excluding any accessory structure

## Home Occupation Permit (HOP)

For more information on the Home Occupation Permit, view the process flow depicted in [Appendix 2](#) and visit DCRA at <https://dcra.dc.gov/service/get-home-occupation-permit>.

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>.

- Application for building permit: <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1234411>

Utilizing the Initial Child Development Home Licensing Requirements Checklist will ensure that all necessary facility-related steps have been taken to receive the home's new Child Development Home license ([Appendix 3](#)).





# Design Considerations

### General Design

Each home's licensed program space 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), the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS), NAEYC and the Early Head Start program to ensure the goal of a high-quality program for children.

#### Regulatory Requirements

1. The Child Development Home must be a residential property.
2. The Child Development Home licensee must live and work on the premises of the Child Development Home facility. (OSSE 167.3)
3. The Child Development Home licensee must obtain a Home Occupation Permit.
4. Child Development Homes and Expanded Homes shall obtain approval from OSSE for the use of all program space, and may only offer child care in approved space. (OSSE 167.11)
5. The licensed program space may not be located above the first floor of a single-family dwelling.
6. The licensed program space may not be located above the third floor of a multifamily building.
7. Gross motor space of 60 square feet per child of outdoor space. (OSSE 163.7)
8. Children under the age of two (2) years, or nonambulatory children, may occupy only home space that (a) is on street level, (b) has two (2) means of egress, and (c) if the means of egress involves 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 FEMS. (OSSE 163.3)

#### Best Practice Recommendations

1. Space allows many play materials to be accessible at the same time.
2. Ample indoor space for child care, children and play materials, and adults can move around freely.
3. Ample space for equipment needed by children with disabilities.
4. Spacious open area for children to play.
5. Space for children is accessible to all children and adults with disabilities currently using child care space.

### 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, 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)

### Windows

#### 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 are accessible to children under five (5) years of age and are above ground level of the building shall be adjusted to limit the opening to less than 6 inches or 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. Natural light and ventilation can be controlled as needed (e.g., adjustable blinds or curtains for nap area; windows can be opened; ventilating fan in bathroom).

### 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

## Design Considerations

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. Means-of-egress doors shall not be concealed by curtains, drapes, decorations or similar materials. (IBC, 1008.1)

### Best Practice Recommendations

1. In place of a half door, a door guard may be added to prevent the door from closing entirely when a young child uses the restroom, yet allow for removal when a school-age child or other adult may need to utilize.

### 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)

## Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Temperature and air quality are important to the children and staff while present in the space, and will ultimately affect how they feel and perform throughout the day. OSSE-mandated temperatures must be maintained to allow for the program 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 Development Facilities (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) and meet all of the following requirements: (FEMS) (122.16)



## Design Considerations

- a. Maintain documentation of approval on file at the child care facility
  - b. Be attended while in use and be off when unattended
  - c. Be inaccessible to children at all times
  - d. Have protective covering to keep hands and objects away from the electric heating elements
  - e. Be placed on the floor only and at least three (3) feet from curtains, papers, furniture and any flammable objects
  - f. Be properly vented, as required for proper functioning
  - g. Not used with an extension cord
  - h. Be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
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)
8. 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.
9. Building renovations, projects or program spaces 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 Development Home.

## Plumbing and Accessories

### Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Maintain hot and cold running water under pressure. Hot running water shall be maintained at 100°F. (122.18)
2. Ensure that designated hand-washing areas are equipped with sinks with running water, soap, 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. Provide a shut-off valve for each fixture so maintenance does not affect multiple plumbing facilities.
2. Provide a hot water supply of 185°F for the dishwasher by utilizing a properly sized, instantaneous hot water heater.
3. Provide hot and cold water at each sink.

## Design Considerations

4. Solder for domestic water piping shall be lead-free.
5. Child Development Homes that are renovating must have documentation stating that piping is lead-free.
6. Sink/countertop heights:
  - a. Preschool — 24"-26" above floor finish (AFF)
  - b. Toddler — 22" AFF
  - c. Diaper changing — 30" AFF
  - d. Facilities that are unable to comply with the above heights provide for easily cleaned step stools to allow for proper hand washing of children in the program.

## Lessons Learned

1. Water testing may be required and results maintained at your facility.
  - a. Determine whether your home's water has fluoride, as this is information that families often need to share with their child's health care professional.

## Restrooms

### Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Maintain hot and cold running water under pressure. Hot running water shall be maintained at 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 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)
5. Provide bathroom facilities for use by adults separate from those used by children. (123.2)
6. 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)
7. Provide toilet paper, soap and single-use paper towels at each bathroom in a manner accessible for independent use by children. (123.5)
8. Provide a block or step for a child's use for each toilet and sink at a facility: it should be too high to be used by one (1) or more enrolled children without assistance. (123.3)

## Design Considerations

9. 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 (disinfected) after each use. Training chairs shall be made of nonporous, synthetic products. Training chairs shall remain in the bathroom facilities. (123.4)
10. 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. 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 or equipped with a step stool that is easily cleaned, to allow children to access both the toilet and the sink.
3. Walls in all restrooms should be installed to resist water and moisture.
  - a. Fiberglass-reinforced panels 48" high are 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.

## Electrical

### Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Ensure that electrical outlets that are not in use and are accessible to children are fitted with appropriate childproof 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 shall be available to limit the need for electric extension cords. Maintain documentation of the tamper-resistant receptacles installed.
2. All cords shall be out of reach of children and secured to prevent tripping or toppling of items.

# Fire Protection

### Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. 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 facility. The system should be both visual and audible. Emergency lighting must also be provided.
2. Provide fire extinguisher per local building codes.
  - a. Consider semi-recessed that prevent child access.
3. 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.
4. 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)
5. Monthly fire drills to occur and are documented. (OSSE 122.25)
6. Fire Safety Inspection: Ensure that fire safety equipment (fire extinguishers, fire alarm, hardwired smoke alarms) is present and functioning.
7. Evacuation plan to be prepared and reviewed annually. All staff are to review the plan upon hire.
8. A sample DCRA-provided Child Development Home Evacuation Plan can be found here: [https://dcra.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcra/service\\_content/attachments/Child\\_Development\\_Homes\\_Fire\\_Safety\\_Evacuation\\_Plan.pdf](https://dcra.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcra/service_content/attachments/Child_Development_Homes_Fire_Safety_Evacuation_Plan.pdf).

### Best Practice Recommendations

1. Required exits 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. Each learning and activity space should ideally be provided with one direct outdoor exit.
4. Provide the capacity for permanent carbon monoxide monitoring. (NAEYC 9.C.11)
5. Fire alarm systems must be inspected annually and will need to be budgeted for in the facility'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.



### Security

#### Best Practice Recommendations

1. Limit entry to the Child Development Home to one to two doorways to allow for the doors to be well-observed by staff.
2. The entry should be visible to the adults inside the Child Development Home.
3. The design must ensure that a child will be unable to exit the without staff knowledge.

### General Health and Safety

1. A licensed Child Development Home shall obtain, maintain and provide to OSSE upon request documentation establishing that each person living at the home that houses the facility has, within the preceding 12 months, been examined by a licensed health care professional and certified by that professional to be free of communicable diseases. (OSSE 167.10)
2. Each person residing at the home has a physical examination by a licensed health care practitioner at least annually, and each is certified by the examining practitioner to be free of tuberculosis and other disease in communicable form. (OSSE 168.2e)
3. All visitors entering the Child Development Home or Expanded Home must be supervised and accompanied during hours of operation. (OSSE 168.2f)
4. Report to OSSE and to the parent or guardian of each affected child any unusual incident or accident that occurs in the Child Development Home. (OSSE 168.2g)
5. Develop and implement written contingency plans, including written instructions for all Child Development Home personnel and for all responsible household members, for use in case of medical or nonmedical emergencies. (OSSE 168.2i)
6. A premises that maintains licensed firearms, shotguns, rifles or other licensed weapons and ammunition ensures they are inaccessible to children served in a Child Development Home or Expanded Home, unloaded, secured with an inappropriate trigger locking device, and stored in a safe storage depository which, when locked, is incapable of being opened without the key, combination or other unlocking mechanism and is capable of preventing an unauthorized person from obtaining access to and possession of the weapon or ammunition contained therein. Ammunition shall also be stored in a safe storage depository. (OSSE 167.7)
7. Parents and guardians of enrolled children in a Child Development Home or Expanded Home with licensed firearm, shotguns, rifles or other licensed weapons and ammunition are provided written notice that these items are on the premises or the Child Development Home or Expanded Homes. (OSSE 167.8)

## Design Considerations

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

## Pets and Animals

If pets are present in the Child Development Home, the following OSSE regulations must be adhered to:

1. The licensee shall adhere to all local laws, regulations and ordinances governing the keeping and maintenance of pets and animals. (161.1 a)
2. Provide proof of current compliance with all applicable registration and vaccination requirements for each pet or animal kept or maintained at the facility. (161.1b)
3. Parents and guardians of enrolled children shall be informed in writing of the presence of pets or animals. (161.1c)
4. All pets and animals permitted at the facility are in good health, show no evidence of carrying disease, are friendly toward children, and do not present a threat to the health, safety and welfare of children. (161.1d)
5. All pets or animals are maintained in a visibly clean manner. (161.1e)
6. All pets or animals showing evidence of disease are isolated. If the pet or animal is suspected ill, it is promptly excluded from the presence of children and examined by a licensed veterinarian. (161.1f)
7. Animals or pets that are common carriers of rabies are prohibited, without specific proof that the pet or animal has been vaccinated against that disease. (161.1g)
8. Pet reptiles shall be kept inaccessible to children at all times. (161.1h)
9. No pet or animal (except a service animal accompanying the person for whom the animal provides assistance), litter box, or pet or animal pen or cage is permitted in any area where food is stored, prepared or served. (161.1i)
10. If an animal bites a child and the skin is broken, the child's parent or guardian shall be immediately notified and the bite shall be reported as an unusual incident to OSSE. (161.1j)
11. Contact between pets and animals and the enrolled children shall be supervised, and facility staff shall remain within close proximity to the remove the child if necessary. (161.2)
12. All pet and animal supplies are kept out of reach of children. (161.3)
13. All pet and animal litter boxes are not located in areas accessible to children. (161.4)

### Furnishings

The child care program space shall include the items listed below to allow for the space to meet the developmental needs of each age group cared for, as well as provide a homelike environment for the children to thrive in.

#### 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 (U.S. CPSC) 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. Playpen
  - e. Projectile toys (126.5)
5. For children under three (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)
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.

## Design Considerations

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 only be used 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 furnishings and equipment are listed below: (NAEYC 9.A)
  - 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. Contains 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.
5. Locked storage for medications, cleaning products or other hazardous materials must be provided.
6. Childproof interior hardware devices must be mounted on the interior of cabinets and drawers within children's reach.
7. Furnishings that are top-heavy shall be secured to prevent tipping.
8. Convenient, organized storage for extra toys and materials. (FCCERS-R Arrangement of indoor space for children)



### Program 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 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. Design or placement of the diaper-changing table should be accessible to the adult diaper handwashing sink and be situated to allow for supervision of infants in the program space.
3. The room should be warm and inviting and have a variety of textures for infants to experience.
  - a. Each classroom should have lockers/cubbies, well-mounted and inaccessible to infants, for children's coat storage, personal papers and change of clothing. Lockers/cubbies should be located near the entry point of the classroom.
4. 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)
5. Areas of mirrored ceiling tiles in the infant areas are preferable.
6. Provide grab bars in front of mirrors for infants and toddlers within a classroom.
7. Toys should be on low, open shelving where the infant can see and grasp them.
8. In addition to the furniture and fixtures, manipulatives, mirrors, tunnels, balls, musical items, push toys, etc., should be provided.
9. 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.

### 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 that are appropriate for this group of children. A high-quality program for toddlers shall allow for 50 to 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 be situated to allow for supervision of infants in the classroom.
2. 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.
3. Cots shall be used only for children more than twelve (12) months of age who can walk. (OSSE 126.17a)
4. All countertops located in wet locations should be made of a solid surface material that is easily cleaned and sanitized.
5. Provide grab bars in front of mirrors for young toddlers within a classroom.



## Facilities Operating at Nontraditional Hours

## Sleep and Rest Areas

### Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)

1. Facilities that provide care after 6:00 p.m. must establish a bedtime routine after the first day of enrollment, in consultation with the child's parent or guardian. This routine shall be documented and maintained in the child's record. (160.4 a)
2. Each child shall be provided with his or her own individual crib, cot or bed that is appropriate for the child's age and size. If the child is sleeping for more than 4 hours and it is age- and size- appropriate, a bed rather than a cot shall be provided. (160.4 b)
  - a. Infants will not use blankets or other loose or soft bedding. Sheets shall be tight-fitting.
3. Bedding, such as sheets and blankets, is changed routinely and before the crib, cot or bed is used by another child. (160.4 c)
4. The enrolled child's parent or guardian shall provide appropriate clothing for the child to wear while sleeping. (160.4 d)
5. All cribs, cots and beds are maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. (160.4 e)
  - a. All cribs must meet the CPSC requirements.
6. If one or more bunk beds are used for enrolled children, no child under 7 years of age is placed on the top bunk. (160.4 f)
7. All beds, cots, cribs and mattresses have firm surfaces and meet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's standards. (160.4 g)
8. All beds, cots and cribs when in use are placed at least 2 feet apart and at least two (2) feet away from any radiator or window. (160.4 h)
9. No bed, cot or crib blocks or impedes access to any exit. (160.4 i)
10. No other person shares a crib, cot or bed with an enrolled child. (160.4 j)
11. No enrolled child 5 years of age or older shares a sleeping room with an adult. (160.4 k)
12. Staff who are monitoring children must ensure that at least once every three (3) hours, children are monitored. A written log of monitoring shall be maintained. (160.4 l)
13. A night light shall be maintained near the exit of each room used for sleeping, along each hallway adjacent to a room used for sleeping, and near each bathroom to be used by enrolled children during the overnight hours. (160.4m)
14. Staff members are available at all times to attend to the needs of the children, and at least one adult staff member per every ten (10) children is awake and within sight and sound of the children at all times. (160.8)





## Facility Upkeep and General Health and Safety Services

## Facility Upkeep and General Health and Safety Services

This section addresses expenses associated with routine maintenance services such as cleaning and extermination, as well as ongoing expenses for servicing building systems such as:

- Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems
- Fire alarm and sprinkler systems
- Painting
- Trash removal

Incorporating such services into the 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 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)
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 the Child Development Home 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.
5. Carpeted areas should be cleaned quarterly by a means that does not allow for chemical cleaners (use of steam is preferred).





# Outdoor Play Space/Playgrounds

## 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 for 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 Child Development Home 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 otherwise not have access.

### **Regulatory Requirements (OSSE)**

1. Child Development Home shall provide, or have access to, a minimum of sixty square feet (60 ft<sup>2</sup>) 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 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)



## Outdoor Play Space/Playgrounds

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. Completion of a playground safety checklist prior to children utilizing an outdoor play space to ensure for safety (see [Appendix 4](#)). (Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition)
2. Annual Playground Safety Inspections should be completed by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector to ensure identification of areas of concern. (NAEYC)
3. Incorporating classroom centers on a playground or other outdoor space will allow for increased learning opportunities.
4. Outdoor space has two or more types of surfaces permitting different types of play (i.e., hard and soft surfaces). (FCCERS-R Active physical play)
5. Outdoor space has protection from adverse weather conditions (i.e., shade in the summer, drainage system). (FCCERS-R Active physical play)

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## Acknowledgments

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These standards were developed utilizing information obtained from the sources below. General theories and concepts gathered from these sources have not been specifically footnoted.

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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](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](mailto:Avis.Pearson@dc.gov).

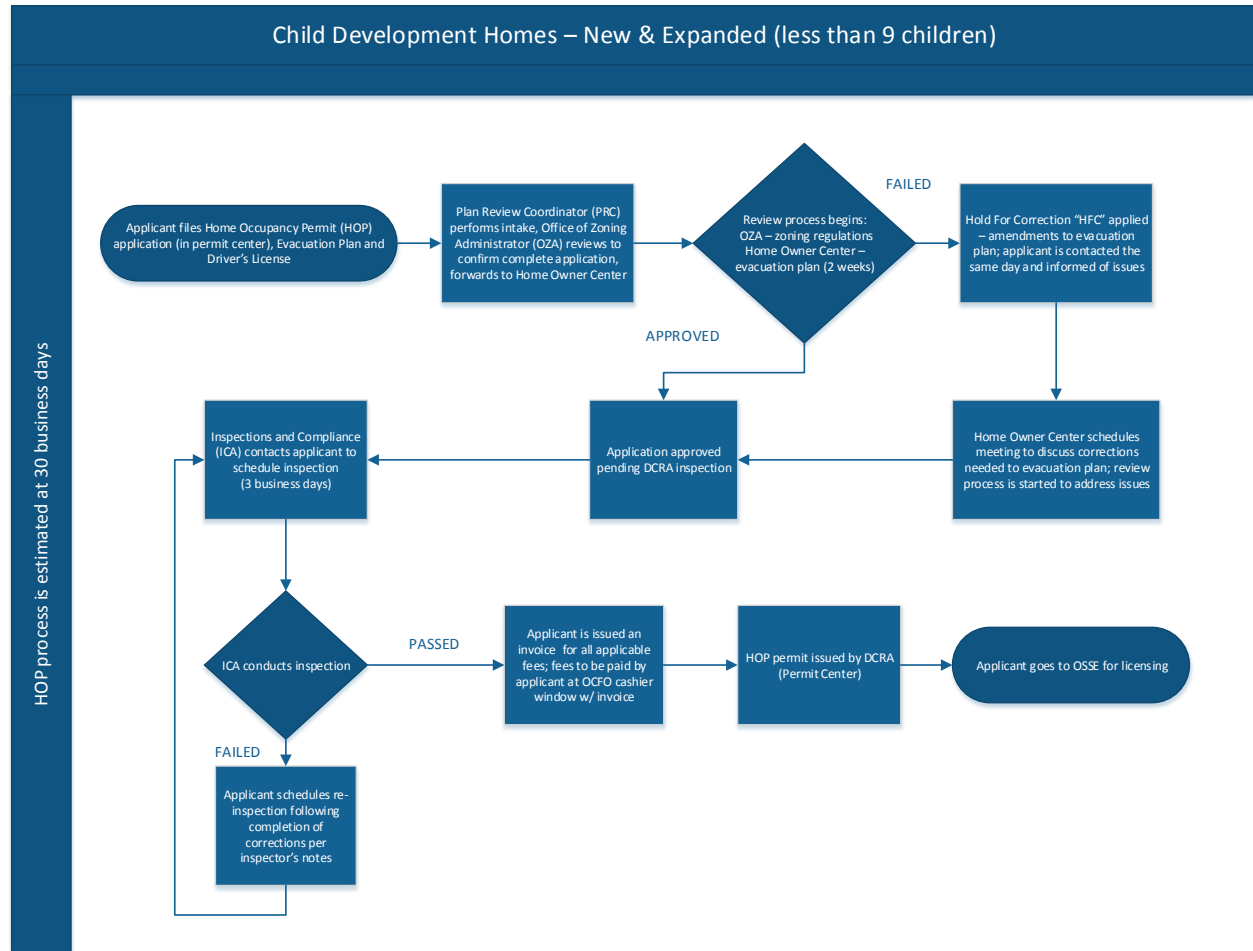
2. When you qualify your architects for larger projects (multi-level additions, roof decks, 2-Family Flat conversions, and underpinning), request a list of recently permitted projects of similar scope listed by address. You can contact DCRA for the permit review history of the project submission. If 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](mailto: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](mailto:Evon.Epps@dc.gov).

## Appendix 2 – Child Development Homes – New and Expanded Home Occupation Permit Process Flow



## Appendix 3 – Initial Child Development Home Licensing Requirements Checklist



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT HOME LICENSING REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

**1. ORIENTATION**

☐ Complete the *child development home 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 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. HOME OCCUPANCY PERMIT**

☐ Select a location and obtain a *Home Occupancy Permit* 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 Home Occupancy Permit should include the following information: Use must indicate 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 Home Occupancy Permit.

**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 Home 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 thirty 30 days of the date the application is submitted)
- ☐ Caregiver 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 Home Occupancy Permit
- 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 – 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 Home. 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 Home 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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