



Design Guidelines

Centre-based Early Learning and Child Care Facilities

August 2025

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederı ɔedjhtl'é yerinıwə nı dé dúle.
Dene Kədə

ʔerihł'ıs Dēne Sųłıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔɔ ɔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftı.
Dēne Sųłıné

Edı gondı dehgháh got'je zhaté k'éé edat'éh enahddhə nıde naxets'é edahłı.
Dene Zhaté

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinothtan ji', diits'at ginohkhiı.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

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Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

kıspin ki nitawihtın ē nıhıyawıhk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsınān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tłıchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.
Tłıchq

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Une version française de ce document est disponible.

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Introduction

The Department of Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE) is committed to building an effective and integrated early learning and child care system with the goal of helping more families access high-quality programs that meet their needs.

Licensed centre-based early learning and child care facilities in the NWT are governed by the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* (ELCC Act), and the *Early Learning and Child Care Regulations* (ELCC Regulations). The Act and the Regulations set minimum standards for the care, instruction, and supervision of children outside their homes.

These guidelines are regularly updated based on user feedback and emerging concepts in early learning and child care building and design processes. In addition, these guidelines are:

- intended to ensure that child care spaces are safe, functional, developmentally appropriate, child-friendly and accessible for children and families,
- to be used together with other applicable regulations and standards. It is the responsibility of those developing child care facilities to ensure that all applicable legislation, regulations, bylaws and standards are met,
- for use by those designing or constructing new child care facilities or renovating/retrofitting existing facilities, and
- applicable to stand-alone child care facilities and those in larger buildings.

Intent of these Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to support potential operators of licensed early learning and child care facilities and provide information on minimum standards for licensed centre-based facilities. The guidelines outline key design considerations, with a focus on meeting space and programming requirements.

In addition to the contents in this document, individuals or organizations interested in setting up a new centre-based early learning and child care facilities should be familiar with other facility requirements. Some of these include:

- Under the ELCC Act and ELCC Regulations, facilities need to also ensure compliance with the *Public Health Act*, the *National Building Code of Canada*, the *National Fire Code of Canada*, and the *NWT Fire Prevention Act and Regulations*.
- The *Community Planning and Development Act* is intended to ensure that developments in the community, including early learning and child care facilities, comply with land use plans and the way services are provided in the community. Please contact your local municipal or community government to access the required by-laws in your area.

These important documents can be accessed at:

- **Early Learning and Child Care Act** - <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/early-learning-and-childcare/early-learning-and-childcare.a.pdf>
- **Early Learning and Child Care Regulations** - <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/early-learning-and-childcare/early-learning-and-childcare.r4.pdf>
- **Public Health Act** - <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/public-health/public-health.a.pdf>
- **Fire Prevention Act** - <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/fire-prevention/fire-prevention.a.pdf>
- **National Building Code of Canada** - <https://nrc-publications.canada.ca/eng/view/ft/?id=515340b5-f4e0-4798-be69-692e4ec423e8>
- **The GNWT Community Planning and Development Act** - [Community Planning and Development Act](#)

Intended users

The document is for use by a wide range of people including:

- individuals or operators of child care facilities
- contractors
- developers
- architects
- consultants

Regulations and requirements at a glance

Early learning and child care facilities in the NWT are classified as Assembly Occupancy (Group 'A2'). As an Assembly Occupancy (Group A2),

- The facility is intended to operate as a daycare centre
- The daycare shall operate only during the day time with no overnight care.

Applicable requirements, as contained in the ELCC Act and Regulations, the NWT Fire Prevention Act and Regulations, the National Building Code of Canada (NBC), the National Fire Code, and the Public Health Act are considered as the minimum acceptable measures required.

Early Learning and Child Care Regulations

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| Section 26 | (1) A centre-based facility must have a minimum of 2.75 m ² (29.6ft ²) of free and usable indoor floor area per child, based on the maximum number of children regularly attending the facility for early learning and child care purposes. |
| Section 27 | (1) Provide safe outdoor play space. (3) If the outdoor play space is adjacent to the early learning and child care facility, (a) the operator of a centre-based facility shall ensure that, i. a minimum of 5 m ² of play space is provided for each child, & ii. if the surrounding environment is potentially hazardous to children, the space is enclosed by a fence that is at least 1.5 m high. (5) If paragraph (3)(b) can not be complied with because of a bylaw, the operator shall (a) erect a fence that is the maximum permissible height under the bylaw; and (b) ensure that other precautions are taken to mitigate any risk to the children. |
| Section 28 | The following must not be used for an early learning and child care facility: a) a room or space that is accessible only by a ladder or folding stairs or a trap door; b) a room or space that is more than one storey below ground level. |
| Section 29 | A door that can be locked without the use of a key must not be used in an area of an early learning and child care facility accessible to children, unless the door can be unlocked from either side. |
| Section 30 | (1) Ensure that a sleeping area is not used for meals or play activities while a child is sleeping in the area. (2) Where a sleeping area is provided within an early learning and child care facility, the operator shall ensure that the sleeping area for children under 18 months of age is separate from older children to ensure quiet sleeping accommodation |
| Section 36 | (1) Ensure that water closets and lavatories meet the requirements set out in the National Building Code of Canada. (Note: <i>Water closets and toilets should be child-size/height, if possible and there should be a minimum of one child size toilet for every 10 spaces</i>). |
| Section 37 | Ensure ready access to drinking water from a water supply system. See subsection 1(1) of the <i>Public Health Act</i> . |
| Section 38 | (1) Ensure that children are protected from radiators, water pipes, water tanks, fuel tanks, electrical outlets and wood stoves. |
| Section 41 | (1) Ensure that smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in compliance with any codes and standards adopted under section 2 of the Fire Prevention Regulations the Fire Prevention Act, and any applicable bylaws. |
| Section 49 | (1) Provide infant bathing facilities where infants are present. |
| Section 50 | (1) Provide a diapering area that is separated from eating, sleeping and teaching areas, for all children who require diapering. |
| Additional requirements apply: Check with the Regional Early Childhood Consultant or ask for a sample checklist to help prepare for ECE inspections. | |

National Building Code of Canada (NBC) and National Fire Code

| | |
|---|--|
| 3.2.4.1 | Fire Alarm is required if Occupant Load is more than 40. NWT OFM requires interconnected smoke detectors in sleeping areas. |
| 3.7.2.2 | Washrooms – 1/30M, 1/25F |
| 3.8 | Accessibility (barrier-free access) |
| Various | Various Mechanical Related: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ventilation – with higher occupancy • Plumbing – for washrooms, sinks in the kitchen, diaper areas etc., • Kitchen upgrades – some equipment needs fire suppression system, vent to the outside – etc., type of food cooked, and equipment list will dictate requirements. |
| Various NBC Assembly Occupancy (Grp A2), Part 3 | • Exits and travel distances that meet the code. |
| | • Fire-resistance separation rating between storeys and between other suites or occupancies in the same building. |
| | • Restricted flame-spread ratings on interior finishes. |
| | • A fire alarm system if the occupant load exceeds 40 people |
| | • Interconnected and hard-wired smoke alarms in all sleeping rooms and on every floor if a fire alarm system is not required. |
| | • Carbon monoxide alarms in every care occupancy that contains a fuel-fired appliance, or a storage garage. |
| | • Emergency lighting in principal routes of exit and fire extinguishers are required. |
| | • Fire department access. |
| | • Barrier-free access and barrier free washrooms |
| • Furnaces and similar heating appliances are to be located within service rooms and are to be enclosed by a fire separation with fire resistance ratings. | |
| <i>Additional requirements apply: Check with the Office of the Fire Marshall or ask for a sample checklist to help prepare for fire safety inspections.</i> | |

Environment and Public Health

| | |
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| Public Health Act Requirements | • Food establishment permit and approval by Environmental Health Officer. |
| | • Separate sinks for food preparation, hand washing, and toy sanitizing. |
| | • (food establishments) are required to have a designated hand sink and a three-compartment sink |
| | • Stove with a fire suppression system and appropriate heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) (if food is prepared on-site) |
| | • Adequate electrical outlets |
| | • Non-porous and impervious floors, surfaces, and cabinets |
| • Holding area for garbage, recycling and/or compost | |
| <i>Additional requirements apply: Check with the Environmental Health Officer or ask for a sample checklist to help prepare for inspections.</i> | |

Notes:

(1). The above information is intended to act as guidelines only. Additional requirements may be considered to address specific facility concerns.

(2). Based on the size, height and occupancy load, other requirements, to be determined by the Office of the Fire shall be included for the building.

General space considerations

Children attending licensed centre-based early learning and child care facilities must have enough room to engage in developmentally appropriate activities.

Indoor spaces consist of play spaces and other designated spaces to accommodate aspects such as sleep, storage, diapering, washing and toileting, children's lockers, non-movable structures/fixed equipment, offices, stairways, washrooms, kitchens, lobbies, laundry, etc.

Eligible licensed spaces/group size per room

The number of licensed spaces is determined by the useable space in the facility as well as the Maximum *Group Size* per room based on the ages of the children that will be cared for, as outlined below and in **Schedule B, Part 1 and 2** of the ELCC Regulations.

PART 1
MINIMUM RATIO AND MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
WHERE CHILDREN ARE CARE FOR IN SEPARATE AGE GROUPS

| Item | Age of Child | Minimum ELCC Staff Person to Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|------|--|--|--------------------|
| 1. | Less than or equal to 12 months | 1:3 | 6 |
| 2. | Greater than 12 months and less than or equal to 24 months | 1:4 | 8 |
| 3. | Greater than 24 months and less than or equal to 35 months | 1:6 | 12 |
| 4. | Greater than 35 months and less than or equal to 4 years | 1:8 | 16 |
| 5. | Greater than 4 years and less than or equal to 5 years | 1:9 | 18 |
| 6. | Greater than 5 years and less than 12 years | 1:10 | 30 |

PART 2
MINIMUM RATIO AND MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
WHERE CHILDREN CARE FOR IN GROUPS OF MIXED AGES

| Item | Mixed Age Group | Minimum ELCC Staff Person to Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|------|--|--|--------------------|
| 1. | Children less than or equal to 24 months | 1:4 | 8 |
| 2. | Children greater than 24 months and less than 5 years, | | |
| | (a) where child not enrolled in school for full day | 1:8 | 16 |
| | (b) where child enrolled in school for full day | 1:10 | 30 |
| 3. | Children greater than 5 years and less than 12 years | 1:10 | 30 |

NOTES:

- Eligible licensed spaces are calculated using group size and ages.
- The operator must not have more children at any given time than the number of licenced spaces.
- If children attend part time, then two or more children could share the same licenced space – they can't be there at the same time.
- Notwithstanding subsection (1), at least two ELCC staff persons must be on duty when more than six children are present at the facility.

Quality and type of rooms

To ensure a healthy and safe physical environment inside a child care facility, in addition to the requirements stated in the Regulations, the facility must meet or exceed the appropriate health, fire and safety requirements. For an area to be considered a usable room, it must have a full-height sound barrier, such as a wall or floor-to-ceiling folding partitions or sliding partitions.

Regulation Requirements

Section 25. An operator shall ensure that a room that is used as part of the early learning and child care facility is dry, ventilated, lighted, sanitary, heated, in good repair and suitable for the care of children.

Section 28. An operator shall ensure that the following are not used for the early learning and child care facility:

- (a) a room or space that is accessible only by a ladder or folding stairs or through a trap door;
- (b) a room or space that is more than one storey below ground level.

Emergency systems

Regulation Requirements

Section 41. (1) An operator shall ensure that smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors are located in the early learning and child care facility in compliance with any and all codes and standards adopted under section 2 of the Fire Prevention Act and Regulations, , and any applicable bylaws in the community in which the facility is located.

All early learning and child care facilities are classified as Group A2 Occupancies or Assembly Occupancies by the NWT Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM).

Because of the rating, early learning and child care facilities require a fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting system, as well as smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors. A sprinkler system is required if there are more than 4 infant spaces. **Refer to NBC, 3.2.4**

Doors and locks

Regulation Requirements

Section 29. An operator shall ensure that a door that can be locked without the use of a key is not used in an area of the early learning and child care facility accessible to children unless the door can be unlocked from either side.

This is to ensure that staff can easily access all children at any time and that children cannot accidentally lock themselves in a room.

Indoor play space

Indoor play space refers to a usable space for children's play and movement and is where they will spend their time during the day. To ensure a healthy and safe physical environment, the space must meet or exceed the minimum requirements set in the ELCC Regulations as well as the appropriate health, fire, and safety regulations.

The space must be used for activities at all times of the operating hours if it is to be included in the calculation of useable space.

Regulation Requirements

Section 26 (1) An operator of a centre-based facility shall ensure that the facility has a minimum of 2.75 m² of free and usable indoor floor area per child, based on the maximum number of children regularly attending the facility for early learning and child care purposes.

Calculating useable indoor space

The amount of useable indoor floor area will determine the number of spaces a facility can be licensed for. Calculations to determine minimum useable floor area, or free and useable space, in each room are based on the maximum number of children regularly attending the facility and include 25% space allocation for storage as well as non-movable furniture and fixtures.

Note: Facility Occupancy in the NBC is also based on everyone using the structure, children and staff.

HOW TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF LICENSED SPACES

1. First, calculate the total area of the room:
 - Area is calculated by multiplying the length and width of the room, but you need to first measure the length and width of the room(s) in meters.
 - Then, multiply the length and width to get the area. For example, a room measuring 10 meters wide by 14 meters long, you get the area by multiplying 10×14 to get a total area of 140 m^2 .
2. Second, calculate useable space by subtracting 25% of the area for non-movable furniture/storage from the total area. Based on the example in #1 above, non-useable space equals to 0.25 multiplied by $140 \text{ m}^2 = 35 \text{ m}^2$. Useable space = 140 m^2 minus $35 \text{ m}^2 = 105 \text{ m}^2$
3. Third, estimate the # of eligible licensed child care spaces by dividing the useable space by the space required per license. For example, 105 m^2 by 2.75, which equals 38 eligible* licensed spaces.

Please note that the final number of licensed child care spaces will be determined by ECE.

Design considerations for indoor play space

- The layout of the room should not create any hidden corners and L-shaped spaces should be avoided to facilitate proper supervision.
- The layout of the room should include a mixture of open spaces and smaller alcove-type spaces and be designed to accommodate a variety of activity settings. The design should emphasize flexibility by utilizing movable elements to define spaces.
 - The plan should direct children from one activity to the next and delineate, protect and support activities in each setting.
 - There should be enough space for art/eating tables, easels, water and texture tables, and adequate storage.
 - Enough space is required to seat all children at once for snacks and meals.
- Ideally, the space should be located in a ground-level floor space with direct access to the exterior. This is especially important for infants to facilitate evacuation in an emergency and to simplify daily routines and access to the outdoors.
- In addition, overall space calculation must account for wall thickness and building services (i.e. furnace room).

Other indoor spaces

Sleeping area

Regulation Requirements

Section 30. (1) An operator shall ensure that a sleeping area in the early learning and child care facility is not used for meals or play activities while a child is sleeping in the area.

(2) Where a sleeping area is provided within an early learning and child care facility, the operator shall ensure that the sleeping area for children under 18 months of age is separate from older children to ensure quiet sleeping accommodation.

Design considerations for sleeping area

- Children under 18 Months will need one room dedicated as a sleeping area with cots/beds/...
- Older kids can nap where they play, however, no other activity can happen in the room while a child is sleeping in the area.
- Space allowances for a designated sleeping area for children between 18 months and five years of age can be included in the minimum space if the area is combined with a quiet play area.
- A sleep area within the playroom that is acceptable for children above 18 months is recommended. This is to enable direct supervision. The space can be combined with a quiet play area with low, movable shelving used to separate quiet play from sleeping children.

Note: if the designated sleep area for infants is only used for rest/sleep, it is NOT included in the measurements of useable space.

Water Closets and Lavatories

Regulation Requirements

Section 36. (1) An operator shall ensure that the early learning and child care facility has water closets and lavatories that meet the requirements set out in the National Building Code of Canada.

(2) An operator shall ensure that water closets and lavatories in the early learning and child care facility have adequate supplies of

- (a) hot and cold running water;
- (b) liquid hand soap in dispensers; and
- (c) disposable towels.

Design considerations for lavatories/washrooms

- Depending on the age of the children, consideration should be given to designing washrooms so that staff can easily supervise and assist children who are in the washroom, as well as the children remaining in the play activity room. For example, the washroom area should be directly accessible from the play space.
- It is recommended that fixtures are child-size and mounted at child height for independent use.
- A separate sink could be provided in the play area for general hand washing, while there must be at least one sink provided for every two toilets. This sink (or sinks) in the washroom area should strictly be used for toileting/diapering.
- It is recommended that the facility have 1 toilet and 1 sink for every 10 licensed spaces for children from birth to 5 years **(this is above the NBC requirements)**.

Based on the National Building Code, a minimum of one washroom must be wheelchair accessible. The facility may require two accessible washrooms if child-sized toilets are used.

Diapering area

Regulation Requirements

Section 50. (1) - An operator shall provide a diapering area in the early learning and child care facility that is separated from eating, sleeping and teaching areas, for all children who require diapering.

Design considerations for diapering area

- The diapering area should be close to the washroom to facilitate waste disposal and should contain an adult-height sink for hand washing and a toilet to enable direct waste disposal. By incorporating a large deep sink for staff hand washing, it may also act as a fixed sink and bathing area for infants. This should be incorporated and located next to the change surface.
- The diapering surface should be made of smooth, non-porous, moisture-resistant, easily cleanable material that can be sanitized after each use.
- The diaper change surface should be approximately 71 to 81 cm (28 to 32 inches) in height plus a 150 mm (6 inch) high guard along the outside edge of the diapering counter for safety. Length of the change surface should be 900 to 1200mm (36 to 48 inches) with a separate area from the change mat, but within arms reach to set out diapering supplies. Pull-out steps are recommended to allow staff to help children climb up and prevent back injury caused by lifting.

- Wall cubicles within easy reach above the diapering counter are recommended for storage of diapers and personal items. One cubicle approximately 30 by 30 cm (12 by 12 inches) per child is recommended.
- Lockable cupboards and a foot-operated waste disposal unit should be provided below the diapering counter to store cleaning supplies and ensure they are kept out of reach of children.

Storage areas

Regulation Requirements

Section 32. (1) An operator shall ensure that each child at the early learning and child care facility is provided with a locker, cubbyhole or hook that is

- (a) easily accessible to the child;
- (b) in a lighted area; and
- (c) arranged so that each child's personal belongings can be kept separate from those of other children.

(2) An operator shall ensure that cupboards or other means of storage are made available and easily accessible to children, to store indoor and outdoor play materials, equipment, clothing and supplies.

Design considerations for storage spaces

Individual storage for children's belongings

- Individual storage for children can include lockers, cubbyholes or hooks. These storage spaces must be provided for each child, should be accessible to allow children independent access to their belongings, and be separated to ensure that belongings do not get mixed up or lost and to minimize the risk of spreading germs.

Space calculations for individual storage are based on the number of licensed spaces (this calculation is estimated as 25% of usable indoor space).

Storage for indoor and outdoor play materials, equipment, and supplies

- Storage for play materials, equipment and supplies must be provided for indoor and outdoor play materials, equipment, clothing and supplies. These storage spaces must be easily accessible to children so that they can make their own choices about activities and equipment, whenever possible.

Additional storage considerations

- Storage units are considered as fixed furniture and cannot be included in the calculation of useable space for licensing purposes.
- Consider space for closed storage area for cots or mats for sleeping close to the designated sleeping area.
- Storage for outdoor equipment should be located either near the exit to the outdoor play area or in an outdoor shed next to the play area.
- A separate storage area/room(s) with ample space for storage of toys, equipment and materials that are rotated through the program.
- Closet or hooks for staff to store outerwear within the play space and individual, lockable storage for personal belongings.
- Wall-mounted closed storage above floor level, if provided, must be well secured.
- An estimate of storage should be based on 25% of the net building square footage.

Food area

Regulation Requirements

Section 47. (2) An operator shall ensure that staff persons comply with the laws of the Northwest Territories respecting the storage, handling and serving of food. Licensed centre-based programs that provide food or serve food shall ensure that staff persons comply with the laws of the Northwest Territories respecting the storage, handling and serving of food.

Design considerations for food preparation and handling area

- ELCC programs that prepare food on-site must have a space designated for the preparation of food that is separate from the washrooms and diaper change area.
- Food preparation areas/kitchen (if applicable) must comply with the National Building Code, Public Health Act and Regulations, and Standards adopted under the Public Health Act applicable to the preparation, handling and serving of food. These requirements include:
 - a three-compartment sink.
 - space for appliances, i.e., stove with exterior venting, refrigerator with a thermometer, and microwave.
 - sufficient counter space for food preparation.
 - Design that allows staff to supervise children in the indoor play space while in the kitchen if staff are required to be included in the child-to-staff ratio
 - Refrigerator should be available in infant areas (if applicable) and shelves installed above the serving counter.
 - Storage for dishes/cutlery, pots, kitchen equipment, food serving carts, food products as well as secure storage for cleaning and sanitizing products.
 - Contained garbage and recycling bins.
 - Flooring that is durable and easily washable.
 - Walls and ceiling surfaces to be non-absorbent, smooth, crack-free and easily washable.

Office space and staff area

Design considerations for a staff area and office/administration space

It is recommended that staff and administration/office space be reflected in the floor plans for new early learning and child care facilities.

Office

- The office area should be close to the child care centre entrance and be fully enclosed for privacy.
- It is preferable to include windows from the office into the entrance and play areas.
- One-way glass from the office could be provided for observation purposes.

Staff Area

- The staff area should be accessible but separate from play activity rooms/areas. This allows staff to assist children in the event of an emergency.
- Where possible, place staff areas close to, but separate from, the centre's office area and/or adult washrooms.
- A staff area could include a small workstation with a computer, telephone photocopier and/or printer that staff can use to prepare program materials.
- A staff washroom can be designed as a wheelchair-accessible washroom.

Outdoor play space

Regulation Requirements

Section 27. (1) An operator shall provide safe outdoor play space.

(2) Where the outdoor play space is not adjacent to the early learning and child care facility, the operator shall

- (a) ensure that the space is within walking distance of the facility;
- (b) ensure that the space is suitable for the number, ages and development of the children attending the facility; and
- (c) ensure that, if the surrounding environment is hazardous to children, the space is enclosed by a fence.

(3) Subject to subsection (5), where the outdoor play space is adjacent to a centre-based facility, the operator shall ensure that

- (a) a minimum of 5 m² of play space is provided for each child; and
- (b) the space is enclosed by a fence that is at least 1.5 m high if the surrounding environment is hazardous to children.

(5) If paragraph (3)(b) can not be complied with because of a bylaw, the operator shall

- (a) erect a fence that is the maximum permissible height under the bylaw; and
- (b) ensure that other precautions are taken to mitigate any risk to the children.

Design considerations for outdoor play space

An outdoor play space is necessary to provide opportunities for children of varying abilities to experience adventure, challenge and wonder in as natural an environment as possible.

The outdoor play space is intended to provide a challenging and safe outdoor environment.

- The outdoor play area should be designed with age specific physical challenges in mind.
- Provide direct access from the inside play space to adjacent outdoor play space.
- The outdoor play area should have storage for outdoor play materials
- The surface should be appropriate for children to play on
- A fixed play structure is not a requirement for an outdoor play space, if a fixed play structure is installed, it needs to be installed according to the manufacture's instructions by a qualified contractor.

Calculating outdoor space

Space for items that cannot be moved or areas that cannot be used for children's play is excluded from the calculation of outdoor play space. These include:

- above-ground sewers, large planters that cannot be moved, outdoor storage (e.g., sheds), and built-in garbage/recycling areas.

Site selection and site area standards

Choosing a site for a licensed centre-based ELCC facility sites should include considerations such as:

- local government bylaws or other legislative requirements and or environmental factors that may prohibit opening up an early learning and child care facility at the location
- availability of adequate and suitable space for indoor space and outdoor components, such as the outdoor play space, outdoor storage, a drop-off/pick-up zone and on-site parking for families and staff.

Specifically, sites should provide space for:

- The building footprint plus front, rear and side yard setbacks at the time of construction.
- Outdoor play area unless the proposed outdoor play space is not adjacent to the licensed centre-based facility or where the outdoor play space is located in a public park or another facility, i.e., school playground.
- Pedestrian route(s) to the facility entrance from the main road and parking areas.
- Parking space equal to 1 parking space for every 8 users (this is the standard in three out of four areas). Please check your local zoning by-law to determine the standard.
- Temporary/short-term use parking to allow parents to park and accompany children to the facility, or pick them up and take them to the vehicle; and
- Dedicated service vehicle access route from the street to building services, as per the local Zoning Bylaws.

Calculating site measurements

| # of Spaces | Type of Space | Calculating Minimum Site Area Requirements for each Space |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| E.g., 24 (licensed spaces) | Indoor Space | Minimum indoor space (useable space + storage + furniture) allowance @2.75 m ² per 1 licensed space x 1.33 x 24 spaces Plus, allowance for <i>Other Indoor Spaces</i> (actual) |
| | Outdoor Space (unless the outdoor play space is not adjacent to the ELCC facility) | Minimum outdoor play space @ 5 m ² per 1 licensed space x 24 licensed spaces. |
| | Parking | 1 parking space for every 8 users ¹ @ 14.56 ² m ² / Parking Space |

NOTES

1. Site Area Calculations are based on the sum total of the building footprint (allocations for indoor play space, storage allowance, other designated indoor spaces such as washrooms, sleeping area, kitchen, etc.; and outdoor spaces), and parking.
2. Site Plans (to be developed by an architect or design consultant) are required to show the plot of land and its property lines, a landscape plan, site structures and infrastructure, and elements

¹ Zoning By-Law #5045: <https://www.yellowknife.ca/Bylaws/Bylaw/Download/6b3ec558-c3ad-4322-8165-43cfcdd4699a>

² Design Standards: Standard parking space dimensions - <https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing-business/design-standards>.

such as waste management, parking, emergency plan and exits, servicing plan, easements, site fixtures, parent drop-off and pick-up, etc.

3. Parking space requirements may vary by community. Please refer to the local Bylaw. For example, this calculation is based on parking requirements in City of Yellowknife, see Bylaw # 5053 (<https://www.yellowknife.ca/Bylaws/Bylaw/Details/aa2bc7be-1089-446d-b4cd-e02eaccadd9e>) where:
 - a. Type “A” accessible parking space for all zones unless otherwise noted must have a:
 - i. Minimum length of 5.6 meters;
 - ii. Minimum width of 4.0 meters; and
 - iii. Minimum vertical clearance of 2.3 meters;
 - b. Type “B” parking space for all zones unless otherwise noted must have a:
 - i. Minimum length of 5.6 meters;
 - ii. Minimum width of 2.6 meters; and
 - iii. Minimum vertical clearance of 2.0 meters.
4. Outdoor areas may be combined with other organizations or a school.
5. Scheduling can be used to accommodate smaller outdoor play space areas.
6. Other site areas might be shared. Examples may include:
 - Nearby public or private park used for outdoor play; and
 - Parking in nearby shared facilities.

Resources and links

City of Yellowknife (2022). Zoning By-law No. 5045. Retrieved from <https://www.yellowknife.ca/Bylaws/Bylaw/Download/6b3ec558-c3ad-4322-8165-43cfcdd4699a>

City of Yellowknife (2022). Building By-law No. 5058. Retrieved from <https://www.yellowknife.ca/Bylaws/Bylaw/Details/d87b1943-40d7-4255-939d-64804a816323>

City of Yellowknife (2022). Design Standards Manual. <https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing-business/design-standards.aspx>

Government of Alberta (2024). Health and Safety Guide for Operators of Child Care Facilities. Retrieved from <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-health-safety-guidelines-child-care-facilities.pdf>

Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Education and Child Care (nd.). Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/info-partners-prov/childcarebc_design_guidelines.pdf

Government of Canada (2020). National Building Code of Canada 2020. Retrieved from <https://nrc-publications.canada.ca/eng/view/ft/?id=515340b5-f4e0-4798-be69-692e4ec423e8>

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Government of Northwest Territories (2023). Early Learning and Child Care Act, RSNWT 1988, c.C-5. Retrieved from [RSNWT 1988, c C-5 | Child Day Care Act | CanLII](#)

Government of Northwest Territories (2023). Early Learning and Child Care Regulations, R-098-2024. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/early-learning-and-childcare/early-learning-and-childcare.r4.pdf>

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Government of Northwest Territories (2009). Public Health Act. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/public-health/public-health.a.pdf>

Government of Nunavut (2024). What you need to know to start a daycare. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2024-03/ELCC%20Licensed%20Daycare%20Handbook%20-%20EN2024.pdf>

Government of Ontario (2022). Planning and Design Guidelines for Licensed Child Care Centres. Retrieved from <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-childcare-centre-design-guidelines-en-2022-03-30.pdf>