

# SPACE

## SPACE — INDOOR

### Section 9(1)

Subject to subsection 9 (1.3), every licensee shall provide a minimum of 3.3 square metres of free and useable indoor floor area per licensed child space, which does not include hallways, washrooms, food preparation area, storage space, or other space not used by the children for play, and which is for the exclusive use of the licensee during the hours of operation of the child care centre.

### Guideline

Space must be available at all times during the child care centre's operating hours to be included in the calculation of available space.

Shelving units containing materials for the children's use will be considered in the calculation of useable space if not more than 20 per cent of the floor area. Any fixed equipment beyond this amount will be deducted in the calculation of the number of licensed child spaces.

### Best Practice

Physical spaces protect the health and safety of children and staff and support high quality programming. The overall environment is carefully planned, aesthetically pleasing and is well-maintained.

Ventilation can be controlled with open windows and fans.

While the minimum requirement for space is 3.3 square metres of useable space per child, centres should strive to provide useable play space of 3.7 to 4.6 square metres per child to maximize interaction and development for all children, including children who use wheelchairs and to reduce conflicts due to confined space.

Enough space is provided for equipment needed by children with disabilities.

Private space to accommodate one or two children is provided.

There is room to display children's individualized work, including three-dimensional projects, throughout the space.

Apart from play areas, additional space should be allocated for:

- eating and resting
- kitchen facilities
- storage for beds/cots and linen

- staff room with natural light
- storage of indoor and outdoor play materials and equipment;
- office
- sanitary and common utility areas
- hallways, walkways, vestibules, entrances and other well-defined areas joining rooms or various exits

## **NATURAL LIGHT**

### **Section 9(1.1)**

**Every licensee who operates a full time child care centre shall provide a minimum of one room with natural light that all children will have access to, for their activities each day.**

### **Guideline**

A window providing natural light shall be a minimum of 10 per cent of the floor space or a percentage acceptable by the director

### **Best Practice**

Natural light, the most desirable light, is a feature in every room used by children and staff. It helps promote safety and well-being and contributes to an environment rich in sensory stimulation and variety.

Windows have low sills, frame interesting views and can be opened for fresh air. Adjustable blinds or curtains control natural light for naptime and relief in hot weather.

## **SPACE INDOOR — EXEMPTIONS**

### **Section 9(1.2)**

Notwithstanding subsection (1.1) where:

- (a) physical renovations cannot be made to a child care centre to comply with subsection (1.1); and
- (b) the child care centre was licensed before October 10, 1983; the licensee may continue to be licensed under this regulation.

### **Section 9(1.3)**

Where a licensed child space is for an infant, a licensee initially licensed after June 30, 2002, shall provide a minimum of 3.3 square metres of free and usable indoor floor area for each licensed child space for an infant, which:

- a) does not include hallways, washrooms, food preparation areas, storage space, space required for equipment or furniture used for the napping (sleeping), feeding or toileting of infants or other space not used by the children for play; and
- b) is for the exclusive use of the licensee during the hours of operation of the child care centre.

## SPACE — SLEEPING

### Section 9(2)

Every licensee who operates a full time child care centre or nursery school which provides child care for more than four continuous hours per day shall provide a sleeping space which:

- a) is not used for play activity while any child is sleeping; and
- b) allows for 2.3 square metres of floor area for each child while the child is sleeping.

### Guideline

If sleeping and play activity are to occur in the same room, a partition must be provided to separate the two areas to ensure quiet for sleeping children and normal activities for others. The partition does not need to be a floor to ceiling wall. A shelving unit or a curtain is acceptable.

Cots and mats should be spread out in the sleep space to ensure the individual space allotment of 2.3 square metres and should be organized to ensure easy evacuation in an emergency.

### Best Practice

Sleep space is provided. Children are helped to relax.

Space for normal activities is available to children who aren't napping. Soft furnishings are also accessible to children.

Provisions are made for early risers such as allowing them to leave their cots/mats to play quietly or join other children in play.

The nap schedule is flexible to meet children's individual needs.

## SPACE — OUTDOOR

### Section 9(3)

Every licensee who operates a full time child care centre, a nursery school which provides child care for more than four continuous hours per day, or a school age child care centre shall provide or have access to outdoor play space which provides for a minimum of seven square metres per child and accommodates the greater of 50 per cent of the number of licensed spaces or 55 square metres, and:

(a) in the case of a full time child care centre or nursery school providing child care for more than four continuous hours per day the space shall be located within 350 metres of the centre;

(b) in the case of a school age child care centre the space shall be located within 700 metres of the centre.

### Guideline

The outdoor play area shall be used only by the number of children that the space permits. The outdoor play space provides experiences in sensory, discovery and mobility that reflect the larger world.

#### Best Practice

Outdoor play space has direct access, without stairs or ramps, from each group's room to the outdoor play space to encourage use and promote greater flexibility for children to move in and out independently.

The space is conveniently located close to a washroom, storage facilities and a water source.

The space is appropriate, stimulating and fully accessible for all children, including children with disabilities. It contains natural elements such as trees, grass, flowers and water. It has a variety of surfaces permitting different types of play such as sand, black top, wood chips, grass, as well as paths, inclines, small hills, fences and water to inspire children to engage in creative explorations with nature.

The space provides protection from the elements, such as shade in summer, a wind break and good drainage to enable year-round use.

## **OUTDOOR SPACE NOT ADJACENT TO THE CENTRE**

### **Section 9(5)**

Where the outdoor play space in subsection (3) is not adjacent to the child care centre the licensee shall provide safe access to the space.

### **Guideline**

Parents should be told how children will be escorted to the outdoor play area when it is not adjacent to the child care centre.

## **OUTDOOR SPACE ADJACENT TO CENTRE**

### **Section 9(6)**

Where the outdoor play space is adjacent to the child care centre and is owned or rented by the child care centre or the licensee, the licensee shall ensure that:

- (a) the space is fenced; and
- (b) a minimum of 50 per cent of the area is grass, sand or a similar surface.

### **Guideline**

A fence is defined as an enclosure to ensure the safety of children playing outdoors. It may take many forms such as a dense hedge.

Centres located in schools that use the school's outdoor play areas are not required to comply with the fencing and surface provisions of subsection 9(5).

For further information on safe playground surfaces, refer to the Canadian Standards Association International's publications, *Children's Playspaces and Equipment (Z614-03)* and *What's New in the Z614*, available in your local library or by purchasing from the Canadian Standards Association International.

## **Best Practice**

Outdoor play space has direct access, without stairs or ramps, from each group's room to the outdoor play space to encourage use and promote greater flexibility for children to move in and out independently.

The space is conveniently located close to a washroom, storage facilities and a water source.

The space is appropriate, stimulating and fully accessible for all children, including children with disabilities. It contains natural elements such as trees, grass, flowers and water. It has a variety of surfaces permitting different types of play such as sand, black top, wood chips, grass, as well as paths, inclines, small hills, fences and water to inspire children to engage in creative explorations with nature.

The space provides protection from the elements, such as shade in summer, a wind break and good drainage to enable year-round use.

The following areas are included in the design of the outdoor play space:

- private places to accommodate a single child
- places for small groups of one to four children
- places for large muscle activity involving groups of up to 10 children
- places for games and sports involving more than 10 children
- plenty of free space for spontaneous activity

## **SPACE OUTDOOR — EXEMPTIONS**

### **Section 9(7)**

Where special circumstances exist and a licensee is unable to meet the requirements of subsection (3) or (6), the licensee may apply to the director for approval for alternative accommodations for outdoor play.

## INFANT SPACE — WRITTEN PLAN

### Section 9(10)

Every licensee who provides child care for infants shall provide a written plan to the director for the director's approval setting out how the licensee intends to develop and use the space to meet each infant's daily developmental needs for sleep and play.

### Guideline

The proposed plan must be written and submitted to the child care co-ordinator for the director's approval.

### Best Practice

The pace of daily routines and activities respects infants in care and supports their social and emotional well-being. Opportunities for physical activity, cognitive stimulation and nutrition are balanced with opportunities for rest and relaxation, while ensuring health and safety.

Staff also balances the needs of the group with those of the individual.

## **SPACE — MIXED AGE GROUPS — WRITTEN PLAN**

### **Section 9(11)**

Every licensee who provides child care where infants, preschool age children or school age children are combined with children of another age group shall provide a written plan to the director for approval as to how the licensee shall provide separate space and separate programs to meet the developmental needs of all the children.

### **Guideline**

The proposed plan must be written and submitted to the child care co-ordinator for the director's approval.

#### **Best Practice**

Staff is knowledgeable about child development and use this knowledge to plan daily routines and activities that are respectful and responsive to all children in the group.

Mixed age group proposals are carefully developed in collaboration with the child care co-ordinator to ensure a well-planned and consistent program for the infant, preschool and school age children brought together in the group.

Proposals include:

- time of day when the mixed age group applies
- proposed staff-to-child ratio and group size
- description of the use of space and program to ensure the needs of all children are met
- reasons for wanting to introduce a mixed age group and the benefits to children

Staff is very careful in their supervision of children in mixed age groups. They observe children to ensure the mixed age group and program are safe and appropriate for all, especially the youngest and most vulnerable in the group.

Staff adjusts the program and environment when necessary to meet the individual needs of children.

## **PROHIBITION — CARING FOR A CHILD MORE THAN 18 HOURS**

### **Section 9.1**

No licensee shall provide care for an individual child for a period longer than 18 hours in any 24 hour period, unless prior written approval is given by the director.

