ACT Government

CENTRE-BASED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES PLANNING GUIDELINES

DESIGNING HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES FOR ACT CHILDREN

ACT Education Directorate
Children's Education and Care Assurance

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CONTENTS

Relevant legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

This Guideline establishes the assessment framework to deliver consistent planning outcomes and design quality for centre-based education and care services in the ACT.

1.1 About this Guideline

The *Education and Care Services National Law* (*ECS National Law*) and *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (*National Regulations*) set out a range of spatial and physical requirements for the approval of education and care services (a service approval).

Australia's *National Construction Code (NCC)* references the *ECS National Law* and sets out the construction requirements for early childhood education and care services.

In the ACT the *Territory Plan* references the *ECS National Law* for the purposes of permitted development and the relevant development approval that may be required for different planning zones in the ACT.

This Guideline supports the *ECS National Law*, *NCC* and *Territory Plan*. This Guideline informs stakeholders on good design to maximise the safety, health and wellbeing, and development outcomes, for young children.

The Guideline will provide a consistent territory-wide planning and design framework for preparing and considering development applications for education and care services. This Guideline aims to support the delivery of attractive education and care services.

This Guideline sets out key considerations for compliance with the *NCC* and the *ECS National Law* in terms of building design.

Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA), the ACT Regulatory Authority for education and care services developed this guideline in collaboration with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

1.2 Who is the Guideline for?

The Guideline is to assist and inform:

- architects, developers, builders, education and care providers and other professionals when preparing development approvals for education and care services
- planning professionals in the ACT Government and National Capital Authority when assessing development approvals. Using this Guideline to assess development approvals supports the development of quality and compliant education and care services that can achieve subsequent service approval
- the wider community about planning and design considerations for the delivery of quality centre-based education and care services.

1.3 What are the Planning objectives?

The planning objectives of this Guideline are to:

- promote high quality planning and design of centre-based education and care services in accordance with the physical requirements of the *National Regulations*
- deliver greater certainty to ACT Government, education and care service providers, construction industry stakeholders and the community by embedding the physical requirements for service approval into the planning requirements for centre-based education and care services.

1.4 Where does this Guideline fit?

In the ACT, development approvals, building approvals and service approvals for education and care services are undertaken under separate statutory frameworks. The *ECS National Law* requires compliance with planning and building laws before a service approval can be considered. The *ECS National Law* also requires specific spatial and building elements.

In the ACT the usual progression of development of a 'greenfield' or 'brownfield' site is development approval; followed by building approval; followed by service approval. On occasion, critical issues required for service approval or building approval may not have been contemplated during the

development approval stage. This Guideline aims to bring those issues to the forefront and allow them to be addressed throughout design and development stages.

The Guideline will further assist design of extensions/renovations that do not require development approval but will need to consider the requirements of the *NCC* and the *ECS National Law.*

This Guideline supports the development of high-quality education and care premises that promote a fun and creative place for children to belong, reflect the services philosophy and engage children in a sense of wonder and curiosity.

2. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ECS NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

Research demonstrates quality education and care early in life leads to better health, education, and employment outcomes later in life. The early years are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth, and capacity to learn. Quality education and care shapes every child's future and lays the foundation for development and learning.

Objectives of the National Quality Framework (NQF)

- to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services;
- to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services;
- to promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services;
- to improve public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services;

Guiding Principles of the National Quality Framework (NQF)

- The rights of and best interest of the child are paramount.
- Children are successful, competent, and capable learners.
- The principles of equality, inclusion and diversity underlie this, Law.
- That Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
- The role of parents and families is respected and supported.
- Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.

3. APPLYING THE NATIONAL REGUALTIONS

The following information will assist design of centre-based education and care services. Approved Providers of centre-based education and care may also use this information in applying the requirements of the *National Regulations* to their physical environment. The minimum construction standards contained in the *NCC* relating to education and care services should be considered in conjunction with this information.

The physical environment of a centre-based education and care service must be safe and suitable, and provide a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development. The physical environment considerations underpinning the *ECS National Law and Regulations* need to be met before an education and care service can be given approval to operate.

Applications for service approval for centre based education and care services with over 134 places will require special consideration from CECA.

Internal Physical Environment

- This section describes the specific regulations that apply to internal physical environment matters, references related construction standards and provides design guidance on how the regulations may be met.

External Physical Environment

- This section describes the specific regulations that apply to external physical environmental matters, references related construction standards and provides design guidance on how the regulations may be met.

Best Practice Examples

- This section outlines a recommended layout for a stand-alone centre-based education and care service by bringing together the internal and external physical environmental matters.
- The underpinning principles may also be applied to mixed use developments which include a centre-based education and care service in commercial, industrial, or high-density zones.

3.1 Internal physical environment

3.1.1 Indoor space requirements

Regulation 107 - *Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations)*

Every child being educated and care for within a facility must have a minimum of 3.25m² of unencumbered indoor space.

Unencumbered indoor space excludes any of the following:

- passageway or thoroughfare (including door swings) used for circulation
- toilet and hygiene facilities
- nappy changing area or area for preparing bottles
- area permanently set aside for the use or storage of cots
- area permanently set aside for storage
- area or room for staff or administration
- kitchens, kitchenettes and bottle preparation areas.
- on-site laundry
- other space that is not suitable for children

All unencumbered indoor space must be provided as a secure area for children. The design of these spaces should consider the safe supervision of children.

When calculating indoor space requirements, the area required for any additional child may be waived when the child is being cared for in emergency circumstances as set out in regulation 123(5) or the child is being educated and cared for in exceptional circumstances as set out in relation 124(5) and (6) of the *National Regulations*.

Applicants should note that regulation 81 requires that the needs for sleep and rest of children at the service be met, having regard to their ages, development stages and individual needs. Development applications should indicate how these needs will be accommodated.

Design Guidance

Room size and position

- The maximum recommended room sizes for each age group are as follows:
  - 0–2-year-old age group a maximum of 12 children per room. There must be a cot provided for each child with a maximum of six cots in each cot room
  - 2–3-year-old age group a maximum of 15 children per room
  - 3–5-year-old age group a maximum of 22 children per room
- All children's rooms must have immediate access to toilet facilities and outdoor space.
- All children's rooms must have external windows. Natural light filtered from a secondary room would not be considered suitable access for rooms identified for children.

Storage

- Storage areas including joinery units are not able to be included in the calculation of indoor space.
- Lockers should be provided for children's belongings that are easily accessible from each room.
- To achieve a functional unencumbered area free of clutter, storage areas must be considered when designing and calculating the spatial requirements of the facility. It is recommended that a centre-based education and care service provide:
  - a minimum of 0.3m² per child of external storage space
  - a minimum of 0.2m² per child of internal storage space.
- Storage does not need to be in a separate room or screened, and there should be a mixture of safe shelving and storage that children can access independently.
- Storage must be provided for sleep beds/mats for children over 2 years of age.
- Storage of items such as prams, bikes and scooters should be located adjacent to the building entrance.
- Where an external laundry service is used, storage and collection points for soiled items should be in an area with separate external access, away from children. This will prevent clothes being carried through public areas and reduce danger to children during drop off and collection of laundry.

Verandas as indoor space

- For a veranda to be included as unencumbered indoor space, any opening must be able to be fully closed during inclement weather.
- A veranda can only be counted once and therefore cannot be counted as outdoor space as well as indoor space.

3.1.2 Laundry and hygiene facilities

Regulation 106 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

There must be laundry facilities or access to laundry facilities; or other arrangements for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies, and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering. The laundry and hygienic facilities must be located and maintained in a way that does not pose a risk to children.

Centre-based education and care services must also comply with requirements for laundry facilities that are contained in the *NCC*.

Design Guidance

Laundry and hygiene facilities are a key consideration for education and care service premises. The type of laundry facilities provided must be appropriate to the age of children accommodated.

On site laundry

- On site laundry facilities should contain:
    - a washer or washers capable of dealing with a heavy requirement of the facility
    - a dryer
    - outdoor area where laundry can be hung out to dry
    - laundry sinks
    - adequate storage for soiled items prior to cleaning
    - an onsite laundry cannot be calculated as usable unencumbered play space for children.

External laundry service

- A facility that does not contain on site laundry facilities must make external laundering arrangements. Any external laundry facilities providing services to the facility needs to comply with any relevant Australian Standards.

3.1.3 Toilet and hygiene facilities

Regulation 109 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

A service must ensure that adequate, developmentally, and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are provided for use by children being educated and cared for by the service; and the location and design of the toilet, washing and drying facilities enable safe use and convenient access by the children. As a guide, there should be a minimum of one children's toilet for every 15 children.

Centre-based education and care services must comply with the requirements for sanitary facilities that are contained in the *NCC.*

Design Guidance

Toilet and hygiene facilities should be designed to maintain the amenity and dignity of the occupants. Design considerations include:

- junior toilet pan, low level sinks and hand drying facilities for children
- a sink and handwashing facilities in all bathrooms for adults
- direct access from both children's rooms and outdoor play areas
- windows into bathrooms and cubicles without full height doors to allow supervision by staff
- external windows in locations that prevent observation from neighbouring properties or from side boundaries.

3.1.4 Ventilation and natural light

Regulation 110 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

Services must be well ventilated, have adequate natural light, and be maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.

Centre-based education and care services must comply with the light and ventilation and minimum ceiling height requirements of the *National Construction Code*. Ceiling height requirements may be affected by the capacity of the facility.

Design Guidance

Ventilation

- Good ventilation can be achieved through a mixture of natural cross ventilation and air conditioning.
- Openable external windows must be provided in all children's rooms, to provide natural ventilation.
- Encouraging natural ventilation is the basis of sustainable design; however, there will be circumstances where mechanical ventilation will be essential to creating ambient temperatures within a facility.
- To achieve adequate natural ventilation, the design of the centre-based education and care services must address the orientation of the building envelope, with natural air flow generally reducing the deeper a building becomes.
- It is recommended that centre-based education and care services ensure natural ventilation is available to each indoor activity room.

Natural Light

- Solar and daylight access reduces reliance on artificial lighting and heating, improves energy efficiency and creates comfortable learning environments through pleasant conditions.
- Natural light contributes to a sense of well-being, is important to the development of children and improves service outcomes.
- Natural light filtered from a secondary room would not be considered suitable access for rooms identified for children.
- When designing centre-based education and care services consideration should be given to:
    - external windows must be provided in children's rooms, to provide natural light.
    - providing windows facing different orientations
    - using skylights as appropriate
    - ceiling heights.

Designers should aim to minimise the need for artificial lighting during the day, especially in circumstances where room depth exceeds ceiling height by 2.5 times. It is recommended that ceiling heights be proportional to the room size, which can be achieved using raked ceilings and exposed trusses, creating a sense of space and visual interest.

3.1.5 Administrative space

Regulation 111 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

A service must provide adequate area or areas for the purposes of conducting the administrative functions of the service, consulting with parents of children and conducting private conversations.

Areas that are required include:

- Directors' room/office
- meeting room for staff and families
- administrative space for staff to undertake programming
- suitable storage for administrative documents

Design Guidance

Design considerations include closing doors for privacy and glass partitions to ensure supervision.

When designing administrative spaces, consideration should be given to functions which can share spaces and those which cannot. Sound proofing of meeting rooms may be appropriate where they are located adjacent to public areas, or in large rooms where sound can easily travel.

Administrative spaces should be designed to ensure equitable use by parents and children at the facility. A reception desk may be designed to have a portion of it at a lower level for children of people in a wheelchair.

3.1.6 Nappy change facilities

Regulation 112 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

Centre-based education and care services must provide for children who wear nappies, including appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing and bathing. All nappy changing facilities should be designed and located in an area that prevents unsupervised access by children.

Centre-based education and care services must also comply with the requirements for nappy changing and bathing facilities that are contained in the *NCC.*

Design Guidance

In circumstances where nappy change facilities must be provided, design considerations include:

- properly constructed nappy changing bench or benches
- a bench type baby bath within one metre from the nappy change bench
- the provision of hand cleansing facilities for adults in the immediate vicinity of the nappy change area
- a space to store steps
- space to store nappies and cleaning materials
- positioning to enable supervision of the activity and play areas.

3.1.7 Premises designed to facilitate supervision

Regulation 115 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

A centre-based education and care service must ensure that the rooms and facilities within the premises (including toilets, nappy change facilities, indoor and outdoor activity rooms and play spaces) are designed to always facilitate supervision of children, having regard to the need to maintain their rights and dignity.

Centre-based education and care services must also comply with any requirements regarding the ability to facilitate supervision that are contained in the *NCC.*

Design Guidance

Design consideration include:

- immediate access from children's rooms and outdoor areas.
- locating windows into bathrooms or nappy change areas away from view of visitors to the facility, the public or neighbouring properties, but that allow educators to have sight of children in adjacent rooms and outdoor areas.
- avoiding room layouts with hidden corners where supervision is poor, or multi room activity for single groups of children
- avoiding multi-level rooms which comprise, or require additional staffing, to ensure proper supervision. If multi-level spaces are proposed, consideration should be given to providing areas that can be closed off and used only under supervision for controlled activities.

3.1.8 Emergency and evacuation procedures

Regulation 97 and 168 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

Regulation 168 sets out the list of procedures that a care service must have, including procedures for emergency and evacuations.

Regulation 97 sets out the detail for what those procedures must cover including:

- instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency
- an emergency and evacuation floor plan, a copy of which is displayed in a prominent position near each exit
- a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the service.

Design Guidance

Facility design and features should provide for the safe and managed evacuation of children and staff from the facility in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Multi-storey building with proposed centre-based education and care services above ground level pose an increased risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children and educators. Additional measures to protect staff and children will need to be considered. For example:

- independent emergency escape routes from the facility to the ground level that would separate children from other building users to address children's developing mobility and child protection concerns during evacuations.
- Low level handrails to assess children navigating stairs.
- a safe haven or separate fire safe emergency area where children and staff can muster during the initial stages of a fire alert or other emergency. This would enable staff to account for all children prior to evacuation.

An emergency and evacuation plan should be submitted with a development application and should consider:

- the mobility of children and how this is to be accommodated during an evacuation
- the location of a safe congregation/assembly point, away from the evacuated building, busy roads, and other hazards, and away from evacuation points used by other occupants or tenants of the same building or of surrounding buildings

- how children will be supervised during the evacuation and at the congregation/assembly point, relative to the capacity of the facility and governing child-to-staff ratios.
- Where services are located in multi occupancy buildings an emergency management plan must be developed for entire building, with special consideration for the education and care service to ensure that children can exit the building without encumbrance and assemble in a safe and isolated area.
- ACT strongly recommends providers consider best practice guidance in relation to emergency and evacuation procedures, as identified in Australian Standard AS3745-2010.

3.2 External Physical Environment

3.2.1 Outdoor space requirements

Regulation 108 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

An education and care service premises must provide for every child being educated and cared for within the facility to have a minimum of 7.0m² of unencumbered outdoor space. Please refer to the *Outdoor Environment Guidelines: Requirements for Approval of Centre-Based Care Services in the ACT* for specific requirements about the importance of outdoor environments for children.

Unencumbered outdoor space excludes any of the following:

- pathway or thoroughfare, except where used by children as part of the education and care program
- car parking area
- storage shed or other storage area
- laundry
- other spaces that is not suitable for children.

When calculating outdoor space requirements, the area required for any additional child may be waived when the child is being cared for in emergency circumstances as set out in regulation 123(5) or the child is being educated or cared for in exceptional circumstances as set out in regulation 124(5) and (6) of the National regulations.

A veranda that is included within indoor space cannot be included when calculating outdoor space and vice versa.

Please note a veranda is located on the ground floor of a building, where a balcony is located from the first floor or above. If a veranda or balcony is covered by the roofline of the building above, consideration will need to be given to the depth of solar access and sunlight penetration to the area. Any areas which receive little or no direct sunlight may not be included in outdoor space calculations. A maximum of 30% of the outdoor space can be permanently undercover, through the use of a veranda or fixed roofing.

Design Guidance

Calculating unencumbered space for outdoor areas should not include areas of dense hedges or plantings along boundaries which are designed for landscaping purposes and not for children's play.

When new equipment or storage areas are added to existing services, the potential impact on unencumbered space calculations and service approvals must be considered.

Verandas as outdoor space

- When a covered space such as a veranda is to be included in outdoor space it should:
    - be open to at least one third of its perimeter
    - have a clear height of 2.1 metres
    - have a wall height of less than 1.4 metres where a wall with an opening form the perimeter
    - have adequate flooring and roofing
    - be designed to provide adequate protection for the elements.

Simulated outdoor environments

- Proponents should aim to provide a requisite amount of unencumbered outdoor space in all development applications. Please refer to the *Outdoor Environment Guidelines: Requirements for Approval of Centre-Based Care Services in the ACT* for specific requirements about the importance of outdoor environments for children.
- Simulated outdoor space must be provided in addition to indoor space and cannot be counted twice when calculating areas. A maximum of 30% of outdoor space can be offered as simulated outdoor environment.
- Simulated outdoor environments are internal spaces that have all the features and experiences and qualities of an outdoor space. They should promote the same learning

outcome that are developed during outdoor play. Simulated outdoor environments should have:

- more access to natural light and ventilation that required for an internal space through large windows, glass doors and panels to enable views of trees, views of the sky and clouds and movement outside the facility
- skylights to give a sense of the external climate
- a combination of different floor types and textures, including wooden decking, pebbles, mounds, ridges, grass, bark, and artificial grass, to mimic the uneven surfaces of an outdoor environment.
- sand pits and water play area
- furniture made of logs and stepping longs
- dense indoor planting and green vegetated walls
- climbing frames, walking and/or bike tracks
- vegetable gardens and gardening tubs.

3.2.2 Natural environment

Regulation 113 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

The approved provider of a centre-based education and care service must ensure that the outdoor spaces allow children to explore and experience the natural environment.

Design Guidance

Creating a natural environment to meet this regulation includes the use of natural features such as trees, sand, and natural vegetation within the outdoor space.

Shrubs and trees selected for the play space must be safe for children. Avoid plant species that risk the health, safety, and welfare of the facility's occupants, such as those which:

- are known to be poisonous, produce toxins or have toxic leaves or berries.
- have seed pods or stone fruit, attract bees, have thorns, spikes, or prickly foliage, or drop branches.

The outdoor space should be designed to:

- provide a variety of experiences that facilitate the development of cognitive and physical skills, provide opportunities for social interaction and appreciation of the natural environment.
- assist supervision and minimise opportunities for bullying and antisocial behaviour
- enhance outdoor learning, socialisation, and recreation by positioning outdoor urban furniture and play equipment in configurations that facilitate interaction.

3.2.3 Shade

Regulation 114 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

The approved provider of a centre-based education and care service must ensure that outdoor spaces include adequate shaded areas to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation for the sun.

Design Guidance

Providing the correct balance to sunlight and shade to play areas is important for the health and well-being of children and staff. Combining built and natural shade will often be the best option.

Solar access

- Controlled exposure to daylight from limited periods is essential as sunlight provides vitamin D which promotes healthy muscles, bones, and overall wellbeing. This is specifically relevant in the ACT where the Cancer Council of Australia recommends children go hat free in June and July to ensure they get adequate amounts of vitamin D exposure. Outdoor play areas should be provided with controlled solar access throughout the year. Outdoor play areas should:
    - have year-round solar access to at least 60 per cent of the ground area, with no more than 40 per centre of the outdoor space covered.
    - providing shade in the form of trees, shade sails or built shade structures giving protection from ultraviolet radiation. Note that no more than 30 per cent of the outdoor play area should be covered by fixed built shade structures.
    - have evenly distributed shade structures over different activity spaces.

Natural Shade

Natural shade should be a major element in outdoor play areas. Trees with dense foliage and wide-spreading canopies provide the best protection. Existing stands of trees, particularly in rear setbacks, should be retained to provide shaded play areas. Species that suit local soil and climatic conditions and the character of the environment are recommended.

Dense shrubs can also provide shade. They should be planted around the site perimeter, so they don't obstruct supervision. Pruning shrubs on the underside may create shaded play nooks underneath.

Planting for shade and solar access is enhanced by:

- Placing appropriately scaled trees near the eastern and western elevations
- Providing a balance of ever green and deciduous trees to give shade in summer and sunlight access in winter.

3.2.4 Fencing

Regulation 104 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

Any outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under it.

This regulation does not apply to a centre-based service that primarily provides education and care to children over preschool age, including a family day care residence or venue where all children are over preschool age.

Centre-based education and care services must also comply with the requirements for fencing and protect of outdoor play spaces that are contained in the *NCC*.

Design Guidance

Fencing at centre-based education and care services must provide a secure, safe environment for children and minimise access to dangerous areas.

Fencing needs to positively contribute to the visual amenity of the streetscape and surrounding area. In general, fencing around the outdoor space should:

- prevent children climbing over, under or through fences
- prevent people outside the facility from gaining access by climbing over, under or through the fence
- not create a sense of enclosure.

Design considerations for side and rear boundary fences include:

- being made from solid prefinished metal, timber, or masonry
- having a minimum height of 1.8 metres
- having no rails or elements for climbing height than 150mm from the ground.

Fencing and gates should be designed to ensure adequate sightlines for vehicles and pedestrian safety in accordance with Australian Standards and Roads and Maritime Services Traffic Management Guidelines. Gates should be designed to prevent children leaving/entering unsupervised using childproof locking systems.

Balconies should be enclosed by a balustrade that ensures that children are safe from harm or hazard, while enabling light, ventilation, and outlook.

3.2.5 Soil assessment

Regulation 25 - Education and Care Services National Regulations

Subclause (d) of regulation 25 requires an assessment of soil at a proposed site, and in some cases, sites already in use for such purposes as part of an application for service approval.

With every service application one of the following is required:

- a soil assessment for the site of the proposed centre-based education and care service premises
- if a soil assessment for the site of the proposed education and care service has previously been undertaken, a statement to that effect specifying when the soil assessment was undertaken.
- a statement made by the applicant that states, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, the site history does not indicate that the site is likely to be contaminated in a way that poses an unacceptable risk to the health of children.

Design Guidance

To ensure consistency between the development consent and the service approval application, a soil assessment should be undertaken as part of the development application process.

Where children will have access to soil the regulatory authority requires a preliminary investigation of the soil. This includes sites with or without buildings and exiting approved children's services where:

- the application is to alter or extend the premises
- the alteration or extension requires earthworks or deep excavations (exceeding a depth of one metre)
- the works are going to take place in an area used for children's outdoor play or will be used for children's outdoor play after the work is completed.
- a soil assessment has not been undertaken at the children's service.

Minor landscaping, creation of sand pits, movement of play equipment and so on does not qualify as earthworks and do not require a soil assessment. An assessment of soil for a children's service approval application may require three levels of investigation:

- Stage 1 – Preliminary investigation (with or without soil sampling)
- Stage 2 – Detailed site investigation
- Stage 3 – Site specific human health risk assessment.

3.3 Best practice example

Figure 1 is a sample plan of a facility designed with a best practice layout. The arrangement of rooms is linear with activity rooms and administration areas located off a central hallway.

Children's bathrooms and cot rooms are located between activity rooms to allow direct and easy access from both internal and external play areas.

Administration and services rooms such as the laundry and kitchen are located nearest the parking. This allows for separate access for deliveries away from children and their play areas. It is likely that auxiliary spaces, which is not included in the unencumbered calculation for children's use, should make up approximately 40 – 50% of the service floor space.

The best practice example shows an optimal layout for new single storey, standalone developments. The underpinning principles apply equally to modifications of existing facilities, mixed use developments, and conversions of buildings to new facilities.

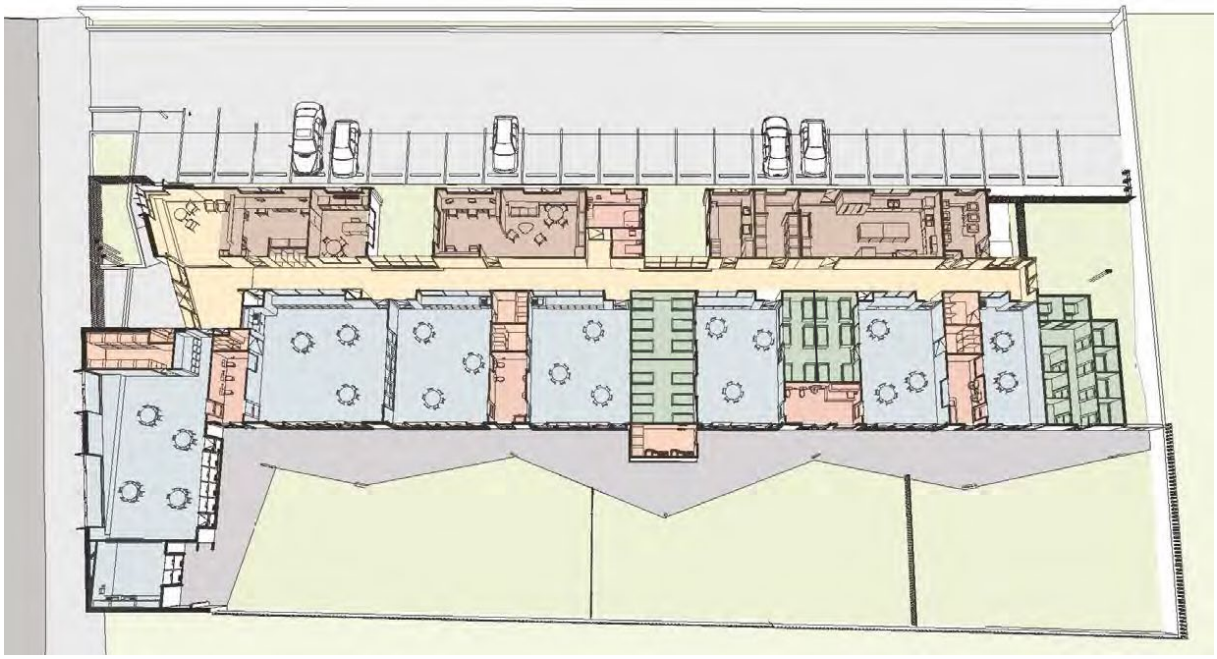

Figure 1 Cutaway plan showing arrangement and relationship between rooms within an education and care service.

4. BEST PRACTICE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section of the Guideline provides information on what is considered best practice under the guiding principles of the NQF. The rights of and best interest of the chid is of paramount consideration in the design of high-quality education and care services. It is expected centre-based education and care services deliver on best practice as outlined in the NQF and strive to continually improve.

4.1 Design quality principles

The design quality principles establish the broad design context that guide all new proposals for centre-based education and care services. The principles apply to stand alone development, mixed-use development, modifications, retrofits of existing buildings, or an intent to occupy premises without incurring new building works.

Good design is integral to creating sustainable and liveable communities. There is growing appreciation of the significant role that good design can play in education with increasing evidence that learning outcomes are closely related to the quality of learning environments.

Factors such as air quality, ventilation, natural lighting, thermal comfort, and acoustic performance have been shown to have a profound impact on learning, engagement, social interactions, and competencies. These factors further contribute to wellbeing through creating a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and confidence.

4.1.1 Principle 1 - site selection and context

Good design responds and contributes to its context, including the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship, and the character they create when combined. Good design includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions.

The appraisal and selection of an appropriate site is critical to creating an early childhood service that can meet and exceed requirements. Poor site selection can create significant challenges for approval and can place limitations on the potential of a service.

Well-designed centre-based education and care services take advantage of context. Optimising nearby transport, public facilities, and centres, respecting local heritage, and being responsive to the demographic, cultural and socio-economic makeup of users and surrounding communities is part of good design. Not all sites will be suitable for education and care services.

Design guidance

Site selection

When selecting a site, the following should be carefully considered:

- potential impacts on the health, safety and wellbeing of children, staff, and visitors about local environmental or amenity issues such as air or noise pollution and local traffic conditions
- the potential impact of the facility on the viability of existing commercial or industrial uses
- the potential impact on viability of the service of future commercial or industrial uses allowed in the planning zone
- previous use of the land or premises such as scientific, medical, or chemical laboratories, petrol stations, storage areas and the like.

For proposed developments in public or private recreation zones, consider:

- the compatibly of the proposal with the operations and nature of the community or private recreational facilities
- if the existing premises is licensed for alcohol or gambling
- if the use requires permanent or casual occupation of the premises or site
- the availability of on-site parking
- compatibility of proposed hours of operation with surrounding uses, particularly residential uses
- the availability of appropriate and dedicated sanitation facilities for the development.

Consider if the site is suitable for the scale and type of development proposed having regard to:

- size of street frontage, lot configuration, dimensions, and overall size
- number of shared boundaries with residential properties
- the development will not have adverse environmental impacts on the surrounding area, particularly in sensitive environmental or cultural areas
- where the proposal is to occupy or retrofit an existing premises, the interior and exterior spaces are suitable for the proposed use
- There are suitable drop off and pick up areas, and off and on street parking
- The type of adjoining road (for example classified, arterial, local road, cul-de-sac) is appropriate and safe for the proposed use
- It is not located closely to incompatible social activities and use such as restricted premises, injecting rooms, drug clinics and the like, premises licensed for alcohol or gambling such as hotels, clubs, cellar door premises and sex services premises.

4.1.2 Principle 2 – built form

Good design achieves a scale, bulk, and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the surrounding area. Good design achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose. Building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation, and the manipulation of building elements should be considered. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours, and textures.

Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their view and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook. Contemporary

facility design can be distinctive and unique. Contemporary design supports innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Visual appearance that is aesthetically pleasing, complements the surrounding areas, and contributes positively to the public realm can be achieved through he built form.

New development should appropriately consider surrounding identified heritage items and identified heritage conservation buildings or areas.

Design guidance

Character and context

The key priorities when responding to character and context are:

- communities – understanding social dynamics can help developments reinforce local communities.
- place – drawing inspiration from indigenous character and heritage can strengthen local identity.
- natural resources – maximising use of the intrinsic resources of the site can create more sustainable development.
- connections – understanding existing street and road linkages can help develop an effective and integrated movement framework.
- feasibility – ensuring schemes are economically viable and deliverable
- vision – understanding the aspirations of the site within the setting of a wider area.

Scale

To ensure that the scale of the centre-based education and care service is compatible with adjoining development and the impact on adjoining buildings is minimised:

- building height should be consistent with other buildings in the locality
- building height should respond to the scale and character of the street
- setbacks should allow for adequate privacy for neighbours and children at the proposed education and care service
- setbacks should provide adequate access for building maintenance setbacks to the street should be consistent with the existing character.

To ensure that the built form, articulation, and scale of development relates to its context and buildings are well designed to contribute to an area's character. The built form of the development should contribute to the character of the local area, including how it:

- respects and responds to its physical context such as adjacent built form, neighbourhood character, streetscape quality and heritage
- contributes to the identity of the place
- retains and reinforces existing built form and vegetation where significant
- considers heritage within the local neighbourhood including identified heritage items and conservation areas
- responds to its natural environment including local landscape setting and climate
- contributes to the identity of the place

Fences and walls

To ensure that fences and retaining walls respond to and complement the context and character of the area and do not dominate the public domain:

- Fences and walls along the front building line should be constructed of visually permeable materials and treatments
- Where the site is listed as a heritage item, adjacent to a heritage item or within a conservation area fencing along the front building line should be designed in accordance with local heritage provisions

High solid acoustic fencing may be used if permitted by the *Territory Plan* for shielding the facility from noise on classified roads. The walls should be setback from the property boundary with screen landscaping of a similar height between the wall and the boundary.

To ensure that setbacks from the boundary of the centre-based education and care service are consistent with the predominant development within the immediate context

- Where there are not prevailing setback controls minimum setback to a classified road should be 10 metres. On other road frontages where there is existing building within 50 metres, the setback should be the average of the two closest buildings. Where there is no building within 50 metres, the same setback is required for the predominate adjoining land use.
- On a land in a residential zone, side and rear boundary setbacks should observe the prevailing setbacks required for a dwelling house.

4.1.3 Principle 3 – adaptive learning spaces

Good facility design delivers high quality learning spaces and achieves a high level of amenity for children and staff. Good facility design results in buildings and associated infrastructure that are fit-for-purposes, enjoyable and easy to use. This outcome is achieved through site layout, building design, and learning spaces fit out.

Good design achieves a mix of inclusion learning spaces to cater for all children and different modes of learning. Appropriately designed physical spaces offering a variety of settings, technology, and opportunities for interaction are optimal.

4.1.4 Principle 4 – sustainability

Sustainable design combines positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

Sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation, sunlight and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Sustainable design includes recycling and re-use of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.

Well-deigned facilities are durable and embed resource efficiency into building and site design, resulting in less energy and water consumption, less generation of waste and air emissions and reduced operational costs.

4.1.5 Principle 5 – landscape

Landscape and buildings should operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A contextual fit of well-designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Well-designed landscapes accentuate outdoor spaces as assets for learning. Designing for diversity in function and use, age-appropriateness, and amenity are key considerations.

Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values and preserving green

networks. Landscaping of centre-based education and care services can play an important role in integrating facilities into the surrounding streetscape and context.

Special attention is required when designing landscaping for sites on bush fire prone land. For details guidance refer to *Planning for Bush Fire Protection* and NSW Rural Fire Service website. The type, location, and ongoing maintenance of landscaping with the Asset Protection Zone (APZ) is a necessary Bush Fire Protection Measure.

Design guidance

Landscape

To provide landscape design that contributes to the streetscape and amenity:

- appropriate planting should be provided along the boundary integrated with fencing. Screen planning should not be included in calculations of unencumbered outdoor space.
- use the existing landscape where feasible to provide a high-quality landscape area by:
    - reflecting and reinforcing the local context
    - Incorporating natural features of the site, such as trees, rocky outcrops, and vegetation communities into landscaping.

Car parking

Incorporating car parking into the landscaping design of the site by:

- planting shade trees in large car parking areas to create a cool outdoor environment and reduce summer heat radiating into buildings
- considering streetscape, local character and context when sitting car parking areas within the front setback
- using low level landscaping to soften and screen parking areas.

4.1.6 Principle 6 – amenity

Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for children, staff, and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive learning environments and the well-being of children and staff.

Good amenity combines appropriate and efficient indoor and outdoor learning spaces, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, service areas and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.

Well-designed centre-based education and care services provide comfortable, diverse, and attractive spaces to learn, play and socialise. Buildings for centre-based education and care services must be designed so that they are safe and secure for children, staff, and other users. Education and care services need to allow equitable access by all members of the community, including those with disabilities. They should also provide suitable play areas for children with disabilities.

Design guidance

Location

Sites for centre-based education and care services are appropriately located:

- near or within compatible social uses such as schools and other educational establishments, community facilities, parks or and other public open spaces
- within or near residential areas
- near or within employment areas, town centres, business centres, shops.

Public spaces and street access

To ensure clear delineation between the centre-based education and care service and public spaces a threshold should be created with a clear transition between public and private realms, including:

- fencing to ensure safety for children entering and leaving the facility
- windows facing from the facility towards the public domain to provide passive surveillance to the street as a safety measure and connection between the facility and the community
- integrating existing and proposed landscaping with fencing.

On sites with multiple buildings and/or entries, pedestrian entries and spaces associated with the centre-based education and care service should be differentiated to improve legibility for visitors and children by changes in materials, plant species and colours.

Where developments adjoin public parks, open space or bushland, the facility should provide an appealing streetscape frontage by adopting some of the following design solutions:

- clearly defined street access, pedestrian paths and building entries
- low fences and planting which delineate communal/private open space from adjoining public open space
- minimal use of blank walls and high fences.

Solar access

To respond to the streetscape and site, while optimising solar access and opportunities for shade:

- orient a development on a site and design the building layout to ensure visual privacy and minimise potential noise and overlooking impacts on neighbours by:
    - facing doors and windows away from private open space, living rooms and bedrooms in adjoining residential properties.
    - placing play equipment away from common boundaries with residential properties
    - locating outdoor play area away from residential dwelling and other sensitive uses.
- orient a development on a site and design the building layout to
    - optimise solar access to internal and external play areas
    - avoid overshadowing of adjoining residential properties
    - minimise cut and fill

Accessibility

Accessible design in centre-based education and care services can be achieved by:

- providing accessibility to and within the building in accordance with all relevant legislation
- linking all key areas of the site by level or ramped pathways that are accessible to prams and wheelchairs, including between all car parking areas and the main building entry
- providing a continuous path of travel to and within the building, including access between the street entry and care parking and main building entrance. Platform lifts should be avoided where possible.
- minimising ramping by ensuring building entries and ground floors are well located relative to the level of the footpath.

NOTE: The *NCC,* the *Discrimination Disability Act 1992* and the *Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010* set out the requirements for access to buildings for people with disabilities.

Acoustic privacy

Acoustic privacy involves reducing sound transmission between activity rooms and outdoor play areas of the centre-based education and care service and its neighbours. Design and site layout are the main ways of reducing acoustic impact for example:

- Site context and orientation for the building
- Building design including the location of public and private open spaces and the arrangement of internal spaces
- Physical relationship to surrounding uses
- Building separation and providing physical barriers between the outdoor areas and the noise receivers.

To minimise impacts of centre-based education and care services on the acoustic privacy of neighbouring residential developments a new development, or development that includes alterations to more than 50 per centre of the existing floor area, located adjacent to residential accommodation should:

- provide an acoustic fence along any boundary where the adjoining property contains a residential use. An acoustic fence is one that is a solid, gap free fence.

A suitably qualified acoustic professional should prepare an acoustic report which will cover the following matters:

- identify an appropriate noise level for a centre-based education and care service located in residential and other zones
- determine an appropriate background noise level for outdoor play areas during times they are proposed to be in use
- determine the appropriate height of any acoustic fence to enable the noise criteria to be met.

Visual privacy

Visual privacy allows residents on adjacent properties to occupy their private spaces without being overlooked by centre-based education and care services. Visual privacy ensures education and care services are not overlooked by neighbouring properties.

To protect the privacy and security of children attending the facility:

- open balconies in mixed use developments should not overlook facilities nor overhand outdoor play spaces
- direct overlook of indoor rooms and outdoor play spaces for public areas should be minimised through:
    - appropriate site and building layout
    - suitably locating pathways, windows, and doors
    - permanent screening and landscape design.

To minimise impacts on privacy of adjoining properties overlooking main internal living areas and private open spaces should be minimise through:

- appropriate site and building layout
- suitably locating pathways, windows, and doors
- landscape design and screening.

4.1.7 Principle 7 - safety

Well-designed centre-based education and care services optimise the use of the built and natural environment for learning and play. Well-designed centre-based education utilises equipment, vegetation and landscaping that has a low health and safety risk. There must be opportunities for all aspects of a centre to be checked and maintained efficiently and appropriately.

Good centre-based education and care service design balances safety and security with the need to create a welcoming and accessible environment. The education and care service must provide for quality public and private spaces that are inviting, clearly defined and allow controlled access for members of the community. Well-designed centre-based education and care services incorporate passive surveillance and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) under the *Territory Plan.*

The location and physical context of an early childhood facility should be safe and healthy for children. Common hazards include contaminated land, bush fires and flooding. In some cases, the government may have already identified areas of significant hazards in planning instruments and policies.

Design guidance

Adverse environmental conditions

A centre-based education and care service should be located to avoid risks to children, staff or visitors and adverse environmental conditions arising from proximity to:

- heavy or hazardous industry, waste transfer depots or landfill sites
- LPG tanks or service stations
- water cooling and water warming systems
- odour (and other air pollutant) generating uses and sources or sites which, due to prevailing land use zoning, may in future accommodate notice or odour generating uses.

Access points

To ensure that buildings are designed to create safe environments for all user's entry to the facility should be limited to one secure point which is:

- located to allow ease of access, particularly for pedestrians
- directly accessible from the street where possible
- directly visible from the street frontage
- easily monitored through natural or camera surveillance
- not accessed through an outdoor play area
- in a mixed-use development, clearly defined and separate form entrances to other uses in the building.

Noise pollution

The location of centre-based education and care services should be selected to avoid or minimise the potential impact of external sources of significant noise.

The *Environment Protection Act 1997,* administered by the Environment Protection Authority in Access Canberra provides the statutory framework for managing air emissions and noise pollution in

the ACT. The Environment Protection Authority should be consulted when proposing facilities in or close to industrial or commercial zones.

To ensure that outside noise levels on the facility are minimised to acceptable levels adopt design solutions to minimise the impacts of noise, such as:

- creating physical separation between buildings and the noise source
- orienting the facility perpendicular to the noise source and where possible buffered by other uses
- use landscaping to reduce the perception of noise
- limiting the number and size of opening facing noise sources
- using double or acoustic glazing or acoustic louvres
- using materials with mass and/or sound insulation or absorption properties, such as solid balcony balustrades, external screens, and soffits
- locating cot rooms, sleeping areas and play areas away from external noise sources.

An acoustic report should identify appropriate noise levels for sleeping areas and other non-play area. The report should examine impacts and noise attenuation measures where a centre-based education and care service is proposed in any of the following locations:

- on industrial zoned land
- where the ANEF contour is between 20 and 25, consistent with AS 2021-2000
- along a railway
- on a major or busy road
- other land that is impacted by substantial external noise.

Air pollution

Locate centre-based education and care services on sites which avoid or minimise the potential impact of external sources of air pollution such as major roads and industrial development.

A suitably qualified air quality professional should prepare an air quality assessment report. The report should demonstrate that proposed centre-based education and care services close to major roads or industrial developments can meet air quality standards in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines.

The air quality assessment report should evaluate design considerations to minimise air pollution such as:

- creating an appropriate separation distance between the facility and the pollution source. The location of play areas, sleeping areas and outdoor areas should be as far as practicable from the major source of air pollution
- using landscaping to act as a filter for air pollution generated by traffic and industry.
- incorporating ventilation design into the design of the facility.

Traffic, parking, and pedestrian circulation

Important safety considerations for design of centre-based education and care services include traffic, parking, and pedestrian circulation. Site access from the public road to the site is important to ensure safety. While a safe pedestrian environment is essential on the site. On and off-site conflicts with children, visitors and users of the facility can be avoided through a combination of design and management plans. For example, drop off, parking and play areas in light industrial or commercial areas need to be carefully sited, away from heavy truck traffic and main roads to minimise risk of accidents.

Car parking areas need to ensure that safety of all visitors to the site, whether it is a stand-alone facility or part of a mixed use residential, commercial, or industrial development. Bicycle parking should be provided suitable for the context and user needs of the centre.

To provide parking that satisfies the need of users and demand generated by the centre off street car parking should be provided at the rates for centre-based education and care services specified in the relevant part(s) of the *Territory Plan* that apply to the land. Car parking rates are generally measured as a function of capacity, that is, spaces per number of children and staff. The capacity of a facility will be determined by several factors dictated by compliance with requirements under the *National Regulations*.

Where the *Territory Plan* does not specify car parking rates, off street car parking should be provided at the following rates.

- Within 400 metres of a light rail stop:
    - 1 space per 10 children
    - 1 space per 2 staff. Staff parking may be stack or tandem parking with no more than 2 spaces in each tandem space.

- In other areas:
    - 1 space per 4 children.

A reduction in car parking rates may be considered where:

- the proposal is an adaptive re-use of a heritage item
- the site is in proximity to high frequency and well-connected public transport
- the site is co-located or in proximity to other uses where parking is appropriately provided (for example business centres, schools, public open space, car parks)
- there is sufficient on street parking available at appropriate times within proximity of the site.

In commercial or industrial zones and mixed-use development, on street parking may only be considered where there are no conflicts with adjoining uses, that is, no high level of vehicle movement or potential conflicts within trucks and large vehicles.

A Traffic and Parking Study should be prepared to support the proposal to quantify potential impacts on the surrounding land uses and demonstrate how impacts on amenity will be minimised. The study should also address any proposed variations to parking rates and demonstrate that:

- the amenity of the surrounding area will not be affected
- there will be no impacts on the safe operation of the surrounding road network.

Alternative vehicular access should be provided where centre-based education and care services are not sites fronting:

- a classified road
- roads which carry freight traffic or transport dangerous goods or hazardous materials.

The alternative access must have regard to:

- the prevailing traffic conditions
- pedestrian and vehicle safety including bicycle movements
- the likely impact of the development on traffic.

Centre-based education and care services proposed with cul-de-sacs or narrow lanes, or roads should ensure that safe access can be provided to and from the side, and to and from the wider locality in times of emergency.

Car parking within a basement can provide optimum use of the site area and minimise visual impacts. Where basement car parking is provided, design should aim to:

- locate car parking entries behind the building line
- integrate entries with the overall building façade. Design options include ventilation grills, louvres, screening devices, hit and miss brickwork and similar cladding finishes
- minimise visual prominence through stepping car park levels or using slip levels on sloping sites.

The following design solutions may be incorporated into a development to help provide a safe pedestrian environment:

- separate pedestrian access from the car park to the facility
- defined pedestrian crossings included within large car parking areas
- separate pedestrian and vehicle entries from the street for parents, children, and visitors
- pedestrian paths that enable two prams to pass each other
- delivery and loading access located away from main pedestrian access to the buildings and in clearly designated, separate facilities
- in commercial or industrial zones and mixed-use developments, the path of travel from the car parking to the centre entrance physically separated from any truck circulation or parking areas
- vehicles can enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

Appendix A

National Quality Framework Assessment Checklist

National Quality Framework Assessment Checklist

The checklist will assist applicants demonstrate that the development is designed to achieve the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Regulation	Proposed	Complies (Tick or Cross)
104. Fencing or barrier that encloses outdoor spaces. Outdoor spaces that will be used by children will be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under it. NOTE: This clause does not apply to centre-based services primarily for children over preschool age or a family day care residence or venue for over preschool age children.	Indicate height, materials and style on plans.	
106. Laundry and hygiene facilities The proposed development includes laundry facilities or access to laundry facilities OR explain the other arrangements for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage of soiled clothing, nappies and linen prior to their disposal or laundering.	On site or off site facilities	
107. Unencumbered indoor space The proposed development includes at least 3.25m² of unencumbered indoor space for each child. Refer to regulation 107 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations for further information on calculating indoor space.	Number of Children: Required area: Provided Area:	
108. Unencumbered outdoor space The prosed development includes at least 7.0m² of unencumbered outdoor space for each child. Refer to regulation 108 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations for further information on calculating outdoor space, and for different requirements for out-of-school-hours care services.	Number of Children: Required area: Provided Area:	
109. Toilet and hygiene facilities The proposed development includes adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities for use by children being educated and care for by the service. The location and design of the toilet, washing ad drying facilities enable sage and convenient use by the children.	Show number of toilets and hand basins on plan	

Regulation	Proposed	Complies

		(Tick or Cross)
110. Ventilation and natural light The proposed development includes indoor spaces to be used by children that- • will be well ventilated; and • will have adequate natural light; and • can be maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and well-being of children.	Indicated on plans and elevations how natural ventilation and light is achieved.	
111. Administrative space The proposed development includes an adequate area or areas for the purposes of conducting the administrative functions of the service; and consulting with the parents of children; and conducting private conversations. NOTE: This space cannot be included in the calculations of unencumbered indoor space – see regulation 107.	Indicate administrative space on plans	
112. Nappy change facilities (To be completed on if the proposed development is for a service that will care for children who wear nappies) The proposed development includes an adequate area for construction of appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing including at least one properly constructed nappy changing bench and hand cleansing facilities for adults in the immediate vicinity of the nappy change area. The proposed nappy change facilities can be designed and located in a way that prevents unsupervised access by children.	Indicate nappy change on plans	
113. Outdoor space – natural environment The proposed development includes outdoor spaces that will allow children to explore and experience the natural elements.	Indicate on landscape plans	
114. Outdoor space – shade The proposed development includes adequate shaded areas (and access to sunlight) to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation for the sun.		
115. Premises designed to facilitate supervision The proposed development (including toilets and nappy change facilities) are designed in a way that facilitates supervision of children at all times, having regard to the need to maintain the rights and dignity of the child.	Indicated on floor plans	

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Acoustic privacy

A measure of sound insulation between dwellings, between dwelling and communal areas, and between external and internal spaces.

Adaptive reuse

The conversion of an existing building or structure from one use to another, or from one configuration to another.

Aircraft noise

Aircraft noise is identified as contours on the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) Map. The higher the ANEF contour value, the greater the exposure to aircraft noise.

Amenity

The 'liveability', comfort or quality of a place which makes it pleasant and agreeable to be in for individuals and the community. Amenity is important in the public, communal and private domains and includes the enjoyment of sunlight, views, privacy and quiet. It also includes protection from pollution and odours.

ANEF

Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (refer www.airservicesaustralia.com)

BCA

Building Code of Australia

Building line

The predominate line formed by the main external face of the building. Balconies or bay window projections may or may not be included depending on desired streetscape.

Building height

As defined in the *Standards Instrument – Principal Local Environmental Plan.*

Commercial and Industrial Zones

Land identified in the *Territory Plan* as Commercial or Industrial Zones.

Centre-based Education and Care

As defined in the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. It may also be known in legislation as childcare.

Core

Vertical circulation (lift and/or stairs) within a building. A single core may include multiple lifts serving the same floor area.

Daylight

Consists of both skylight (diffuse light from the sky) and sunlight (direct beam radiation from the sun). Daylight changes with the time of day, season and weather condition.

Facade

The external face of a building, generally the principal face, facing a public street or space.

NCC

National Construction Code. The NCC is made up of the Building Code of Australia and the Plumbing Code of Australia.

ECS National Law

Refers to the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011.*

National Regulations

Refers to the *Education and Care Services National Regulations.*

NQF (National Quality Framework)

'National Quality Framework' is made up of the *Education and Care Services National Law*, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the National Quality Standards (Schedule 1 of the National Regulations), as

assessment and rating scheme, and an approved learning framework. The National Quality Framework regulations children education and safety, staffing, partnerships with families and the community, the physical environment and use of education and care services throughout Australia.

Outdoor

The ACT Regulatory Authority refers to the Macquarie Dictionary definition of outdoor being occurring or used in the open air'. Further, the Oxford English Dictionary defines outdoors as 'done, situated or used out of doors.' This means that areas classed as 'outdoors' in services in the ACT must be open to the sky, be well ventilated with adequate natural light, and allow children to explore and experience the natural environment.

Outdoor Environment Guidelines

Outdoor Environment Guidelines: Requirements for Approval of Centre-Based Care Services in the ACT published by the ACT Regulatory Authority on the ACT Education Directorate website.

Regulatory Authority

As defined in *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations.* In the ACT this is the Director General of the Education Directorate who delegates this authority to Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

Sloping site

A site with a slope of 15 per cent or greater.

Solar access

The ability of a building or play space to continue to receive direct sunlight without obstruction from other buildings or impediments, not including trees.

Sunlight

Direct beam radiation for the sun.

Unencumbered indoor space

As defined by regulation 107 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations.*

Unencumbered outdoor space

As defined by regulation 108 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations.*

ACT Government

ACT Education Directorate
Children's Education and Care Assurance

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