



Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education

E-mail: qaddmeyr@gov.mt

Tel: 2598 1414

Interpretation of the Registration Criteria for Early Childhood and Care Services (0-3 Years) (2021).

| | |
|-----------|---|
| <p>1.</p> | <p>A Planning Authority permit does not allow a childcare centre to operate. To be in line with the Education Act (CAP 605), a licence issued by the DQSE would be required to operate a childcare centre.</p> |
| <p>2.</p> | <p>The Registration Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3 Years) (2021) refers to the mandatory requirements that must be met prior to submitting the online application (together with the supporting documentation) to obtain the required status of provision for Early Childhood Education and Care (0-3 Years) (ECEC) centres to operate.</p> |
| <p>3.</p> | <p>All staff members of the childcare centre are to be suitable and trustworthy.</p> |
| <p>4.</p> | <p>Finished floor levels (ffl) in all areas of the childcare centre are not to exceed +0.9 from the ffl at pavement at the entrance of the childcare centre.</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>A childcare centre must enjoy copious amounts of natural light, be ventilated and damp-free throughout. All child accessible rooms are to have windows or apertures leading to the outside. Should the DQSE request a ‘Light and Ventilation Report’, it must be carried out by a warranted Engineer. However, please be aware that DQSE will reserve the right NOT to licence a centre unless the report certifies that the premises does have adequate ventilation and natural lighting.</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>In order to determine whether the outdoor play area has completely satisfied the minimum requirements set out in Criteria 6.4 of the Registration Criteria “<i>the main outdoor play area (excluding other smaller outdoor areas) must represent at least 20% of the gross total ground area (indoor and outdoor area combined, excluding shafts, driveways, garages, planters, front outdoor areas, amongst others) as defined in Section 4: Child Space Allowance, and must be sufficiently large to contain an imaginary unobstructed rectangle of play space measuring at least 5m in length and at least 3.5m in width, of which only 25% may be permanently covered area”.</i></p> <p>Therefore, the DQSE would always require a detailed legend (see table below) to be clearly indicated on a ground floor architectural plan.</p> |

| Item | Net (SQM) | Gross (SQM) |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| A. Total Indoor Area (Including all child accessible areas and non-child accessible areas) | | |
| B.i. Uncovered Main Outdoor Play Area | | |
| B.ii. Uncovered Secondary Outdoor Play Area | | |
| C.i Covered Main Outdoor Play Area | | |
| C.ii Covered Secondary Outdoor Play Area | | |
| D.i Main Outdoor Play Area | | |
| D.ii Secondary Outdoor Play Area/s | | |
| E. Total Area (A+D) | | |

The **Gross Values** would constitute all areas from the threshold of the Child Day Care Facility (door from pavement level) to the backyard wall which would include any third-party lines. Whereas, the **Net Values** would be made up of all indoor space excluding the wall thickness (all floor space that can be stepped on).

Any **secondary outdoor play areas** are to have an imaginary square measuring at least 3.5m x 3.5m (only 25% of the imaginary square may be covered).

In addition to the above-mentioned point, outdoor play area at the front of the premises will not be deemed to form part of the total ground floor net indoor and outdoor play combined of the property.

7.

The main indoor play area is to be large enough to accommodate a minimum one group of children, adhering to the 1:6 ratio. The DQSE would encourage the use of large open spaces, when and where this is possible.

There must be a designated area for babies (0-12months) provided that they do not mix with toddlers. The main indoor play area for babies is to be large enough to accommodate for a minimum of one group of babies, adhering to the ratio of 1:3.

8.

For Night ECECs, a layout of cots and beds is to be provided during the PA process. Number of children during the night will be determined on the number of cots and beds.

9.

Quiet area is to be proportional to the size of the childcare centre i.e. 25% minimum of the maximum child capacity.

10.

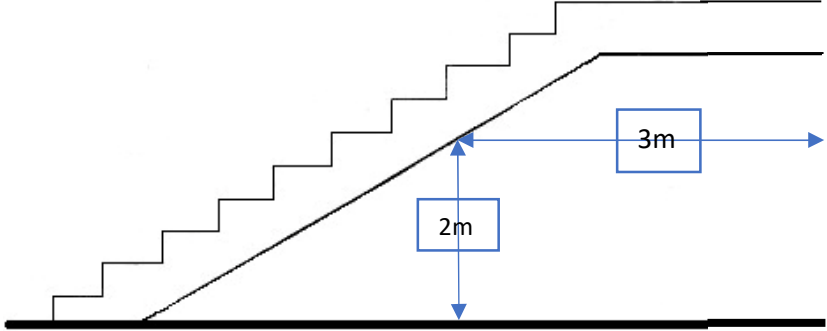
Activity areas must have a minimum dimension of 3m x 3m (both length and breadth). Any play and leaning area smaller than 3m x 3m and corridors will be considered as circulation space and will not be included in determining the maximum number of children at registration stage.

11.

Insect screens are to be installed.

12.

If spaces under the stairs of a childcare centre are to be considered as child accessible areas, they would need to have a clearance of 3m x 3m with a minimum headroom of at least 2m (see below diagram).

| | |
|-----|---|
| |  <p style="text-align: center;">Fig 1. Headroom under stairs.</p> |
| 13. | Play and learning space situated in front of a doorway/s will NOT be considered as child accessible areas and will NOT form part of the net area of the room. |
| 14. | <p>Any secure door is to be labelled on any plans as “a secure door to be kept locked during operational hours” (e.g. utility room, kitchenette and entrance etc.)</p> <p>During operational hours, doors which are not ‘secure’ (e.g. leading to different activity areas etc.) are to be kept unlocked.</p> |
| 15. | <p>No steps are permitted within a childcare centre.</p> <p>Should there be a difference in finished floor levels, it should be ramped for better accessibility.</p> |
| 16. | Bedding within the sick bay area is to be changed and washed after every individual use. |
| 17. | Referring to RC 11.4, hanging storage refers to any shelving/ cupboards etc. used to store any materials, resources and appliances etc. |
| 18. | <p>No pesticides / chemicals are to be used.</p> <p>In exceptional cases such as professional treatment after infestations, the area should be made inaccessible to children until it is safe to be used.</p> |

*Disclaimer: For minor amendments to PA permits approved prior to 31st December 2021, the DQSE reserves the right to evaluate which **Registration Criteria** are to be met according to the layout of the existing permit.*

If the centre does not adhere to the requirements as set out in the PA permit, this may affect the centre’s licence.