

Space Requirements in Child Development Centers, Socialization Spaces, and Public-School Classrooms

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.21

§ 1302.31

§ 1302.47

Necessary Classroom Features

Feature	Rationale
<p>Infants and Toddlers: A minimum of 35 square feet per child with a group maximum of 8 children. Strongly recommend 600 square feet for a group of 8.</p> <p>Preschool: A minimum of 35 square feet per child with a group maximum of 20 children. Strongly recommend 900 square feet for a group of 17-20.</p>	<p>Infants and Toddlers: Each classroom needs enough space to accommodate infants' napping, eating, and diapering, as well as flexible space to allow for the developing needs of mobile infants and toddlers. Rooms need to be on the ground floor.</p> <p>Group maximum based on Performance Standard 1302.21 (b).</p> <p>Preschoolers: Each classroom must allow space for learning centers or areas, for children to comfortably explore their environment, and for a group meeting area.</p> <p>Group maximum based on Performance Standard 1302.21 (b).</p>
<p>Diapering facilities must be located within the classroom or in a directly adjacent area with visibility to the classroom.</p>	<p>Diapering facilities for infants and toddlers must have sufficient areas to hold individual baskets and totes for each child's diapering needs. Diaper-changing table must be non-absorbent and easily cleaned. There must be a hand washing sink in each diaper changing area.</p> <p>For children under 36 months there shall be 1 flush toilet in or adjacent to the older toddler area, 1 toilet with training seat or child-sized toilet for every 10 older toddlers.</p> <p>Diapering facilities may be needed for preschool children who are still toilet learning or who have special needs. They may be located in an adjacent bathroom area and must have sufficient space for diapering needs.</p>
<p>Sinks for adults and children.</p>	<p>Children need easy access in the classroom to wash their hands before and after eating. Sink must be separate from the sink in the bathroom/diapering area. Adults need a sink near the diapering area separate from the sink(s) in the handwashing and food prep area. Sinks must have hot and cold water as well as soap and paper towels dispensed in a sanitary manner.</p>
<p>Hard floor (vinyl/linoleum) and carpeted areas.</p>	<p>Hard floors are best for the many wet and messy activities and for snacks and meals. Carpeted areas are needed for infants and toddlers to move around on, create variety and interest in the environment, help to define center areas, and help with noise reduction. Floors shall be free of splinters, large or unsealed cracks, sliding rugs, and other hazards.</p>

**Community Action Head Start
Washington County, Oregon**

Feature	Rationale
Classroom exits	Each classroom must have two exits, including one that leads directly outside as required by the Fire Marshal.
Abundant storage	This is a must in all locations where so much of the curriculum is based on children interacting with materials. Materials must be readily available so that the teacher can introduce new items weekly, recycle materials, and respond to children's interests. Storage space shall be available for each child's clothing and possessions.
Wall coverings for displays	It is helpful to have a bulletin board or other wall surface at a child's eye height for children to display their work.
Playground — A minimum of 75- square feet for each child with a recommendation of 100 square feet for each child.	Children need safe and easy access to a fenced outdoor play area. Space should be large enough to accommodate the needs of children in all areas of development, especially gross motor development. There should be separate spaces for infants/toddlers and preschoolers. If the playground is not fenced, there needs to be a plan for supervision that addresses visible boundaries. Playground must be suitably surfaced, well drained, free of litter, solid waste and refuse, ditches and other potential hazards. Must be equipped to provide age-appropriate gross motor activities. Ideally, there will also be storage for gross motor equipment.
Evening access	To facilitate parent involvement, family-focused events such as curriculum meetings, festivals, and celebrations are held throughout the year. They are usually scheduled for the early evening.
Wheelchair Accessibility	Accessibility is required by law for adults and children.
Fire Protection	Must meet Oregon Structural Specialty Code, have fire extinguisher that meets licensing/fire marshal guidelines, and have smoke detectors where children nap.
Ventilation and Heat	Be ventilated and free of excessive heat, condensation, and obnoxious odors.
Water Supply	Center's water supply shall be continuous in quantity and from a supply system approved by the Health Division.
Insect/Rodent Control	Shall be in such condition to prevent the infestation of rodents and insects. Doors/windows used for ventilation shall be equipped with screens.
Hazard Protection	Classrooms shall have adequate lighting, free of potential hazards. Electrical Outlets accessible to children shall have a protective cap or safety device when not in use. Infants and Toddlers: A movable barrier, such as a mesh-type gate, shall be placed at the top and/or bottom of all the stairways accessible to infants and toddlers.

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Recommended Classroom Features

Feature	Rationale
Single or double restroom with hand washing sink at child height located with direct access from the classroom	Many children may need assistance with toileting needs and must be within sight and sound by the teacher. There must be one toilet per 15 children, 36 months and older required by licensing. Children must have safe access to a hand washing sink specific to toileting. Bathrooms shall have smooth, washable, easy to clean walls and floors.
Food Prep Area	Occasionally there is additional food prep that is necessary for teachers to complete in the classroom. A separate sink and counter space for this is required by licensing and sanitation. Food Prep sink must not be used for hand or dish washing.

Necessary Workspace Features

Feature	Rationale
Restrooms for adults	A restroom for adults needs to be separate from the area for children. Ideally a center should have enough restrooms to accommodate staffing numbers. It is also recommended that at least one adult restroom have a diaper changing area for visitors with infants/toddlers.
A small staff/office/meeting space	Staff need space to complete paperwork, work on computers, make phone calls, and meet privately with fellow staff and families. It is recommended that the workspace be separate from the classroom but can be contained within if space and delineation allow. Meeting space must allow for private and confidential conversations.
Computer, phone and Internet access	Staff need IT equipment to access the Community Action network, ChildPlus and Teaching Strategies websites, and to communicate with parents during work to address child and family goals.

Additional considerations

- Short distances to the classroom and the playground are helpful.
- When classrooms have plenty of windows to provide natural lighting, the classroom environment is improved.
- Children in full-day preschool programs need a quiet area to nap.
- Drinking fountains in classrooms and on playgrounds separate from handwashing sinks.
- Area in addition to the classrooms space that can be accessed for larger gatherings such as Parent-Teacher Nights. In the public schools or other rented locations, ask the school or site staff for help finding other useable rooms.
- Flexibility with respect to food service is appreciated. In some locations, meals are served in the classrooms; in others, a cafeteria may be used. For questions regarding food service within a center, public school or other location, contact the CACFP Coordinator.