



BUILDING QUALITY STANDARDS HANDBOOK

Appendix A: Summary of design requirements specific to early learning facilities

May 2025

8.1 Appendix A: Summary of design requirements specific to early learning facilities

Appendix A is a summary of BQSH early learning-specific performance criteria only. It should be noted that the BQSH includes many requirements and criteria that apply to both schools and early learning facilities, so this summary list should not be treated as exhaustive.

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Introduction	1.1 What is the Building Quality Standards Handbook?	<p>The Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH) sets the minimum quality criteria for all Department of Education (DE) capital projects, including new construction, refurbishment and maintenance works. Its purpose is to assist architects and designers to create high-quality designs for school and early learning facilities across Victoria.</p> <p>The BQSH uses early learning facilities as an umbrella term covering two facility sub-categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">kindergartens, which include kindergarten on school sites (KOSS) and modular kindergartens for placement on or off school sites, andearly learning and childcare centres (ELCCs), which are government-owned and operated childcare facilities.
Introduction	1.5.5 School and early learning area schedules	<p>Area schedules for early learning facilities are developed on a site by site basis because child place numbers, rooms and additional facility scope are determined by the NQF and contingent on agreed outcomes with third party partners and other strategic opportunities. The Early Childhood Strategy and Planning Unit prepares area schedules for each site prior to principal design consultant procurement. Indoor and outdoor space allocations in early learning facility design, including those in multi-storey buildings, must comply with the minimum requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Children’s Services Act (CS Act). For further details, refer to Space requirements for early childhood services</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		https://www.vic.gov.au/space-requirements-early-childhood-service .
Introduction	1.5.6 Shelter In-Place for schools in bushfire-prone areas	<p>DE maintains a Bushfire-at-Risk Register (BARR) that identifies schools and early learning facilities considered to be at the highest risk of fire danger within bushfire-prone areas. Inclusion on this register is a trigger for pre-emptive closure or relocation. Details can be found at the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) webpage https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-risk-register-barr.</p>
Education vision and philosophy	2.2.5 Early learning facilities	<p>2.2.5 Early learning facilities</p> <p>The Department of Education will be delivering new early learning facilities to provide additional infrastructure capacity to support the roll-out of Three and Four Year Old Kindergarten and the Best Start, Best Life program across Victoria. High quality learning is supported through the physical and social environments, and opportunities that early learning facilities provide.</p>
Education vision and philosophy	2.2 Education principles	<p>High quality environments promote children's wellbeing and engagement, positive learning experiences and inclusive relationships. Physical learning environments must include both indoor and outdoor learning spaces that satisfy the key principles, including NQF indoor and outdoor requirements, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">flexibility and accessibilitya range of developmentally appropriate, open ended activities and sensory experiences, andan environment that is sustainable, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of families within the local and broader community.

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Education vision and philosophy	2.3.3 Early learning education matters	2.3.3 Early learning education matters
		Contemporary research shows that the early years of a child's life from birth to 8 years of age is the most critical period for brain development. A child's relationships, experiences and environment during these years create neural pathways that have a long-lasting influence on health, wellbeing, behaviour and learning. Nurturing relationships, social and emotional development of a child is vital to lifelong learning and setting them up for success in life.
		The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) adopts a comprehensive approach to children's learning and development. The VEYLDF sets out outcomes and practices to guide early learning professionals in their work with all families and their young children from birth. Supporting children to progress toward these outcomes, in conjunction with their families, is the core of the VEYLDF.
		The vision and purpose of the VEYLDF is to guide early learning professionals in a collective effort with families towards the achievements of the nationally agreed Early Years Learning Outcomes. Early learning facilities should be designed to support the following principles:
		Principle 1, Reflective practice: Creating environments where families and professionals who work in the setting can engage in critical reflection.
		Principle 2, Partnerships with families: Designed with children's and family's needs at the forefront and with consideration of local community priorities informed by local consultation.
		Principle 3, High expectations for every child: Spaces that support children's agency, sense of capability, goals and aspirations for the future. Spaces that support play-based learning, avoiding locked in expectations

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		about what children are capable of at a certain age or stage.
		Principle 4, Respectful relationships and responsive engagement: Spaces allow for creativity of learning and responsiveness to children's changing interests and needs.
		Principle 5, Equity and diversity: Showcase First Nations perspective, cultural inclusion, safety and awareness. Spaces support all children to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land and the natural world.
		Principle 6, Assessment for learning and development: Creating environments where children are comfortable, have opportunity to engage in everyday experiences, materials and equipment that interest them.
		Principle 7, Integrated teaching and learning: Spaces are designed to promote and enhance opportunities for integrated teaching and learning approaches to be embedded into the programming.
		Principle 8, Partnerships with professionals: Spaces that facilitate strong partnerships with professionals.
Planning	3.1.2 Recognition of First Nations culture in new facilities and major upgrades; First Nations cultural recognition in design	All VSBA-led new school and early learning facilities and significant school upgrades must recognise First Nations culture in line with the commitments in the Dhelk Wukang 2022–2026 Aboriginal Inclusion Plan and the VSBA's public commitment to First Nations engagement </our-commitment-first-nations-engagement> . All First Nations cultural design elements must be implemented in consultation with Traditional Owners, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporation (VAEI), Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Marrung Facilitators. There are no restrictions for cultural design, but the project team should be led by First Nations representatives, including Traditional Owners, about what is appropriate to include at the

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		school or early learning facility and available project funding will ultimately determine its final scope. Before starting engagement, VAEAI must confirm the relevant First Nations representatives to include in the meetings. VSBA Communications leads the consultation for new schools in collaboration with the project team. Principal Design Consultants should review the VSBA's public commitment to First Nations engagement for guidance on the engagement process. For guidance on the First Nations engagement process, contact VSBA Communications via vsba@education.vic.gov.au .
Planning	3.1.2 Recognition of First Nations culture in new facilities and major upgrades; Aboriginal names for schools and early learning facilities	<p>First Nations cultural design engagements for schools and kindergartens could include language requests, for example, for room names. However, engagement about naming entire schools or early learning facilities is not led by the VSBA.</p> <p>Under the School and Campus Naming Policy, Aboriginal language names are preferred for all new government schools and campuses. Early Learning Victoria (ELV) has also made the same commitment for early learning childcare centre (ELCC) names. When choosing names for schools or ELCCs, Traditional Owners propose Aboriginal language names to ensure the accuracy of language and to support self-determination.</p> <p>The Priorities Unit of the Operations and Governance Division coordinates the school naming process with Traditional Owner groups, while Early Learning Victoria (ELV) coordinates naming for ELCCs. For school naming queries, please contact the Priorities Unit at srs.priorities.unit@education.vic.gov.au.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Planning	3.1.4 Building for early learning	<p>3.1.4 Building for early learning</p> <p>In 2022 the government announced the Best Start, Best Life early learning education reform with three new major initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• free kinder across the State• a year of universal Pre-Prep for 4-year-olds, and for the first time,• the Victorian government will establish and operate 50 childcare centres. <p>The Department will deliver a number of early learning facilities to provide additional infrastructure capacity to support the roll-out of Three and Four Year Old Kindergarten. Some early learning facilities will be delivered on new and existing government school sites.</p> <p>The new infrastructure required in order to deliver on the government's Best Start, Best Life and Pre-prep reforms will include long day care provision. The VSBA must be consulted for direction on long day care facility specifications.</p> <p>The Government is committed to the benefits of integrating early learning into the wider government school system. New co-located early learning facilities can help make drop off time simpler for family and carers, support smoother transitions between early learning and primary school, and may make early learning programs more accessible for some children.</p> <p>The National Quality Framework (NQF) sets out the standards and legal obligations for approved service providers of early learning services across Australia. The National Quality Standards (NQS) sets out the benchmarks for early learning education and care, including the ways an early learning facility's environment is designed, equipped and organised to maximise children's engagement and positive relationships.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		Early Learning environments must comply with the National Quality Framework – Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment < https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-3-physical-environment >.
Planning	3.1.5 Victorian early learning reforms	<p>The Victorian Government has made a commitment to overhaul early learning education and care in Victoria.</p> <p>The Best Start, Best Life reforms are the most significant change to the Victorian early learning sector in a generation.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Kinder: all children in Victoria who are 3 and 4 years old can access Free Kinder • Three-Year-Old Kindergarten: the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten continues, with programs increasing to 15 hours a week across the state, providing Victorian children with 2 years of a quality kindergarten program before school • Pre-Prep: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in Victoria is in the process of changing to 'Pre-Prep'. This means that every 4-year-old child can go to a play-based learning program for 30 hours per week, and • Early Learning and Childhood Centres: establishing 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childhood centres.
Planning	3.2 Universal design	Some standard design solutions for AS 1428 may not align with the operational objectives and Early Childhood Education and Care Legislative requirements for early learning facilities. This can create a conflict, and thus, consultants should highlight all AS 1428 conflicts through the departure process and solution rationale. Additionally, in such cases a DDA/Access consultant engagement is

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		recommended for specialist insight and guidance. For more information, see the section on Hierarchy of requirements and departures (in 1.3.1 The writing style of specifications < https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-quality-standards-handbook/introduction#131-the-writing-style-of-specifications >).
Planning	3.3.1 Urban Context	Project consultants must ensure schools and early learning facilities complement their community, and eventually be a vital part of the community's broader aims. This should be considered before the design process starts.
Planning	3.3.1 Urban context	Where a new early learning facility is to be co-located on a school site, consideration must be given to the interface between the early learning facility's children's outdoor play areas with an area of learning or play with primary school, to promote opportunities for connection and learning.
Planning	3.3.3 Entry and Exit requirements	<p>The minimum number of exits in multi-storey school and early learning infrastructure must comply with NCC D2D3 and NQF design considerations for emergency evacuation.</p> <p>Early learning facilities co-located on school sites must similarly have easy to find and accessible entry that is separate to the school entrance. There should only be one main entry/exit point into the early learning facility. Where the early learning building will have additional integrated community facilities (such as MCH and or community meeting room) or is integrated under the school roofline/building, alternative requirements for emergency and maintenance points are required.</p> <p>For early learning facilities in multistorey and vertical buildings, exit numbers for each storey must comply with NCC D2D4 and D2D16 requirements. Also see section 3.3.7 Emergency exits <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-quality-standards-handbook/introduction#131-the-writing-style-of-specifications>).</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		g-quality-standards-handbook/planning#337-emergency-exits>.
Planning	3.3.5. Site Planning	<p>Where an early learning facility is designed on a school site, specific considerations should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• northern orientation for indoor and outdoor play spaces• facility to be directly accessible from the street• regular shaped building to support supervision• strong connection to /interface with school facilities, and• if car parking is included direct access to the early learning facility entry.
Planning	3.3.5 Site planning	<p>A separate waste disposal area (minimum 8m²) must be located within the footprint of any early learning facility.</p>
Planning	3.3.6 Integration of shared facilities	<p>In many circumstances, school buildings can be shared with the community and provide spaces for vital community functions. The co-location of community facilities in schools is encouraged. This could include shared use of library facilities, sporting facilities, meeting spaces, performance spaces, co-location of early learning facilities, and before and after-school programs on school grounds. [...]</p> <p>Where an early learning facility is to be integrated into the school facilities, consideration should be given to shared use of (school and early learning) administration, meeting and staff breakout spaces, and the creation of gathering areas for family and carers close to the early learning facility's entrance.</p> <p>'Integration' of early learning facilities services within school buildings (under the same roofline) differs from co-location of early learning facilities on school site where typically there is limited shared facilities or</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>amenities under the same roofline, due to separate governance and operational arrangements. In these instances, the design should ensure that the early learning facility, in which NQF requirements always apply, has a clear service approval area to meet early learning education and care regulations distinct from the school community use areas.</p> <p>Designs must mitigate against risks that are specific to multi-use sites, where relevant, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• building and site access and security allow only authorised people in and out of the premises and spaces not shared by adjacent entities• the design minimises risks of children being able to exit independently and unsupervised, e.g. coded doors and capture gates• entrances/exits are designed to allow appropriate monitoring by staff and avoid potential congestion points that could block sightlines in shared spaces, and• external exits do not lead directly to unsafe areas (such as roads) without additional safety measures, i.e. secondary barriers, surveillance technology.
Planning	3.3.7 Emergency exits	<p>Consultants must ensure all emergency egress' in early learning facilities are designed in accordance with the National Quality Framework and National Construction Code. Early learning facility exits must not lead directly onto busy roads.</p>
Planning	3.3.8 Site circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• where an early learning facility includes a car park and vehicular thoroughfares, consideration must be made to younger children and parents and carers with prams as they are more vulnerable to high risk vehicular movement.

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Planning	3.3.11 Vehicle Access	<p>Where car parking is provided for an early learning facility and where site conditions allow, the car park should be separate from the school car parking and provide direct access to the early learning facility's entry.</p> <p>Carparks and access roads near the early learning site must include effective carpark design considerations to ensure the safety of young children and parents, and minimise and control associated safety risks. The early learning Regulatory Authority will examine these safety risks, including unprotected vehicle access, the possibility of vehicles entering outdoor areas adjacent to the carpark, and unsafe car manoeuvres (such as reversing) near entrances. Physical barriers (e.g., bollards), natural elements like plants and garden beds, or appropriate signage and labelled systems can be used to adequately control the aforementioned safety risks.</p>
Planning	3.3.13 Provision of Car parking	<p>Where site conditions allow early learning facility car-parking for parents/carers accompanying children to sign them in and out of the early learning facility, the car park should be separate from school staff car parking and provide direct access to the early learning facility's entry.</p>
Planning	3.3.16 Vertical school and early learning facility planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further, vertical school and early learning facility design must satisfy the following criteria:• in the case of vertical schools that include primary schools or early learning facilities, satisfy fire safety and emergency evacuation requirements set out in the NCC and the National Quality Framework• where an early learning facility is located above ground floor, there must be sufficient outdoor space and access to natural environment on the same floor as education and play spaces• where early learning facilities are located above ground floor, lift access

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>and operation arrangements must differ for at least one lift (i.e. lift capacity should accommodate efficient, mechanical transport of small children and parents/carers in larger groups and not require key passes), additionally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• early learning designated lift/s must have capture gates, and this must not impede the DDA-compliance of surrounding circulation spaces
Planning	3.4 Landscape planning	<p>External fencing must be two metres high and non-scalable around early learning facilities located above ground level.[...]</p> <p>Specific regulations and spatial requirements apply to outdoor play spaces in early learning facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• additional safety measures, such as fencing or barriers, must be installed for early learning facility sites close to potential natural water hazards or swimming pools• as for schools, a qualified landscape designer must be consulted to design all aspects of the outdoor areas of early learning facilities in order to ensure regulations can be achieved• outdoor spaces must be enclosed by AS1926-compliant fencing / barriers that are, minimum, 1800mm high and of a design that children cannot go through, climb over or under, or create entrapments. Fencing should not be climbable in its own right or via items (such as outdoor air conditioning condenser units or yarning circle logs) within 1000mm that children could use to scale• storage sheds, trees and play equipment such as cubby house should not be placed within 1000mm of a perimeter fence line, care must be taken to ensure equipment or landscaping

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>elements do not create footholds onto and over the fence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sandpits with minimum depth of 400mm with shade are provided • grated stormwater pits are fitted with heel safe lids or mesh covering to avoid finger entrapment, and • provide suitable maintenance gates.
Planning	3.4 Landscape planning; Vertical schools	<p>External fencing must be two metres high and non-scalable around early learning facilities located above ground level.</p> <p>See External equipment for a summary of irrigation system requirements in multi-storey early learning facilities and schools.</p>
Planning	3.4.2 Outdoor learning space	<p>Outdoor learning space design should satisfy the following requirements: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide clear sightlines for supervision, appropriate to broader school or early learning context, especially to bathrooms if the site is located on steep ground. If external sightlines are limited in schools, the outdoor space should be containable outside teaching and learning times [...] <p>External fencing must be two metres high and non-scalable around early learning facilities located above ground level.</p>
Planning	3.5 School and early learning design principles	<p>In addition for early learning facilities, the design principles set out in the seven National Quality Standards related to the Physical Environment Quality Area 3 <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-3-physical-environment>.</p>
Planning	3.5.1 Safety and security in design	<p>Early learning facilities are third-party operated and must be zoned separately from schools, with separate security systems. This applies to early learning facilities located in vertical and non-vertical schools. Please review both Designing Safer Buildings and</p>

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		<p>Structures <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/designing-safer-buildings-and-structures>, which is published by WorkSafe Victoria; the Preventing and responding to work-related violence: A guide for employers <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/work-related-violence-a-guide-for-employers>, and the Occupational Violence Information Sheet <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/occupational-violence-information-sheet> for further guidance.</p>
Planning	3.5.3. Learning Spaces; Connections/Relationships between learning spaces and circulation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where an early learning facility is located above ground floor, at least one lift must accommodate the efficient, mechanical transportation of groups of children and parents/carers without key passes, and • early learning designated lift/s must have capture gates, and surrounding circulation spaces must be DDA-compliant
Planning	3.5.3. Learning Spaces; Sleeping areas or nooks in early learning education and play spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping areas or nooks where children will sleep must accommodate the required number of cots and sleep mats for planned child occupants, as outlined in the Area Schedules. The designated sleeping area or nook must be safe, conducive to sleep, well-ventilated and flexible enough to accommodate a range of ages and sleep needs. • Sleep areas or nooks must not have blind spots that prevent staff from supervising the whole sleep area. The design of sleeping areas should also balance reduced light for sleeping with adequate light for child supervision. • Sleeping areas must also include provision for storage of, vertically stacked, sleep mats that is accessible to children, noting that dimensions for a standard rest mat are 120x55x5.5 cm. Storage must accommodate the same number of mats as planned child

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		occupants for the room in question (e.g., 12 mats for a 12-place room, 33 mats for a 33-place room).
Planning	3.5.3 Learning Spaces	<p>Education and play spaces in early learning facilities are subject to specific regulatory requirements. Consultants must ensure that designs meet the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the seven National Quality Standards related to the Physical Environment Quality Area 3 (<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-3-physical-environment>, including that indoor education and play spaces allow minimum unencumbered indoor space that does not factor in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas such as passageways, bathrooms and nappy change areas, space set aside for the use of storage, staff or administrative rooms, storage areas or • any space not suitable for children.
Planning	3.5.3 Learning spaces; Natural light and views	All indoor and outdoor approved areas of an early learning facility must be designed in a way that facilitates supervision of children at all times they are being educated and cared for by the service including toilets and nappy change facilities.
Planning	3.5.3 Learning spaces; Views and lines of sight	Schools and early learning facilities must have sightlines from every learning space and children's bathroom to and from the outside for supervision and safety. Special attention must be paid to maintaining supervision sightlines where early learning facilities are situated on steep sites.

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Planning	3.5.3 Learning spaces; Information and communications technology	Project consultants must refer to 5.10 Information and communication technology <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-quality-standards-handbook/technical-specifications#510-information-and-communication-technology> specific to early learning facilities.
Planning	3.5.5 Adjacency of spaces	Where early learning facilities are co-located on a school site, outdoor play spaces should be located adjacent to primary school outdoor play areas or school learning spaces to enhance connection. Where early learning facilities are integrated into the school facilities, consideration should be given to shared use of administration, meeting and staff breakout spaces. The associated safety risks of multi-use sites must be addressed through well-considered design as outlined in the Integration of shared facilities section.
Planning	3.6.3 Construction in bushfire-prone areas	All relevant school or early learning facility constructions in a designated bushfire prone area must also comply with NCC's Additional Bushfire Requirements for Certain Class 9 Buildings at NCC Part G5, and NCC Specification 43 Bushfire protection for certain Class 9 buildings.
Planning	3.6.4 Early learning regulations and policies	<p>The National Quality Framework (NQF) consists of Acts, regulations, and standards that guide the design of early learning facilities.</p> <p>The NQF is underpinned by the following regulatory tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, and • the National Quality Standards (NQS) and quality rating system. <p>The NQS provides early learning service providers certainty about what is expected of</p>

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		<p>them and what they are required to do to comply with the National Quality Framework, this includes guidance on the design and development of a facility. The physical environment of an early learning facility must be safe, suitable and provide a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development. Good design of an early learning facility is a major contributor to ensuring these regulations are addressed and fundamentally underpins what needs to be met before an early learning facility gains a service approval to operate.</p> <p>All early learning facilities designs must comply with all of the NQF tools and additional requirements laid out in this Handbook. Any early learning-specific performance criteria in the BQSH relate to licensed areas required under these regulations and legislation, unless otherwise stated.</p> <p>Indoor and outdoor space allocations in early learning facility design, including those in multi-storey buildings, must comply with the minimum requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Children's Services Act (CS Act). For further details, refer to Space requirements for early childhood services <https://www.vic.gov.au/space-requirements-early-childhood-service>.</p>
Special Factors	4.2.5 Multi-storey or higher than normal buildings	<p>Early learning facilities in multi-storey buildings must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capture gates to restrict early learning children's access to lifts and stairs and surrounding circulation spaces must be DDA-compliant pin code and fob key operable lifts handrails are required to meet regulatory requirements, including a low handrail at a height suitable for use by 3 year old children upgraded exits, sprinkler and smoke detection systems, as per NCC

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		<p>requirements for early learning facilities, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide separate secure line/access for school and early learning facilities, where relevant <p>Furthermore, the NQS stipulates that outdoor spaces must allow children to explore and experience the natural environment. There must be appropriate access for children to interact with the natural environment and natural vegetation. If an early learning facility is located above ground floor, there must be sufficient outdoor space and access to natural environment on the same floor as education and play spaces.</p> <p>Consultants must comply with safety, design and approval requirements for children in multistorey buildings, as set out in the NQF and NQS that are current at time of masterplanning the early learning facility.</p> <p>All spaces designated for babies should be on the ground floor. If located above the ground floor, direct exit to the ground floor with an adequate ramp must be provided.</p> <p>New guidance from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2021) <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/Evacuation_of_multi-storey_buildings.pdf>, the secretariat for the NQF provides clarity on their expectations in relation to early learning facilities in multi storey buildings to ensure developers, designers and builders understand the increasing stringent service approval process applied to services in multi-level buildings.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.1 Landscape Archit..	<p>Per the NQF, all early learning facilities must ensure that the minimum outdoor space requirements are met in compliance with the National Education and Care Services Regulations and must satisfy the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a qualified landscape designer or landscape architect must be consulted on all aspects of outdoor design

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Outdoor Space Minimum Requirements must be met, as outlined in the NQS, and must not count:<ul style="list-style-type: none">areas such as pathways, thoroughfares, car parks and storage shedsany other space that is unsuitable as outdoor space for children, orany area of veranda included in indoor space calculations. <p>Early learning facilities must maintain supervision sightlines between outdoor learning areas and children's bathrooms. Special attention must be paid to maintaining supervision indoor-outdoor sightlines where the facility is located on a steep site. Multiple-level changes should be avoided as they can hinder child supervision, restrict access, and create potential hiding spots.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.1 Landscape Archit..	<p>Schools and DE-operated early learning facilities must create, safeguard and store administrative and student records. Where a school or DE-operated early learning facility does not plan to digitise the majority of its records, permanent hardcopy records must be stored on its premises.</p> <p>Temporary records must be stored on site or with an Approved Public Record Storage Supplier (APROSS). On site hardcopy records storage must comply with PROS 20/02 Storage Standard https://prov.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/documents/2002v1.0.pdf and the Records Management policy https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/records-management/policy. Records should not be stored in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">shedsshipping containersatticsbasements, or

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">any space where there is a risk of damage by weather, water leakage, or pests. <p>The records storage space must not have external windows.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.1.1 Soft landscaping	<p>In early learning facilities, synthetic or non-natural materials, such as artificial grass and rubber soft fall, must not be used in outdoor spaces. Refer to the section on early learning outdoor spaces for further information.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.1.3 Hard landscaping and indoor sports courts: Fencing	<p>For early learning and special, special development and supported inclusion schools, consultants must adhere to specific regulations for barriers and fencing. All outdoor space must be enclosed by a fence or barrier, with a minimum height of 1800mm whose design prevents children of early learning age and under (5 years) from passing through, over or under.</p> <p>In early learning facilities, outdoor gates should be self-closing and self-latching, with a mesh or solid panel on the internal side of the fence to ensure that unauthorised adults cannot reach over and open the gate. A high-level handle must be provided on the internal/early learning side of the fence only.</p> <p>Capture gates, or other appropriate safety measures, must be provided beside exit doors in early learning facilities that do not have a foyer to prevent children from exiting into unsafe areas unsupervised.</p> <p>Fences should not be scalable by creating footings or have an item (such as outdoor air conditioning condenser units or yarning circle logs) within 1000mm that could be used to scale the perimeter fence. Furthermore, solid plinths may need to be provided below fences to ensure children cannot dig out the soil or mulch that increases the gap below the fence to greater than 100mm.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.1.3	Exposed sharp aggregate paving finishes should be avoided in primary schools and early learning facilities.
	Hard landscaping and indoor sports courts:	
	Pathways	
Technical Specifications	5.1.3	A range of playground equipment must be selected for new schools and early learning facilities to promote accessibility and inclusivity, and to accommodate as many abilities and special needs as possible. PDCs should obtain advice prior to playground equipment installation from relevant specialists as appropriate to the situation, including one or more of the following: allied health specialists, DDA/Access Consultants, or expert playground specialists. Expert advice when selecting equipment for special, special development and supported inclusion schools is particularly important to accommodate a higher percentage of complex needs.
	Hard landscaping and indoor sports courts:	
	Planning and departmental approvals	
Technical Specifications	5.1.4 External Equipment:	Indoor and outdoor space allocations in early learning facilities, including those in multi-storey buildings, must comply with the minimum requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Children’s Services Act (CS Act). For further details, refer to Space requirements for early childhood services
	Early learning facility outdoor spaces	<https://www.vic.gov.au/space-requirements-early-childhood-service>.
		Outdoor space design must consider access points for maintenance and deliveries. An additional pedestrian emergency egress gate, positioned opposite to the maintenance access points/gates, should also be considered.
		Sandpits must be at a minimum 40cm in depth, however, up to 60cm is preferable. Shade must be provided to sandpits and mud play areas.
		Outdoor play spaces in early learning facilities must comply with the following:

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">a qualified landscape designer is consulted on all aspects of their designOutdoor Space Minimum Requirements as outlined in the NQF, not counting<ul style="list-style-type: none">areas such as pathways, thoroughfares, car parks and storage sheds or any other space that's unsuitable for children as outdoor space, norany area of veranda included in indoor space calculations in outdoor space calculations.
		Early learning facilities located in multi-storey buildings must include outdoor spaces on each storey to accommodate the number of children on that storey to comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Their design must ensure that the requirements for outdoor space are met for each child being educated and cared for by the service. Outdoor spaces should be no smaller than 4 metres in width or length.
		Outdoor spaces in early learning facilities must also satisfy the following:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">supports accessibility by children with disabilities, developmental delay or mobility aidsprovides direct access to indoor education and play spaces and children’s bathroomsincludes an undercover veranda to serve as a transition area between outdoor and indoor education and play spaces and to offer outdoor play areas during extreme weatherfacilitates supervision of children, avoids landscaping, elements, or structures that could impact sightlines and hinder supervisioninclude smaller areas for focused play while maintaining open spaces for active play

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">if an external storage shed is installed, it should satisfy the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">double doors (with a drop bolt lock for larger doors) for easy access600mm deep shelving units for storage, along with suitable higher shelving for items such as ladder brackets, anda double GPO positioned at 1500mm highmust allow children to access, interact with and experience the natural environment and vegetation, in accordance with the Education and Care Service National Regulations (regulation 113; outdoor space-natural environment)excessive landscaping elements, such as extensive bike paths or unnecessary, large cemented areas, are to be avoided in the interests of maintaining a balance between natural elements like digging areas, vegetable gardens, or soft fall, and essential landscaping featuresinclude adequate shaded areas to protect children from the sun while also ensuring all other requirements such as supervision are complied withrocks, natural logs, and timber used for seating or bordering sandpits are low, free of sharp edges, and positioned to avoid safety risks, andexposed sharp aggregate paving finishes are not included in the design. <p>If structural square poles or pillars are necessary in outdoor areas that are designed for children to run in, they should be padded to reduce risk of impact injury. When selecting materials and surfaces for outdoor areas, the following requirements apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">synthetic or non-natural materials, such as artificial grass and rubber matting and soft fall, must not be used

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">tan bark or mulch should be used as a soft fall option, where requiredsoft fall mulch should not be included in areas adjacent to indoor education and play spacesmetal grating groundcover should not be used in outdoor spaces, andsurfaces, particularly those adjacent to 0–under 3 education and play spaces, must not include choking hazards, such as materials that may deteriorate over time or contain small parts that could pose choking risks for babies and toddlers.
Technical Specifications	5.1.4 External Equipment: Irrigation systems	<p>Irrigation systems in multi-storey schools and early learning facilities should not be installed in roof garden balconies, to avoid risks of reticulated pipework leaks. Irrigation in these locations should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">sourced from local tapware/plumbing fittingsunconcealed, andideally a timed drip system. <p>Integrated roof terrace planters should not be installed, due to high risk of long-term waterproofing issues with building envelope. Planters should be free standing.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.1.5 Shade areas	<p>Project consultants should select and satisfy shade areas that meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">provide a combination of built and natural shade to protect students, children (in early learning facilities), and staff, particularly when UV radiation reaches damaging levels (3 and above) [...] <p>Shade structures in early learning facilities must be located clear of fences and barriers so they do not enable climbing and comply with AS1926.1. Shade must be provided over</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		static play areas such as sandpits. It should also be provided over areas of soft fall and digging patches. In cases where new plantings need time to grow, temporary shade solutions must be provided to ensure constant adequate sun protection for children.
Technical Specifications	5.1.7 Wetlands	Wetlands must not be included in the design of early learning facilities. Should wetlands be included within school grounds that have an early learning facility on site, the design should prevent access to the wetlands by early learning facility children.
Technical Specifications	5.2 Utilities and associated infrastructure	<p>The majority of early learning facilities on school sites will be operated by a third party service provider such as the local Council or early learning providers. Therefore they must be designed with separate utilities infrastructure and authority meters independent to the schools. Where separate utilities are not viable, check meters for all utilities including electricity, potable and recycled water must be installed.</p> <p>The following should also be satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• manual override lighting controls provided to indoor education and play spaces, and• incoming supply pillars and mains switchboards located outside children's areas.
Technical Specifications	5.3.4 Windows: Shading and sunlight controls	Tinted glazing and solar film should not be used on windows for children's rooms and toilets where they impede visibility and supervision between indoor and outdoor play spaces. In which case, other measures, such as shading, must be employed to achieve glare and passive energy outcomes.
Technical Specifications	5.3.4 Windows	Window sill heights in early learning facilities must comply with NCC requirements. Internal and external early learning facility play spaces, children's bathrooms and art

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		preparation areas must be designed for high visibility and supervision at all times.
		Storerooms in early learning facilities must have a window or other suitable and safe glazing for supervision sightlines and to ensure children do not get trapped inside without the educator’s knowledge.[...]
		<p>In early learning facilities, windows must satisfy the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in education and play spaces, the height of window sills must not exceed 1100mm AFL to ensure an unimpeded line of sight from the indoor to the outdoor space, enabling supervision by educators• at least 50% of windows in education and play spaces must have sills no higher than 500mm AFL, in accordance with the NCC F6D3(4), and• design must enable supervision between the indoor education and play spaces and the bathroom, as well as between the outdoor spaces and the toilets. This can be achieved through a supervision window, glazed door or other suitable design solution/s. <p>In addition, please refer to the section on Blinds and insect screens for further information</p>
Technical Specifications	5.3.4 Windows: Operable Windows	<p>In the case of vertical schools and early learning facilities, windows must be operable to provide natural ventilation and opportunities for night purging. Operable windows must be zoned and centrally mechanised through a self-contained smart system for windows or an aggregated Building Management System (BMS). Operable windows should be reed switch linked to mechanical HVAC systems to manage energy loss when spaces are in natural ventilation mode. [...]</p> <p>Project consultants should select and satisfy operable windows that meet the following</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">fitted with a means of securely limiting above-ground floor window openings in schools (restrictors must be installed in early learning facility windows to limit opening to 125mm)
Technical Specifications	5.3.4 Windows: Blinds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In early learning facilities, blinds for all internal and external windows must be translucent, except for meeting rooms and staff lounges, which should include opaque blinds or frosting for windows. Blinds, particularly in north- and west-facing windows, should effectively manage sunlight and glare, while blinds in sleeping areas must balance adequate lighting with the occupants' needs.[...] Cords must not be accessible to young children or toddlers.
Technical Specifications	5.3.5 Glazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">in early learning facilities, any glass installed in areas accessible to young children must be safety glass that complies with AS 1288. [...]In early learning facilities, if an observation booth is included, the window between it and the indoor education and play space must feature one-way glass to prevent disruption to the children during observation of practice. Refer to Lighting Systems for additional requirements for the observation booth.
Technical Specifications	5.3.6 Doors: Early learning facility doors	Project consultants must consult with the Project Control Group (PCG) on door schedules prior to their finalisation, due to the complex interface between early learning care and education regulations, emergency and fire management building codes, NQF, and DDA and accessibility requirements in early learning facilities.

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		Further advice must be sought from a building surveyor or DDA consultant to determine the appropriate level of considerations have been made to meet the range of regulations and requirements. The key features of doors for early learning facilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">most doors and gates, including exits to the perimeter of the early learning facility must swing inwards, be self closing and self latching and have handles installed between 1500-1650mm AFLdoor handles into the children's bathroom and the indoor education and play space leading to the outdoor play space should be at 1000-1200mm AFL, additionallydoors from children's bathrooms to outdoor and indoor learning and play areas must be able to be locked/pinned open, to allow children easy and quick access to the bathroomwhere double doors between indoor and outdoor spaces are installed to allow large items to be moved between areas, they should:<ul style="list-style-type: none">swing 180 degreesbe capable of being pinned to an adjacent wall, andbe appropriate for three and four years olds to operate, furthermoreall door hinge frame junctions in the children's indoor and outdoor play spaces must include protection against finger injuries.
		An airlock must be provided at early learning facility entrances, as outlined in the Automatic Operation Doors and Airlocks section. In addition, consideration must always be given to potential conflicts or intersections between DDA and safety regulation door requirements. Airlock doors in early learning facilities should be capable of being disabled to allow manual operation only via a push exit button, if

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>required, to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.</p> <p>Exit buttons must be located between 1500–1650mm above the floor in accordance with NCC Vic D3D26(6). Sensors should be located at a height suitable for detecting small children. The designated distance between airlock doors should accommodate the movement of prams.</p> <p>An intercom/bell can be installed as further accessibility and emergency measure.</p> <p>Where the early learning facility has additional community facilities shared by services such as maternal and child health (MCH), all services must be easily accessible to community members with mobility issues. Where an ELCC is co-located with a MCH, that operates after hours or weekends, a separate video intercom should be installed between the MCH and the front entrance.</p> <p>Project consultants must consult the VSBA delivery manager to confirm inclusion of additional facilities and services prior to finalising Door Schedules.</p> <p>Early learning doors and gates, and exits to the perimeter must comply with NCC requirements specific to early learning facilities. All doors must be designed for anticipated movements into and within the early learning facility.</p> <p>Doors to internal stores/program spaces in early learning facilities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide direct access to indoor education and play space(s), and be shared between two of these spaces, where possible, for efficiency • be lockable • provide flexibility to leave doors safely open, to accommodate child movement in and out of the space, as required • be sliding door, where possible, and have a soft close device on them to

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>minimise finger entrapment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide easy access for staff but be inaccessible to children and be lockable, while providing free egress as required by the NCC for access and egress, and • have handles at adult height (1500–1650mm AFL) to prevent children from independently accessing the space.
Technical Specifications	5.3.6 Doors: Automatic operation doors	Automatic doors must not be installed in early learning facilities except at external entrances.
Technical Specifications	5.3.10 Stairs and ramps	<p>Project consultants must provide stairs and ramps that comply with the following requirements: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • step risers should be between 150mm and 180mm, and preferably 150mm for P-6 schools and early learning facilities • tread depth must be within a range of 300mm to 355mm, with a preference for the lower end of range in primary and early learning facilities, and both must comply with the NCC D3D14 tread/riser ratios, and [...] <p>Additional requirements apply in vertical schools and early learning facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stair width should be optimised, wherever possible, to manage circulation pressures, which can be more acute in vertical environments, and • a minimum of two sets of stairs must be installed for vertical schools which should include fire stairs that are compliant for general student movement and, predicted or known, circulation patterns, as well as emergency evacuation. • consideration should also be given to strategically scattering stairs along an atrium to encourage vertical circulation. Rather than connecting levels with

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>staircases, seating may also be provided by the stairs (these have become known as Hellerup stairs). If installed, Hellerup or central stairs should be dual function, i.e. suitable for use as mini theatre spaces, presentation spaces, or spaces for informal gathering or study as well as circulation.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>In early learning facilities, stairs and ramps should not be located adjacent to early learning facility perimeter fences as the required handrails can be used as a foothold to scale the fence. In facilities, particularly modular kindergartens where structures are elevated above ground level, special consideration should be given to designing outdoor learning spaces that integrate seamlessly with the rest of the service. Stepped-down connections and abrupt level changes should be avoided, ensuring access is designed to allow babies and small children to reach outdoor spaces independently or with minimal support. Uneven hard surfaces in retaining walls or similar landscape elements resulting in drops of more than 150mm pose serious safety and fall risks for babies and small children and must be avoided in outdoor areas of early learning facilities.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.3.10 Stairs and ramps; Balustrades and bleachers	<p>Stair and ramp handrails in facilities containing primary or early learning aged children have different handrail requirements, as per NCC D3D22. Handrails, particularly lower ones, must be designed in a way that does not create a climbing risk. Openings in barriers in early learning facilities must not exceed 125mm. All balustrades and barriers must be non-scalable, with no horizontal rails or potential footholds, which could be used for climbing. In early learning facilities, in particular, non-scalable mesh screening may be a necessary supplementary measure.</p> <p>[...]</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>Where a balustrade forms a barrier or fence around the early learning facility (i.e. above ground floor in multilevel buildings or protecting from water or climbing hazards) it must be 2000mm AFL, non-scalable and not have an item within 1000mm that could be used to scale. In addition, mesh wire fencing must form the balustrade to reduce climbing risk and items, such as children's play items, inadvertently passing through the barrier dropping below.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures; Toilet facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Amenities for staff, students, children and visitors must be provided to satisfy the following: [...]the NCC Volume 1, Table F4D4f for schools, and Table VIC F4D4g https://ncc.qbcb.gov.au/editions/ncc-2022/adopted/volume-one/f-health-and-amenity/part-f4-sanitary-and-other-facilities must be used to calculate toilet allocations for each building and, while that allocation of sanitary compartments does not have to be accommodated within that building, it must be in reasonable proximity to it
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures: Toilets and sanitaryware in early learning facilities	<p>The design of children's bathrooms in early learning facilities must enable supervision at all times, while maintaining children's rights and dignity. The following requirements must be satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">children's bathrooms are located with direct access to indoor education and play spaces and outdoor spaces, andin multi-storey buildings, toilets are provided on each floor, allowing children to access toilets reasonably quicklydesign must enable supervision between the indoor education and play spaces and the bathroom, as well as between outdoor spaces and toilets. This can be achieved through a supervision window,

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>glazed door or other suitable design solution/s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the private areas of children's bathrooms are not visible to people in the foyer or beyond the play space fence junior toilet pans and toilet roll holders are installed at child height and within child-arm reach, respectively, i.e. (toilet roll holders should be no more than 300mm from the edge of the pan and large toilet roll holders must not be used as they are challenging for child access and use the minimum number of wash basins required by NCC VIC Table F4D4g, at least, are provided, noting that a continuous sink or trough type washbasin is another acceptable option wash basin heights comply with regulatory requirements, including that rim heights are accessible to children and no more than 600mm AFL taps and soap dispensers are child-friendly (i.e. heights, complexity, required pressure) in ELCCs, tempered water (between 30-35 degrees) is provided to children's handwashing basins/troughs in kindergartens, either cold or tempered water (between 30-35 degrees) is provided to children's handwashing basins/troughs, as determined by operator preference mirrors are installed at child height (base of mirror no higher than 600mm) closet pans situated in a bank must be separated from each other by opaque partitions between 900-1200mm AFL single partition doors have sufficient gaps on either long side to avoid finger entrapment (double barn-style doors

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>must not be used due to entrapment risk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lower height doors, up to 900-1200mm AFL, to provide children with adequate privacy and dignity while still enabling visual supervision partition front edges are rounded to reduce injury risk the required number of DDA-compliant toilet/s, at minimum, provided for wheelchair and mobility scooter access hand dryers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ELCCs) electric hand dryers must not be installed in children's bathrooms, instead hooks must be installed for hand towels at an appropriate child height and paper towel dispensers installed at adult height, and (kindergartens) hooks for hand towels at children's height and paper towel dispensers at adult height are preferred, however (all early learning facilities) where hand dryers are provided, they must be temperature controlled, and blade type hand dryers must not be used shower/baby bath: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ELCCs) a minimum of one recessed baby bath to be provided, and one additional recessed baby bath where the facility has more than two rooms for children under 3 years old (kindergartens) an additional shower bath (not more than 300mm deep) with a flexible handheld shower head, located in the bathroom servicing the education and play spaces
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures;	Early learning facilities must include dedicated laundry rooms that provide:

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
	Laundries in early learning facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secure storage for cleaning equipment and supplies infrastructure for a washing machines and dryers, and a wet area. <p>These rooms must be lockable and not be accessible from early learning play spaces.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures; Nappy changing facilities	<p>When an early learning facility accommodates children under 3 years old, and a nappy changing bench to be installed, the following requirements must be satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> design complies with NCC VIC F4D4(9) (c), including proximity to a baby bath positioned to allow supervision sightlines between the bathroom, adjoining indoor education and play spaces and/or outdoor space adult hand washing basin is located in proximity to nappy changing bench with tempered water bench to be a minimum of 1200 mm length and 800 mm depth to allow educators to lay babies either vertically or horizontally for access and ergonomics design considers the placement of overhead hazards overhead cabinetry is considered that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is not located directly over the nappy changing area or baby bath where it poses a head injury risk, but rather directly adjacent over bench/hand wash basin space is ergonomically accessible by staff, and has open pigeonhole storage and closed cupboards under bench storage with child proof latches are included

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design considers waste strategy for nappy change including ergonomics and utility in terms of location, access and type of bin steps beneath the nappy changing bench are included that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable child access to the bench without staff having to lift them withstand a minimum load of 40kg include side handrails, and lock into a fixed position nappy changing bench and steps are not positioned near a door in a way that impedes access to and from the room or poses a risk of tripping
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures; Tap fittings and fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where possible, use the same model and manufacture throughout a school or early learning facility. [...] <p>In early learning facilities, external taps must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> separate taps are provided for both children's water play activities and facility gardening/maintenance hose taps for children's play activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided at multiple points installed at a child accessible height, and not connected to recycled water external taps for maintenance and gardening purposes are fitted with vandal-resistant handles.
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures; Food preparation	<p>Class 1 Commercial Kitchens (ELCCs)</p> <p>Where an ELCC is operating on a full-time basis and providing a daily meal service (i.e. 3 meals per day) for enrolled children, a Class 1 commercial kitchen must be installed and registered with the local authorities.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>Class 1 commercial kitchens in ELCCs must satisfy the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• comply with State Government Environmental Health Standards for Class 1 Level Kitchen, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), and the Food Act 1984• satisfy all local government/council requirements to ensure compliance and prevent licensing delays• be designed in accordance with the ELCC Functional Design Brief, and• commercial kitchen design specialist advice, wherever possible, and• include an appropriately sized grease trap, and• natural and mechanical ventilation.
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures;	Indoor Program Kitchen (ELCCs)
	Food preparation	<p>Indoor program kitchens must have direct access to and line of sight into the children's room. A child-safe gate must be installed between the kitchen and children's room.</p> <p>Kitchens must contain a sink, bar fridge, bench space, overhead cupboards, and simple joinery/pantry to store a small amount of ingredients, utensils and tableware. The sink must have tempered (between 30–35 degrees) and cold water, with a mixer tap to control water temperature.</p> <p>An oven should be considered with a slide in door and other safety features such as a lockable and induction cooktop with a child lock function. Kitchens with open electric cooktops must have an adult height switch mounted near the appliance in a visible and readily accessible position, to ensure the safety of children in the room. A sliding or double-hung window should serve as a servery to the external veranda area, and a hand-wash basin must be provided.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.3.12 Plumbing fixtures;	Outdoor Program Kitchen (ELCCs)
	Food preparation	<p>An outdoor program kitchen is sometimes installed as a supplement to an indoor program kitchen. It is a simplified version of an indoor program kitchen, however, outdoor kitchens must include a sink with tempered (between 30–35 degrees) and cold water access, bench space with under-bench storage, and secure outdoor power outlet. A cavity for a permanent fridge or oven is not required. Where site conditions allow, the landscape design should include a safe area for a portable fire pit near the outdoor kitchen, ensuring it does not pose a fire risk to the building or decking. The kitchen must provide space and power for bench-top appliances such as plug-in stoves, portable ovens, and toasters. The design should also include storage for these appliances, either in the kitchen or a nearby internal store. The joinery should feature a pantry for storing a small amount of ingredients, utensils, and tableware, designed to prevent access by animals.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.3.13 Joinery and fixtures	<p>The scope of joinery works must include:</p> <p>[...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• built-in student lockers (in vertical schools and early learning facilities, locker numbers must reflect floor number i.e. 4.1, 4.2)
Technical Specifications	5.3.13 Joinery and fixtures;	All reception/canteen counters in school and early learning facilities must facilitate use by students, children and visitors who use wheelchairs or other disability support. The wheelchair accessible areas of the reception counters must be readily identifiable, easily accessible, and centrally located.
	Accessibility and inclusion	
Technical Specifications	5.3.13 Joinery and fixtures;	Each indoor education and play space in an early learning facility must be provided with a custom fabricated rack of joinery pigeon holes or mobile locker units with caster wheels. The
	Early learning joinery	

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>number is determined by the number of places per rooms</p> <p>For example a 33-place room should have 33 pigeon holes. Children's lockers or pigeon-holes, whether located within an education and play or a circulation space, must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• heavy-set and stable to prevent tripping hazards• positioned to allow direct staff observation• each is approximately 350 x 450mm• washable materials are used, and (where located in circulation space)• the design and placement keep the circulation path unobstructed, and• the minimum required width of the circulation path is maintained. <p>(Indoor education and play spaces) Should include wet/art troughs with soap dispensers above troughs, along with bench and under-bench storage cupboards—one at adult height (900mm) and one at child height (no more than 600mm).</p> <p>Cabinetry above sinks must be avoided.</p> <p>All low-height joinery doors must be fitted with keyed locks (with same key for all), magnetic latches, or childproof catches to restrict access by children.</p> <p>(ELCCs) Joinery design in the children's program space and internal store should meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• comply with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) standards and ergonomic principles• maximise built-in sturdy shelving with a recommended depth of approximately 620mm• incorporate flexible usage features, including large storage spaces, drawers,

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>adjustable shelving, and closed cupboards with lockable options, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• includes at least one overhead cupboard equipped with a key lock for secure storage. <p>(ELCCs) Joinery in the baby bottle preparation area should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• overhead cupboards and shelves, including• at least one overhead cupboard with a key lock (not above sink)• bench space for safe and hygienic preparation, including a soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser• a hand wash basin and a separate sink with an integrated drainer, and• space for a microwave and a small under-bench fridge. <p>(KOSS) Joinery design in children's internal store must also include maximum built-in sturdy shelving to a recommended depth of approximately 620mm.</p> <p>(Maternal child health (MCH) consulting rooms) Fixed joinery must be designed in consultation with the council/ third-party providers. It should generally include the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• drawers and cupboards with childproof and lockable doors• nappy bin drawers• pull-out stairs for mobile children to climb onto the change bench, and• an examination bench, which includes a measuring ruler of minimum 1m, positioned under natural light with vinyl flooring.
Technical Specifications	5.3.14 Insect screens	Durable insect screens must be fitted on all operable windows and any openings used for night purging, unless alternative justification

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>is provided, to encourage natural ventilation where air quality is good and provide protection from mosquitoes and other insects. Screens should also be provided in any food preparation areas, including food technology areas. Screens must be of high commercial quality and fitted with aluminium or stainless-steel mesh.</p> <p>Insect screens should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• installed internally and facilitate easy removal and reinstallation, especially for screens at height, to enable convenient cleaning and maintenance, and• securely fitted within the frames so children cannot push the mesh out of the frame. <p>In early learning facilities, insect screens on windows that open between approved and non-approved spaces must withstand a force of 300N in any direction without breaking, deforming more than 10mm along their length, or showing signs of fracture, as per AS1926.1. This includes insect screens on windows that open to outdoor areas not enclosed by children’s playgrounds.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.4.2 Internal Finishes; Wall linings	<p>In early learning facilities, wall lining in indoor education and play spaces must be made of durable, washable materials, while also considering the room’s acoustic requirements to control reverberation. Additionally, neutral colours and textures should be used to minimise sensory overload.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.4.2 Internal Finishes; Resilient floor finishes	<p>In early learning facilities, resilient, washable and non-slip sheets such as vinyl/linoleum flooring must be installed in indoor play spaces. The floor finishes must also have a soft-touch surface to ensure comfort for toddlers who may play on or touch the flooring directly. The materials should also contribute to a welcoming and child-friendly environment.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.5 Acoustic engineering	<p>In early learning facilities, indoor or partially enclosed education and play areas should have as many sound-absorbing panels as possible, such as pinboards, on ceilings or walls (but not cupboard doors). These can also display children's work, posters, or regulatory notices while helping to reduce noise. In addition, education and play areas in early learning facilities should have a ceiling with a noise reduction coefficient (NRC) of at least 0.7. [footnote: Association of Australasian Acoustical Consultants, Guideline for Child Care Centre Acoustic Assessment]</p>
Technical Specifications	5.5 Acoustic engineering; Vertical school acoustics	<p>In vertical schools and early learning facilities, acoustic measures must be well-considered in school circulation spaces such as hallways and stairwells to mitigate excessive noise generated through student travel between levels. See required sound insulation ratings at 5.5.1 Demonstration of performance <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-quality-standards-handbook/technical-specifications#551-demonstration-of-performance>.</p> <p>Acoustics in vertical schools and early learning facilities, particularly in atria and other circulation areas close to learning spaces, must be closely considered in early tender work and sequenced with design. Children and educators in early learning facilities must be able to speak and be heard without strain. [...]</p> <p>In vertical schools and early learning facilities, special consideration must be given to ambient noise from specialist classrooms, such as wood workshops, where they are located near atria. Due to reverberation through these spaces, additional acoustic measures must be provided to meet standards for open-plan and circulation spaces adjacent, open and accessible to atria.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.7.3 Pedestrian footpaths	Exposed sharp aggregate paving finishes should be avoided in primary schools and early learning facilities.
Technical Specifications	5.8.1. Heating	<p>Mechanical heating (and cooling) units must be provided in the following rooms of an early learning facility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• office, planning and staff rooms• foyers, and• children's indoor play spaces.
Technical Specifications	5.8.2 Cooling	<p>Regardless of a school's location, air conditioning must be provided to the following facilities: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• early learning facilities [...] <p>Safely operable windows should be installed in vertical schools and early learning facilities to provide opportunities for natural ventilation and night purging. Where a vertical school has operable windows, they must be zoned and centrally mechanised through an aggregated Building Management System (BMS) or a separate, smart monitoring control system for windows.</p> <p>In early learning facilities, air conditioning units must be provided in the following spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• office, planning and staff rooms• foyer, and• children's indoor play spaces. [...] <p>When planning to install an air conditioning system—whether self-funded by the school or funded by the VSBA—a life-cycle analysis must be undertaken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• calculate total ownership costs (over at least 7–10 years), including capital costs associated with electric sub-mains• maintenance and energy costs (on the basis of likely energy tariff rates and

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		<p>envisaged usage requirements), and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare the financial implications of potential active mechanical versus passive solutions (such as orientation, insulation, and natural ventilation) or combinations thereof• highlighting both the upfront investment and long-term operational costs. <p>This analysis is to ensure that the installed air conditioning system is necessary, fit for purpose, requires minimal maintenance, and provides value for money for the design in question.</p> <p>All air-conditioning systems must comply with and be installed in accordance with relevant Australian standards.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.9.6 General power outlets	<p>For example, in early learning facilities, GPOs must be installed in appropriate locations to support check-in/check-out devices at the reception area. [...]</p> <p>In early learning facilities, general power outlets must be located at 1500mm AFL in spaces that are accessible to children.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.9.8 Lighting systems	<p>Project consultants must select lighting that meet the following requirements: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in early learning facilities, if an observation booth is included, an indicator light must be installed in the indoor education and play space, with its switch located inside the booth, to inform educators that the observation booth is in use [...]• in early learning facilities, indoor education and play spaces must include 0-100% dimming lights to enable lighting to be adjusted

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.10 Information and communication technology:	The VSBA Delivery Manager must facilitate IMTD's review of ICT design documentation and plans, including for power and data point schedules for all new early learning facilities.
	ICT in early learning facilities	<p>Communications rooms in early learning facilities that are co-located on school sites must be treated as 'satellite' communications rooms as per DE ICT Design Models for Schools Guide, however, they must have two separate communications cabinets in order to provide the following facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• conduit connection to the school network designed to connect to a separate rack that will not be accessible by the early learning facility operator.• a new NBN connection from the street connected to a separate rack for the early learning facility service provider to install their own equipment and connection. <p>Project consultants should refer to the early learning facility functional brief for information on the number and location of wireless access data points.</p> <p>Where early learning facilities are to be leased to external service providers, all data points in these spaces must connect to a secondary communications rack dedicated exclusively to the external service provider infrastructure. For this purpose, sufficient space for a separate (external service provider) rack in the communications room should be allocated. External service providers are responsible for installing their own active IT equipment such as WAPs, switches, audio visual and telephone equipment.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
Technical Specifications	5.10.1 ICT design and information management and technology division	Early learning facilities are typically operated by the local council or third party providers and not subject to State Purchase Contract (SPC) arrangements. The service provider is therefore responsible for the facility's ICT equipment and services.
Technical Specifications	5.10.3 - Network points required	<p>Recessed floor boxes must not be installed in early learning contexts. [...]</p> <p>In early learning facilities, data outlets (and GPOs) must be installed at 1500mm AFL in spaces that are accessible to children.</p>
Technical Specifications	5.10.6 - Server room and IT equipment cabinets	Any new early learning facilities located on a school site must have separate ICT service in addition to a conduit back to the school network. Consultants must allow for two suitably sized and ventilated service cupboards to accommodate the IT equipment and communications cabinet in the early learning facility.
Technical Specifications	5.11.2 Physical security	<p>where a new early learning facility is to be delivered on a school site with additional community facilities, such as maternal child and health (MCH) consulting rooms or community meeting spaces, consultants must consult with the Project Control Group and early learning service provider service provider about the design of barriers and gates to ensure access to the community facilities while maintaining secure early learning facility boundaries that only authorised early learning staff and registered users can access.</p> <p>Early learning facilities on school sites, must be designed to restrict public access to all areas. A fence must define the early learning facility's perimeter to prevent school users and members of the public from accessing the early learning facility without permission and supervision.</p>

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		Advice from the service provider should be obtained to determine where keypad entry systems should be installed within the early learning facility.
Technical Specifications	5.11.7 CCTV monitoring	CCTV should not be installed in early learning facilities, unless explicitly requested by the agreed provider and approved through the Project Control Group.
Technical Specifications	5.12.6 Smoke detectors and sound alarms	Where required, all smoke detectors and sound alarms must comply with and be installed in accordance with relevant Australian standards. In early learning facilities, automatic smoke detection and alarm systems must be provided throughout the whole building in accordance with NCC E2D20 requirements.
Technical Specifications	5.12.9 Water efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If sprinkler systems are installed, each floor must be fitted with isolation valves or shut-off points for floor-by-floor testing. Early learning sprinkler system requirements must comply with E1D11.
Technical Specifications	5.13.2 Tap outlets and fixtures	Project consultants must provide a general distribution of external taps for garden watering, irrigation, and general facility use, and, in early learning facilities, also for children's water play activities.
Technical Specifications	5.14 Vertical transportation	<p>Project consultants must provide vertical transportation if required to ensure that the facilities delivered are accessible and compliant with all relevant regulations. If vertical transportation is provided, it must meet the following requirements: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">where an early learning facility is located above ground level, lift capacity, access and operational arrangements for at least one lift must accommodate the efficient, mechanical transportation

Section	Sub-category	Early learning facility-specific criterion
		of groups of children and parents/carers without the need for key passes
Building Completion and Handover	Building Completion and Handover	<p>Completion and handover timeframes differ for early learning facility delivery than from schools. In the case of early learning facilities, third party service providers are appointed approximately six to nine months prior to start of the new school year i.e. April-June. The service provider is the only entity that can apply to the regulator for approval to operate an early learning service.[...]</p> <p>Furthermore, as practical completion is reached the early learning service provider is required to submit an Occupancy Permit, a Building Permit, As Built plans and evidence of a lease agreement.</p> <p>The approval process includes a site visit by the regulator. This occurs after PC once the service provider has installed all equipment and connected services for operations. Where the regulator identifies non-compliant elements that must be rectified prior to service approval the VSBA Project Manager will have to determine the process to rectify the elements prior to the start of the early learning term which aligns with school terms.</p>
Building Completion and Handover	Building Completion and Handover	Smoking is banned within four metres of all entrances to early learning facilities, primary and secondary schools in Victoria, and within the school grounds, under an amendment to the Tobacco Act 1987.