Child and Family Centre
Functional Design Brief

Department of Education
Early Years and Child and Family Centres
Child and Family Centre Functional Design Brief

The Department of Education developed a Child and Family Centre Functional Design Brief for use by architects responsible for the design of the various Child and Family Centres. The Functional Design Brief outlines a range of requirements that should be incorporated into each Centre design.

The common principles and underpinning philosophy were to design a child and family centred environment, creating a harmonious autonomy of space, which relates equally to children, parents and the wider community who will be the primary users of the facility.

Overarching design principles to be considered

- Child and family centred
- Atmosphere (including entrance) is warm and welcoming, flavour to reflect community
- Seen as a positive environment
- Build with children in mind - colour schemes, spaces, windows, access, design flexible and practical and of good quality
- Building presentation is open, non-institutional, a welcoming space
- Building respects social and cultural diversity
- Exciting and challenging for children
- Flexibility in building with spaces for multiple uses
- Good quality furniture, carpet and fixtures
- Indoor wet areas for children’s creative play
- Windows to be positioned to optimise viewing for small children between rooms and to the outdoors
- Comfortable informal spaces for small groups of parents/carers and children to sit and chat
- Maximum use of natural light
- Values clearly agreed and visible in centre (may be in symbols)
- Accessible for all children and families in the community

Exterior design principles to be considered

- Outdoor communal areas that promote engagement
- Court yard areas for children and families
- Different areas/surfaces
- External play areas: wet, age appropriate
- Garden, including vegetable patch
- Indoor/outdoor easy access
- Integrated with other new developments where appropriate
- Large gross motor play areas
- Large windows for ease of viewing
- Outside and inside - big doors, natural environment exposure
- Parking areas well lit at night
- Pet space (designated)
- Safety (well-lit)

Interior design spaces to be considered

- Adjunct care space
- Common tea room for staff
- Communal areas that promote engagement
- Communal kitchen – space to prepare and eat food together
- Consultation/counselling rooms – single, groups, private and confidential
- Feed/change area
- Flexibility in size of rooms within centre
- Information areas for parents
• Launching into Learning space
• Laundry
• Learning spaces for parents
• One main entrance – first door says it all – meet and greet reception area for children and parents
• Parent Training Room/s that can be multipurpose
• Play spaces based on evidence based learning principles and in view for parents
• Pram space
• Quiet areas
• Reception area is open, warm and friendly
• Rooms available for community groups
• Sand pits
• Sleep areas – nooks, nests, booths for sleeping
• Staff office space
• Storage spaces – indoor
• Wet areas
• Work Rooms with flexibility but also dedicated sp