

**PART IV – STANDARDS FOR CENTRES
DIVISION 3 – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT
OUTDOOR PLAY AREA**

SECTION 59

(1) The licensee of a centre must provide a safe outdoor play area of seven square metres per licensed child care space.

(2) Unless otherwise provided in the licence, at least half of the outdoor play area required by subsection (1) must be adjacent to the centre and the remainder must be within walking distance of the centre, determined in relation to the youngest age category for which the centre is licensed.

22 May 2015 cC-7.31 Reg 1 s59.

INTENT

The intent of this section is to ensure children have access to an adequate amount of safe and secure outdoor play space.

POLICY

Where special circumstances exist and a licensee is unable to meet the requirements of this section, the licensee may submit a written plan for alternative accommodations for outdoor play to the Director for approval.

GUIDELINES

The outdoor play area is enclosed with a fence or natural barrier (e.g. dense hedge) to ensure proper supervision, injury protection and area control.

Storage structures will be deducted from the outdoor play space measurements before calculating the required area per licensed child care space.

All outdoor activity areas are maintained in a clean and safe condition by removing debris, dilapidated structures, broken or worn play equipment, building supplies, glass, sharp rocks, twigs, toxic plants and other injurious material.

New playspaces and equipment and additions and replacement parts of existing playspaces and equipment meet the requirements for playspaces and equipment as per CSA Standard CAN/CSA - Z614, Children's Playspaces and Equipment.

Space is adequate for the number of children using the area at any one time (i.e. groups rotate).

Sandboxes are constructed to permit drainage. Covers should allow air circulation to allow natural cleansing of sand. Sandboxes must be re-covered when not in use and are kept free from cat or other animal excrement.

Sandbox Maintenance

Sand play areas should be turned over to a depth of 460 mm (18 inches) annually.

Sand can be cleaned by the following method:

- Measure sand box area and determine depth of sand. Determine volume of sand. For each 5 cubic metres (175 cubic feet), fill a 9 litre (2 gallon) watering can with water and 110 cm (4 fluid ounces) of bleach.
- Distribute the solution over the sandbox area.
- Hose down area to allow solution to penetrate into the sand.
- Turn over the sand, depth of one shovelful (17 cm or 7.5 inches) before children use it again.

Outdoor play space has clearly defined circulation and traffic paths for both people and wheeled toys to prevent collision (e.g. between swings and slides).

There is adequate accessible storage for equipment and toys.

Adequate safety provisions are made for any standing bodies of water (e.g. swimming pools are fenced).

BEST PRACTICE

Direct access at grade (i.e. no stairs or ramps) from each group room to the outdoor play space is provided to create increased use and greater flexibility for children to move in and out independently.

The space has a variety of surfaces permitting different types of play, such as sand, black top, wood chips, grass, as well as an intriguing mix of trees, flowers, paths, inclines, small hills, fences and water to inspire children to engage in creative explorations.

Sunlit areas and shaded areas are provided by means of open space and tree plantings or other covered outdoor spaces such as a porch (ideally 3 -5 m deep), veranda, gazebo, play shed or hut, lean-to, or roofed activity space.

The outdoor space has access to water (e.g. fountains, water table) for both drinking and playing.

9 - 18 sq.m/child is preferable to allow each child enough outdoor play space to play safely and exuberantly.

The following areas are included in the design of the play yard:

- Private places that are easily “owned” by a single child
- Places for small groups of 1-4 children
- Places for large muscle activity involving groups of up to 10 children
- Places for games and sports involving more than 10 children
- Plenty of free space for children to gather spontaneously

Play yards are outdoor extensions of the indoor play rooms, providing many of the same opportunities as indoor spaces. Opportunities are provided for active, creative, structured, quiet, fantasy and therapeutic (i.e. for children with diverse needs) activities.

Outdoor play space has at least two supervisable exits.

Proper drainage is essential for year-round use of outdoor space, with the quickest drying surfaces located closest to the building’s entry.