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| **Caring for Our Children Standards:****Indoor Space**STANDARD 5.1.2.1: Space Required per Child In general, the designated area for children's activities should contain a minimum of 42 square feet of usable floor space per child. A usable floor space of 50 square feet per child is preferred. This excludes floor area that is used for: a. Circulation (e.g., walkways around the activity area); b. Classroom support (e.g., staff work areas and activity equipment storage that may be adjacent to the activity area); c. Furniture (e.g., bookcases, sofas, lofts, block corners, tables and chairs); d. Center support (e.g., administrative office, washrooms, etc.) Usable, indoor floor space for the children's activity area depends on the design and layout of the child care facility, and whether there is an opportunity and space for outdoor activities.**Rational**Studies have shown that the quality of the physical designed environment of early child care centers is related to children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development...Child behavior tends to be more constructive when sufficient space is organized to promote developmentally appropriate skills. Crowding has been shown to be associated with increased risk of developing upper respiratory infections. Also, having sufficient space will reduce the risk of injury from simultaneous activities. |
| Rule Proposal Options | Impact Examples | Pros and Cons |
| **Option1:** No changes to current rule which have no square footage requirements indoors or outdoors.Rational:Eliminate any financial impact to providers. | None | Pros:* Providers would be able to continue to care for up to 10 children regardless of available space.
* There would be more child care spaces available in lower income communities where smaller environments are typically found.

Cons:* Children who are furthest from opportunity often continue to receive care in limited child care environments.
* Possible cognitive, social, and emotional impacts on children.
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| **Option 2:**There shall be a minimum of 35 square feet of indoor activity area per child. The space shall be available for use by children at all times. The following shall not be counted as part of the 35 square feet per child requirement: heating units, storage areas; large permanent equipment; any space not useable by children.Rational:Align with current CF/CC rules.  | Estimated 30-50% of providers overall could be affected.  | Pros:* More aligns with Caring for Our Children recommendations.
* Better supports cognitive, social, and emotional needs of children.

Cons:* Financial impact on providers who would have to accept fewer children.
* Could impact child care supply for lower income families.

Note: There is an impact on licensing specialist workload. This would increase the length of the visit by 25% initially and if room use changes. |
| **Option 3:**There shall be a minimum of 25 square feet of indoor activity area per child. The space shall be available for use by children at all times. The following shall not be counted as part of the 25 square feet per child requirement: heating units, storage areas; large permanent equipment; any space not useable by children.Rational:Provides for some very minimal square footage requirements, but still maintain a lower requirement than CF/CC. | Estimated 20-25% of providers overall could be affected. | Pros:* Provides some very minimal square footage requirements.
* Better supports cognitive, social, and emotional needs of children.
* Fewer providers are impacted.

Cons:* Less alignment with best practice.
* Benefits to children will be less than 35 square foot requirements.
* Some financial impact to providers.

Note: There is an impact on licensing specialist workload. This would increase the length of the visit by 25% initially and if room use changes. |
| **Option 4:**If the available space to children is 140 square feet or less, the maximum number of children in care at any one time is six.Rational:140 square feet is what is required for 4 children at a 35 square foot requirement. This allows for some limiting on number of children in care in extremely small spaces.  | Estimated percent of providers impacted* 5% at most across the board. This would likely affect single wide trailers or providers who limit care to a small area of their home, e.g. bedroom.
 | Pros:* Provides limits on number of children in care when there are extreme space limitations.
* Very few providers will be impacted.

Cons:* Because very few programs will be affected, there will be very little effect on improving children’s child care environments.

Note: There is minimal impact to licensing specialist workload. |