



Government of
South Australia

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Integrated Hub Design Brief

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Office for
Early Childhood
Development

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Project background and objectives.....	3
3.	Project scope.....	3
4.	Key design and construction requirements.....	4
5.	Functional requirements	4
6.	Operational considerations	7
7.	Community engagement and stakeholder collaboration.....	7
8.	Budget and funding parameters	8
9.	Project delivery timeline	9
10.	Appendices.....	11

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the design brief

The Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) will establish 20 integrated hubs across the state, delivering preschool and broader child and family programs, in areas where there are high levels of developmental vulnerability in South Australian regional and metropolitan areas. These integrated hubs will be both conversions of existing services and new builds. It is anticipated that two hubs will be developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) sector.

We are seeking to partner with both government and non-government organisations to establish the OECD integrated hubs.

For more information on the OECD integrated hubs and commissioning approach, please refer to the Integrated Hubs Partnership Guide.

The information contained in this document is designed to provide guidance for both conversions of existing services and new builds using evidence-based best practice integrated hubs; however, it is recognised there may need to be tailored or innovative approaches in some scenarios, depending on community needs and site context. Precinct options will be considered on an exception basis.

2. Project background and objectives

2.1 Project context

The OECD is responsible for implementing the government's commitment to reducing the rate of South Australian children entering school developmentally vulnerable. Integrated hubs are part of the state government's significant investment to improve outcomes for young children in South Australia and will be delivered through both government and non-government settings.

All hubs will deliver a 30-hour preschool program, Preschool Boost, for 3- and 4-year-old children.

The full report from the Royal Commission can be found [here](#).

The government's response can be found [here](#).

2.2 Alignment with community and stakeholder needs

Research undertaken by Social Ventures Australia¹ highlights the critical importance of hubs infrastructure to support hub activities and that these spaces should be designed so that they are warm, inviting and welcoming. A summary of these findings, and South Australia's Department for Education (DfE) Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting context is provided in 10.1 Community facilities.

Further detail regarding local community input into integrated hubs is provided in Community Engagement and Stakeholder Collaboration.

3. Project scope

3.1 Overview of services to be provided

Each integrated hub will operate a Service Model to offer:

- High quality early childhood education and care
- 30-hour preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds (known as Preschool Plus)
- Resources to build educator capacity and meet the needs of children
- Access to family and child health and development services
- Parenting and family support programs
- Community co-designed, place-based additional supports

Further details about the Service Model can be found in the Integrated Hubs Partnership Guide.

¹ Integration in early years services, September 2024, <https://www.socialventures.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Integration-in-early-years-services-final-report-6.9.24.pdf>

4. Key design and construction requirements

4.1 Minimum standards and compliance

Integrated hubs must comply with all required standards and regulations. This includes requirements under the National Construction Code, including the Building Code of Australia (BCA) for a class 9b building, and any requirements under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). As early childhood education and care facilities, the integrated hubs must also meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF), the *Education and Care Services National Law (South Australia)* (the National Law) and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (the National Regulations), specific to the physical environment. Considerations include minimum indoor and outdoor space, toilets, handwashing, nappy-change and bath facilities, fencing, and natural light and window requirements.

The *Creating safe facilities: A guide to building and renovating education and care services* resource provided by the Education Standards Board (ESB) provides an overview of mandatory ECEC requirements.

4.2 SA Department for Education (DfE) Building Design Standards

While not mandated, providers interested in becoming an integrated hub are encouraged to refer to the DfE Early Childhood Education and Care Facilities Design Standards, published in 2024. The design standards are to support stakeholders to:

- create quality, fit for purpose learning environments for children from birth to school age
- ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, standards and the National Construction Code
- support the effective delivery of connected, continuous programs and services; and
- ensure all children are thriving and learning.

Part 3: Generic Functional Briefs of the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards provides advice in relation to community facilities as designed for Children’s Centres for Early Childhood and Parenting that currently offer integrated services.

4.3 Accessibility and universal design principles

The design of the integrated hubs will consider inclusion of all children and families, with specific consideration of mobility, neurodiverse environments and culturally inclusive spaces, reflective of community demographics.

Further considerations for the accessibility and universal design principles are provided in the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards, Part 2: Design Principles - Universal Design.

4.4 Sustainability and environmental considerations

The building will meet the minimum requirements for sustainability elements as per the relevant building codes and legislation. Opportunities to improve sustainability will be considered and pursued when they are cost effective and contribute to the overall design, feel and functionality of the service.

Further considerations for sustainability and environmental matters are provided in the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards, Part 2: Design Principles - Environmentally Sustainable Design.

5. Functional requirements

5.1 Layout and spatial requirements

Considerations for the rooms required for the integrated hub are detailed below and are further described in the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards, Part 3: Generic Functional Briefs.

There are 3 physical models for integrated hubs:

- An **integrated build model** is where all services are available and delivered under one roof.
- A **co-located build model** occurs where buildings for services are located closely to each other on one site.
- A **precinct model** is where services are delivered at multiple sites within short walking distance from each other (ideally less than 1km). This model will be considered for OECD integrated hubs by exception.

5.1.1 Indoor spaces

An overview of the minimum room requirements is included as Appendix 10.2 Minimum community space room specification. New builds must accommodate at least 60 preschool places.

The building should create a welcoming and safe atmosphere, with signage of rooms provided and navigation easy for new and returning families.

The below sections detail the required indoor spaces for a new integrated hub building and are desired deliverables of minor and capital infrastructure work to existing services which will be established as an integrated hub.

5.1.1.1 Entrance foyer

The main entrance to the building should be welcoming and shared for all services and programs so that there is no confusion for families attending the service.

New buildings should be designed with one front entrance regardless of the service or program the family is accessing to support a seamless approach, with clear signage providing direction to families and visitors. At a minimum, the entrance foyer will have a reception desk, community noticeboard, community pantry area, and seating to enable families to socialise with other families and support informal conversations with service providers.

Necessary security measures should be implemented to restrict access to relevant rooms and staff areas.

Existing services should maximise opportunities to provide a single front entrance and welcoming space for attending families and visitors.

5.1.1.2 Preschool room/s

The children enrolled in the preschool program will attend up to 30-hours of preschool each week. To facilitate this, multiple rooms will be included to support the delivery of a formal preschool program to at least 40 children aged 3 to 4 years old for a medium-sized centre, or at least 60 children aged 3 to 4 years old for a large-sized centre. In all facilities, minimum staffing ratios as defined under the national regulations must be met.

Children in the preschool room/s will have access to nappy-change facilities designed for use by ECEC staff and toilets designed for children.

5.1.2 Outdoor spaces

The below sections detail the required outdoor spaces for a new integrated hub building and are desired deliverables of minor and capital infrastructure work to existing services to be established as an integrated hub.

5.1.2.1 Outdoor play spaces

For new buildings, an outdoor play space will be provided for each preschool and long day care room. Existing services will maximise opportunities for simultaneous indoor and outdoor play for each room.

Outdoor play spaces will be provided so that children and educators have access to both indoor and outdoor play simultaneously. These spaces will be designed to support learning, play and wellbeing, and will be designed to support the learning needs of each cohort of children.

The outdoor play spaces will provide a mixture of open and covered areas to protect children and families from inclement weather.

5.1.2.2 Landscaping

The landscaping of the outdoor play spaces will reflect the NQF standards and best practice for ECEC services to provide safe and engaging areas for children to play and learn, as well as consideration of elements that will enable adult and child interactions, particularly in the outdoor play space connected to the community space.

Further considerations for outdoor spaces and landscape are provided in the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards, Part 2: Design Principles – Master Planning, Architectural & Landscape.

5.1.3 Office spaces

The below sections detail the required office spaces for a new integrated hub building and are desired deliverables of minor and capital infrastructure work to existing services which will be established as an integrated hub.

5.1.3.1 Staff room

For new buildings, a single staff room will be provided with sufficient space for all service staff, including centre-based and visiting service providers, which encourages relationship building across the service. The staff room should be located away from the entrance foyer to provide a quiet space for staff to take their breaks.

Existing services will maximise opportunities to provide a staff room which is separate to other areas used by children and families.

5.1.3.2 Integrated hub office spaces

For new buildings, at least one room will be included to support the staff dedicated to the integrated hub operations, which is a minimum of 3 people.

Existing services will maximise opportunities to provide a collaborative space for staff to work from.

5.1.4 Shared community areas

The below sections detail the required shared community areas for a new integrated hub building and are desired deliverables of minor and capital infrastructure work to existing services which will be established as an integrated hub.

5.1.4.1 Community spaces

For new buildings, at least one room will be included to support the provision of programs for children and families or parents/caregivers of children. These programs may include, but are not limited to playgroup, parenting courses, first aid, group counselling, peer support, workshops.

The community spaces will be designed to enable flexibility, which may be through the provision of an operable wall, or furnishings that allow for a parenting group and creche to run simultaneously.

The community room will have direct access to an outdoor play space to be used during activities such as playgroup and creche. The outdoor play space will be designed to support a connection to nature with active and quiet spaces, messy play (access to sand, water, paint, etc) and will support child and family interaction. Landscaping design should also consider opportunities for inclusion of edible plants to support nutrition education and access to fresh produce for the children and families attending the service.

Children, families and facilitators using the community spaces will have access to toilet and nappy change facilities.

Existing services will maximise opportunities to deliver programs to children and families or parents/caregivers of children separate to other areas used by the children enrolled in the preschool program (and long day care rooms where applicable).

5.1.4.2 Consultation and meeting rooms

For new buildings, at least one room will be included to support family and child health and development service consultations. Services may include, but are not limited to, child health and development checks, lactation support, speech pathology, occupational therapy, and counselling. Staff using these consultation rooms will have access to handwashing facilities.

For new buildings, at least one room will be included to support private meetings for staff and families. This room will need to have space to accommodate multiple family members and staff and provide a level of sound proofing that prevents conversations from being understood in adjacent rooms.

Existing services will maximise opportunities to provide a private space to offer consultations, or conduct small meetings.

5.1.5 Functional use

There will be many users of the integrated hub and a brief overview of how some of these users may move through the building when accessing the service is included within Appendix 10.4 Sample Functional Relationship Diagram, which also presents the interactions between the rooms in a visual format.

5.2 Safety and security provisions

Compliance with the mandatory NQF and building standards will meet safety and security requirements. Further considerations for safety and security provisions are provided in ECEC Facilities – Design

Standards, Part 2: Design Principles - Master Planning, Architectural & Landscape, Safety and security in design.

5.3 Technology and ICT infrastructure

It is preferred that all office spaces of the integrated hub will provide staff with access to a high-speed, secure internet connection. Typical administrative facilities should also be available, such as shared printers.

Community spaces should be equipped with technology to facilitate the sharing of presentations (e.g. through a digital projector) and participation in virtual meetings (e.g. through camera, microphone and audio equipment).

6. Operational considerations

The below considerations refer to new build integrated hubs but will apply when possible for existing services.

6.1 Flexibility and adaptability of spaces

The preschool room could provide flexibility to reconfigure the space to support the delivery of the program by creating areas for different activity types (e.g. group work, table work, movement and one-on-one support).

The community spaces will be designed to provide flexibility in use and configuration, which reflects the multi-purpose use of the spaces to suit the programs and services being offered.

6.2 Maintenance and durability standards

Finishes and materials selected for the integrated hub will reflect the purpose of the building by being durable, easy to clean and long-lasting.

The integrated hub buildings are intended to be permanent buildings with long lifecycles. All maintenance will be the responsibility of the service operator.

Further detail on considerations for maintenance and durability standards is provided in ECEC Facilities – Design Standards Part 2: Design Principles - Master Planning, Architectural & Landscape - Building quality, materials and lifecycle.

6.3 Traffic and access management

The movement of families and children from the car park, drop off/pick up zone and entrances to the integrated hub should be considered to ensure there are safe pedestrian pathways and logical 'desire paths' are implemented.

Further detail on considerations for traffic and access management is provided in the ECEC Facilities – Design Standards, Part 2: Design Principles - Traffic and pedestrian movement.

6.4 Operations during planning and delivery phase (for conversion/expansion site)

For integrated hub conversions, the impact of building works on existing operations requires careful consideration and planning. Project staging can be discussed with the project architect to minimise disruption to the service, for example, by concentrating works within smaller geographic areas as the project progresses. For services with non-operating weeks, conducting works during these times may minimise disruption. Temporary service arrangements while construction occurs may also be an option. Guidance and relevant approvals will need to be sought from the ESB for temporary arrangements.

7. Community engagement and stakeholder collaboration

7.1 Place-based approach

The integrated hubs will operate under a shared Service Model and develop an individual Service Offer to define exactly which services, programs and supports will be available at their site. The Service Offer will be developed using a place-based approach, through engagement with the local community. This place-based approach will extend to the design phase of all new integrated hubs, with the community invited to influence aspects of the design. This may be through incorporation of spaces to meet the cultural or

religious needs of the community, selection of colour schemes and artwork, or landscape design and plant selection.

7.2 Key stakeholder groups

Stakeholders for each integrated group will vary slightly, but as a general guide will include:

- Families with children eligible for service in the local community or enrolled in service (if the service is existing)
- Leadership of the integrated hub, or service operator
- Aboriginal families
- Community leaders/advocates/representatives
- Government service providers
- Non-government service providers; and
- Early childhood education service providers.

7.3 Engagement process and timeline

The integrated hub project will be supported by a local Enabling Group, consisting of the OECD, site operator and service provider community representatives. This group will plan and undertake consultation activities to capture the perspectives of families and service providers regarding the Service Offer and building design for the integrated hub. These activities will be planned to meet the needs of the local community and may include workshops, focus groups, pop up feedback sessions or surveys.

Leadership of the integrated hub, or within the service operator, is likely to participate in many of the consultation activities and discussions with the build team as part of the design process.

The timing of these activities will align with the project plan timing for the design phase of the integrated hub building.

7.4 Integration of feedback into design

Findings and outcomes from the consultation activities will be captured as they occur and summarised when they conclude. Some activities may have an immediate influence on the design. For instance, a session may be held to present options for stakeholders which to vote or may be used to influence the overall look and feel. For example, a collation of themes may be incorporated in briefings to certain partners in the build team. Feedback from consultation will be considered with respect to the available budget and compliance with mandatory standards.

7.5 Aboriginal cultural safety and inclusion

Through engagement with the local Aboriginal Community, the integrated hub will celebrate Aboriginal culture and incorporate elements to provide cultural safety in the design. This may be using appropriate imagery, demonstration of an Acknowledgement of Country on the building, name selection, or inclusion of design elements within indoor or outdoor spaces.

7.6 Community identity

The integrated hub should reflect the unique community in which it is located to facilitate connection for children and families with the service. This may be through use of appropriate imagery, name selection, additional function requirements or inclusion of design elements within indoor or outdoor spaces.

8. Budget and funding parameters

8.1 Estimated project costs

Each integrated hub will have an individual infrastructure budget, which may include land purchase and associated costs, site analysis costs (to an agreed threshold), time and materials for the building works to deliver a turn-key standard completed project, landscaping, and furniture for the entrance foyer, consultation and meeting rooms, integrated hub office space, community space and outdoor play space.

Additional investment in furniture and educational resources for the preschool and long day care service is required by the service operator.

The budget for each integrated hub project will be determined during the site analysis and design phases to inform the infrastructure grant agreement conditions, with reference to the total budget available across the integrated hubs initiative.

8.2 Funding sources and framework

The integrated hub will be funded up to an agreed amount through a grant provided by the OECD, subject to the terms and conditions defined in that agreement. This funding will not include projects that:

- do not establish an integrated hub
- are for services that will not deliver a 30-hour preschool program
- are in locations outside of South Australia
- do not align with value-for-money principles
- would proceed without state government support; or
- are more appropriately funded through other funding sources (i.e., state or Commonwealth programs).

8.3 Design approach

The OECD will work collaboratively with the service operator and any professional services (such as architects) to ensure the design of the integrated hub meets the policy objectives taking into account limitations of a site. The design will consider the relationships between rooms when determining space, layout and configuration across the whole site.

The OECD will be available to provide support and advice to ensure the policy intent of the hubs for areas, including but not limited to:

community spaces

- consultation and meeting rooms
- integrated hub office spaces
- outdoor play space connected to the community space
- entrance foyer; and
- staff room.

9. Project delivery timeline

9.1 Key milestones and deliverables

The integrated hub will be completed so that the 30-hour preschool program and other services can commence in the January of the identified year for the project. The project will proceed through the identified stages, which will also determine the appropriate timeframes for each stage.

Stage	Deliverables
Site selection	Project scope / location / specification / high level costings
Site investigation, analysis and reports	Reports and summary findings
Preliminary design	Concept designs
Design completion and cost plan	Design documentation and cost plan
Approvals and supplier procurement	Council, ESB, building approvals, tender documents
Construction	Construction

Stage	Deliverables
Project handover	Operational readiness
Operation commencement	

9.2 Risk management and contingency plans

A high-level risk register will be prepared during the project concept phase, and the service operator will maintain a risk register with identified risks and mitigation strategies throughout the project.

10. Appendices

10.1 Community facilities

Social Ventures Australia's commissioned report, entitled 'What good looks like'², highlights the critical importance of hubs infrastructure to support hub activities and that these spaces should be designed so that they are warm, inviting and welcoming.

What it looks like in practice



Open, safe, and inclusive space where parents can comfortably bring their children for unscheduled visits, build social networks and connect with other families.



Child-safe areas for play and exploration, such as playgrounds, communal kitchens and toy libraries.



Sufficient private consultation rooms for diverse services, such as allied health, psychologists, and financial counselling.



A single, shared entrance ensuring a welcoming and accessible point of access for families.



Co-located services on-site, including childcare, preschool, kindergarten, playgroups and MCH.



Located on, or within close proximity to local school to facilitate easy access for families and promote collaboration between Early Childhood Hubs and school staff.



Communal spaces for collaborative staff work.

“Early childhood hubs thrive when intentionally designed to be welcoming and safe places for children and families to come and build social networks and for the provision of a diverse range of services”.

Where possible, and particular in services and communities with higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, it important to involve the community in the design of the spaces.

In the Tasmanian Child and Family Centres, this has resulted in some hubs having an entry area that has been designed as a family-friendly kitchen or lounge, which is also utilised by service providers for informal conversations with families, as a place for them to have lunch breaks.

In South Australia, we have a long history of integrated service hub provision through the network of 47 Department for Education (DfE) Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting.

The DfE provides significant support to planners, architects and builders through the recently updated (2024) building design standards which provide guidance about hub spaces including functional space descriptions.

² https://www.socialventures.org.au/?post_type=publications&p=5141

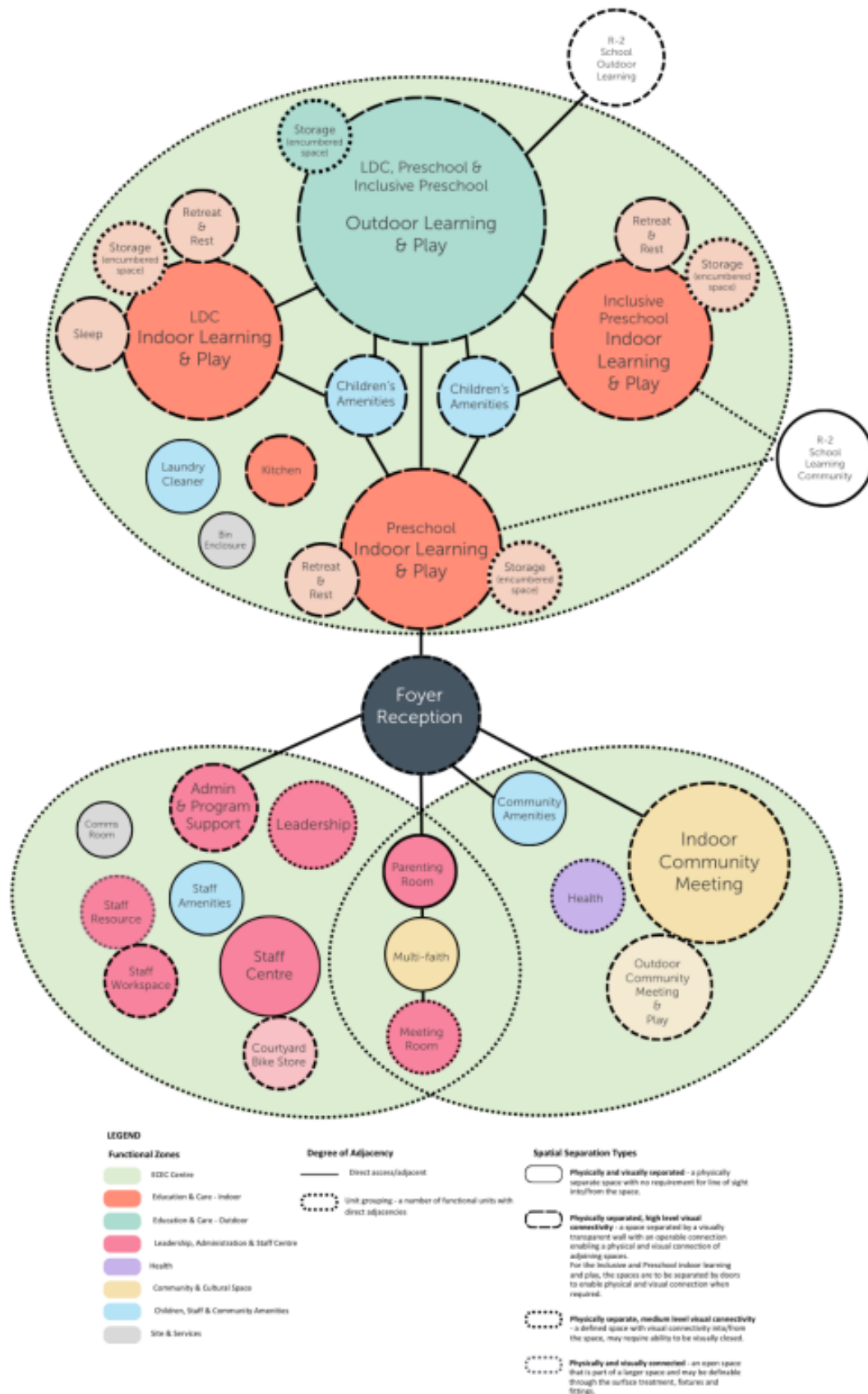
10.2 Minimum community space room specification

The below table³ details the proposed room size for the community space elements of an integrated hub with a 40 place or 60 place preschool program.

Room type	Note	40 place (m ²)	60 place (m ²)
Consult room x 1	3 adults	24	36
Hand-washing bay	If not within consult room	1	1
Meeting room		9	9
Community/group room	35 persons @2m ² per person	70	70
Food prep/kitchenette		5	5
Community toilet (accessible with nappy change)		5.3	5.3
Community toilet		6.6	6.6
Storage		8	8
Community Outdoor Space		70	70
Office: ECEC Director		12	12
Office: shared space	4 staff	40	59
Admin + foyer		27.5	34.3
Staff resource/utility		5.8	6.6
Staff room (just for community staff)		35.3	41.6
Storage: secure & general		3.7	5.4
Internal circulation		64.6	82.1

³ Department for Education area schedule – early childhood education and care centres

10.3 Sample Functional Relationship Diagram



The above diagram⁴ gives an indication of desirable relationships between the functional zones, sub-zones and units for an ECEC facility to give effect to the DfE Design Principles.

⁴ <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/infrastructure/ecec-design-standard/generic-functional-briefs.pdf>

Examples of how users will move through an integrated hub and access different spaces.

- Family attend appointment with child and family health service:
 - Family enters (with a pram) through front door to entrance foyer and speaks with staff at reception desk.
 - Health service staff member greets family and takes them to a consultation room.
 - Family uses toilet and passes notice board and community pantry display on the way out.
- Family attend preschool with child:
 - Family enters through front door and greets Director sitting in their office on the way into preschool room.
 - Children utilise indoor and outdoor play spaces and toilet throughout the day.
 - Family collects child/ren by entering through front door and into preschool space.
- Family attends playgroup:
 - Family enters (with a pram) through front door to entrance foyer and speaks with staff at reception desk.
 - Family utilises community space and kitchen facilities during playgroup session.
 - Staff use play equipment and chairs from storage.
 - Family uses toilet and pass notice board and community pantry on the way out.
- Integration lead:
 - Enters through front door to entrance foyer and speaks with staff at reception desk.
 - Is able to see/hear families attending for playgroup and child and family health visits through the day.
 - Interacts with other staff in office, hallway, staff room and other office spaces.