



# MINIMUM STADARDS FOR CRÈCHE CENTER IN BHUTAN

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## **Minimum Standards**

The national minimum standards are the minimum levels of service that has to be provided to ensure provision of a consistent level of care and support to children in crèche centres. All crèche centres in Bhutan are governed by the national minimum standards. Crèche centres failing to meet the minimum standards in any way shall be disqualified from providing the service. The national minimum standards shall be executed by entities operating crèches and monitored by competent authorities. Therefore, all crèche centres must have a memorandum of understanding with the competent authorities to ensure that the centres are consistently monitored and meet the minimum requirements in all respects. The national minimum standards encompass the following:

### **1. Physical requirements**

To ensure safety, hygiene and conducive environment for child development, including children with special need, the following minimum standards must be met for:

#### ***1.1 Space requirements***

The crèche center must be safely constructed, in good repair and maintained in a safe and healthy condition.

- The indoor area must be operated in a manner that will minimize the risk of injuries to children and staff. The minimum indoor space requirement should be 25 square feet(2.3 meter) per child. The indoor space requirement refers to clear floor space per child, excluding extraneous areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas.
- In case of outdoor area, it must be situated to permit children to reach it safely and provided with a fence. All access doors to this area must be secured with at least one exit which is away from the building. The area must be free of any poisonous plants and dangerous articles, and must be well maintained.

#### ***1.2 Floors, walls, and ceilings***

- Floors, walls, and ceilings should be in good condition and free of hazards
- Floors, walls, and ceilings of the crèche must be smooth, impervious to moisture, and easily cleanable.

#### ***1.3 Windows and doors***

- Every doorway, window or other opening must be screened to prevent pest infestations.
- Every mirrors or windows within one-meterheight from the floor must have safety features or be made of safety grade glass.
- Every bedroom must have a window or door that provides access to the exterior of the building, or another reasonable way to escape from the room in the event of emergency.
- Every doors and window fittings should be fixedbeyond the reach of children.

#### **1.4 Stairways**

- Every stairway accessible to infants and toddlers must have a securely installed gate barrier at the top and bottom.
- Every stairway with three or more steps inside and outside must have appropriate and secure handrails and be maintained in safe condition. Handrails and guards must be safe and secure, maintained in good repair and must reasonably prevent injury.

#### **1.5 Lighting**

- All areas of a crèche center and surrounding property must be well lit.
- All rooms used for sleeping must have adequate window coverings.
- All power points must be suitably protected and should be out of reach of the children.
- All the electrical appliances should be secured with features that enhance the safety of children.

#### **1.6 Ventilation and heating**

- Ventilation must be sufficient to maintain good air quality. All rooms should be well-ventilated by means of windows that can be opened.
- Exhaust fans are to be used to provide better ventilation in toilets, diaper changing areas and the kitchen.
- Heaters and fans shall be provided as per need.

#### **1.7 Water supply**

- Every crèche must be supplied with a safe drinking water of adequate quantity to serve the needs of children and staffs.

#### **1.8 Sewage system**

- Every crèche center shall be connected to the public sewage system or to an operational private sewage disposal system.
- The plumbing and the sanitary drainage or private sewage disposal system, including drains, fixtures, traps, vents, stacks, waste disposal facilities, pump-out sewage holding tanks, septic tanks, and the disposal system must be maintained in a good operating condition.

#### **1.9 Sinks**

- Every crèche center must have at least one easily accessible hand washing sink for child and staff use.
- Every hand washing sink must have soap in a dispenser, towel and waste containers.

### **1.10 Washrooms**

- Washroom must be in a convenient location so children can easily access them. Child friendly toilet and hand washing facilities should be located in the same building and easily accessible to children and staff.
- Washrooms must be appropriate for the age, size, and ability of the children in care. If the washroom is not designed for children and modifications are made, such as steps, stools and training seats, the modifications must be sturdy, durable, and easily cleaned. Steps and stools must be slip resistant.
- Every crèche center must have separate toilets for girls and boys.
- Every crèche center must ensure plumbing fixtures consisting of at least a flush toilet, a hand washing sink, and a means to bathe children such as a shower/bathtub.
- For child's safety, washroom door locks must be capable of being opened from the outside.
- All rooms containing a flush toilet and/or shower must have an exterior window or exhaust fan.

### **1.11 Laundry area**

- Laundry area must be completely separate from food area
- Floors, walls, and ceilings in laundry rooms shall be smooth, impervious to moisture and easily cleanable
- It should have adequate space and appropriate containers to keep dirty laundry from contaminating clean laundry

### **1.12 Food preparation area**

- In every crèche center, food preparation areas must be adequately separated from other areas.

### **1.13 Storage area**

- Different types of items must be stored separate from each other. For example: cleaning products should be kept in a locked cabinet separate from food items.
- Every crèche center must have adequate space and storage facilities for all items and activities connected with the operation, including:
  - Foods and utensils
  - Child and staff personal items
  - Unused articles/seasonal items
  - Laundry equipment and supplies
  - Cleaning equipment, supplies, and toxic materials

### **1.14 Sleeping area**

- Rooms or areas that are used for resting or sleeping should have sufficient space.
- It must have a minimum of 30 square feet of sleeping space, with at least 2 feet between each crib.
- All cribs/cradle must be of material that is safe and can be kept in a hygienic condition.
- The center must have enough mats, sheets and blankets for all children.

### **1.15 Diapering area**

- Area for diaper changing and storage of soiled diapers must be completely separate from food preparation areas, including microwave areas used to reheat foods, and sinks used to fill and/or mix bottles.
- A diapering surface must be made of an impervious material that can be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

### **1.16 Sick child area**

- Every crèche center must have a designated and supervised area with adequate space for children who become sick.
- This space must be separate from other areas, adequately ventilated and heated, and large enough for a bed/mat. This space, including all of the surfaces, must be easy to clean and sanitize.

### **1.17 Play and learning materials**

- All toys and play materials must be durable, easy to clean and safe.
- Craft materials/supplies must be non-toxic, safe and appropriate for the children using them.
- Equipment and materials are provided in proportion to the number of children and in accordance with the developmental levels of children.

#### **1.17.1 Indoor**

- Indoor climbing equipment have impact absorbing mats.
- The center must have a minimum quantity of play equipment as specified below:

Sl. No.	Indoor play materials	No of sets required for a group of 10 children	
		Below 18 months	Above 18 months
1	Sets of building block( minimum of 20 pieces)	2	2
2	Items for table activities, such as matching games, lotto, string, beads.	-	10-15
3	Games and Puzzles		6

4	Rattles and hangings	3	-
5	Small hand-held toys, such as push cars, trucks, airplanes, boats, bikes etc.	8	8
6	Art supplies, such as paper, play dough, crayons, tapes, and various textured materials.	10-15	10-15
7	Dolls with accessories and household items	4	4
8	Puppets		3
9	A variety of age appropriate books		10

### 1.17.2 Outdoor

- Swing seats are constructed of durable, lightweight, relatively pliable materials; for example, nylon webbing, rubber, or plastic.
- Climbers, swings, slides, or revolving equipment have impact absorbing surfaces, such as loose materials under them and throughout the fall zones.
- Outdoor equipment provided are age appropriate.
- For every group of 10 children, the center must provide the following:

Sl.No.	outdoor play materials	Number
1	Slides	2
2	Swings	2
3	Seesaw	2

### 1.18 Other equipment

- The crèche center must provide the following:

Sl. No.	Equipment and Household Items	No. of sets required	Remarks
1	Wall Fan/AC	1	Hot places
2	Room Heater	1	Cold places
3	Television	1	Without cable connection
4	Microwave oven	1	
5	Refrigerator	1	
6	Water Filter	1	
7	Vacuum Cleaner	1	
8	Washing Machine	1	
9	Baby potty	10	
10	Cradle	1 for every child	Below 12 months
10	Mattress	1 for every 2 child	

11	Pillow	1 for every 2 child	
12	Blanket	1 for every child	
13	Bedsheet	1 for every child	
14	Window curtain		
15	Towel	1 for every child	
16	Pack lunch shelve	1	
17	Carpet	All room	

## **2. Operational requirements**

For the effective and smooth operation of the crèche, the minimum set operational requirements must be fulfilled for the following:

### **2.1 Food**

- All food served at a crèche center must be from an approved source if served in the center. Lunch boxes and snacks may be provided by parents for their own children. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy foods to their children.
- Meals provided are varied, balanced and nutritious. The use of processed food should be minimized.
- Caregivers should ensure that each child brings food every day, and talk about healthy eating habits and importance of nutrition to children and parents.
- Children are fed as necessary or allowed to eat at ease.
- Food is kept in cool temperature and safe place.

### **2.2 Sleep and rest**

- All bedding, including blankets and moisture-resistant covers, must be washed and sanitized when soiled. Sheets must be laundered at least once a week.
- The center incorporates nap time in their daily schedule.
- Any child regardless of time spent at the center can take rest when he/she needs it.
- Children remaining in the center over four hours are given options to nap in the afternoon, though it should not be forced.
- The caregivers should attend to children during rest and nap times.

### **2.3 Play and learning**

- Indoor play materials must be made available to support each child's holistic development under the caregiver's supervision and guidance.
- Caregivers monitor play equipment for potential hazards; for example, splinters, loose parts and sharp edges.



- All indoor play materials are stored in shelves and learning corners and kept secure when not in use.
- Books are kept on bookshelves of which height is within children's reach.
- Outdoor equipment should be maintained in a safe, stable, secure and good condition, and pose no risk to children.
- Entrance and exit points are kept closed while children are in the compound.
- Children have opportunities to play outdoor regularly.
- Children are well hydrated and encouraged to drink water during physical activity.
- Equipment are installed, maintained, and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Infant and toddler toys and those toys likely to be mouthed must be cleaned and sanitized between uses and at least daily.
- Play table covers if provided, must be smooth, impervious to moisture, and easily cleaned.
- Carpets must be laid out on floors inside the building(s) for children to sit down during storytelling and other activities.

#### ***2.4 Toilet and diapering***

- Toilets are maintained in a clean and sanitary condition with adequate ventilation.
- Children are given toilet training over time and timely diapering is carried out as per need
- Children must never be left unattended on a diapering surface.
- A diapering surface must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- A fresh diapering surface to cover the changing surface (i.e. paper for each child) is required.
- Diaper containers left on site shall be cleaned and disinfected daily with an approved disinfectant
- Used diapers must be disposed off properly.

#### ***2.5 Personal hygiene***

- All staff must be clean, not have any infected sores or wounds, wear only clean clothing, and not smoke in any area used by children
- Caregivers must attend promptly to children's personal hygiene needs.
- Hands of children and staff must be properly washed and dried:
  - When they arrive at the center
  - Before feeding
  - After indoor and outdoor play activities
  - After toilet and diapering activities
  - After contact with animals
  - After any activity which leaves hands dirty or contaminated
  - Before going home

*Proper hand washing should be done using soap and running water. Vigorously rub*

*together lathered hands and exposed arms for at least 20 seconds. Rinse under clean, running water. Dry hands and arms thoroughly using towel.*

*Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not suitable for hand washing when hands are visibly soiled. They are not acceptable during diapering or food preparation. Hand sanitizers are not appropriate for infants and toddlers.*

- Caregivers must ensure that the children practice and develop hand washing habits.
- A child's cloth if dirtied or wet during the activities or play should be changed immediately.

## **2.6 Illness and Sick children**

- The center must ensure that children have regular health checkups and immunization.
- The center must have a clear written guideline regarding the care of sick children and parents oriented on it.
- Parents should be notified immediately when their child is sick/injured in the center. When needed, medical assistance should be sought immediately.
- Sick children must be separated from other children until they can be picked up by the parent/guardian.
- Separate the child from others if he/she has any of the following:
  - Fever and a combination of other symptoms (nausea, vomiting, etc)
  - Fever and a body rash
  - Diarrhea – two or more liquid stools or a change in the normal pattern of bowel movement (e.g. runny, watery or bloody stools)
  - Vomiting
  - Eye discharge – yellow or white
  - Severe cough
  - Yellowish skin or eyes

## **2.7 Sick staff**

- The same exclusion guidelines for children shall apply to staff.
- Staffs, who are unwell, but well enough to work, should ensure hand washing is done more frequently and should be assigned duties that require less contact with children. They cannot work in the kitchen.

## **2.8 2.8 Communicable diseases**

- All staff must be free from symptomatic communicable infections.
- Bottles must be properly labeled to indicate the user, stored, and handled in a safe and sanitary manner at all times. Personal items should not be shared between children.
- Objects that are considered contaminated by body fluids such as saliva, mucus or other discharge, must be stored in a separate, labeled container intended for

cleaning and disinfection or disposal.

## **2.9 Emergency Preparedness**

- The name, address (detailed location of the center) and telephone number of the center and a list of emergency phone numbers are available, including the fire, police, ambulance and emergency medical services.
- Written plan for reporting, protecting from outside threats, and evacuating in case of fire, earthquake, or any other natural or man-made disaster that can create structural damage to the center or pose health hazards to children and staff are prepared and placed on the wall.
- A plan in each room showing evacuation routes from each area of the building and relocation plans are developed and placed on the wall.
- The center practices evacuation and emergency procedures frequently.
- Caregivers are trained on emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction.

## **2.10 Safety and hazard**

- Children must be adequately protected from injurious conditions such as radiators, hot water pipes or other heating devices, electrical outlets, toxic plants, window blind cords, and other hazards.
- Every crèche center must be operated in a manner that will minimize the risk of injuries to children.
- Furniture such as shelves and dressers must be stable or secured to prevent them from falling on children.
- High chairs must be stable, kept in good repair and equipped with safety belts. Feeding trays must be smooth and easy to clean.
- Access to all mechanical equipment rooms, storage rooms and janitorial closets used in or around a crèche center must be controlled to prevent undue risks to children in care.
- Medication, cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, health and beauty aids, poisons, and other toxic materials are clearly labeled, properly stored and inaccessible to children.
- Alcohol, tobacco, drugs and illegal drugs are strictly prohibited within the centre's compound.
- Gas cylinders are closed and secured, if there are any.
- Temporary wiring or extension cords are not used on a permanent basis.
- Electrical outlets that are not in use are covered with safety devices, unless they are not within reach of children or are in areas not used by children.
- Pesticides or other toxic chemicals are used in strict compliance with labelled instruction and be applied when children are not present.
- Containers or buckets of standing liquid are stored safely and inaccessible to children unless used as a part of a planned and supervised activity
- Shelves and cupboards are properly secured or fixed to ensure safety of children

### **2.11 Maintenance and cleaning**

- The crèche center and all equipment must be in good repair and in clean and sanitary condition.
- Blood, faeces, vomit or body fluid spills must be cleaned and disinfected.
- The crèche center must be kept clean at all times.

### **2.12 First aid kit**

- A first aid kit must be readily available for emergency treatment. There should be list of items in the first aid and First aid kits are restocked as needed.
- Care givers should be trained on First Aid
- The center must notify parents as soon as possible of any known cuts, burns, animal bites, or injuries that may need evaluation by a health worker.

### **2.13 Laundering**

- Linens, towels, toys, and items contaminated with blood, vomit, faeces, lice or other contamination must be stored and laundered separately and dried properly.
- Separate storage must be provided for clean and soiled laundry.

### **2.14 Garbage**

- Garbage must be kept in watertight, fly proof, enclosed containers of suitable strength to hold the contents without tearing or splitting.
- Separate bins must be kept for different types of wastes for proper waste management.
- Garbage must be properly stored and disposed off as often as necessary to eliminate overflow or any nuisances
- Garbage should not be kept for more than 24 hours in the center's compound.

## **3. Human Resource and administration**

### **3.1 Human Resource**

The personnel working in the Centre have immense effect on the health, well-being, learning and safety of children. Therefore, all individuals working with young children in the centers must meet the following requirements:

- Caregivers are Bhutanese nationals with an academic qualification of class XII passed.
- Caregivers have a professional qualification of basic training certificate in crèche and development.
- The head of the center has a relevant professional qualification and basic training certificate.

- All persons working in the center have medical fitness certificate.
- All persons working in the center have security clearance certificate.
- All persons working in the center have leave and other entitlements as per the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan.
- The recommended caregiver-children ratio as follows:

Age of child	Staff to child ratio	Maximum group size
0 – 12 months	1 staff to 3 children	6 children
12 – 24 months	1 staff to 5 children	10 children
24 – 36 months	1 staff to 5 children	10 children

### **3.2 Record and documentation**

- When applying for admission, parents submit the MCH handbook and a list of special health needs, if any.
- the crèche center should maintain the following records:
  - Child records including health record
  - Staff records
  - Attendance register
  - Incident report

### **4. Psycho-social Environment**

Care and learning within the centre must take place with respect to each child’s developmental stage, needs and abilities to promote of a sense of security, wellbeing, autonomy, self-confidence and initiative as children at this age not only make progress in physical growth but also in cognitive, psycho-motor and language areas, and continue to expand their repertoire of social and moral behaviour and personality characteristics. The crèche center must ensure that:

- The overall environment makes children be able to experience a sense of joy, safety, love and acceptance, and freedom that is necessary for them to learn actively.
- Children and parents are greeted cordially and spoken to as appropriate, both at arrival and departure.
- The environment is free from threats such as those posed by a cane, giving instructions in a loud and harsh voice or expecting complete silence.
- Individual differences in needs, interests and behaviours exhibited by children are understood and respected.
- Children are provided freedom and opportunities to engage in activities preferred and chosen by them.
- Children are provided with activities that can be mastered with a certain amount of effort and subsequently experience the joy of success.
- Children are encouraged to be independent in attending to simple tasks such as washing hands and feet, putting on clothes and shoes, etc., and encouraged to do things by themselves willingly, joyfully and with a sense of dignity.
- Children are encouraged to express and develop their individual talents.

- On appropriate occasions, children's works are appreciated, encouraged and given recognition so as to build their self-confidence, self-respect and sense of achievement.
- In disciplining children, criticism and punishment are avoided and children's attention is diverted away from the problem to an acceptable form of behaviour.
- Self-discipline that arises as a result of engaging in self-motivated and meaningful activities is encouraged.
- Ample opportunity is provided for children to play together, help each other, share resources and respect ideas and needs expressed by other children.
- Children are encouraged to address each other cordially, to express their ideas and engage in child-to-child conversation.
- Children are helped to get accustomed to having their meals in a way that fulfills not only their nutritional requirements but also builds good eating habits and manners.
- Children are encouraged to participate in activities in a way that brings out the need for cleanliness, orderliness and safety.
- Children are encouraged to build a sense of ownership, belongingness and mutual responsibility.
- Caregivers are aware of matters concerning children's safety and wellbeing.
- Caregivers do not engage in comparing children in the presence of other children or parents.
- Caregivers assess, appreciate and encourage efforts made by each individual child.
- Parents are encouraged to offer assistance in daily activities such as preparing and organizing learning materials, telling stories to children, teaching songs and rhymes, etc.
- Children have opportunities to attend and observe family events and local festivals and learn about their tradition and culture through them.
- Children are taken for outings to familiarize with the local environment and its resources and workings.

