

**THE DESIGN AND
CREATION OF
PRESCHOOL
SPACES:**

A PRIMER
FOR CHILD CARE
PROFESSIONALS

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INTRODUCTION

The design or renovation of a preschool or child care center is a major undertaking for most child care professionals. This event typically occurs only once or twice in a child care professional's career, and can be a wonderful or an overwhelming experience. This workbook has been written specifically, but not exclusively, for child care professionals (including preschool center directors, owners, teachers, and specialists) who are considering any type of preschool design. It is meant to be a learning and communication tool to inform these professionals about the design process, what to expect, and their responsibilities. By having this information early in the "thinking" process, child care professionals can make more informed decisions, be better prepared to appropriately educate the design professionals involved, and ultimately collaborate to create a successful center that addresses the needs and desires of all the participants in the process.

The empowerment of the child care professional in this process is important. This tool will foster empowerment by helping the child care professional work with design professionals, parents, and others to collect and communicate information appropriately to ensure a successful project. The tool, however, is not only for child care professionals. Design professionals may benefit from observing and participating in the exercises provided, and may use this tool to help the client understand the design process. By using this tool together, the child development professional and design professional build a greater understanding of each other's fields, and formulate a common format for discussions.

In conducting the research upon which this tool is based, the commitment to creating aesthetically pleasing, functional, and appropriate spaces for children of both design and child development professionals was apparent. The research also showed, however, that there were obstacles to this commitment that were primarily rooted in the communication efforts of the

groups involved. By offering information and formats to foster better communication between these groups, including child development professionals, design professionals, and parents, many of the obstacles identified in the research should be eliminated. With the impediments removed, this tool strives to provide opportunities for more creative and collaborative solutions to the preschool design.

While this document by no means provides a comprehensive look at architecture, interior design, or child development, it offers an overview of these fields and includes narrative and exercises to help increase the understanding of how these fields come together in the process of designing and renovating preschool spaces. Through this coming together collaborative work takes place. And through successful collaboration, functional, creative, and appropriate preschools are designed and built.

UNIQUENESS OF PRESCHOOLS

A preschool facility is a unique design challenge. Many design professionals associate the design of preschools and child care facilities with the design of schools. They feel that experience designing school environments is equal to experience designing younger children's spaces. This is not the case, as any child development professional is aware, because of the difference in functions of the spaces, as well as the differences in the characteristics of the occupants.

The developmental level of young children is significantly different than that of a school age child, and the spatial needs are just as unique. Because our experience as a society in creating appropriate children's facilities is limited at this time, there is no "model" or common understanding about the design features needed for preschool spaces (Olds, 1999, in press). In other words, when designing new and renovated preschool buildings, we often start from scratch, with few resources to guide the design. While limited research is available, there has been little effort to translate research into usable design components.

In implementing developmentally appropriate programs, often the need for developmentally appropriate spaces is recognized, but few concrete guidelines are available to aid the design and child development professionals in making relevant decisions when creating children's spaces. The following sections speak to general considerations of both exterior and interior spaces to help the child care professionals begin to think about the project. Again, these are not comprehensive sections, but give a preliminary overview of topics that should be discussed with the design professional.

Exterior Issues

The exterior of a preschool building makes a powerful statement about beliefs, and influences how children feel entering your facility. Consideration should be given to the appearance, the inviting

nature of the facility, and the statement it makes to those entering it's doors.

An inviting entry way helps children to transition more easily into a care environment from a home environment and should be given a great deal of thought and planning. Considering the scale, the inviting nature, and the “homeyness” of the entrance are important details that must be addressed.

Research on the size and scale of preschool facilities and the effects of large structures on children's reactions to space indicates that smaller scaled facilities are more welcoming to children, and enable them to be more comfortable and interact on a deeper level with others in the space (Moore, 1997). This may be an important consideration if you have a large facility and are considering building new spaces. Thinking about a campus concept, having several smaller buildings joined by common areas, may be an effective option to help support the children.

The orientation of the building on the site (i.e. north, south, east, west) is another important consideration. Children need considerable amounts of natural light throughout the day, and classrooms should be situated to take greatest advantage of the light available. Another consideration in site selection and placement is the outdoor play areas. These play areas should not only be adjacent to the classroom areas, but should also take full advantage of the sunlight and shade to provide the most comfortable outdoor play environments possible. How this is approached will depend greatly on geographic location; positions for play areas would be different in Florida than in Minnesota. Discuss these issues with the design professional to assure that they are aware of the critical nature of exposure to natural light and playground orientation.

Drop-off and parking areas are another important consideration in planning the exterior of a building. While sufficient parking is necessary and the issue unchallenged, the arrangement of this parking and the ease with which parents can drop off and pick up children is sometimes an overlooked area of discussion in the design process. Safety, security, and convenience of children and parents must be addressed and the needs met in planning the exterior environment of any preschool facility. In addition, the aesthetics of the parking area and the path traveled to enter the facility should be inviting and pleasant.

Many other issues must be considered in the exterior design of a new facility. The design professional brings an ability to create aesthetically interesting and inviting spaces, and should be encouraged and supported in these endeavors. Both the needs of the clients and the aesthetics of the building should be discussed in detail with the design professional and an agreement reached as to how these issues will be handled.

Interior Issues

Consideration of the interior spaces of preschool and child care facilities is of utmost importance since many children spend 8 – 10 hours a day, 5 days a week in some type of care facility. Many of these hours are spent inside, and these interior environments must be designed appropriately to support children's development and foster their healthy growth. Developmentally appropriate practices are well known in the child care circles, but there is often some confusion as to the physical characteristics of developmentally appropriate spaces. Evaluation tools and rating scales are available (Harmes, Cryer, & Clifford, 1990; Moore, 1994), but often are complex and are focused on evaluating existing spaces with little information to guide the design of new preschool environments. Children's preschool spaces should be designed with a knowledge of children's developmental levels, teacher and

parental expectations, and children's desires and needs as primary factors; in addition to the creative aspects contributed by the design professional.

Research has shown that interior environments can affect children's behavior, moods, and actions. Aesthetically interesting spaces help children to learn an appreciation for beauty and order (Bowker & Sawyers, 1988). Creating spaces with challenges for children creates opportunities to learn. Making supplies available and accessible teaches children independence and gives them a sense of competence because they are not dependent on adults for all of their needs. Surrounding children with spatial components that reflect their work and accomplishments, and considering spatial elements such as scale and proportion of the space, sends a message that the children are important and that their efforts are valued. Designing spaces to reflect these values is an important part of creating developmentally appropriate spaces.

Design professionals are often not trained in child development and, therefore, need help in determining appropriate functional characteristics for interior spaces. Teachers, administrators, and parents are crucial in providing suitable information for use in designing spaces for different age groups within the facility. Teachers are aware of how children use both exterior and interior spaces on a daily basis and must share this knowledge with the design professional. They are also aware of their own needs within the classroom and within the center as a whole. Parents have an intimate understanding of their needs as well as their children's needs during the transition between home and school, and this information is important for inclusion in the design process as well. Administrators have an overall knowledge of requirements for licensing, accreditation, and other necessities that should be part of the design of the facility. Considering both children's needs as well as adults' needs when designing preschool facilities will lead to

a more successful project that supports everyone involved in the preschool on a daily basis.

The interior space is often thought of as a collection of separate interior rooms that need to be “decorated”, but not considered as part of the whole during the design process. This attitude needs to be changed, since the design of the exterior significantly impacts the interior, and the two should be designed in conjunction with one another, not in separate arenas. Thinking about the facility as a whole illustrates the importance of the interior designer working side by side with the architect throughout the entire design process. If an architect is designing a building with little consideration for furniture and fixture placement within the interior of the classrooms, the probability is that the types of interior spaces needed to accommodate the interior features required will not be available. Other interior features such as lighting, color choice and placement, textural qualities, and activity zones are also affected by architectural decisions such as site placement of the building, natural light, and interior room shapes and relationships. The interior designer brings an intimate knowledge of these elements to any design project, and should be contributing to the overall design from the inception of the project. Given the percentage of time spent in the interior of the facility by both children and adults, the design of the interior should be given primary consideration in the overall design process. The design of the interior is a part of the whole, not a separate issue to be dealt with when the construction is complete. In projects where the interior design has been overlooked or undervalued, the success of the project is compromised, and the children are shortchanged because the interior is not designed to meet their needs.

The overall design of the facility should not only address aesthetics and the stated needs of children and adults, but also reflect the mission and philosophy of the center. Most centers have some

type of mission and belief system, although it is sometimes not articulated clearly to parents and teachers. The definition of a mission statement and philosophy are given below.

- **Mission Statement** – A mission statement clearly articulates what is important to you as an organization and as a group committed to the welfare of children. Covey (1994) states that mission statements “capture what you want to be and what you want to do...and the principles upon which being and doing are based.” As an organization, it is important to identify what is significant since that will impact decisions made concerning the design of the new space.
- **Philosophy** – A philosophy is a statement of your beliefs. In the context of a preschool or child care facility, it would be the statement of beliefs about children, their abilities, their development process, and how the center chooses to support that belief. A philosophy may state that the center holds the belief that children are competent individuals who learn by being presented opportunities to explore and problem solve, directed by their own interests. This type of belief statement greatly influences how a preschool space should be designed.

In many cases the beliefs about children and how they develop are not reflected in the design and arrangement of the interior spaces, causing some confusion and dissention within the classroom. For example, if the belief or philosophy of the center is that children should be supported in their independence, problem solving, and making choices, the space needs to be arranged in ways that allow them access to materials and options for activities. If the space is set up in such a way as to force the children to ask a teacher for supplies each time they want to participate in a specific activity, the space is not reinforcing the stated philosophy of the center.

The activities at the end of this section will help your group think through both the mission and philosophy of your center, and what that may mean in terms of interior spaces. Below is a list of interior features identified through interviews with parents, teachers, and design professionals that should be considered for both children and adults when designing preschool facilities.

Interior Features for Children	Interior Features for Adults
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety 2. Natural light 3. Low windows for visual access to outdoors 4. Soft places 5. Lofts, climbing structures 6. Child scaled 7. Spaces for quiet and private time 8. Consistency 9. Flexibility 10. Storage 11. Elements that foster children's independence 12. Gross motor activity areas 13. Fine motor activity areas 14. Appropriate bathroom facilities 15. Water fountains within classrooms 16. Display areas for projects 17. Areas for ongoing project work 18. Easy access to outdoors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Security features – limited access 2. Observation areas 3. Bulletin board for posting current information 4. Comfortable break rooms for teachers 5. Operable windows 6. Teachers-sized elements in classroom in addition to child-sized elements 7. Good acoustics 8. Homelike atmosphere 9. Carpet 10. Ease of cleaning 11. Adult-sized toilets 12. Office and conference space 13. Varied lighting 14. Supply room 15. Adult sized chairs for meetings (i.e. PTA) 16. Infant nursing areas

Interior Features for Children	Interior Features for Adults
19. Controlled lighting 20. Different textures 21. Aesthetically pleasing elements	17. Parent gathering areas 18. Parent library 19. Special needs therapy room 20. Double doors in lobby area

Summary

This section has identified the uniqueness of the preschool facility from a design standpoint and provided you with an overview of both interior and exterior features to be aware of when beginning the design process. The elements described are not comprehensive, but are complete enough to give an adequate starting point for detailed discussions with the design professionals about your understanding and expectations for your special place. By using the given list of characteristics identified by some parents, teachers, and design professionals, you can begin to evaluate your own particular needs for your center.

MISSION STATEMENT ACTIVITY

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to create a common mission statement for your center to guide your thinking about the design of your new/renovated space.

Participants

This activity has been structured to include any individuals identified as important in the process of planning, creating and implementing the plans for your new preschool center. This may include owners, administrators, board members, teachers, parents, specialists, and others who work at your preschool.

Instructions

1. Briefly discuss the meaning of a mission statement with the participants in the activity based on the readings in this booklet.
2. For this activity, the group may work as one or can be divided into smaller groups depending upon the size.
3. Have each group articulate a mission statement for your new center in 10 words or less and write it down to share with the group.
4. Using the mission statements from all groups, create one common mission statement using 10 words or less.

Outcomes

By briefly articulating a mission statement, everyone involved in the design process has an easy to remember statement upon which to base decision-making. All design and construction decisions should be reviewed against the mission statement to ensure that the design relates clearly to the center's mission.

CENTER PHILOSOPHY ACTIVITY

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to identify and articulate a common philosophy for your center that will guide decisions made in the design and implementation of your new spaces. Your center may already have a stated philosophy, but this may be a good time to review it and determine what this philosophy means in terms of physical arrangement of spaces.

Participants

This activity has been structured to include any individuals identified as important in the process of planning, creating and implementing the plans for your new preschool center. This may include owners, administrators, board members, teachers, parents, specialists, and others who work at your preschool.

Instructions

1. Briefly discuss the meaning of a philosophy with the participants in the activity based on the readings in this booklet.
2. Have the group discuss the existing philosophy (if available) and how they see that translated into the current space.
3. Have the participants discuss changes to the philosophy that update it and make it more in line with what you are currently practicing
4. If no philosophy has been written for the center, have the group discuss and decide on a philosophy statement that reflects the group's beliefs about children and their preschool experiences.
5. Discuss with the group how their philosophy statement may translate into design ideas for the new center.
6. Have someone record the new philosophy and ideas about how that translates into the interior environment.

CENTER PHILOSOPHY ACTIVITY (continued)

Outcomes

It is important that your center's philosophy reflect the beliefs about children and how their growth and development will be supported. These beliefs can determine decisions made about critical characteristics incorporated in the design of the space. This activity gives the group an opportunity to agree on a philosophy, and explore how that philosophy might guide decisions made about design.

WISH LIST ACTIVITY

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to acquire information from each of the participants about the features that they feel are important to include in a new or renovated center. There are no limits – it is a WISH list. It will help the administration and the design professional know what is important to the individuals working and interacting with the center.

Participants

This activity has been structured to include any individuals identified as important in the process of planning, creating and implementing the plans for your new preschool center. This may include owners, administrators, board members, teachers, parents, specialists, and others who work at your preschool.

Instructions

1. Explain that the responses to this exercise are to give everyone an opportunity to contribute their ideas about spatial features they feel are important. It is a wish list – every suggestion will probably not be able to be included, but all will be reviewed and considered.
2. Have each participant write down 5 important interior features they want to see in the new center. (These may include items such as lofts, carpeted floors, more storage, or any other feature determined as important).
3. Once participants have written their list, have them prioritize each item and briefly tell why the item is important to them and why items are in the order shown. If the participants are willing, have them place their name on the paper and collect them for future reference.

WISH LIST ACTIVITY (continued)

Outcomes

The lists created in this exercise will inform the design professional about the important features that need to be addressed in the design of the preschool, and provide a basis for discussions between design and child care professionals about priorities within the interior environment. These lists should become part of the “programming documents” given to the design professional.

CHOOSING A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

Choosing a professional to guide you through the design process is an important decision. These professionals work very closely with you and your team throughout the project, and often the success of the design depends on your mutual relationship and communication. There are several factors that should be considered when choosing a design professional, and these will be addressed later in this section. First, however, it is critical to know what design resources are available to you, and what each different design professional can offer to your project. The following segments will give you a better understanding of the three primary design professionals relevant to preschool design, and how they each can contribute to a successful building project.

Architects

The professional definition of an architect as stated in the Dictionary of Architecture and Construction (Harris, 1993) is “a person trained and experienced in the design of buildings and the coordination and supervision of all aspects of the construction of buildings.” They can bring a technical knowledge of design and building construction, as well as creative and exciting insights into the building type needed and the functional needs to be met by the structure.

Architects by training are proficient in designing exteriors, considering the types of interior configurations needed, understanding zoning and legislative requirements, and situating a structure on the site for maximum advantage. Their services should include the design of the building structure, the coordination of electrical and mechanical design within the interior, the production of construction drawings, and administration of the construction contracts to assure that the quality of the building work is acceptable according to the design intended and produced for the facility. In almost any new building construction project, the architect should be the lead design professional of the team.

Working in conjunction with interior designers and landscape architects, an architect can be a part of a complete team that addresses all the needs of the preschool client.

Interior Designers

Interior designers, by education, training and experience, are qualified to design the interior environment “for the purposes of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public” (FIDER, 1998). The interior designer specializes in the design of interiors including spatial arrangements, interior finishes, lighting, interior detailing, furniture and fixture specification and placement, and accessibility issues. They have an understanding of the psychology of interior space and color, and how these environmental characteristics affect the occupants of the spaces. An interior designer is an important team member in the design of child care and preschool facilities because of the amount of time children spend in the interior spaces and the magnitude of the effect these spaces have on their growth and development. In renovation projects, often the interior designer should be considered the primary design professional since the majority of the work entails the redesign of existing interior spaces. Depending on the scope of the renovation job and local and state regulations, it may or may not be necessary to include an architect to approve and stamp drawings. This is a detail to be discussed with the interior designer at the beginning of the project.

Landscape Architects

A landscape architect, according to the definition offered by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA, 1998), is “one who develops land for human use and enjoyment through effective placement of structures, vehicular and pedestrian ways, and plantings”. Landscape architects are primarily concerned with the design of environmental spaces on the exterior of building

structures. They should be included in any design team for preschools because of their critical decisions including playground spaces, parking areas, environments creating and surrounding entry areas, and other outdoor spaces. When a building project is focused on the exterior environment and playground area, the landscape architect should be considered the lead design professional on the team.

Collaboration

Any one of the three design professionals identified above is qualified to lead a design project. The “lead” design professional would be chosen based on the type of work required, as illustrated in each section. More importantly, however, is an understanding of the need for collaboration among all three professionals in the design of preschool environments. By working together with each other and with the client group, these teams can solve problems; provide professional, thorough services; create a more appropriate and functional space; and save money in the long run by coordinating, reducing changes, and “getting it right the first time”.

What to Look For

Choosing a team of design professionals can feel like a daunting task, but in fact may be a fun and rewarding activity. The most important first step any client can begin with is to do their homework. This includes having an understanding of the scope of the job you are undertaking and the type of design professional you need to lead the process.

If you have decided to build a new facility, the architect would be the lead design professional, and can help in the selection of the other members of the team. If an interior renovation is your goal, the interior designer should be chosen as the first member of the team, and will help in the selection of the other design professionals needed to complete the job. As stated previously, if the majority of

the work is landscape oriented, the landscape architect would be the lead design professional and they would bring in other designers as needed. Try to bring the lead design professional on board as early in your thought process as possible. There are many ways they can contribute to your project and help establish a positive direction from the beginning.

Finding Design Professionals

Interviewing several different design firms before deciding on a design professional to work with is usually a good idea. There are many ways of compiling a list of firms for consideration, and dedicating time to this process is important to avoid problems in the future.

Touring new centers similar in size to the facility being considered can provide valuable information. Talking to the owners, administrators, and teachers about working with the design professional and their feelings about the final product can provide insight into the design professional's commitment to collaboration. It is not imperative that these centers be in your local area. Hiring a design professional that is not local may require more effort for collaboration, but increases your options to find someone with experience, commitment, and connection to provide you with the center you ultimately seek. Cost may be a factor, but if a non-local design professional has experience designing the type of preschool facility you desire, that individual may save you money in the long run by understanding your needs, making decisions that will lower the construction costs, and reducing the number of changes during and after construction is complete.

Asking for recommendations from others in your community who have worked with design professionals on jobs of similar type and/or size can also provide names of firms and people to add to the list. Finally, calling local chapters of professional design

organizations to find additional firms that are on file as designing the types of facilities you are looking for can be another valuable resource in compiling your initial list. Some professional organizations are listed below:

- **Architects**

- The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Ave., NW,
Washington, DC 20006 /
Phone: 202-626-7300
Web Site: <http://www.aia.org/>

- **Interior Designers**

- International Interior Design Association
341 Merchandise Mart
Chicago, IL 60654
Phone: 312-467-1950 or toll free: 888 799 IIDA
(4432)
Web Site: <http://www.iida.com/>
- American Society of Interior Designers
ASID Headquarters
608 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-6006
Phone: 202/546-3480
Web Site: <http://www.asid.org/>

- **Landscape Architects**

- American Society of Landscape Architects
633 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736
Phone: 202-898-2444
Web Site: <http://www.asla.org/>

Design professionals who have completed an appropriate program of study, worked for a specified period of time under the supervision of another design professional, and who have passed a qualifying examination typically become professional members of one of these organizations. By obtaining names through the organizations, you can be assured of at least a minimum design and performance competency in the respective fields.

After compiling a list of potential design professionals, making an initial contact with them to narrow the choices is imperative. Calling each firm and briefly discussing your job, their interest and experience in your specific type of work, and their availability to take on the project at that time can help to narrow your choices. Ask each firm or person to send you information about their services and previous experience in design for children for your review. In reviewing their written information, you should be able to compile a list of 2 – 5 firms to interview for your job. Interviewing a potential design professional is an important way to obtain answers to many of your questions as well as to evaluate your “connection” or “chemistry” with the particular person you will be working with.

Interviewing and Selecting a Design Professional

Several criteria should be used when evaluating a design professional for your project. Spend time thinking about your own expectations and needs, and incorporate questions to address your personal requirements into your interview process.

Experience designing children’s spaces will be one factor for review and discussion. An understanding of the uniqueness of the preschool and child care facility is important to a successful design, and the design professional should be comfortable talking about children, environments for children, and children’s interactions within spaces. If a design professional has no experience

designing preschools, review their experiences designing other facilities with size and budgets similar to yours. Also their experience and knowledge of local ordinances, licensing regulations, and geographic peculiarities of your area can be addressed. Seeing examples of their previous work, and touring facilities they designed is a good way to get a sense of their true understanding of the type of facility you are contracting for.

Competency, which is often determined by licensing, certification, or membership in a professional organization, is critical, but is not always the only determining factor in the ability of a design professional to produce a successful project for you. Competency in the type of design for which you are contracting is important and should be reviewed and discussed in the interview. The more you have determined about your expectations, the better you can articulate your preliminary needs and desires. This enables you to have a more informed discussion with the design professional to determine their appropriateness for your job.

Interpersonal skills are crucial in any profession working with the public. Because of the necessity of gathering information from a variety of sources, the design professional must have exceptional interpersonal skills to put clients and information sources at ease and support them in providing information that will lead to the success of the project. Listening is one of the most important skills a design professional can have. During the interview process, observe these skills in the design professionals you are talking with. Intimidation by design professionals has been identified as a major factor in the dissatisfaction of many preschool clients, and this is primarily communicated through the design professional's interpersonal skills (or lack thereof). Observe closely and trust your intuition in determining your comfort level with your interviewees.

A **willingness to learn** on the part of the design professional can indicate the potential for a very successful project. Discuss the design professional's priorities in the designing of your preschool, how those priorities relate to children, and how willing the designer is to become familiar with the daily workings in your center. Many child care professionals encourage or require their design professionals to spend at least one day in the classroom interacting with the children before the design process begins. This helps to educate the design professional in ways that typical programming or information-gathering techniques cannot. Discuss this expectation during the interview to determine the reaction of the design professional and their willingness to participate fully in the process.

Chemistry and connection between the client and designer is also critical for a successful job. A great deal of time will be spent together, and building a comfortable and enjoyable relationship can lead to greater understanding of each other and of the project. This understanding supports better communication, which ultimately leads to a more creative, functional, and appropriate design for your space. Compatible personalities bring more harmony and teamwork to the project. It is imperative that you meet all design professionals before hiring them to participate in your project. For example, if an architect indicates that he/she has an interior designer on staff or that they typically use one person for their interiors work, you need to request a meeting and interview with that individual before agreeing to work with them. Putting together a design team that has not previously worked together prior to your project is an acceptable practice, and may foster greater creativity in the designs. Again, trust your intuition and observe your own reactions to each interviewee as you proceed through the decision-making process.

References can be an invaluable contribution in your final decision. Seeing other work by a design professional is important, but talking to the clients they worked with can offer even more insight into the procedure followed, the relationships built, and the final success of the project.

Below are some questions you might consider asking when you are interviewing design professionals for your project. Use these as a guide, adding questions pertinent to your situation, deleting questions that are irrelevant.

1. Does the design professional have experience designing preschool or child care facilities?
2. Does the design professional understand the differences between preschool design for young children and design for older children (i.e. school design)?
3. Who does the design professional see as the users of the space? Who do they see as important in providing them information about the needs within the environment?
4. Is the design professional willing to spend time in the center with the children to better understand the needs of children within interior and exterior environments?
5. Is the design professional familiar with the licensing requirements for preschool and child care facilities?
6. What are the design professional's ideas about collaborative work? Do they typically work with other design professionals (indicate which ones – i.e. does the architect work with interior designers on a regular basis)?
7. How does the design professional react when you express an expectation of working as a team with an architect, interior designer, and landscape architect?
8. Has the design professional done work in this geographic location previously?
9. Given your budget, can the design professional talk to you in general terms about what you can expect for your budget dollars?

10. How do you feel when you are talking with the design professional?
11. What is the current work load of the design professional's firm? How would your project fit into that workload?
12. Ask the design professional if there is anything else you should be asking.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

A mutual understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of all groups involved in the design of preschool spaces, including owners, teachers, administrators, parents, and design professionals is crucial to a successful project. The more a design professional understands about the daily work of the teacher and the ways children use interior spaces, the more sensitive the design produced. And the more the client group understands about the process of designing the preschool, the more timely and appropriate the information they provide. This section will give an overview of the design process, as well as a summary of the expertise the design professional brings to the design project for the child development client group. The following section provides guidance for the client group to help the design professional understand the needs of children and adults in the preschool setting.

Educating the Child Development Professional

The design professional brings a unique talent and ability to the process of creating new preschool spaces. Designers and architects not only translate the needs and desires expressed by the child care professionals and parents into workable, functional environments, but they also bring the ability to include beauty, creativity, uniqueness, and distinction into the design of the facility. They are equal partners with the client, and can educate the client in areas such as site orientation, spatial relationships, lighting, psychology of spaces, and color, that will enable the team to create more wonderful, exciting, and functional preschools.

The design process is a tool used by design professionals to proceed through the design of a space in an orderly and organized fashion. There are typically 7 steps in this process; planning, programming, schematic design, design development, contract documentation, contract administration, and finally, post-occupancy evaluation (Pile, 1988). The complexity and duration of each phase

may vary with the individual needs of each project, but in most cases, the design will proceed through each step as needed.

Planning is the first step in the process, and may be done with or without the design professional. During this phase, the client group defines the goals of the project and the “scope of work” or the amount of work you want to undertake. Issues such as preliminary budget allocations, type of work, reason for work, and location of the project are discussed and decisions are made. It is often beneficial to bring the design professional into the process during the planning phase since they can provide important information for consideration. Design professionals also have methods of helping you come to decisions about these issues and can save costly delays later in the process.

The design professional should always be involved during the **programming** phase of the job, when specific information about client needs and wishes is gathered. Information on the preliminary budget and schedule of the project will be identified and shared during this process. The design professional will engage in fact-finding conversations with members of the client group to determine functions of spaces, expectations, spatial usage, licensing requirements, and other pertinent information. Many strategies are used by design professionals to gather the needed information including interviews, group meetings, observation, and surveys. During the programming phase the design professional should spend time in the classrooms within the center interacting with the children and gathering information on the daily activities within the space. In order to increase communication, it may also be helpful during this phase for the design professional and client group to tour many different child care centers and other children’s spaces together and openly discuss what is being observed. By engaging in this collaborative activity, both groups are getting a better sense of the language each uses to describe visual elements. Spatial

appointments observed are identified as both positive and negative, giving all involved a better sense of the requirements of your specific project. This phase is one of the most critical phases of the process, and should be given concentrated attention by all team members. If sufficient and appropriate information is gathered during this stage, the following phases of the project will require much less effort.

The **schematic or preliminary design** phase of the project is the time of spatial evaluation by the design professional based on the information gathered in the programming phase. Often a program statement is written expressing the designer's understanding of the intent of the project, and overall direction of the design. The designer may produce a "bubble diagram" which shows the relationships of space in a preliminary format. For example, a bubble diagram would identify a service area that may include a kitchen, laundry area, storage, and delivery entrance in close proximity, but separate from the commons and parent lounge area. Diagramming, or creating a non-literal representation of the types of spaces needed is another format that may be used visualize the spatial concepts and relationships identified by the bubble diagrams. Other formats such as models, sketches, or computer-generated drawings may also be used. These schematic designs give everyone a chance to evaluate the initial understanding of the programming information gathered, and provide a basis for the design professional to proceed on to the next step. Discussions of more detailed budget considerations may occur at this point also, since more information about detailed expectations has been identified. To assure the understanding and agreement between all parties about the outcomes of this phase, it is a good idea to discuss this schematic design and to provide a written approval of the issues reviewed.

The next phase of the process is the **design development**, when the design professional, using the modifications determined after the review of the schematic design, produces a refined design and presentation. The design professional begins to provide details for the design, calculate budget estimates as closely as possible, specify finishes and interior furnishings, and confirm compliance with legislation, zoning, and licensing requirements. This is the final design phase, and should include a presentation of the final recommendations to the client for approval. Presentation formats may vary, and can include color and sample boards, sketches, renderings, computer-generated drawings, models, and audio-visual components. The approval for the final design should be given in writing, pending any changes or modifications requested after the presentation.

Upon approval of the final design, the design professional moves into **construction documentation** to provide drawings and specifications of all materials and construction methods for the contractor to use in building or renovating the facility. These drawings and specifications describe how the contractor is to approach the project on a trade-by-trade basis. The level of quality and work standards are also identified in the construction documents. This phase requires a great deal of coordination between all professionals involved in the design and engineering aspects of the project to avoid discrepancies or contradictions within the documents. Copies of these detailed blueprints and specification books should be provided by the design professional to the contractor for use in the construction of the facility.

During the construction phase of the project, the design professional also may have the role of **contract administration**, which includes overseeing the estimating and bidding of the construction work, coordinating scheduling with the contractor, arranging for the purchase of furniture and fixtures, coordinating

with the contractor to install any fixtures provided by the owner, and overseeing the construction progress. The design professional does not supervise the construction, but rather monitors the progress and ensures that the project is built to the specifications outlined in the contract documents. The owner may also include responsibilities within the contract administration such as coordinating the furniture installation, placement of accessories, artwork, and free-standing light fixtures, and overseeing move-in details. To ensure a clear understanding of the contract administration responsibilities, discuss expectations with the design professional early in the project and have the agreement put in writing so there will be no discrepancy when the administration of the construction contract begins.

The final phase of the design process, and one that is often overlooked by design professionals, is the **post-occupancy evaluation**. This evaluation takes place after the move-in has occurred, and the purpose of the follow-up is to assure that the job was completed as the client expected and that the client group is satisfied with the final product. Design professionals approach post-occupancy evaluations in different ways. They may choose to discuss the satisfaction with the owner, interview teachers and administrators, or submit written surveys to the occupants to procure responses to specific questions. Often the design professional will want to photograph the space upon completion of the construction, but prior to the move-in date. Photographing the space gives the design professional documentation of the design (much the same as child development professionals document the creations and progress of children in their classrooms). This documentation provides a record of the design as well as an opportunity to evaluate the design more closely at a later date. The photos may also be used to provide design examples to educate other center directors as to the possibilities that design can open up within a preschool center. If this is acceptable, you will want to

coordinate the photography session with the design professional to avoid conflicts with other activities. This phase can provide a learning experience for the design professional, who can gather information for future projects by learning what works for the client and what needs to be modified.

Understanding the typical process of design most design professionals will use helps you as the client to better anticipate information needed and to provide accordingly. Discussing this process in detail with your design professional, and having them identify target dates for each phase will further enhance your ability to provide timely and appropriate information. As a result, both you and your design professional will be able to proceed through the design phases with a maximum understanding of expectations and minimal delays due to miscommunication.

Educating the Design Professional

To design an appropriate preschool space that supports both children and adults, the design professional needs to understand as much as possible about the functions of the spaces, how the children use and interact with interior environments, and the effect spaces can have on children. Other factors are important also, such as technical requirements, maintenance and operation requirements, and environmental requirements.

You are the source of appropriate information for the design professional, and the better prepared you are to provide this information, the more smoothly the job will progress. It is important for you to remember that you are the expert in the needs of children, and it is your responsibility to ensure that the children are provided for in this process. The designer is an expert at translating your needs into spatial characteristics, but the team of administrators, teachers, and parents know best the needs of the children and adults in the center. We are on the cutting edge of a

new building type, and it is critical for you as child development professionals to clearly communicate the needs to willing design professionals. Some design professionals request research articles to help them understand findings about children within preschool environments, and children's reactions to spatial elements. Having recent research articles available will help to educate the design professional by providing reliable conclusions about children in interior environments based on research conducted under controlled conditions.

When gathering information, design professionals typically go from gathering very general information during the early programming phase to needing very specific details during the latter part of the programming and early part of the schematic phases. Be assured that the details will be addressed, but that the general information the designer asks for early in the information-gathering is what is needed at that stage in the process. By doing the activities in this workbook, you will be prepared to offer the designer pertinent information at the appropriate time.

Collaborative Activities

Because of the collaborative nature of the design process, identifying activities for you to engage in with the design professional can be very helpful in establishing a deeper understanding of each other. As discussed in a previous section, visiting a variety of centers with the design professional and discussing the elements observed can provide a wealth of information for use in your own project. Discussions about visual characteristics can help to establish a common language and common reference points for future dialogues about the project.

Taking pictures of centers toured, gathering plans from different centers, and viewing slides of previous work for children's spaces done by the design professional can offer more insight into the

design ideas used in the past. Having your staff bring in illustrations of spatial characteristics they would like to see in the new facility can provide new ideas for consideration in the design process. Asking the design professional to provide slides of exceptional spaces for children, as they interpret the concept, to expand the ideas of what to strive for is also a good strategy for opening the team to new possibilities.

Working together to educate one another in each area of expertise, the design and child development professionals can make a dynamic and powerful team to address the needs of children and adults in preschool spaces. By keeping open communication and by advocating for children's needs within the preschool, you are able to be a vital force in the design process and are part of a team that will provide well-designed and appropriate spaces for all of the occupants.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Purpose

This activity will provide each classroom a chance to work collaboratively to write a story that will give the design professionals some different insights into the unique qualities of a preschool space, and the specific needs of the children occupying the space. Thinking through and expressing the needs of children, parents, and teachers from a child's perspective will bring to light any issues that may be overlooked with other "data-gathering" techniques.

Participants

This activity has been structured to include any individuals identified as important in the process of planning, creating and implementing the plans for your new preschool center. This may include owners, administrators, board members, teachers, parents, specialists, and others who work at your preschool.

Instructions

1. Divide the group by classrooms for this activity.
2. Have each class write a story, fiction or nonfiction, from a child's perspective, about experiencing their environment on a typical day.
3. The story doesn't have to be long (1 – 2 pages), but should include information that the teachers, parents, etc. want to convey to the design professional as important.
4. Be creative and talk about what it is like to be a child moving, thinking, feeling, and interacting within their space.
5. You may also include information about the needs of adults as seen through the eyes of a child.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY
(continued)

Outcomes

These stories will act as a tool to help educate the design professional about the ways in which children experience interior spaces and how that differs from the adult experience. Typical programming, or information-gathering, techniques will secure some information, but these stories afford the design professional with a deeper understanding about the ways in which children interact with their surroundings.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The administration of any design and construction project involves 3 particular areas of focus. These are budget issues, timing or scheduling issues, and quality of work issues. Each area must be considered when making design decisions, and the design professional should be able to provide insight into the effect of arising situations on each of these areas. For example, if a decision is made that the project must be finished two months ahead of the schedule initially established, the owner must be willing to either dedicate more money to the budget to pay for accelerated construction, or be willing to compromise on the quality of work so that the time to design or build is reduced.

BUDGET

The preliminary budget of any project must be established early in the process. The budget must include not only the costs for construction, but also allowances for appropriate design fees. The owner, director, and administrator should contact the center's accountant or financial advisor to discuss the financial position of the center, and what budget possibilities are available for new construction or renovation of the existing facility. These discussions are crucial to the overall understanding of the financial decisions that must be made in order to budget for a new project.

Other decisions may be made that impact this financial position. For example, you may decide to provide for double your preschool enrollment in the new facility, or to add a new program for infants that previously did not exist. While these will impact the budget needed, they would also offer possibilities for greater future revenue that would pay for the additional space. These decisions must also be discussed with the financial advisor and reviewed for feasibility.

When a preliminary figure has been identified for allocation to the new project, it is important to get an idea of what type of

construction you could expect for that amount of money. The design professional can help in this process by showing you examples of projects that were built within your budget range. If possible, visit those projects to get a better understanding of the quality of construction, the amenities included, and the overall feel of a building built in your budget limits. After viewing these projects, you may decide that more money is needed. This may be the time to begin reviewing other funding options such as grants to help supplement the money allocated.

SCHEDULE

Scheduling factors are important since they determine when decisions are needed, and ultimately when your move will take place. Many issues must be considered in determining scheduling, such as whether you close for a period of time to complete a remodel, or whether you work around critical transition times for the children when moving into a new facility.

The time of year and geographic location of your center can have a significant impact on the schedule, since in many climates, exterior construction is difficult in winter months. Other factors may also influence your schedule, such as construction loan requirements, grant stipulations, or government contract conditions.

As you begin thinking about your project, be sure to consider and communicate all factors that may impact the timing of your construction to the design team. Your design professional can work with you to create a realistic timeframe for your completed project. Completing the activity in this section about timelines will help you and your group begin addressing many specific details that determine the schedule, and making decisions about each of these issues. This timeline should be a helpful tool when talking to the design professional about your expectations.

QUALITY

The quality of design and craftsmanship depends primarily on the amount of money you are willing to dedicate to the project and the amount of time allocated to its completion. You should strive for the best quality possible within your personal constraints, and discuss your expectations with the design professional at the start of the design process.

As with the budget, touring other centers and talking with owners and administrators can give you a more realistic idea of what to expect. Often it is important to put in additional budget money during the initial construction to provide for higher quality materials that will save you money in the long run. The return on your investment and the life cycle cost of an item is a meaningful consideration when determining the final specifications of a project. Both the design and construction experts can provide you with alternatives that may meet your needs, meet your budget, and have a better life-cycle cost, so discussing the issue of quality with all professionals involved is an important step.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL INPUT NEEDED

Many different professionals can have input into the decision to renovate or build a new preschool center. As an owner or administrator, it is your responsibility to talk with each of these professionals to get current information that will influence your judgement about a variety of issues. Listening to the ideas of these professionals can help to prepare you to be a more informed consumer and ultimately make the process of creating new spaces an easier task (Hale, Marshall, & Showalter, 1980).

The following is a list of some professionals that may be helpful in your information-seeking process.

- Your **accountant** or **financial advisor** will have information pertaining to your specific business and how your financial status will support additional debts for construction. Different strategies can be reviewed, and in conclusion a preliminary budget figure based on your situation can be derived. While this figure may be altered for many reasons, it does give you a good idea of a beginning range of budget dollars to discuss with the design professional.
- Your personal **banker** has an idea of the financial status of your center, and can help you identify a variety of loans available to you for your construction needs. They are knowledgeable about the different loans, and should be able to explain the terms of each. Loan officers can guide you in the decision-making process and help you to make sound decisions about your final loan commitment.
- An **SBA (Small Business Association) representative** may be a valuable resource when looking at financial, legal, and insurance issues associated with your business. While they may not be able to offer professional counsel, they may be able to provide you with information and resources to obtain services at a reduced price, or from professionals that deal mainly with the small business population. The SBA also has loan packages for many small business situations that should be reviewed as part of your information-gathering process.
- It is important to seek information about the legal details of your project from your **lawyer** or **legal counsel**. While this may not seem a necessary step initially, it is always a good idea to keep your legal counsel apprised of changes in your business status. This way they can provide you with considerations you may not otherwise think of, and there will be fewer surprises as you move into a new aspect of your business life.

- Inviting comments from your **insurance agent** as to the consequences of design, construction, and business decisions is critical. Keeping policies updated, understanding the nuances of insurance during the construction process, and calculating potential additions to premiums into future budgets will help you understand the broader picture of the design and construction product.
- The **state licensing officer**, and **NAEYC accreditation validator** can have critical input into the design of your center to assure that criteria are met for licensing and accreditation. These individuals should be brought in to review plans at the completion of the design development stage before final approvals are given to the design professional to proceed. Many details can be caught and corrected before construction if input from these individuals is sought early in the process.

SUMMARY

This section has given you information to help you understand the three primary issues for consideration when designing and constructing a new or renovated center. Budget, schedule, and quality must be weighed, and decisions made about your personal expectations in each of these areas.

Talking to different professionals at the beginning of your thought process can help to give a more realistic approach to this process. Professionals such as accountants, bankers, insurance agents, lawyers, and licensing/accreditation officials can provide input to allow you to proceed in a practical manner. By understanding your capabilities and limitations from the beginning, there will be little wasted time as a result unrealistic expectations. The following activity will help you to visualize in more detail the time and activities required to begin and complete the design and construction process.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXERCISE

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to familiarize you with the scheduling of a preschool design project. Using the information provided below and the illustration given as a guide, you will create your own timeline for the design and construction of your center. While the information provided is hypothetical, the exercise gives your participants an opportunity to evaluate the possible time needed for certain steps in the process, and to have a visual representation of a potential schedule for your project.

Participants

This activity has been structured to include any individuals identified as important in the process of creating and implementing the plans for your new preschool center. This may include owners, administrators, board members, teachers, parents, specialists, and others who work at your preschool. Inviting outside professionals to participate, including design professionals, financial professionals, and construction professionals can provide additional information and realistic input for this activity.

Instructions

- Spread a long sheet of craft paper on the wall and draw a horizontal line with divisions to indicate week increments. You do not have to put dates on this timeline at this time.
- Using the activity list provided below, discuss and determine the amount of time you want to associate with each activity.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXERCISE **(continued)**

- On the craft paper divided into 1 week increments, draw in each activity and the time you have associated with it. If you know of activities that can be performed simultaneously, draw them into the same weeks. If you aren't sure, provide separate days/weeks for each activity.

- Once all of the activities and their associated times are drawn on the paper, identify a possible date you would like to begin the process and indicate that on the paper.

- From that point, calculate the possible finish date of your project based on the times you allocated to each activity.

- **NOTE:** Some timeframes have been included on the following list of activities. These timeframes are hypothetical, but not unrealistic for some types of projects. Timeframes for other activities are not included, so a discussion and agreement among the participants needs to occur to determine the amount of time to allocate to the activity. The list of activities is not necessarily comprehensive, so please add activities and associated times that apply to your center.

Activity	Associated Time
Deciding whether to build a new center or renovate existing space	<i>determine with participants</i>
Talking to accountant, banker, and other professionals to determine the economic feasibility of a building project	<i>determine with participants</i>
Making preliminary decisions about budget issues (availability of money, loan information, # of children needed and at what tuition level to support a new building project or renovation)	<i>determine with participants</i>
Writing for grants if necessary	<i>determine with participants</i>
Deciding on any fundamental changes in the preschool structure (i.e. adding an infant program)	<i>determine with participants</i>
Polling families to determine requirements for a new site (i.e. location area if building a new facility)	<i>determine with participants</i>
Locating new site	<i>determine with participants</i>
Interviewing/hiring design professional	<i>determine with participants</i>
Interviewing/bidding/hiring contractor	<i>determine with participants</i>
Design phases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Organization and Planning Programming Space Evaluation Schematic/Preliminary Design Design Development Contract Documentation Contract Administration Post-Occupancy Evaluation 	2 – 4 weeks 4 – 8 weeks 4 weeks 6 – 8 weeks 3 weeks 4 – 6 weeks 20 weeks (during construction) varies – allow 2 weeks

ADMINISTRATIVE EXERCISE
(continued)

Activity	Associated Time
Construction phases	
Site work	2 – 3 weeks
Foundation work	2 weeks
Construction of building	
Exterior Construction	6 weeks
Interior Construction	10 weeks
Final landscaping work	can be completed during interior construction
Final occupancy permit	2 – 4 weeks
Move-in	<i>determine with participants</i>

Outcomes

By doing this exercise and discussing the times that may be needed for each step, you will come to have a greater understanding of the length of time you might expect to complete your project. The graphic you create will also give you a starting point for discussions about timing and schedules that should take place with the design professionals early in the design process. Using the results of this activity as a guide, the design professional and contractor can discuss modifications to the schedule your group created based on the realities of your specific project and location. This timeline may also be used to determine target dates and milestones in the progress of the job.

**PROJECT
PARTICIPANT
INTERACTIONS**

Individuals Involved in Project

The individuals involved in a preschool design project may vary with the size, complexity, and ownership of the center. Typically the owner, administrator/director, architect, interior designer, and landscape architect are involved in much of the initial decision-making about the project. Bringing in teachers, parents, children, and specialists (i.e. physical therapists) that interact within the facility each day to share their needs, concerns, and desires in the programming process is always a good idea. Depending upon the owner's approach, these individuals may also be involved in the decision-making about final design issues.

There are many ways in which teachers, parents, children, and others can be brought into the process and share their information. The design professional should be eager to discuss daily functions with the teachers, and may have specific techniques that they typically use to gather information from larger groups. As stated previously, the design professional should be willing to spend time in the center interacting in the classrooms, giving them ample opportunity to discover the needs and wants of the occupants. Many design professionals will distribute surveys, hold group meetings, and lead interactive workshops to discover the needs of all involved in the preschool space.

Often, however, a new center is built prior to the hiring of teachers and the registration of children and parents as participants. In this case, as the owner you may want to try to "enlist" the help of other teachers and of preschool children not involved in your center to provide some information to the design professional. While this is not an ideal situation, at least the experience these individuals bring to the process will enlighten the designers and broaden the understanding of the needs. With more input from experienced individuals, the design professional has a better opportunity to

address broader issues and consider more options, giving the preschool design a greater chance of success.

During the process of choosing the design professional, discuss their approaches to information-gathering with a larger group of participants. Including teachers, parents, and others in this process is important to assure that your new center meets the needs of the occupants, as well as having them feel ownership of the new space as a result of their contributions. If a design professional is not willing to interact with the group and gather information from the users of the space, you may want to seriously consider choosing another design professional who supports this practice.

Types of Interactions

Meetings are the most typical interactions that occur among the design and construction team. Expect regular meetings with the design team at the beginning of the project as information is gathered and design ideas are discussed. You may not want to invite all teachers and parents to each of these meetings, but once some preliminary designs have been created, holding center meetings to explain and discuss the design options is a good way to elicit input and encourage participation by the users of the preschool spaces. The design professionals should be available to attend these meetings at least periodically to answer questions and explain the thought process behind the decisions made.

As the job progresses, the team may decide to schedule weekly meetings to discuss the job progress. Sometimes, the project team decides that weekly meetings are not needed, but meetings of the design professionals, client representatives, contractor, engineers, and any other professional involved in the process should take place periodically. These meetings are important to assure that all participants understand the progress of the project, and the meetings give a forum for questions and discussion that needs to

take place to maintain a coordinated effort throughout the job. The design professional typically takes a lead role in these meetings, but if that is not occurring, you have the right to call meetings and ask for discussion about the current issues of the project. The important point is that the job is well coordinated and everyone on the project team is informed of this coordination and the job progress.

Summary

The key to a successful project is collaboration between all parties involved in the design and construction project. Each participant needs to be able to listen to the ideas and thoughts of other team members, to clearly share their ideas and needs with the team, to act on the information shared, and to make decisions based on the facts and knowledge that result from the collaborative interactions. Teamwork is critical, and an understanding of the responsibilities of each team member helps establish a network of communication that fosters successful interactions. It is the responsibility of each team member to support good interactions throughout the project, and to share their expectations with other team members to keep the communication lines open at all times.

FINAL SUMMARY

The design of preschool facilities, as identified in this document, is a unique design challenge. Designing environments for children and the adults who care for them is not a new activity, but the understanding of the impact of the near environment on children's lives, behavior, and development makes the space an important consideration for any person deciding to build a new preschool or renovate an existing setting.

This document has addressed the essential elements of designing a preschool facility. The roles of the child care professionals as well as the design professionals have been defined, and suggestions provided as to the most appropriate individuals to involve in the different types of design domains. A discussion of the uniqueness of the preschool design is included to foster a more thoughtful approach to the activity. An understanding of the educational roles of both design and child development professionals in the process is essential. Each brings a unique set of talents, experience, and responsibilities to the project, and is charged with helping to enlighten the other team members as to their contributions.

Many administrative issues must be evaluated and studied prior to the design of the facility, and some of the professionals who might be of service in these areas are also included in this document. Finally, a narrative about the types of interactions that must take place to foster successful communication that leads to a successful project completes the major sections of this work.

The information included in this document was compiled from many sources. The content was primarily identified through a research study conducted with child development professionals, parents, and design professionals who had been involved in the design of a new preschool facility or children's space. Some of the information comes from my personal experience as a design professional, and

some from writings of many design and child development professionals regarding different aspects of the design process and other subjects. The Child Care Design Institute lead by Dr. Anita Olds also contributed ideas and approaches included in this work. This document was written as a tool to help bring together the fields of design and child development for the purposes of creating functional, creative, wonderful spaces for children. My hope is that this document has both addressed and accomplished that mission for each of you.

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