

Play-Pods

Why use play-pods?

- As an alternative to social distancing.
- To limit the number of contacts and facilitate contact tracing.
- To support close, positive interactions between children and their practitioner.

Social distancing is difficult for children and practitioners need to interact physically with children they care for.

Face coverings are not required for children in settings or for adults while they are caring for children. Face coverings should be worn by adults (staff, parents, visitors) when not caring for children and where social distancing is not possible

Play-Pod size

There is no evidence base to define a maximum play-pod size. They should be kept as small as is reasonably practical. Generally a pod will have either one or two adults, sometimes three e.g. to assist a child with additional needs or for groups of very young children. Adult child ratios and space requirements remain the same.

Therefore, Pod size will depend on:

- The space available in your service (number and size of rooms)
- Staffing available (e.g. for breaks/relief).

Can a room be a play-pod?

- Does your room usually have one, two or three adults in it? If so, this could be a single play-pod.
- More than two/three adults? Partition the room.
- Partitions to be light and/or transparent and high enough to limit pods interacting.
- No need for solid partitions from floor to ceiling.

Think about - access points (shared or separate), access to outside space, access to handwashing and toilet facilities, fire safety and clear floor space.

Examples

(other scenarios can apply)

Jumping Jacks;

a sessional service with 16 children aged 3-6 years.

The service decides to have one play-pod with two adults and 16 children in the pod.

An additional member of staff assists with drop-offs and collections.

Jill's After School Club;

a school age service, with 24 children.

The service splits the children into two play-pods with one adult and 12 children in each.

An additional staff member provides cover for breaks

Play-Pods

Movement of Staff/children between Play-Pods

Minimise movement between play-pods where possible, but there will be exceptions:

- Relief for staff breaks.
- Two sessions in one room e.g. one morning and one afternoon – staff may work in both sessions.
- Part time staff working in full day pods.
- Children who need to move to another play-pod within the service as numbers change throughout the day (e.g. from ECCE to full-day pod or breakfast club to full-day).
- Children with dual placements.

You should also take steps to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

Examples

(other scenarios can apply)

Little Acorns;

a combined full day, part time and sessional service with 49 children from birth to 6 yrs.

The service has four rooms (one large and three medium sized).

It divides the large room into two pods and treats each of the other rooms as a pod.

Room 1 – ECCE Room -

One adult and 11 children.

Room 2 – baby room birth-1 year -

Two adults and six children.

Room 3 – wobbler room 1-2 years -

Two Pods with two adults and 10 children in each.

Room 4 – school age -

One adult and 12 children

Two relief staff - one for rooms 1 and 4 and the other for rooms 2 and 3.

