

EYFS - space requirements

This guidance has been written to help childminders work out their indoor space following the requirements in the EYFS.

Requirement 3.54 *'Providers must ensure that their premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises'*.

You need to measure the usable inside area available for children's PLAY the spaces children can freely walk around – not spaces covered by fixed furniture such as shelves, sofas or desks. The EYFS states *'These calculations should be based on the net or useable areas of the rooms used by the children, not including storage areas, thoroughfares, dedicated staff areas, cloakrooms, utility rooms, kitchens and toilets.'*

How do I calculate the square meters in my house?

The basic formula for calculating square meters is length x width, so... first, find your calculator and put in some batteries. Then have a game of 'hunt the tape measure' - the children will love playing with it when you have finished your calculations.

Next, measure the length and width of the available space in meters - not inches - don't make it more complicated than it needs to be. Remember that it is **free** space for children to move around and play – measure it in meters and write it down.

You might find it helpful to draw a rough map of your play areas – I have given you an example on page 3 of my play areas in my house, showing you where my furniture sits in the rooms and how I have measured round it to give an accurate measurement.

Now use your calculator to times the length by the width - the answer gives you the meters squared of your room. You can use my measurements and working out on page 3 to check that yours are right...

What if the children are mostly outside?

If you mostly play outside - maybe you follow a forest school curriculum - that does not count when calculating floor space for ratios. The EYFS states that the figures given are for usable indoor space only.

What if the children play in my kitchen because it is big?

The EYFS does not count the kitchen as a usable area of provision. However, any area to the side of the kitchen which is set up for eg water and sand play (as opposed to being filled with a table) *might* count if it is clearly not part of your kitchen area eg it has different flooring or is set up for use by the children. You should check with Ofsted for further advice - and get your answer in writing as they seem to give out conflicting information on this one.

Then you need to consider the space needed for each child. The space needed for each child in your care is detailed in requirement 3.57 -

- *Children under two years: 3.5 m² per child.*
- *Two year olds: 2.5 m² per child.*
- *Children aged three to five years: 2.3 m² per child.*

Write it up in a simple table so you can add it up easily. So you might have ...

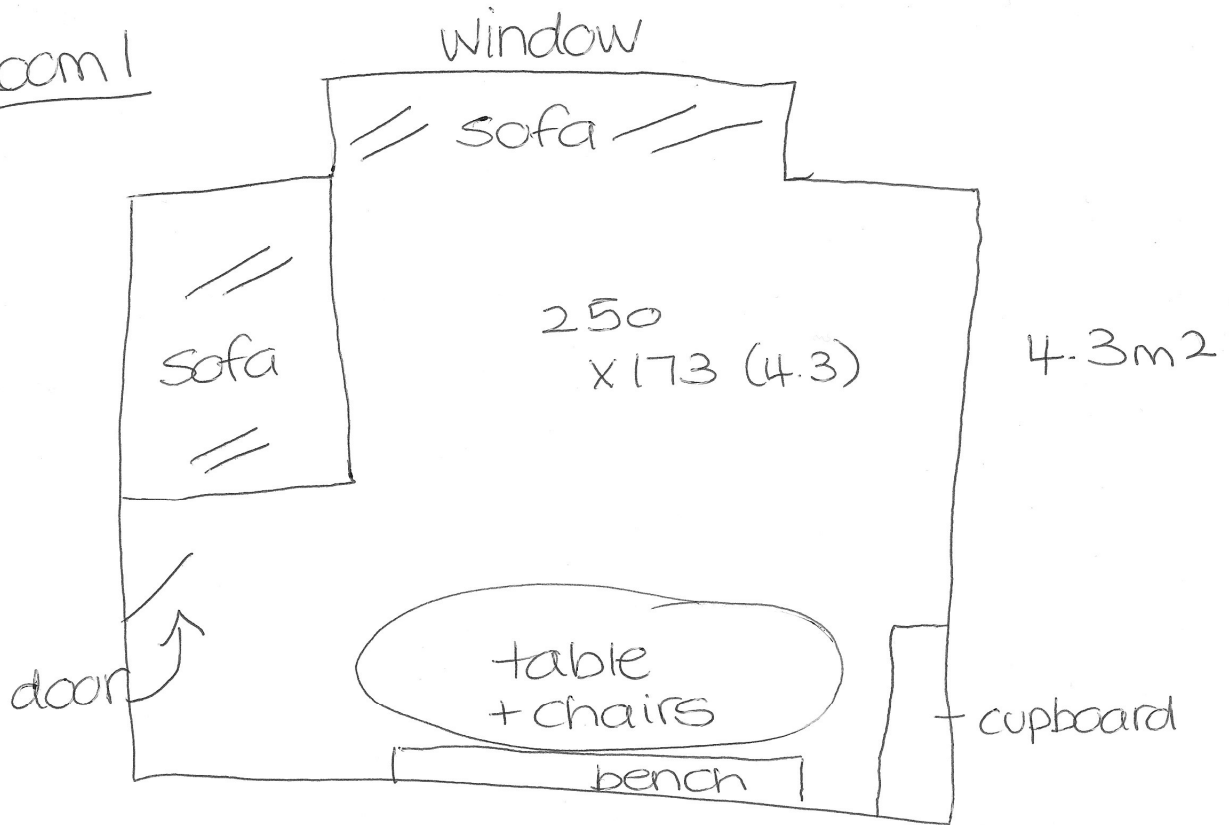
Children on Monday – after school	Space needed
Your own baby aged 1	3.5 m ²
Childminded child age 4	2.3 m ²
Childminded child age 5 (after school)	2.3 m ²
Childminded child age 8 (after school)	No space requirement in Childcare Register
Total space needed =	8.1 m ²

I have 9.6 m² in the 2 rooms I have measured below so I can take on these children.

You can then do the same calculation for each day of the week – and if you have 5 year olds after school you might do it for them too – to make sure you are complying with the rules in the EYFS. Ofsted inspectors have been known to arrive with tape measures and check so it is important you are confident that you have the space you need for the children on the day.

Floor Space

Room 1



Room 2

