

A sample of the comments volunteered by 471 Ministry of Education licensed early childhood centres regarding their centre's ventilation problems

“Three air purifiers would be very useful as we have a sleep room with little to no ventilation and also a nappy change area and our main room where we spend the majority of our day. We are unable to open doors and windows and even outdoor play is limited due to how cold it can get here due to our location. Being able to keep air clean and fresh for the tamariki would be amazing.” (Waikato Kōhanga Reo)

“We have air-conditioning but no windows at all. We are unable to keep doors open all the time in the winter being in a high-rise building – it can get extremely wet and windy.” (Auckland childcare centre)

“Our sleep room has small south-facing windows - airflow is cut off when blinds are down. The toilet area has small windows at ceiling level and air does not circulate efficiently. The nappy change room is situated between 2 rooms and there are no windows in this area. In the entrance and bag area there are no windows and the main door cannot be left open because of safety issues.” (Foxton preschool)

“Our bathroom window is tiny and around the corner of the U-shaped bathroom. This window also "leads" out to a deck area and not the open air. Our room for 3- and 4-year-olds has a few windows but we don't deem them safe to open, as they are old cottage windows that slide up. We fear that they could slide down and seriously hurt a child or adult.” (Auckland childcare centre)

“The children's bathroom has two permanently closed windows with tiny vents (1cm high x 4cm wide). The baby change area has one permanently closed window with a tiny vent (1cm high x 4cm wide). The baby sleep room has two permanently closed windows with tiny vents (1cm high x 4cm wide). The library room has no ventilation – a tiny mostly enclosed space. The office corner has no ventilation close to this corner of the building.” (Wellington Playcentre)

“In the hallway/ children's bag hook area, we can't keep the front door open for security reasons and also wind tunnels make door slamming possibility. Other rooms have some windows but with over 30-degree temps we need them closed with air-con on.” (Blenheim preschool)

“The toilet area in infant/toddler room has no external walls for windows and is tucked in a corner. The infant sleeping spaces have small windows with stays and blinds over the top, wall air conditioners (circulating internal air - no HEPA filter). The infant and toddler play spaces have external windows on stays and the doors shut when children are inside – for child supervision purposes. The doors cannot be kept open because of birds flying indoors.” (Auckland preschool)

“We have to unscrew windows to open them. It’s hard to watch kids in a room while standing on a chair with your back to them while you individually unscrew 6 long screws to be able to undo and then screw them back into position. The only window to cross draft backs into an opening door space so you have to shut the window to use the door. The windows in sleep rooms open into a noisy alleyway - nearby machinery wakes kids often. Toilet windows latched so children can't fall out but placed under veranda so no breeze to provide cross draft. We spray chemicals inside to disguise poo smells.” (Dunedin centre)

“Inside play space is an internal room with no direct link to the outdoors. One door goes into an undercover outdoor space, not directly outside (not only that, but we do not want our infants and toddlers having free range of the outdoors during routine times), and the other door into the room is from an inside foyer area. There are no windows that open in the play space. Sleep rooms windows are closed to minimise noise as we are by a State Highway.” (Hamilton childcare centre)

“In the sleep room when the curtains are closed for children sleeping the air flow is blocked. The hallway has no windows for ventilation. All windows in the building have safety locks fitted (ministry requirements) this reduces the amount of air flow per window.” (Carterton preschool)

“Due to our extreme heat in summer and cold in winter, we need to have air conditioning on to keep our play space and rooms at the constant temperature the MOE requires. If our windows are open, our air conditioning systems cannot keep the rooms cool/warm to the required temperature as they are not designed to operate when windows are open.” (Central Otago centre)

“Although a flow of fresh air is possible with opening doors and windows - it is not always effective due to not enough wind or too much wind. Also, open windows and doors increases noise flowing from/to different areas and rooms.” (Wellington preschool)

“Baby room and toilet/nappy change area have windows that are not able to be open. They are old wooden windows that are painted shut or are on ropes that are damaged and all if they could open would be too low to the ground a child could climb through.” (Havelock North centre)

“When windows are open in the sleep room in summer, the room temperature cannot cool down and it gets too hot for children so we keep windows closed. In winter rain comes in the windows and onto beds, so again we keep windows closed.” (Auckland childcare centre)

“How we will manage everything when it is wet and cold and children choose to play inside where it is warmer? We promote outdoor play regardless of weather but most children still choose to play inside. 18 degrees will not be possible with doors open to ventilate.” (Taupo preschool)

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