

5101:2-12-18

Group size and ratios for a licensed child care center.

(A) What are the requirements for staff/child ratios and maximum group size for a licensed child care center?

- (1) The center shall ensure that required child care staff members/child ratios and maximum group size limitations are maintained at all times in accordance with appendix A to this rule. The center shall post appendix A to this rule in a noticeable area in the center.
- (2) Child care staff members shall not be counted in the staff/child ratio when engaged in duties or activities that interfere with supervision of children.
- (3) There shall be at least one other employee or child care staff member at the center if there are seven or more children in the building.
- (4) Children shall be organized and assigned to a permanent group in consultation with parents and in accordance with the maximum group size detailed in appendix A to this rule.
 - (a) A child with special needs shall be included in the group that best meets the child's development needs.
 - (b) Specific child care staff members shall be assigned and responsible for the care and supervision of the children in their group on a daily basis.
- (5) The center shall not exceed the license capacity at any time.
 - (a) Children on routine trips to and from home, do not count in the center's capacity.
 - (b) Children on routine trips, other than to and from home, and on field trips do count in the center's capacity.
- (6) Group size limitations shall not be interpreted to apply during nap time, evening sleep time, meal time, snack time, outdoor play, field trips, routine trips or special occasions.
- (7) The children shall be organized in groups to give continuity of care and supervision to the children on a day by day basis.

(B) What are the requirements when multiple age groups are combined?

- (1) If two or more age groups are combined, the staff/child ratio shall be maintained for the age of the youngest child in the group. This includes when children are visiting the next older age group for transitioning purposes.
- (2) If no more than one child two and one-half years of age or older is permanently assigned to a group in which all the other children are in the next older group, the staff/child ratio and maximum group size shall be determined by the older children.
- (3) All age groups may be combined when there are twelve or fewer children in the center.

(C) What are the requirements when multiple groups are combined in a shared undivided space?

Two or more groups of children may be combined in the shared space if all of the following are met:

- (1) All of the children are two and a half or older.
- (2) The total number does not exceed the occupancy limit for the space or thirty-five square feet per child (whichever is less).
- (3) Ratio is maintained pursuant to this rule at all times.

(D) What are the requirements for transitioning children into the next age group?

The center shall have available in the classrooms, a copy of the transition agreement between the parent and the center.

(E) Can school-age only programs be double ratio to allow access to the program?

- (1) If the program serves only school-age children, a group of school-age children may be left with only one child care staff member while the other child care staff member leaves the room to allow access to the program.
- (2) Both child care staff members shall have a working communication device to contact each other while one child care staff member is out of the room.
- (3) The child care staff member shall return to the group after allowing access to the program.

(F) What are the requirements for child care centers to keep an attendance record?

- (1) The program shall have written documentation of the following for each child:

- (a) The name and birth date of the child.
 - (b) The assigned group for the child.
 - (c) The child's weekly schedule.
 - (d) The time (hours and minutes) of the child's arrival and departure to the program, including transportation by the program. The Ohio electronic child care (Ohio ECC) provider website (Pweb) cannot be used to meet this written documentation requirement.
 - (e) The written documentation shall be kept for a period of one year. Attendance documentation shall remain at the center at all times.
- (2) Each group shall have a method for tracking the children in the group. This tracking method shall include the child's name and date of birth and shall remain with the group at all times throughout the day including outdoor play, emergency evacuations and when groups are combined. The tracking shall be updated throughout the day as children enter or leave the group.

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