



Teacher-Child Ratio

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (1991) lists the criteria devised by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs for determining adequate numbers of staff in early childhood programs:

"F-2. Sufficient staff with primary responsibility for children are available to provide frequent personal contact; meaningful learning activities; supervision; and to offer immediate care as needed. The ratio of staff to children will vary depending on the age of the children, the type of program activity, the inclusion of children with special needs, the time of day, and other factors. Staffing patterns should provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult takes a break or must respond to an emergency. Staff-child ratios are maintained in relation to size of group (see Table 1). Multi-age grouping is both permissible and desirable. When no infants are included, the staff-child ratio and group size requirements shall be based on the age of the majority of the children in the group. When infants are included, ratios and group size for infants must be maintained. Staff-child ratios are maintained through provision of substitutes when regular staff members are absent. Substitutes for infants and toddlers are familiar with the children and oriented to children's schedules and individual differences in a systematic way before assignment. When volunteers are used to meet the staff-child ratios, they must also meet the appropriate staff qualifications unless they are parents (or guardians) of the children. Volunteers who work with children complete a pre-assignment orientation and participate in ongoing training. Both group size and staff-child ratio are determined on the basis of number and ages of children enrolled." (p. 40)

Recommended staff-child ratios within group size.*

Age of Children ↓	Group Size →	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	28
Infants (birth to 12 mos.)	1:3	1:4										
Toddlers (12 to 24 mos.)	1:3	1:4	1:5	1:4								
2-year-olds (24 to 30 mos.)		1:4	1:5	1:6								
2-1/2-year olds (30 to 36 mos.)			1:5	1:6	1:7							
3-year-olds					1:7	1:8	1:9	1:10				
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10				
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10				
6 to 8 year-olds								1:10	1:11	1:12		
9 to 12 year-olds										1:12	1:14	

* Smaller group sizes and lower staff/child ratios have been found to be strong predictors of compliance with indicators of quality such as positive interactions among staff and children and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Variations in group sizes and ratios are acceptable in many cases where the program demonstrates a very high level of compliance with criteria for interactions (A), curriculum (B), staff qualifications (D), health and safety (H), and physical environment (G).