



Child-Staff Ratios and Maximum Group Size Requirements in 2011

Many research studies have shown that low child-staff ratios and group sizes have a positive impact on the overall quality of early and school-age care and education programs and the experiences that children have in those programs.¹ All States that license child care centers have requirements for child-staff ratios. Eleven (11) States do not regulate group size for any age groups. An additional 10 States do not regulate group size for at least one age group. The following table includes information about States' child-staff ratio and maximum group size requirements for child care centers.

In the table, child-staff ratios are displayed as a numeric ratio of the children allowed for one staff member to supervise (e.g., 4:1 – four children to one staff). Below the ratio in the table, is the group size – the maximum number of children that is assigned to specific staff and can occupy one physical space. Many States do not regulate group size for all or some age groups of children; which is noted by “NR” in the table. In addition, some States have options in their requirements. For example, a center classroom can have a larger group size if the child-staff ratio is smaller (see Maine, Pennsylvania, and Washington); or one additional child is allowed with two staff (see Arizona, Massachusetts, and Ohio).

This information was compiled from the regulations posted on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (NRC) Web site between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2011 at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/>. This study of licensing requirements was conducted as a joint effort between the Office of Child Care's National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement (NCCCQI) and the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA).

States ¹	Child-Staff Ratio and Group Size by Age of Children										
	6 weeks	9 mths.	18 mths.	27 mths.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5 yrs.	6 yrs.	7 yrs.	8 & 9 yrs.	10 yrs. & older
Alabama	5:1 NR	5:1 NR	7:1 NR	8:1 NR	8:1 NR	18:1 NR	21:1 NR	21:1 NR	21:1 NR	22:1 NR	22:1 NR
Alaska	5:1 10	5:1 10	5:1 10	6:1 12	10:1 20	10:1 20	14:1 28	14:1 28	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36

¹ Deborah Lowe Vandell and Barbara Wolfe. (2000). *Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to Be Improved?* Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/sr/pdfs/sr78.pdf>

States ¹	Child-Staff Ratio and Group Size by Age of Children													
	6 weeks		9 mths.		18 mths.		27 mths.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5 yrs.	6 yrs.	7 yrs.	8 & 9 yrs.	10 yrs. & older
Arizona*	5:1 NR	11:2 NR	5:1 NR	11:2 NR	6:1 NR	13:2 NR	8:1 NR	13:1 NR	15:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR
Arkansas*	6:1 12	6:1 12	9:1 18	9:1 18	12:1 24	15:1 30	18:1 36	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR
California	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	6:1 12	6:1 12	12:1 NR	12:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR
Colorado	5:1 10	5:1 10	5:1 10	7:1 14	10:1 20	12:1 24	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
Connecticut	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20
Delaware*	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	6:1 NR	8:1 NR	10:1 NR	12:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR
District of Columbia	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	8:1 16	10:1 20	15:1 25	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
Florida	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	6:1 NR	11:1 NR	15:1 NR	20:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR
Georgia	6:1 12	6:1 12	8:1 16	10:1 20	15:1 30	18:1 36	20:1 40	25:1 50	25:1 50	25:1 50	25:1 50	25:1 50	25:1 50	25:1 50
Hawaii*	4:1 8	4:1 8	6:1 12	8:1 NR	12:1 NR	16:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR
Idaho*	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed	Not licensed
Illinois*	4:1 12	4:1 12	5:1 15	8:1 16	10:1 20	10:1 20	20:1 20	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30
Indiana	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 10	5:1 10	10:1 20	12:1 24	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30

States ¹	Child-Staff Ratio and Group Size by Age of Children															
	6 weeks	9 mths.	18 mths.		27 mths.		3 yrs.		4 yrs.		5 yrs.	6 yrs.	7 yrs.	8 & 9 yrs.	10 yrs. & older	
Iowa	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	4:1 NR		6:1 NR		8:1 NR		12:1 NR		15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	20:1 NR	
Kansas	3:1 9	3:1 9	5:1 10		7:1 14		12:1 24		12:1 24		14:1 28	16:1 32	16:1 32	16:1 32	16:1 32	
Kentucky*	5:1 10	5:1 10	6:1 12		10:1 20		12:1 24		14:1 28		15:1 30	15:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	20:1 30	
Louisiana*	6:1 NR	6:1 NR	8:1 NR		12:1 NR		14:1 NR		16:1 NR		20:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	25:1 NR	
Maine	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 12	5:1 10	4:1 12	5:1 10	8:1 24	10:1 20	8:1 24	10:1 20	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	
Maryland*	3:1 6	3:1 6	3:1 9		6:1 12		10:1 20		10:1 20		15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	
Massachusetts*	3:1 7	7:2 7	3:1 7	7:2 7	4:1 9	9:2 9	4:1 9	9:2 9	10:1 20		10:1 20	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
Michigan*	4:1 12	4:1 12	4:1 12		4:1 12		10:1 NR		12:1 NR		12:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	
Minnesota	4:1 8	4:1 8	7:1 14		7:1 14		10:1 20		10:1 20		10:1 20	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	
Mississippi	5:1 10	5:1 10	9:1 10		12:1 14		14:1 14		16:1 20		20:1 20	20:1 20	20:1 20	20:1 20	25:1 25	
Missouri	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8		8:1 16		10:1 NR		10:1 NR		16:1 NR	16:1 NR	16:1 NR	16:1 NR	16:1 NR	
Montana	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	4:1 NR		8:1 NR		8:1 NR		10:1 NR		10:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	14:1 NR	
Nebraska	4:1 12	4:1 12	6:1 NR		6:1 NR		10:1 NR		12:1 NR		12:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	

States ¹	Child-Staff Ratio and Group Size by Age of Children											
	6 weeks		9 mths.		18 mths.	27 mths.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5 yrs.	6 yrs.	7 yrs.	8 & 9 yrs.
Nevada*	4:1 NR	6:1 NR	8:1 NR	10:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR
New Hampshire	4:1 12	4:1 12	5:1 15	6:1 18	8:1 24	12:1 24	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
New Jersey	4:1 12	4:1 12	6:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	12:1 20	15:1 20	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
New Mexico	6:1 NR	6:1 NR	6:1 NR	10:1 NR	12:1 NR	12:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR	15:1 NR
New York	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 12	5:1 12	7:1 18	8:1 21	9:1 24	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	15:1 30
North Carolina*	5:1 10	5:1 10	6:1 12	10:1 20	15:1 25	15:1 25	25:1 25	25:1 25	25:1 25	25:1 25	25:1 25	25:1 25
North Dakota	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 10	7:1 14	10:1 20	12:1 24	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36
Ohio*	5:1 10	12:2 10	5:1 10	12:2 10	7:1 14	7:1 14	12:1 24	14:1 28	14:1 28	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36
Oklahoma	4:1 8	4:1 8	6:1 12	8:1 16	12:1 24	15:1 30	15:1 30	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40
Oregon	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 10	10:1 20	10:1 20	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
Pennsylvania*	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 10	6:1 12	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	12:1 24	12:1 24	12:1 24	12:1 24	15:1 30
Rhode Island	4:1 8	4:1 8	6:1 12	6:1 12	9:1 18	10:1 20	12:1 24	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR
South Carolina	5:1 NR	5:1 NR	6:1 NR	9:1 NR	13:1 NR	18:1 NR	21:1 NR	23:1 NR	23:1 NR	23:1 NR	23:1 NR	23:1 NR

States ¹	Child-Staff Ratio and Group Size by Age of Children												
	6 weeks		9 mths.		18 mths.	27 mths.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5 yrs.	6 yrs.	7 yrs.	8 & 9 yrs.	10 yrs. & older
South Dakota	5:1 20	5:1 20	5:1 20	5:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	15:1 20	15:1 20	15:1 20	15:1 20	15:1 20	
Tennessee	4:1 8	4:1 8	6:1 12	7:1 14	9:1 18	13:1 20	16:1 20	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	20:1 NR	
Texas	4:1 10	4:1 10	9:1 18	11:1 22	15:1 30	18:1 35	22:1 35	26:1 35	26:1 35	26:1 35	26:1 35	26:1 35	
Utah	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	7:1 14	12:1 24	15:1 30	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	20:1 40	
Vermont	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	5:1 10	10:1 20	10:1 20	10:1 20	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	13:1 NR	
Virginia*	4:1 NR	4:1 NR	5:1 NR	8:1 NR	10:1 NR	10:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	18:1 NR	20:1 NR	
Washington*	4:1 8	3:1 9	4:1 8	3:1 9	7:1 14	7:1 14	10:1 20	10:1 20	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30	15:1 30
West Virginia	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 12	8:1 16	10:1 20	12:1 24	12:1 24	16:1 32	16:1 32	16:1 32	16:1 32	16:1 32	
Wisconsin	4:1 8	4:1 8	4:1 8	6:1 12	10:1 20	13:1 24	17:1 34	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36	18:1 36	
Wyoming*	4:1 10	4:1 10	5:1 12	8:1 18	10:1 24	12:1 30	12:1 30	18:1 40	18:1 40	18:1 40	18:1 40	18:1 40	

Notes:

For the purposes of this document, a *licensed* program is required to have permission from the State to operate and must meet specified child care center standards. Several States have county or city licensing regulations, which may supersede State requirements; this table does not include such regulations.

¹States includes the District of Columbia for a total of 51 entities.

***State Notes:** The information for these notes was compiled from the States' child care licensing regulations. Each note contains a link to access the regulations on the NRC Web site.

***Arkansas:** Group size is limited to two times the number of children allowed with one staff member. This does not apply to periodic or special group activities or to school-age children, K–5th grade and older. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/arkansas-regulations/>.

***Delaware:** Centers licensed before the effective date of the rules (January 1, 2007) have 4 calendar years from the effective date, or no later than January 1, 2011, to achieve compliance with child-staff ratio requirements. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/delaware-regulations/>.

***Hawaii:** Children younger than 2 years of age are prohibited from mixed centers. Hawaii has a separate set of regulations for infant and toddler programs. Ratios and group size requirements for 6-week-old, 9-, and 18-month-old children shown in table are the maximum allowed in infant and toddler programs. The State allows the following as well:

Age	Maximum Group Size			
	6	8	10	12
6 weeks to 12 months	3:1	4:1		
12 months to 24 months	3:1	4:1	5:1	4:1
18 months to 36 months			5:1	6:1

Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/hawaii-regulations/>.

***Idaho:** Until recently, Idaho did not license home-based child care facilities at the State level; however, some large cities and counties in Idaho have their own licensing programs. Idaho enacted state requirements for child care centers after these data were collected. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/idaho-regulations/>.

***Illinois:** The following exception is permitted: an early childhood teacher aided by an early childhood assistant may supervise a group of up to 30 children if all of the children are at least 5 years old. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/illinois-regulations/>.

***Kentucky:** In part-day programs for school-age children, the ratio for children 7 years of age and older is 25:1, with a maximum group size of 30. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/kentucky-regulations/>.

***Louisiana:** Louisiana regulates two types of centers: Class A and Class B. Ratio and group size information is reported for Class B centers that provide care for more than 11 children. Class A centers require more stringent ratios. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/louisiana-regulations/>.

***Maryland:** For children 6 weeks to 2 years of age, the maximum group size is nine if up to two infants are in the group or six if three or more infants are in the group. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/maryland-regulations/>.

***Massachusetts:** The ratio of 10:1 and group size of 20 applies to 3- and 4-year-old children attending full-day programs; a ratio of 12:1 and group size of 24 applies to 3- and 4-year-old children attending part-day programs. For children in kindergarten and preschools, the ratio is 15:1, with a maximum group size of 30. For school-age children in school-age programs, the ratio is 13:1, and the group size is not limited. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/massachusetts-regulations/>.

***Michigan:** The ratio of caregivers to children between the ages of 2½ and 3 years of age present at any one time in the center and during outdoor activities and field trips shall be at least 1 caregiver for 8 children or each fraction of 8, including the children who are related to the staff and licensee. For school-age children ages 13 to 17 years, the child-staff ratio is 30:1. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/michigan-regulations/>.

***Nevada:** Ratios shown in the table were calculated based on the maximum number of children allowed to one caregiver. Center classrooms with children older than 2 years of age but younger than 3 years of age are required to have a child-staff ratio of 10:1. Requirements for children age 2 years and older are based on the total number of children in care as follows:

Number of Children in Care	Number of Caregivers Required
1–6	1
7–20	2
21–35	3
36–50	4
51–65	5
66–80	6

Number of Children in Care	Number of Caregivers Required
81–93	7

For every additional 13 children above 93, 1 more caregiver is required. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/nevada-regulations/>.

***North Carolina:** Ratios and group sizes shown in the table are for medium and large centers with 30 or more children. Small centers, which care for up to 29 children, are required to meet a child-staff ratio of 15:1 and a group size of 25 for children 3 to 5 years.

Age	Ratio	Group Size
Birth to 12 months	5:1	10
12 to 24 months	6:1	12
2 to 3 years	10:1	20
3 to 5 years	15:1	25
5 years and older	25:1	25

Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/north-carolina-regulations/>.

***Ohio:** A Child-staff ratio for 5- to 10-year-old children in school/kindergarten is 18:1, with a group size requirement of 36. The ratio requirement for 11- to 14-year-old children is 20:1, with a maximum group size of 40. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/ohio-regulations/>.

***Pennsylvania:** For children in preschool (those older than 37 months) to entry into first grade, the child-staff ratio is 10:1, and maximum group size is 20. For children in first grade through third grade, the child-staff ratio is 12:1 and maximum group size is 24. For children in fourth grade to 15 years of age, the child-staff ratio is 15:1, and the maximum group size is 30. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/pennsylvania-regulations/>.

***Virginia:** A Child-staff ratio for 16 to 24 months is 5:1; 24 months to 4 years is 10:1. The 5-year-old ratio is based on school eligibility. If a child is 5 years old by September 30, the 18:1 ratio applies. If the child turns 5 after September 30, the 10:1 ratio applies. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/virginia-regulations/>.

***Washington:** A ratio of 3:1 is allowed with a maximum group size of 9 children. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/washington-regulations/>.

***Wyoming:** Ratios are also regulated for two or three staff members as follows:

Age	Two Staff Members	Three Staff Members
Birth to 12 months	8:2	10:3
12 to 24 months	10:2	12:3
24 to 36 months	16:2	18:3
3 years	20:2	24:3
4 and 5 years	24:2	30:3
6 to 12 years	32:2	40:3

Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/wyoming-regulations/>.

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