



STAFFING PATTERNS - RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

- Because these requirements accommodate three different program types - Long Term care, Short Term Care, and Combined Care they set out three different sets of staff: child ratios for each age group.
- The CNCR also accommodates “family groups” that include up to five children of varying ages and may include one infant (not necessarily members of the same biological family).
- Ratios and group sizes are similar to requirements already being followed in LINC programs across Ontario, although programs in Ontario will note that the age range for toddlers has changed from 19-30 months to 19-35 months.
- Also new in these requirements is the opportunity to allow 20% of children in a same age group to be over-age or under-age by two months, although no child may be under six months.
- These requirements also allow for field trips for seasonal school-age programs for the first time.
- Provide for the presence of an additional qualified staff member with each group of children.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Researchers have found staff-child interactions are among the most important - if not the most important - elements of an early childhood program. Smaller group sizes and more opportunities for attention from staff are keys to providing each child with a positive experience. The ratios of staff to children, and group sizes defined in these requirements, are based on optimum standards established by internationally recognized professional organizations. The requirements have been strengthened for short-term and combined programs because of the uncertainty and challenges associated with offering care to unfamiliar children who are different each time care is provided. Favourable staff : child ratios are especially important in programs serving newcomer children where language and cultural issues arise. Individual children and families may need increased attention because of past separation and trauma. The new family grouping allows programs who offer care to small groups of children to care a wider range of age in one group.

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IMPLEMENTATION

- Develop a staffing plan that is based on the type of care you are providing. Identify the number of staff you require to meet the staff : child ratio requirements for each group of children receiving care.
- Ensure you have sufficient staff to meet the ratio requirements. Including the number of qualified staff according to the number of children the program cares for.
- Review Part 5 of the requirements, especially the sections on Staffing Patterns and Staff on Duty.
- Assign staff, along with roles and responsibilities, as necessary to meet the requirements.
- Ensure sufficient supply staff is available when needed.

Special information about Combined Care

- Because of the flexibility of combined care you will need to ensure that you have staffing that will address the changing numbers of children you might care for each day.
- Determine if you will provide short term care for 20% or fewer of the children. If so you can use the same staff: child ratios as you do in your long term program
- Determine if you will provide short term care for more than 20% of the children. Identify which age group/s will accept short term children. Identify if this will happen every day or if it will be scheduled for certain times. Use this information to schedule the appropriate staffing when required.
- Consider the times when the care for short term children will be provided and adjust the staffing as necessary throughout the day
- It may be helpful to have supply staff immediately available in the event more children require care than you had planned to serve. Remember never to increase the amount of children you care for beyond the capacity of the group size and space.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Care of Newcomer Children Ratio and Group Size Chart



REQUIREMENTS

5-5 STAFF: CHILD RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

All Types of CNC

- a. A CNC program has a plan for staffing that ensures that sufficient CNC staff members are on duty working directly with the children at all times to
 1. Provide adequate supervision as required in section 5-6.a; and
 2. Meet the requirements for staff: child ratios and group size set out in Appendix 7.
- b. Twenty percent (20%) of the children in a same age group may either be over-age or under-age by two (2) months, except that all children must be six (6) months of age or over.
- c. When caring for a mixed age group, the staff: child ratio and group size requirements set out in Appendix 5 for the youngest child in the group are met, except that all children must be nineteen (19) months of age or over.
- d. When caring for a total of five (5) children or fewer, including a maximum of (1) child under nineteen (19) months of age, the staff: child ratio and group size requirements set out in Appendix 7 for a family group of children are met.

Combined CNC

- e. When a program provides combined CNC and 20% or fewer short term children are present in a group of toddlers, preschoolers or school age children, the staff: child ratio and group size requirements for Long Term CNC are met.
- f. When a program provides combined CNC and more than 20% of the children nineteen (19) months of age or over are receiving short term care,
 1. The staff: child ratio for long term care is met, and
 2. An additional qualified staff member is present with each group of toddlers, preschoolers or school age children.



Field Trips

- g. While on a field trip away from the site, one (1) additional staff member is on duty with each group of school-age children.

STAFF: CHILD RATIO AND GROUP SIZE CHART FOR CNC							
	Long-term		Short-Term		Combined		
Group Name	Ratio	Group Size	Ratio	Group Size	Ratio		Group Size
Infant 6 to 18 Months	1 to 3	6	1 to 3	6	1:3	Plus 1* or Employ 20% rule**	6
Toddler 19 to 35 Months	1 to 5	10	1 to 5	10	1 to 5	Plus 1* or Employ 20% rule**	10
Preschool 36 months to 6 years	1 to 8	1 to 16	1 to 8	16	1 to 8	Plus 1* or Employ 20% rule**	16
School-Age Grade 1 and up	1 to 12	24	1 to 12	24	1 to 12	Plus 1* or Employ 20% rule**	24
Family Grouping 19 months and up May include 1 infant	1 to 5	5	1 to 5	5	1 to 5	N/A	5

* Combined care requires that one (1) additional qualified CNC staff member be assigned to the group regardless of the size of the group

**When 20% or fewer of the children in a combined care program attend short term an additional qualified staff member is no longer required.

***On a field trip, one (1) additional qualified CNC staff member must be assigned to each group.
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