How Many Children?

A tool to explain licensed capacity, adult-to-child ratios and maximum group size in child care.

ChildCare Aware® OF NORTH DAKOTA

Why should you care about ratios and group size?

Children receive higher quality care and attention when they are cared for in small groups and adult-to-child ratios meet recommendations or go beyond minimum licensing requirements with the addition of extra care staff.

Did You Know?

North Dakota child care providers must be licensed if they care for 6 or more children, including their own.

Licensed Child Care Categories

Family Child Care License

Licensed family child care providers can care for up to 7 children, plus 2 additional school-age children. The family provider's own children under age 12 must be included in the total. Keep in mind:

- Either the provider can care for up to 3 children under the age of 24 months with additional children over 24 months
- OR they can care for up to 4 children under the age of 24 months when not caring for additional older children.
- Two school-age children can be added to either scenario.

Group Child Care License

Licensed group child care providers can care for up to 30 children, depending on local ordinance. The group child care provider's own children under age 12 must be included in the total.

Total number of children who can attend at any given time is based on age and:

- Adult-to-child ratios
- Square footage
- Point levels

One adult can care for children totaling 1.34 points, but ratios must be met and a group of children may not contain more than 4 children under the age of 18 months per provider. An additional qualified care provider is added for every 1.0 points. Group providers can care for children according to the above guidelines or follow the licensing guidelines for Family Child Care.

Child Care Center License

A licensed child care center can care for 19 or more children. The total number of children who can attend at any given time is based on age and:

- Adult-to-child ratios
- Square footage
- Point levels
- Maximum group size

One adult can care for children totaling 1.34 points, but ratios and maximum group size must also be met.

** If mixed ages are grouped in the classroom, group size must be consistent with the age of the majority of the children. EXCEPTION: If children under 18 months of age are part of the mixed age group, the group size for their age group must be maintained.*

Contact your county licenser at the county social services office if you want more information about specific rules, special licensing, provisions, restrictions and corrective action histories.

Point System for Child Care Groups and Centers

AGE OF CHILDREN	POINT LEVEL
0 thru 17 mo.	.25 points
18 thru 35 mo.	.20 points
3 years	.14 points
4 years	.10 points
5 years	.08 points
6 to 12 years	.05 points

Adult-to-Child Ratio & Group Size for Child Care Center Classrooms

AGE OF CHILDREN	ADULT to CHILD RATIO	MAX. GROUP SIZE of SAME AGES*
0 thru 17 mo.	1:4	10
18 thru 35 mo.	1:5	15
3 years	1:7	20
4 years	1:10	25
5 years	1:12	30
6 to 12 years	1:20	40

Child Care Aware® of North Dakota is a program of Lutheran Social Services in western North Dakota and Lakes and Prairies Community Action Partnership in eastern North Dakota

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