

SUPERVISION — STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES

SUPERVISION

Section 8(1)

Every licensee shall ensure that children attending the child care centre are supervised at all times.

Section 8(1.1)

The licensee shall ensure that the supervision referred to in subsection (1), whether direct supervision or indirect supervision:

- (a) protects the health and safety of each child; and
- (b) is appropriate to each child's developmental age.

Guideline

Centres should discuss questions about supervision with their child care co-ordinator.

Best Practice

Staff is aware of the environment and individual children and adjusts supervision accordingly.

Staff is aware of all children in the group, even when attending to an individual child. Staff frequently scans the room, counts children, ensures areas not visible are supervised by another staff member and ensures substitution when needing to leave the room.

Staff anticipates and takes action to ensure safety, while balancing children's need to explore and take risks appropriate to their development.

Staff explains the reasons for safety rules to children.

Staff follows strict guidelines when children are in and around water by:

- assessing natural or other hazards to determine the appropriateness of the activity
- providing direct supervision to children within arm's length distance and within an unobstructed view
- developing specific plans for providing supervision, including where staff are located, their specific duties and the children assigned to them

- following all of the rules and regulations for the site being visited, including the supervisory guidelines for wading pools as set out by the Community Development and Recreation Services Division, City of Winnipeg. This includes the following adult-to-child ratios:
 - one adult to one child for infants to age one
 - one adult to two children for two to three-year-olds
 - one adult to five children for four to five-year-olds
 - one adult to eight children for six to nine-year-olds
 - one adult to 10 children for 10 to 12-year-olds

IF SUPERVISION IS NOT DIRECT

Section 8(1.2)

If the supervision of a child is not direct supervision, the licensee shall obtain the written approval from the child's parent or guardian as to the type of supervision given and keep the approval on file.

Guideline

Where 8 (1.1) (a) and (b) cannot be met or are not being followed, 8 (1.2) will be disallowed.

Best Practice

Staff recognize the need for children to be independent while still safe and secure.

Staff adjust supervision for different ages and abilities, activities and environments. For example, staff may allow increased freedom and independence for some school age children by permitting a small group to play a board game in the hallway or adjacent to the room. When supervision is adjusted, staff know at all times where children are and are frequently check on them.

RATIO AND GROUP SIZE — FULL TIME AND SCHOOL AGE CENTRES

Section 8(2)

A licensee who operates a child care centre, except a nursery school which provides child care for less than four continuous hours per day, shall provide for staff to child ratios and maximum group sizes which do not exceed the following ratios and group sizes:

(a) where children are cared for in mixed age groupings during the majority of the centre's operating hours

Age of Child	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
12 wks – 2 yrs	1:4	8
2 yrs – 6 yrs	1:8	16
6 yrs – 12 yrs	1:15	30

(b) where children are cared for in separate age groupings during the majority of the centre's operating hours

Age of Child	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
12 wks – 1 yr	1:3	6
1 yr – 2 yrs	1:4	8
2 yrs – 3 yrs	1:6	12
3 yrs – 4 yrs	1:8	16
4 yrs – 5 yrs	1:9	18
5 yrs – 6 yrs	1:10	20
6 yrs – 12 yrs	1:15	30

Guideline

Age Groups

Where children are cared for in mixed age groups, the ratio will be calculated on a prorated basis. For example:

Ages	Number Children Enrolled	Ratio	Number Staff Required
6 mos – 24 mos	3	1:4	$3/4 = .75$
2 yrs – 5 yrs	14	1:8	$14/8 = 1.75$
	17		2.50

The number of required staff must be rounded up to the next whole number. In this example, a minimum of three staff members would be required to care for the children.

If children are separated into age groups for part of the day, the group size for the specific age group would apply.

When children are given the choice of participating in a variety of activities within the centre, the maximum group size requirement may be waived and staff-to-child ratios may not be strictly enforced for specific groups of children. This flexibility may be provided as long as overall staff-to-child ratio requirements are met, children are engaged in appropriate activities, and the health, safety and well-being of children are not compromised.

RATIO AND GROUP SIZE — NURSERY SCHOOLS

Section 8(3)

A licensee who operates a nursery school which provides child care for four or less continuous hours per day shall provide for staff to child ratios and group sizes for children which do not exceed the following ratios and group sizes.

Age of Child	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
12 wks – 2 yrs	1:4	8
2 yrs – 6 yrs	1:10	20

RATIO AND GROUP SIZE — EXEMPTIONS

Section 8(4)

If at any time the staff to child ratios or group sizes for children exceed the ratios or group sizes set out in subsection (1) or (2), the licensee shall develop a policy concerning these matters to be approved by the director and posted in a conspicuous location in the child care centre.

Guideline

The proposed flexibility policy must be written and submitted to the child care co-ordinator for the director's approval. The approval must be posted in a visible place to inform parents and guardians.

For example, if a child care centre wishes to reduce the ratio of staff-to-children during naptime for preschool-aged children to the number required by the *Manitoba Fire Code* a proposal must be submitted and approved. New proposals are required when changes are made to the original.

Note: A 1:4 ratio must be maintained at all times for infants.

Best Practice

Flexibility policies are appropriate, well-planned and assessed regularly to ensure the health, safety, well-being and positive development of all children.

ROOM — MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT

Section 8(5)

No licensee shall permit a room in a child care centre to accommodate more than two groups of children.

Guideline

The maximum number of children, individually or in groups, is defined in the tables in subsections 8(2) and (3) of the regulations.

For an area to be considered a room, there must be a floor to ceiling divider such as folding door, sound proof curtain or wall.

In centres with more than one room, the maximum enrollment allowed per room, based on the space requirements outlined in 9(1), will be enforced if children must be in a specific room. If children move freely from room to room within the centre, a maximum room enrollment will not be enforced.

During nap times, there may be no more than two groups of children in the room and the groups must be separated in some way.

The maximum enrollment per room will be waived during the lunch period.

Best Practice

Children have enough physical space to move, explore and meet their physical, social and emotional needs.

Centres ensure the number and ages of children within a room for any length of time contributes to the well-being of children.

VOLUNTEERS — NURSERY SCHOOLS

Section 8(6)

Volunteers may be included in the staff to child ratio in a nursery school and may be considered as a maximum of one-half staff person for this purpose.

Guideline

Nursery school volunteers included in the ratio are screened through the investigation authorization process, which includes criminal record and child abuse registry checks.

Best Practice

Volunteers receive training and supervision appropriate to their duties.

Volunteers understand that employees respond first and that they will assist, if needed.

Performance feedback is provided to the volunteer.

Volunteers are mentored by trained staff and are not left alone with children.

PARENT VOLUNTEER — RATIO

Section 8(7)

Notwithstanding subsection (6), where the volunteer in a nursery school is a parent or guardian of a child in the centre or a person regularly volunteering in place of the parent or guardian, a nursery school may apply to the director to have that volunteer considered as a full staff person for the purpose of calculating staff to child ratios.

Guideline

The following four considerations are required to grant approval to sections 8(6) and 8(7):

- (a) regularity of centre voluntarism
- (b) orientation provided to the volunteer
- (c) volunteer responsibilities
- (d) ongoing supervision and feedback from an early childhood educator

Volunteers are advised to complete the first aid training requirements identified in Regulation 7(11).

Nursery school volunteers who are included in the ratio are screened through the investigation authorization process, including criminal record and child abuse registry checks.

Best Practice

See best practice for section 8(6).

SUPERVISION — ADULTS

Section 8(8)

Staff who are included in the staff to child ratio must be adults.

Guideline

The regulations do not prevent individuals less than 18 years old from working with children. They do restrict them from inclusion in the staff-to-child ratio and responsibility for child supervision.

Under the provisions of *The Human Rights Act*, child care centres are not permitted to ask age or birthdates of individuals during the application process. They may ask if the applicant has reached the age of majority.

MINIMUM AGE FOR ENROLLMENT

Section 8(9)

No licensee shall permit a child less than 12 weeks of age to be admitted to a child care centre without the prior written approval of the director.

Guideline

The parent or guardian of a child less than 12 weeks old and the child care centre must receive the permission of the director of the Manitoba Child Care Program to enroll a child less than 12 weeks old. Unique circumstances must be provided with a physician's letter commenting on the infant's health and readiness for child care. Requests must be made in writing to the child care co-ordinator before the infant's enrollment.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Section 8(10)

Every licensee shall develop a policy concerning the transportation of children which:

- (a) identifies the responsibilities of parents or guardians, and responsibilities of the licensee; and
- (b) is provided to parents or guardians upon enrollment of their child in the child care centre.

Guideline

A centre must develop a policy outlining the point at which the centre assumes responsibility for the child.

The policy should indicate the manner of supervision children receive while walking to and from school, if applicable. It should include the maximum number of children who will be walked to school and the number of staff used to supervise this group.

Private vehicles are not used to transport children.

Where the centre transports children in the centre's vehicle, the policy should include:

- the use of seat belts or other restraints and required equipment as required by *The Highway Traffic Act*
- safety practices, such as seating children in the back seat
- how often a safety certificate is required for the vehicle
- the driver's qualifications and evidence of a valid driver's licence and good driving record

Centre policies should also address the transportation of children during field trips.

Best Practice

If the centre rents a van, bus or other vehicle to transport children, written evidence from the company is obtained to confirm the vehicle is equipped and built according to the *The Highway Traffic Act* and regulations and that it is licensed and insured to transport the children under the centre's care.

