

 **How does BrightStars define group size?**

BrightStars defines group size as the number of children who occupy a defined space while engaged in a specific activity. Group size is looked at independently from staff to child ratio.

 **What are current group size recommendations?**

Many leading organizations specializing in the care and education of children have published recommendations for group size maximums in school-age child care settings. Below is a summary of these recommendations.

*The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety recommend the following group sizes:*

Age	Group Size
5 year olds	16
6-8 year olds	20

The Council on Accreditation After School Recognition Standards recommends group size not exceed 30 children.

 **How does BrightStars assess group size?**

Group size will be determined based on the total number of children in a group or activity throughout the observation. Intermingling is permitted. Exceptions to group/activity size include: outdoor time, arrival, departure, meals and snack, and special activities.

Programs at all star levels must also let parents know the maximum group size, either by posting group size or including the information in writing. Parents in initial focus groups during the development of BrightStars standards expressed the desire to be able to clearly determine the maximum amount of children allowed in their child's classroom.

Programs achieving 4 and 5 star ratings meet stricter group size requirements if the program enrolls Kindergarteners. Programs achieving a 5 star rating meet stricter group space requirements (one group of children per room.)



## **Why is group size considered an important indicator of quality school-age programs?**

Many research studies have shown that smaller group size has a positive impact on the overall quality of school-age care child care and educational programs and the experiences that children have in those programs.

- Smaller group size is associated with a lower risk of infection in child care and lower rates of disease.
- Children in smaller groups are more cooperative, compliant, and exhibit more social competence than children in larger groups.
- Caregivers have more positive, nurturing interactions with children in small groups.
- Caregivers provide children with more individualized attention when they are in charge of small groups of children.
- Smaller group size is associated with more developmentally appropriate activities than larger group size.
- Children who are in larger groups tend to receive less individual attention. Less individual attention in group care settings has been linked to lower acquired knowledge and academic achievement.
- Small group sizes are consistently correlated with improved interactions among staff and children and more positive interactions between children.

### **Resources:**

Caring for Our Children: Second Edition. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Public Health Association (APHA), and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care. 2002.

Council on Accreditation. (2008). After School Accreditation Guidelines. *After School Programming and Services*. Retrieved May 24, 2011, from [http://www.coafterschool.org/standards.php?navView=private&core\\_id=13](http://www.coafterschool.org/standards.php?navView=private&core_id=13).

NAEYC Accreditation Performance Criteria (2008), "Teacher Child Ratios within Group Size".