

 **How is staff-child ratio defined in school-age care?**

Staff-child ratio refers to the number of staff per child or children in an assigned group. Measuring staff-child ratio ensures that classrooms and groups have enough staff members at all times to supervise the children in the program’s care and to support learning and development.

 **What are current recommended staff-child ratios?**

Recommended staff-child ratios vary based on the age of the children in care and the child care setting. Many leading organizations specializing in the care and education of young children have published recommendations for minimum staff-child ratio in school-age settings. Below is a summary of some of those recommendations.

The Council on Accreditation-After School recommends the following for minimum staff-child ratio:

For groups of children 6 years and older	between 1:10 and 1:15
When group includes children under age 6	between 1:8 and 1:12

The **RI Department of Youth, Children and Families (DCYF)** sets the following staff-child ratio standards for child care licensing:

When center operates a kindergarten program	1:12
School-age program without kindergarten program	1:13

 **How does BrightStars assess staff-child ratio?**

BrightStars assesses staff-child ratio to ensure that classrooms have enough staff members at all times to supervise the children in their care and to support learning and development. BrightStars uses the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families Child Day Care Licensing regulations as a guide.

BrightStars assesses staff-child ratio through both document review and an on-site assessment visit. During an assessment visit, BrightStars staff observe whether a program meets the staff-ratio requirements, and whether the staff-child ratio is clearly posted inside or near each classroom. Ratio will be determined based on the total number of children present during an observation and the total number of staff present during an observation.

 **Why is staff-child ratio considered an important indicator of quality in school-age care?**

Research shows that the number of caregivers per child in a child care setting significantly impacts the quality of a child's experience in group care. Below is a summary of some of the research that supports smaller staff-child ratios as an important indicator of high quality care:

- Staff-child ratio is an example of a structural characteristic of child care quality. Some structural characteristics have an impact on the academic, cognitive, behavioral, and social development of children.

Why is staff-child ratio considered an important indicator continued...

- Lower staff-child ratios are associated with fewer behavior issues. In environments with lower staff-child ratios, teachers are found to spend more time engaging children in developmentally appropriate activities and less time managing children's behavior. In environments with lower staff-child ratio, children were found to be less distressed and less apathetic.
- Lower staff-child ratios have been found to be associated with higher scores on global child care quality measures, like the SACERS.
- Caregivers in settings with lower staff-child ratios are less stressed and more available to give support and guidance to children.
- Direct warm social interaction between adults and children is more common and more likely with lower staff-child ratios.
- Schools with lower ratios of students to adults will produce less student victimizations.

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.

Gottfredson, D.R., & DiPietro, S.M. (2011). *School size, social capital, and student victimization*. *Sociology of Education*, 84(1), 69-89.