



# Licensed Child Care Centres **NEW! FAMILY AGE GROUP**

Schedule 4 of Ontario Regulation 137/15

As of September 1, 2017, a new licensed age group—“family age grouping” for children 0–12 years will be introduced for licensed child care centres. This new group allows the placement of children of different ages in the same group in the same play activity room.

## **How a licensed family age group might be used**

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A family age group, as set out in Schedule 4 in Ontario Regulation 137/15, may be an option for licensees as follows:

- A centre that has 15 or fewer children where the family age group is the only age category in the centre.
- A separate child care program that runs outside of a centre’s standard operating hours (i.e. evenings, overnight, and weekends).
- A centre that wishes to license a family age group alongside other age groups licensed under Schedules 1 or 2 of Ontario Regulation 137/15.

## **Submitting requests to be licensed for a family age group**

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The family age group will come into effect as of September 1, 2017.

## Requirements related to staffing, group size, & ages of children

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The family age group can have up to a maximum of 15 children; and no more than six children under two years of age.

### *Formula for calculating staffing*

The following weighted formula will help you determine a baseline to calculate the number of staff required for the family age grouping, as indicated in Schedule 4 of Ontario Regulation 137/15. Begin by multiplying the total number of children per age range, with the weighting. Then add results of the number of staff from each age range. To determine the total number of staff required, calculations resulting in a decimal must be rounded up to the next whole number.
















Total number of children per age range	Multiplied by weighting per child	Number of Staff Required
Enter number of children younger than 12 months	Multiply by 0.33	Number of staff
Enter number of children 12 months or older but younger than 24 months	Multiply by 0.25	Number of staff
Enter number of children 24 months or older but younger than 13 years	Multiply by 0.13	Number of staff
Total number of children		Total number of staff

The formula is to be used in conjunction with the following additional requirements:

Where there are:	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six or fewer children; and</li> <li>• No more than two children under two years of age</li> </ul>	Only 1 required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than six children</li> </ul>	2 minimum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than ten children; and</li> <li>• Any children under 12 months of age in the group</li> </ul>	3 minimum

Where it is determined that additional staff are required as a result of kindergarten and school-age children being enrolled, those staff would only need to be present when these children are attending the program.

**Here are some examples:**

Younger than 12 months 	12 months or older but younger than 24 months 	24 months or older but younger than 5 years 	44 months or older but younger than 13 years 	Number of staff required 
Scenario A – 6 children				
				
Scenario B – 6 children				
				
Scenario C – 15 children				
				
Scenario D – 11 children				
				
Scenario E – 11 children				
				
* Note in Scenario E that one additional staff is only required to be present when kindergarten and school age children are attending the program.				

**Staff qualification requirements**

The proportion of required qualified professionals, Registered Early Childhood Educators, is 1 when 2 or fewer staff are required, or 2 when 3 or more staff are required, unless otherwise approved by the Director.

**Do reduced ratios apply?**

No, there are no reduced ratios permitted at any time for family age groups.

## SPACE REQUIREMENTS

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### *Play activity space*

Programs are required to have at least 2.8 square metres of unobstructed floor space for each child enrolled. No separate play activity area is required to accommodate children of different ages. Licensees will need to ensure spaces are responsive to the safety and development of children enrolled.

### *Sleep furnishings and space*

All programs are required to have cribs or cradles for children under 12 months. For children who are 12–24 months, the program must have cribs or cots available, with decisions about sleep arrangements made in discussion with parents of the child and reflected in written instructions from the parent.

All programs are required to have cots for children who are 24 months or older but younger than 5 years, unless otherwise approved by the director.

A separate sleep area is required if the group requires cribs or cradles.

### *Diaper changing*

A counter or table for diapering adjacent to a sink is required.

## PROGRAM

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### *Benefits of a family age group*

While maintaining stringent requirements to ensure health, safety, and quality, family age groups would help to increase access to licensed child care – particularly in areas of the province with dispersed and/or small populations where child care options are limited, or in areas where there is a need for child care during non-standard hours of operation. Family age groups could also play a key role in supporting the unique and diverse child care needs of various cultural and linguistic communities, such as Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, as well as francophone communities, and provide opportunities for families wishing to have siblings of different ages together.

## ***Some considerations when developing programs for children within a licensed family age group***

The family age group is a licensed age group with a dedicated program and not intended to be used as a temporary group, for instance, for drop-off/pick-up or to transition children between age categories.

There are many benefits to children interacting in multi-age groupings. Educators can encourage relationships and interactions between children of different ages. Older children have opportunities to mentor, assist and show empathy for younger children, building their own sense of competence and leadership. Younger children can learn from older peers as role models and supports in fostering complex play, creative thinking and problem-solving.

In recognizing that children develop and learn at different paces, the family age group creates opportunities to consider each individual child's abilities and interests. *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* helps educators to plan for and create environments and experiences that respond to the varied abilities and each child's unique characteristics of children enrolled, while maintaining safety.

Educators can provide "open-ended" materials that are safe for all ages and can be used in many different ways. For example, materials that encourage construction and exploratory questions like: "How does this feel?"; "How does this go together?"; "What can I make with this?", and opportunities to encourage representation of their thinking and ideas through various mediums for older children could be used effectively in the family age grouping.

Professional resources such as the following are available on the ministry website to support you and your team in continuous learning:

### ***How Does Learning Happen?***

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

### ***Think, Feel, Act and other related resources***

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/EarlyYearsProfessionals.html#Resources>