OVERVIEW

A new optional approach to age groupings, ratios and staff qualifications will be implemented starting September 1, 2017. Under the new approach, licensees will have the option of operating under the current requirements for age groupings, ratios, and qualifications (Schedule 1) or applying to adopt the new option (Schedule 2). Licensees and new applicants will have the opportunity to apply for a licence under Schedule 2, which would be approved based on set criteria.

By providing greater flexibility to licensees to apply to adopt the new age groupings or maintain status quo, the ministry aims to address the complex relationship between staff-child ratios, group size and educator training/qualifications while meeting the varied needs of families, children, and communities in Ontario and supporting successful business models.

This fact sheet is intended to highlight some of the key licensing requirements for implementing the new Schedule 2.
Here are the requirements for age groupings, ratios, maximum number of children, and minimum number of qualified staff under Schedule 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Age Category</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Ratio of Staff to Children</th>
<th>Maximum Number of Children</th>
<th>Minimum Number of Qualified Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant/Toddler</td>
<td>Younger than 24 months</td>
<td>1 to 3 (younger than 12 months), 1 to 4 (12 months – younger than 24 months)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 out of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>24 months or older but younger than 5 years</td>
<td>1 to 8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 out of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>44 months or older but younger than 7 years</td>
<td>1 to 13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1 out of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/junior school age</td>
<td>68 months or older but younger than 13 years</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 out of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior school age</td>
<td>9 years or older but younger than 13 years</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 out of 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can centres adopt Schedule 2 but only enrol children between certain ages (i.e., 12–24 months)?
Yes, centres still have the flexibility to choose which ages to serve within their licensed aged groupings.

Can centres use both Schedule 1 and 2?
No, a child care centre will only be licensed for either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2.

When will the new requirements come into effect?
Schedule 2 will come into effect on September 1, 2017 as an option.
Staffing required for the infant/toddler category
Following is the formula to determine the number of staff required for the infant/toddler group. Rounding up will be applied in all cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of children per age category</th>
<th>Multiplied by weighting per child</th>
<th>Number of Staff Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter number of children younger than 12 months</td>
<td>Multiply by 0.33</td>
<td>Number of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter number of children 12 months or older but younger than 24 months</td>
<td>Multiply by 0.25</td>
<td>Number of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of children</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing required for the preschool category
The ratio for the preschool group is 1 to 8, however an additional staff person is required where there are 4 or more children younger than 30 months.

Can mixed-age groups still be used?
Yes, with director approval programs can use a mixed age grouping in more than one room.

Infant/Toddler Group: if no more than 20 per cent of the children are 10 months or older but younger than 12 months, then a 1:4 ratio applies.

Preschool Group: mixed age grouping may be permitted for up to 20 percent of children from the younger age group.

Kindergarten, Primary/Junior and Junior School Age Programs: staffing and mixed age requirements pertaining to Schedule 1 also apply to Schedule 2.
Here are some examples of the staffing required for the infant/toddler and preschool groups under Schedule 2.

**Infant/Toddler – Younger than 24 months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Younger than 12 months</th>
<th>12 months or older but younger than 24 months</th>
<th>Number of staff required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(no younger than 10 months, and approved for mixed age group)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preschool – 24 months or older but younger than 5 years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under 30 months</th>
<th>Over 30 months</th>
<th>Number of staff required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(note 4 staff required due to 4 children under 30 months)
REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF QUALIFICATIONS UNDER SCHEDULE 2

**Infant/Toddler and Preschool**
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.

For programs licensed prior to September 1, 2017, that are transitioning to Schedule 2, existing staff may remain as they were before September 1, 2017. The new requirements would apply to these positions once vacated.

**Kindergarten, Primary/Junior and Junior School Age**
One qualified staff is required unless otherwise approved by the Director.

In addition to RECE’s, individuals working in programs serving only children ages 9-12 years are considered as qualified staff (no Director approval required) if they:

- have a degree or diploma in child and youth care;
- have a degree or diploma in recreation and leisure services; or
- are members in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.

**Requirements for reduced ratios for licensed programs (new)**
Children under 12 months – Reduced ratios are not permitted
Children over 12 months – Reduced ratios are permitted

**Full Day Programs**
Reduced ratios are permitted during rest periods and up to 90 minutes after the centre opens and one hour before the centre closes, where a ratio of employees to children may be reduced to two-thirds of the required ratio.

**Programs that Operate Less than Six Hours**
Up to half an hour after centre opens and half an hour before centre closes, a ratio of employees to children may be reduced to not less than two-thirds of the required ratio, which is consistent with current policy.

**Outdoor play**
No reduced ratios permitted for any age group, which is consistent with current policy.
SPACE REQUIREMENTS UNDER SCHEDULE 2

Play activity space
As with Schedule 1, programs are required to have at least 2.8 square metres of unobstructed floor space for each child in a licensed infant/toddler, preschool or family age group, based on the licensed capacity.

Exceptions
A space requirement of 2.33 square metres will be permitted where:

• A licensee wishes to convert an existing infant or toddler room that was licensed prior to September 1, 2017, to an infant/toddler room under Schedule 2, provided there are no renovations to the space – with the exception of renovations to create a separate sleep area.
• This exception will remain in place unless the space is renovated or the program is relocated, in which case the space requirement of 2.8 square metres would apply.

A counter or table for diapering adjacent to a sink is required for the infant/toddler group; and a space for diapering and access to hand washing is required for preschool groups licensed under Schedule 2.

Requirements for existing capital projects
A space requirement of no less than 2.33 square metres per child will be permitted for school board projects where the child care centre is located in a school and:

• Construction for an infant or toddler program was approved by the Ministry prior to June 1, 2016 in accordance with the requirements set out in the Ministry’s policy memorandum 2015: B11 Capital Funding for New Construction of Child Care” (and policy memoranda 2015: B16);

OR

• Construction for an infant or toddler program was included in a jointly approved plan submitted to the Ministry prior to June 1, 2016 in accordance with the requirements set out in the Ministry’s policy memoranda “2012: EL3 Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy”, “2012: EL4: Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy – Funding and Implementation”, “2013: EY3 Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy – Board by Board Allocations for 2013-14 and Policy Updates”.
A space requirement of no less than 2.33 square metres per child will be permitted for non-school board projects where:

- Licensees submitted floor plans for the construction or renovation of a child care centre to the Director before June 1, 2016.

These exceptions will remain in place unless the space is renovated or the program is relocated.

**Sleep Furnishings and Space under Schedule 2**

All programs are required to have cribs or cradles for children under 12 months, and cribs or cots available for children who are 12 months or older but younger than 24 months, 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 receive child care for six hours or more in the preschool group, unless otherwise approved by the director.

A sleep area is required for children in the infant/toddler group if the group requires cribs or cradles. This does not necessarily mean a separate room is required; rather this could be separate designated sleep areas for cribs or cradles.

Two or more licensed infant/toddler groups may use the same sleeping area provided that there are no more than 12 children sleeping in the room at any time.
Some considerations when developing programs for children within these revised age groupings

Effective August 29, 2016, the requirement to separate infants not able to walk from other children during active indoor and outdoor play has been removed. This allows licensees greater flexibility in planning programs that are responsive to the varied abilities and unique characteristics of each child.

In recognizing that children develop and learn at different paces, these age groupings provide opportunities to consider each child’s interests and abilities across all domains of development. 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, while maintaining safety.

Supervisors can work with parents and staff teams to plan out the day according to the needs of each child in their program. For example, children may be organized into smaller groups at different times of the day to respond to children’s varied schedules and to foster responsive relationships between adults and children in the program.

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)
CHANGES TO REGULATIONS RELATED TO SCHEDULE 1 UNDER ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15

Existing requirements related to staff qualifications under Schedule 1 remain in place, with the exception of the following:

- **Effective August 29, 2016:** In addition to RECE’s, individuals working in programs serving only children ages 9–12 years are considered as qualified staff (without Director approval) if they have a degree or diploma in child and youth care, or in recreation and leisure services, or are members in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.

**Mixed-age groups**
Existing requirements related to mixed age groupings remain the same for the infant, toddler, preschool, and primary/junior school age under Schedule 1, with the exception of the following:

- **Effective August 29, 2016:** Mixed age approval may be granted by the Director in more than one room.
- **Effective August 29, 2016:** Mixed age approval in kindergarten age groups may be granted by the Director for up to 25 percent of younger children who are three years old, or if the child care is provided on or after the first day of school in a calendar year, will attain the age of three in that year, and all other children are kindergarten children. The 20 percent mixed age provision has been removed for Kindergarten, Primary/Junior, and Junior age groups.

**Reduced Ratios**

**Infant programs**
No changes; no reduced ratios permitted.

**Licensed Full day programs**
**Effective September 1, 2017**, one change: up to 90 minutes after the centre opens and one hour before the centre closes, a ratio of employees to children may be reduced to not less than two-thirds of the required ratio.

**Licensed Programs that Operate Less than Six Hours**
**Effective September 1, 2017**, up to half an hour after centre opens and half an hour before centre closes, a ratio of employees to children may be reduced to not less than two-thirds of the required ratio, as per existing policy.
Outdoor play
Effective August 29, 2016, no reduced ratios permitted across all age groups, as per existing policy.

New Program Requirements
Effective January 1, 2017, programs that offer a before- and/or after-school program are required to include at least 30 minutes of outdoor time each day.