

National Quality Framework

Centre-based services

Mixed Ages Ratios

Fact Sheet | April 2012

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This fact sheet outlines the educator to child ratios and qualification requirements for mixed age groups for Victorian centre-based education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework.

From 1 January 2014 all educators who are required to meet the relevant educator to child ratios must have or be actively working towards a qualification.

Educator to child ratios

Educator to child ratios must be met whenever children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service (section 169). To be counted in the educator to child ratios, educators must be working directly with children (regulation 122). When calculating the minimum number of educators required, the number should be calculated according to the ages of the children and the total number of children being educated and cared for by the service. The table below provides the qualified educator to child ratios for centre-based education and care services that are required by the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulations).

Age	Ratio	Qualifications
Children less than 36 months of age	1 educator to 4 children (regulation 123 (1)(a) and 357)	At least 50 per cent of required educators must have or be actively working towards ¹ at least an approved diploma level qualification (regulation 126(1)(a)).
Children 36 months to preschool age	1 educator to 15 children (regulation 360)	All other required educators must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level qualification (regulation 126(1)(b)).
Over preschool age	1 educator to 15 children (regulation 355)	<p>At least 50 per cent of required educators must hold, or be enrolled in and studying for, at least a diploma level qualification approved for educators working with children over preschool age in Victoria (regulation 356(2)).</p> <p>All other required educators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hold or be actively working towards at least a certificate III level qualification approved for educators working with children over preschool age in Victoria; or commence obtaining that qualification within 6 months of commencing to educate and care for children (regulation 356(3)).

¹ See regulation 10 for the definition of 'actively working towards' a qualification

Further information about educator to child ratios and qualifications is available in the *Educator to Child Ratios and Qualifications* fact sheet at www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx.

Mixed age groups

Services educating and caring for children, where there is a mix of children under 36 months of age and 36 months of age or over, may wish to calculate the educator to child ratios under the requirements of regulation 123(2). This allows children 36 months of age or over to be considered as part of the ratios for children under 36 months of age.

Refer to the table below for examples of how the mixed age ratios can be calculated or refer to the online Mixed Age Group Ratios calculator.

Relationships in groups

Opportunities for children to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with educators is an important consideration when deciding group size and composition of children being educated and cared for by the service (regulation 156). Services should also ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times.

Further information

The **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority** is the national, independent statutory authority governing the National Quality Framework.

Phone: 1300 422 327

Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au

Web: www.acecqa.gov.au

The **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development** is the Regulatory Authority in Victoria.

Phone: 1300 307 415

Email: licensed.children.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Web: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation

Examples of calculating mixed age ratios and qualifications

The examples below demonstrate how ratios can be calculated for all children being educated and cared for by the service.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS		
The following qualification requirements apply once the ratio of qualified educators to children is calculated:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50 per cent of the required educators must have or be actively working towards at least a diploma level qualification. All other educators required to meet the educator to child ratios must have or be actively working towards at least a certificate III qualification 		
Age of children	Children under 36 months	Children 36 months and over
Ratio of qualified educator to child	Ratio of 1 to 4	Ratio of 1 to 15
Example 1:		
Number of children	3 children	1 child
Number of qualified educators required	1 qualified educator	1 qualified educator
Number of children (mixed ages)	3 + 1 = 4 children	
Total number of qualified educators required (mixed ages)	1 qualified educator	
Overall qualification requirements for mixed ages group	1 diploma qualified educator	
Example 2:		
Number of children	3 children	5 children
Number of educators required	1 qualified educator	1 qualified educator
Number of children (mixed ages)	3 + 5 = 8 children	
Total number of qualified educators required (mixed ages)	2 qualified educators	
Overall qualification requirements for mixed ages group	1 diploma qualified educator <u>and</u> 1 certificate III qualified educator	
Example 3:		
Number of children	5 children	7 children
Number of educators required	2 qualified educators	1 qualified educator
Number of children (mixed ages)	5 + 7 = 12 children	
Total number of qualified educators required (mixed ages)	3 qualified educators	
Overall qualification requirements for mixed ages group	2 diploma qualified educators <u>and</u> 1 certificate III educator	
Example 4:		
Number of children	2 children	17 children
Number of educators required	1 qualified educator	2 qualified educators
Number of children (mixed ages)	2 + 2 = 4 children	
Total number of qualified educators required (mixed ages)	2 qualified educators	
Overall qualification requirements for mixed ages group	1 diploma qualified educator <u>and</u> 1 certificate III qualified educator	