Educator to child ratios from 1 January 2016 – centre-based services

Fact sheet | June 2015

This fact sheet outlines the educator to child ratios for Victorian centre-based education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework that will apply from 1 January 2016.

### Educator to child ratio requirements for centre-based services in Victoria from 1 January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ratio (1 January 2016)</th>
<th>Qualification requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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 at least an approved diploma level qualification (regulation 126(1)(a)). All other required educators must:  
• have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level qualification (regulation 126(1)(b)); or  
• an educator can be counted as a certificate III level qualified educator on a probationary basis for not more than 3 months (regulation 126(1A)). |
| 36 months to preschool age | 1 educator to 11 children (regulation 123(1)(c)) |  |
| Over preschool age         | 1 educator to 15 children (regulation 355) | • 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)). All other required educators must:  
• hold or be actively working towards at least a certificate III level qualification approved for educators working with children over preschool age in Victoria (regulation 356(3)(a)); or  
• commence obtaining that qualification within 6 months of commencing to educate and care for children (regulation 356(3)(b)). |

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1 The implementation of the National Quality Framework in 2012 included a transitional provision under regulation 360 that applied to the educator to child ratios for children aged 36 months to preschool age for services operating in Victoria. This transitional provision applies until 31 December 2015.

2 To be actively working towards a qualification an educator must:  
• be enrolled in an at least an approved certificate III level education and care qualification; and  
• provide the approved provider with documentary evidence from the provider of the course that –  
  – the educator has commenced the course; and  
  – is making satisfactory progress towards completion of the course; and  
  – is meeting the requirement for maintaining the enrolment (regulations 10).
Educator to child ratios from 1 January 2016

Educator to child ratios must be met whenever children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service. To be counted in the educator to child ratios, educators must be working directly with children (regulation 122). The educator qualification requirements will not change from 1 January 2016 and are outlined in the table on page 1.

Refer to the tables below for some examples of how the ratios can be calculated from 1 January 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of children</th>
<th>Children less than 36 months</th>
<th>Children 36 months to preschool age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educator to child ratio</td>
<td>Ratio of 1 to 4</td>
<td>Ratio of 1 to 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>16 children</td>
<td>33 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of educators required</td>
<td>4 educators</td>
<td>3 educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification requirements</td>
<td>4 educators who hold or are actively working towards at least an approved diploma level qualification; and 3 educators who hold or are actively working towards at least an approved certificate III level qualification. All educators must meet the qualification requirements for working with children preschool age or under.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: An early childhood teacher can be considered in meeting the diploma level qualification requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of children</th>
<th>Children 36 months to preschool age</th>
<th>Children over preschool age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educator to child ratio</td>
<td>Ratio of 1 to 11</td>
<td>Ratio of 1 to 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>11 children</td>
<td>45 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of educators required</td>
<td>1 educator</td>
<td>3 educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification requirements</td>
<td>2 educators who hold or are actively working towards at least an approved diploma level qualification; and 2 educators who hold or are actively working towards at least an approved certificate III level qualification. 1 diploma level educator MUST meet the qualification requirements for working with children preschool age or under. 1 diploma level educator can meet the qualification requirements for working with children over preschool age.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: An early childhood teacher can be considered in meeting the diploma level qualification requirements.

Mixed age groups

Services educating and caring for children, where there is a mix of children from the three specified age groups, may wish to calculate the educator to child ratios under the requirements of regulation 123(2). This allows children in older age groups to be considered as part of the ratios for children in younger age groups.

The online Mixed Age Group Ratios calculator for 2016 will be available from 1 July 2015 at:

Early childhood teachers

For the purposes of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulations), early childhood teachers are not required to be counted in the educator to child ratios, however an early childhood teacher can be considered in meeting the diploma level qualification requirement if working directly with children.


Early childhood teachers in funded kindergarten programs

Information about the early childhood teacher requirements for funded kindergarten programs is available in the fact sheets:

- *Early childhood teacher requirements for funded kindergarten programs*
- *Educator to child ratios for funded kindergarten programs from 1 January 2016.*


Waivers

It is recognised that some services may need additional time to transition to the new ratio requirements for a number of reasons. Services may apply for a temporary waiver (section 94) from the prescribed elements of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations (regulation 44).

Services may consider applying for a waiver from staffing arrangements (regulations 123 or 126) if for example the service is unable to recruit the required number of educators, or suitably qualified educators to meet the new ratio requirements.

Alternatively, services may wish to consider applying for a waiver from the physical environment requirements of indoor or outdoor space (regulations 107 and 108) if for example the service is considering applying to amend the number of approved places to accommodate an increased number of children, but may not be able to meet the space requirements.

Services can find more about applying for a waiver from the Department’s website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx) and waivers applications should be submitted using the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS). This information is available on the ACECQA website at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/service-approvals](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/service-approvals).

Further information

The Department of Education and Training is the Regulatory Authority in Victoria.

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