Calculating educator to child ratios for mixed age groups from 1 January 2022

Children's services approved under the *Children's Services Act 1996*

The prescribed educator to child ratios must be met at all times that children are being educated and cared for by a children's service. These ratios will be changing from 1 January 2022 for all children's services to:

- Birth to under 36 months of age – 1 educator to 4 children
- 36 months or over (not including over preschool age) – 1 educator to 11 children
- Children over preschool age – 1 educator to 15 children

The minimum number of educators required depends on the ages of the children, and the total number of children being educated and cared for by the children's service. *(Children's Services Regulations 2020, regulation 90)*

To be counted in the ratios, educators must be *working directly with children*. This means being physically present with the children and directly engaged in providing education and care. *(Regulations 11 and 89)*

Former licensed children's services (ie. services that existed before 17 May 2020) have until 1 January 2022 to meet the new ratios. Until then, the former ratios apply. *(Regulations 142 to 150)*

In addition to meeting the ratios, services must ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times. *(Children's Services Act 1996, section 105)*

Mixed age groups

The way the ratios are calculated for mixed age groups will also change on 1 January 2022. Ratios will be calculated across the service (not by individual rooms) and based on the youngest child in care. Meeting the prescribed ratio for each age range of children in a mixed age group does not mean the service must apply the ratio for the youngest age range to all children. An educator caring for one age range of children may also be counted against another age range of children, as long as the minimum ratio for each age range in the mixed group is met, and there is adequate supervision at all times.

Examples of calculating mixed age ratios

The examples below show how ratios can be calculated for all children being educated and cared for by the service from **1 January 2022.**

In addition, all educators must meet the qualification requirements in regulations 91 to 93 and any additional program funding requirements for qualifications.

Example 1 – Service that provides education and care to children of all ages

Example 1 is a service with a small group of children of mixed ages. There are three children aged under 36 months, five children aged from 36 months to preschool age, and four children over preschool age. Calculating each age group separately would require three educators - one for each age group. Instead, if the four children in the *over preschool* age group are moved into the *36 months to preschool* age group, this would it would make a total of nine children, which meets the 1:11 ratio with a single educator. One educator (rather than two) is required for all children over 36 months. Calculating across the service using mixed age groups requires two educators, not three. The calculation is illustrated in the table below.

Age of children	Under 36 months	36 months to preschool age	Over preschool age
Educator to child ratio	1 to 4	1 to 11	1 to 15
Number of children	**3 children**	**5 children**	**4 children**
Number of children (mixed ages)	**3 children**	**5+4 = 9 children**	**0 children remaining**
Total educators required	**1 educator**	**1 educator**	
	2 educators		

Example 2 – Service that provides education and care only to children preschool age or under

Example 2 is a service that provides education and care only to children preschool age or under.
There are five children aged under 36 months and 25 children aged from 36 months to preschool age. Calculating each age group separately would require five educators. Instead, if three children from the *36 months to preschool* age group are moved to the *under 36 months* age group. The *over preschool age* group then has only 22 children, which meets the 1:11 requirement with two educators rather than three. The *under 36 months* age group now has eight children, meaning two educators are required to meet the 1:4 ratio. Calculating across the service using mixed age groups requires four educators, not five. The calculation is illustrated in the table below.

Age of children	Under 36 months	36 months to preschool age	Over preschool age
Educator to child ratio	1 to 4	1 to 11	1 to 15
Number of children	**5 children**	**25 children**	**0 children**
Number of children (mixed ages)	**5 + 3 = 8 children**	**22 children remaining**	
Total educators required	**2 educators**	**2 educators**	
	4 educators		

Example 3 - Service that provides education and care only to children aged 36 months and over

Example 3 is a service that provides education and care only to children aged 36 months and over. The service has five children aged from 36 months to preschool age, and 18 children over preschool age. Calculating both age groups separately would require three educators. However, for counting purposes, three children from the *over preschool* age group could be moved to the 36 months to preschool age group. The younger group would then have a total of eight children which meets the 1:11 ratio with a single educator. The *over preschool age* group would then have only 15 children, meeting the 1:15 ratio with a single educator. Calculating across the service using mixed age groups requires two educators, not three. The calculation is illustrated in the table below.

Age of children	Under 36 months	36 months to preschool age	Over preschool age
Educator to child ratio	1 to 4	1 to 11	1 to 15
Number of children	**0 children**	**5 children**	**18 children**
Number of children (mixed ages)		**5 + 3 = 8 children**	**15 children remaining**
Total educators required		**1 educator**	**1 educator**
		2 educators	

Example 4 – Service that provides education and care only to children under 36 months, and children over preschool age

Example 4 is a service that provides education and care only to children under 36 months, and children over preschool age. There are two children aged under 36 months, and 17 children over preschool age. Calculating each age group separately would require three educators. Instead, if two children are moved from the over preschool age group to the under 36 months group, this would leave 15 children in the older group, which meets the 1:15 ratio with a single educator. The younger group would also meet the 1:4 ratio with one educator, even with the additional two children. The calculation is illustrated in the table below.

Age of children	Under 36 months	36 months to preschool age	Over preschool age
Educator to child ratio	1 to 4	1 to 11	1 to 15
Number of children	**2 children**	**0 children**	**17 children**
Number of children (mixed ages)	**2 + 2 = 4 children**		**15 children remaining**
Total educators required	**1 educator**		**1 educator**
	2 educators		

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