

RESOURCE STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

General.

The sources below, including District of Columbia regulations and the national accrediting organization, call for maximum group size and minimum staffing:

For 3-year olds: Class size 16 maximum Teacher and aide
For 4-year olds: Class size 20 maximum Teacher and aide
For 5-year olds: Class size 20-25 maximum Teacher and aide

Many provisions in the regulations, standards, and expert recommendations involve the qualifications of staff. These will not have cost implications, since DCPS already meets the standards for teachers. We do not have data on the qualifications of aides or charter school teachers, but compliance with No Child Left Behind mandates will require meeting such standards. Other provisions govern program, e.g., curriculum, kinds of activities, duties of staff. Where these involve resources that could be costed out they are listed below, but not otherwise.

District of Columbia regulations for child development centers. 29 DCMR Chapter 3.

These regulations do not apply to DCPS or charter schools. “Child development facility ... does not include a public or private elementary or secondary school engaged in legally required educational and related functions.” 29 DCMR 399.1

Age	Maximum group size	Child-adult ratio
2 years, 6 mo. through 3 years	16	8 to 1
4 years	20	10 to 1
5 years	25	15 to 1

Adults must include at least one teacher. Other adults may be assistant teachers or aides. 29 DCMR 316.

Other resources:

- Sufficient number of toys, games, equipment, including outdoor play equipment, raw materials, and books which are safe for use by children and adequate for the requirements of the program. 29 DC 317.5
- Individual eating and drinking equipment ... as appropriate when meals or snacks are served. 29 DCMR 317.6
- Furnishing, including tables, cots, chairs, and shelves, appropriate to the age, size and activities of the children, and sufficient for the number of children enrolled in the program. 29 DCMR 317.8-317.9
- Food suitable to the ages of the children. 29 DCMR 318.2

National Association for the Education of Young Children. Accreditation Standards

These are similar to District of Columbia regulations, except for more detailed variation in the number of adults depending on group sizes. Adults are defined as teachers/assistant teachers/teacher aides.

Age group / Group size	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
30-48 months	1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4 year olds			1:8	1:9	1:10		
5 year olds			1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten					1:10	1:11	1:12

Qualifications:

- Ratios are to be lowered when one or more children in the group need additional adult assistance to fully participate because of ability, language fluency, developmental age or stage or other factors.
- Group sizes are ceilings, regardless of the number of staff.

National Institute for Early Education Research, Preschool Policy Matters. Linda M. Espinosa, “High Quality Preschool: Why We Need It and What it Looks Like.” November 2002.

As do other sources, this article separates “process quality” from “structural quality.” This memo draws only on standards for the latter.

- Adult to child ratios not to exceed NAEYC recommendations
- Small group sizes
- Spacious, well-equipped classrooms

Debra J. Ackerman & W. Steven Barnett, *Increasing the Effectiveness of Preschool Programs.*

Review of research on effective programs

- Class size: no larger than 20, but substantial effects may be obtained – especially for disadvantaged children – only when classes for 3- and 4-year olds are reduced to 15 or fewer children
- Staff-child ratios no larger than 1:10
- At least 2 1/2 hours per day for 180 days per year