NEW YORK CHILD CARE CENTERS

Staff-to-child ratios at a glance

New York's ratios and maximum group sizes for licensed child care centers. Print it, pin it up by the door.

Group	Ages	Staff : children	Max group
Newborns	under 6 weeks (only with OCFS approval)	1 : 3	6
Infants	6 weeks to 18 months	1 : 4	8
Toddlers	18 to 36 months	1 : 5	12
Three-year-olds	3 years	1 : 7	18
Four-year-olds	4 years	1 : 8	21
Five-year-olds	5 years	1 : 9	24
School age	school age through 9 years	1 : 10	20
Older school age	10 to 12 years	1 : 15	30

- **Mixed ages:** three- to five-year-olds kept together all day follow the ratio for the age of the majority; infants never mix with other ages except in OCFS-approved continuity-of-care rooms, and children under three join mixed groups only at the very start and end of the day, under the 18–36 month ratio.
- **School age:** preschoolers may join school-age groups only at the very start and end of the day, under the youngest child's ratio; programs serving only school-age children are licensed under 18 NYCRR Part 414.
- **Shared spaces:** group sizes still apply on playgrounds, in gyms and in other common areas, and groups may share a space only if it is large enough to keep each group separate.
- New York City centers are licensed under the NYC Health Code (Article 47), which sets its own ratios, not under this state rule. A state law signed in December 2025 lets OCFS relax these ratios, so they may change.

Source: 18 NYCRR 418-1.8(j)–(l) (OCFS compilation effective October 13, 2021), read on November 24, 2026. This sheet is a summary, not legal advice: always check the current regulation and your licensing consultant.