NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE CENTERS

Staff-to-child ratios at a glance

North Carolina'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
Infants	birth to 12 months	**1 : 5**	**10**
Toddlers	12 to 24 months	**1 : 6**	**12**
Two-year-olds	2 to 3 years	**1 : 10**	**20**
Three-year-olds	3 to 4 years	**1 : 15**	**25**
Four-year-olds	4 to 5 years	**1 : 20**	**25**
Five and older	5 years and older	**1 : 25**	**25**

- **Mixed ages:** the youngest child's ratio applies to the whole group. A center may instead notify the Division and use the rule's multi-age table.
- **First and last hour:** all ages may be grouped together, keeping the youngest child's ratio.
- **Star rating:** these are the minimums for every licensed center. Meeting the tighter ratios in 10A NCAC 09 .3209 earns rated-license points.
- A center in a residence follows the rule's own tables in (b) and (c).

Source: 10A NCAC 09 .0713(a) (amended effective November 1, 2024), read on November 24, 2026. This sheet is a summary, not legal advice: always check the current regulation and your licensing consultant.