WISCONSIN CHILD CARE CENTERS

Staff-to-child ratios at a glance

Wisconsin'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 18 months	**1 : 4**	**8**
Toddlers	18 months to 2½ years	**1 : 7**	**14**
Older toddlers	2½ to 3 years	**1 : 8**	**16**
Three-year-olds	3 to 4 years	**1 : 10**	**20**
Four-year-olds	4 to 5 years	**1 : 13**	**26**
Five and older	5 years and over	**1 : 18**	**36**

- **Mixed ages:** the ratio is prorated by the ages of the children in the group. A group that includes a child under 18 months may not exceed 8; a mixed group of children 18 months and older may not exceed what 2 workers could care for at those ratios.
- **Nap time and field trips:** group size limits do not apply to napping groups, field trips, outdoor play areas or eating areas, but ratios must still be kept.
- **Swimming off site:** while children are in the water, ratios of workers who can swim are 1:1 under age 3, 1:4 at age 3, 1:6 at ages 4 and 5, and 1:12 at 6 and older.
- On August 1, 2027, 2025 Wisconsin Act 15 changes this table again: infants become birth to 2 years (1:4, group of 8) and children 2 to 2½ years are 1:6 (group of 12).

Source: Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251.055(2), Table 251.055 (amended by 2025 Wisconsin Act 15, effective July 3, 2025), read on November 24, 2026. This sheet is a summary, not legal advice: always check the current regulation and your licensing consultant.