

This document is provided as guidance and is not a legal document. It does not override or replace the need to be familiar with rules. Current rules may be found on [the DLBC website](#).

### Definitions

#### Caregiver-to-child ratio

The caregiver-to-child ratio, or simply *ratio*, is the number of caregivers in relation to the number of children present. Ratio is typically represented by 2 numbers separated by a colon (e.g. 1:4). The first number represents the number of caregivers, the second number represents the number of children.

For example, if a group has 1 caregiver and 3 children, the ratio of that group is represented as 1:3.

Ratio is based on the number of children per caregiver. This means ratios usually begin with a 1, as we are comparing how many children there are to each caregiver present.

For example, if a group has 2 caregivers and 8 children, the ratio of that group is represented as 1:4. This indicates that for each caregiver present, there are 4 children.

Ratio rules define the upper limit of what is allowed, but you may always choose to operate at a lower ratio. For example, if a ratio of 1:4 is required for a certain group, you may choose to operate at a ratio of 1:4, 1:3, 1:2, or 1:1 instead.

#### Group size

Group size is the total number of children 0-12 years old present in a group. Group size does not account for the total number of caregivers or individuals 13 years old and older.

For example, if a group has 2 caregivers and 16 children, the group size is 16.

To be more specific, in a residential setting, group size includes all children signed into care (including any who may be at an offsite activity) and all children 0-12 years old present in the home, regardless of who their parent is or if they are a household member.

Just like ratio, rules define maximum group sizes allowed, but you may always choose to have a smaller group size. For example, if a group has a maximum group size of 24, that means you may have anywhere between 1-24 children in that group.

# Ratio requirements

## General ratio

A ratio of **1:8** must be maintained. In other words, no group may exceed a ratio of 1:8.

Examples	
A ratio of 1:8	A ratio less than 1:8

## Infant and toddler ratio

Because they generally require more direct interactions and supervision, a lower ratio must be maintained for children younger than 2 years old.

For children 0-17 months, a ratio of **1:2** must be maintained.

For children 18-23 months, a ratio of **1:3** must be maintained.

The combined total of infants and toddlers (children 0-23 months old) may not exceed **3 per caregiver**. This means a caregiver may have any combination of up to 3 children 0-23 months old with them as long as they do not exceed the ratios described above.

Examples	
A caregiver with 2 children 0-17 months, 1 child 18-23 months, and 6 older children.	Two caregivers with 4 children 0-17 months, 2 children 18-23 months, and 2 older children.

## Group size requirements

This section only applies to licensed family providers (a residential child care program caring for 9 or more children).

### Counting children toward ratio/group size

Generally, every child present counts toward capacity, ratio, and group size.

The only exception is for children 4-12 years old whose parent is a provider or caregiver working at the facility. These children do not count toward capacity or ratio, but they always count toward group size.

This exception only applies when the provider or caregiver is the parent or legal guardian of the child. All other relatives (cousins, nephews, grandchildren, etc.) count toward capacity, ratio, and group size.

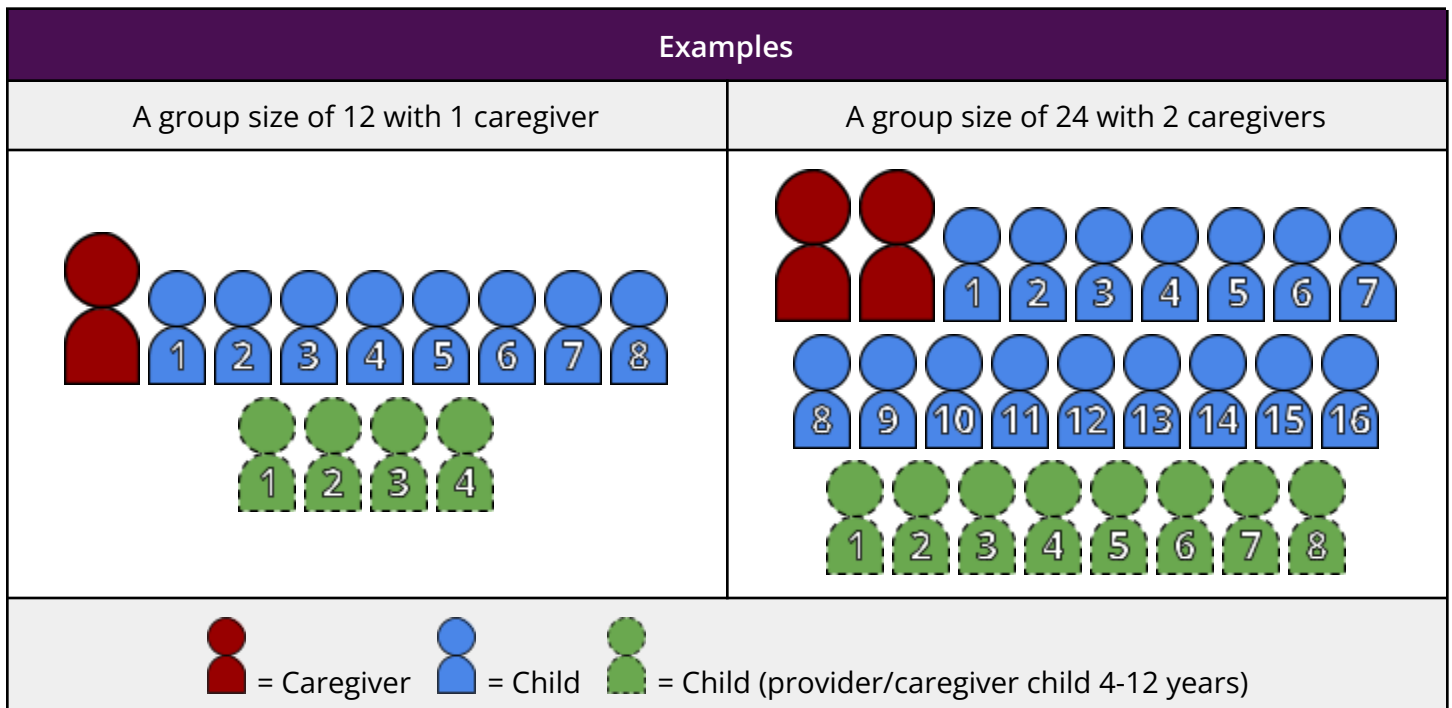
Let's use an example to illustrate this exception. A caregiver has 10 children with them. The caregiver is the parent to 3 of those children, 2 of them being between 4-12 years old. So this group has:

- 7 unrelated children (who all count toward ratio)
- 1 related child younger than 4 years old (who also counts toward ratio)
- 2 related children between 4-12 years old (who do not count toward ratio)

This means that the ratio of this group is 1:8, although the group size is 10.

### Maximum group size

Maximum group size with 1 caregiver is 12. Maximum group size with 2 or more caregivers is 24.



## After-school child care exception

To promote the availability of after-school child care, residential providers (licensed family and residential certificate) are permitted to have additional children beyond approved capacity, ratio, and group size.

Note the following in regard to using this exception:

- Additional children must be school-age, meaning they are 5-12 years old.
- Children do not need to be enrolled in, or attending school to be considered school-age.
- This exception may be applied any time children are in care, regardless of the time of day or year.
- Additional children do not count toward a program’s capacity, ratio, or group size.
- The number of additional children allowed is based on the program’s license type:
  - **Licensed family providers** may have up to 3 additional children present.
  - **Residential certificate providers** may have up to 2 additional children present.

