



December 2020

Preschool Ratio and Class Size Maximum by Program Standards

Introduction

The Iowa Department of Education supports quality learning opportunities and environments for young children by developing, implementing, and monitoring preschool programs and services. Iowa's school districts and their community partners operating **Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs (SWVPP)**, **Shared Visions**, and classrooms providing **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)** instructional services must meet one of the three approved preschool program standards listed below. The preschool ratios and class size maximums are required to be maintained across all delivery models of onsite, hybrid, and continuous learning.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

1302.21 Center-based option.

(3) A class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 15 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers.

(4) A class that serves a majority of children who are four and five years old must have no more than 20 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are four and five years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers.

Age Category	Teacher-Child Ratio	Maximum Class Size*
3 year olds	2:17	17 Note: No more than 15 children enrolled in any double class.
4 and 5 year olds	2:20	20 Note: No more than 17 children enrolled in any double class.

NAEYC Accreditation

Assessment Item 10B.8:

Program staff maintain a developmentally appropriate class size (20) in preschool classrooms and other indoor settings.

Age Category	Teacher-Child Ratio	Maximum Class Size*
Preschool (3 - 5 year olds)	1:10	20

* Shared Visions preschool programs must maintain a teacher-child ratio of not less than one staff member per eight children regardless of the maximum class size. For example, if a program enrolls 17 or more children in one classroom, three staff members would be required to maintain the ratio of 1:8 for Shared Visions.

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards

Criterion 10.4:

Written procedures address the maintenance of developmentally appropriate teaching staff-child ratios and maximum class size to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children. Teaching staff-child ratio and maximum class size identified are maintained during all hours of operation, including: Indoor time, Outdoor time, and; During transportation and field trips (when transporting children, teacher-child ratio is used as a guide).

Age Category	Teacher-Child Ratio	Maximum Class Size*
Preschool (3 - 5 year olds)	1:10	20

Note: Class size is the maximum number regardless of the number of staff.

Addendum

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards

Criterion 10.4 (Required):

Groups of children may be limited to one age or may include multiple ages. A class or group consists of children assigned to a teacher or a team of teaching staff for most of the day and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space that prevents intermingling of children from different classes within a larger room or area.

- The IQPPS 10.4 criterion would be addressed through policies and observation of maintenance of teacher: child ratios and maximum class size.
- The maintenance of developmentally appropriate teacher: child ratios and maximum class size is based on the development and learning of children, with consideration of each child's individual abilities, needs, and cultural background.
- The ratio remains in compliance when a staff member leaves the class without being replaced by a substitute for no more than five minutes (e.g., to get craft supplies, talk in the hall to a parent, go to the bathroom).
- If teaching staff are absent for more than five minutes but less than 20 minutes, the ratio remains in compliance when another adult who is not part of the teaching staff substitutes for the staff member (e.g., to take children to the bathroom, to administer first aid, to take a personal break).
- **Nap time:** When two or more adults must be present during nap time, at least one of the adults present must be a teacher or assistant teacher-teacher aide (for example, a group of 11 to 20 preschoolers would require at least two people, one of whom is a teacher or assistant teacher-teacher aide, to be present to meet the ratio). Additional adults may be staff members or other adults who function in a different role.
- **Special Events:** During special events (such as assemblies, field trips), if children remain in their own classes and the teaching team responsible for the class remains with the class, the class is not intermingling. The class must maintain the required teaching staff-child ratios within class size maximums. When intermingling occurs with one or more classes during the special event, then it is considered as a single combined class. The single combined class must maintain the required teaching staff-child ratios within class size maximums.
- **Special Education:** If a paraeducator is assigned to provide specific supports or services identified in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) which will remove the paraeducator from supporting other children during classroom activities, the paraeducator is not included in the count for teacher: child ratio. However, the child is included in the count for class size.