

**Child Care Program Regulation – Group Size Requirements- Additional Information for Child Day Centers that are Subsidy Approved**  
**Division of Licensing**

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**What is Group Size?**

"Group Size" means the number of children assigned to a staff member or team of staff members occupying an individual room or area.

Group size requirements were added to the Child Care Subsidy regulation, effective 10/17/18. Group size represents the maximum number of children that should be grouped together, distinct from the larger population of children, in a room or area with specific staff members.

**Child Day Center Subsidy Inspection Requirements – Group Size Requirements.**

TABLE 1. Maximum Group Size Requirements		
	Age	Maximum Group Size
1.	Birth up to 16 months	12
2.	16 months up to 24 months	15
3.	2 year olds	24
4.	3 year olds up to school age eligible	30

**\* The staff-to –children group size applicable to the youngest child in the group applies to the entire group.**

**\* Group size does not apply to school-age children.**

**What do I need to do to meet group size requirements?**

- Programs need to determine which children will be supervised by the same staff or the same team of staff, ensuring consistent care for children in each group.
- Each child should be a part of a group.
- In each group, the assigned staff will have primary responsibility for the children in their group.

**Consistent Care Policy**

- The center must develop a written policy and procedure to ensure care by consistent staff.
- Programs should determine how they want to ensure that children receive consistent care.

**Why is this good for children?**

Consistent care represents consistent, dependable relationships, which helps children build secure attachments. Children should have consistent caregivers in order to build a sense of security and trust. The goal is for children to have a limited number of caregivers during the course of a day.

### **Is group size required at all times?**

- No. Group size is not required when meals or snacks are served; during designated rest periods; evening and overnight sleep time; outdoor play; field trips; special group activities; or during the first and last hour of operation when the center operates more than six hours per day.
- In addition, more than one 'group' can be in an individual room or area and there is no requirement for groups to be divided by physical barriers.

### **Benefits of Group Size**

- Easier for staff to supervise the children.
- Increases opportunities for staff to become familiar with the behavior patterns, issues and concerns of individual children.
- Helps children develop social skills by allowing consistent opportunities to interact with a smaller group of children.

### **Questions and Answers: Group Size/ Consistent Care Requirements**

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***Q: In order to have more than one group occupy a space, are partitions or room dividers required?***

A: No. It is not necessary to define space in order to meet the requirement. Group size does not affect space.

***Q: What is the effective date to implement group size?***

A: The requirements are effective October 17, 2018. There will be an implementation period of approximately 60 days. During this period, violations of group size will not be cited, but noncompliance will be documented on the inspection summary.

***Q: Is group size an official requirement?***

A: Yes, for subsidy approved vendors. The requirement for group size is in the [Federal law](#) as well as in the Child Care Subsidy regulation.

***Q: If I have questions about group size, who do I contact?***

A: Contact Tatanishia Armstrong, Program Consultant, at [Tatanishia.Armstrong@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:Tatanishia.Armstrong@dss.virginia.gov).