

DCF 252.425 Supervision and grouping of children.**(1) SUPERVISION.**

(a) Each child shall be supervised at all times to guide the child's behavior and activities, prevent harm, and ensure safety.

See DCF 252.04 (25) – DEFINITION – SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN.

See DCF 252.425 (1) (b) – CHILD TRACKING PROCEDURE regarding implementing a procedure to ensure that the number, names, and whereabouts of children are known to the assigned counselor at all times.

(b) All children in care shall be assigned to a counselor. The camp shall implement a procedure to ensure that the number, names, and whereabouts of children in care are known to the assigned camp counselor at all times.

At any time throughout the day, during the camp's hours of operation, the camp must have a written or documented system to determine how many children are present and the names of children that are present. This includes during camp-sponsored transportation and field trips.

(c) 1. Counselors who are included for meeting the required counselor-to-child ratio may not provide care to children more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period.

2. Notwithstanding subd. 1., camps that provide an occasional overnight activity for children enrolled in the camp may allow a counselor to provide care for children for more than 12 hours in the 24-hour period to permit the counselor to remain with the children during the overnight session.

(d) No licensee, employee, volunteer, or other individual in contact with children may consume alcoholic beverages or any non-prescribed controlled substance specified in ch. 961 Stats., on the premises of the camp or be under the influence of any alcohol or non-prescribed controlled substance, during the hours of the camp's operation.

Section 961.01 (4), Wis. Stats., defines "controlled substance" as a drug, substance or immediate precursor in schedules I through V of Subchapter II. Broadly, this covers marijuana, narcotic drugs, opium and opiates, opium poppy and poppy straw. For additional definitions of terms and list of pharmaceuticals which are specifically controlled, see Chapter 961, Wis. Stats.

(e) A child may not be released to any person who has not been previously authorized by the parent.

The Department recommends the camp document any verbal authorizations. It is also recommended that camp check the photo identification of the person picking up the child.

(f) The camp shall implement a procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the camp without prior notification from the parent.

(g) A child may not be in care for more than 14 hours in any 24-hour period.

(h) The camp director shall be at the camp during the hours of operation, except if any of the following conditions are met:

1. The camp director is on a field trip with all of the children.

2. The camp director is on a field trip with some of the children and has a reliable method of communicating easily with the camp.

3. Another qualified person that is identified in the written delegation of administrative authority under s. DCF 252.41 (1) (p) is present at the camp and is authorized to make decisions for the camp.

252.425(1)(i)

(i) When 9 or more children are present at the camp, there shall be at least 2 adults available at all times and at least one of the adults shall be a counselor.

The second adult may be a cook, maintenance worker, secretary, or other person who does not normally work with children as long as the person is aware that they may be asked for assistance in case of an emergency. The waterfront supervisor may be counted as the second adult as long as children are not in the water during the time the waterfront supervisor is serving in this capacity. If children are in the water or waterfront area, the waterfront supervisor may not be used as the required second adult.

(2) GROUPING OF CHILDREN.

(a) 1. Except as provided in subds. 2. and 4., the ratio of counselors to children may not be less than the minimum number of counselors to children specified in Table DCF 252.425.

TABLE DCF 252.425 COUNSELOR-TO-CHILD RATIO FOR CHILDREN IN A DAY CAMP	
Age of Children	Minimum Number of Counselors to Children
3 Years to 4 Years	1:4
4 Years to 5 Years	1:6
5 Years and 6 Years	1:12
7 Years and Over	1:18

2. When there is a mixed-age group, the counselor-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis, according to age.

Note: The department's form, Counselor-to-Child Ratio Worksheet may be used to prorate the staff-to-child ratio for mixed age groups. Information on how to obtain forms is available on the department's website, <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/ccformspubs>.

See DCF 252.425 (2) (a) 1. – COUNSELOR-TO-CHILD RATIOS. When working with mixed-age groups, the Counselor-to-Child Ratio Worksheet may be used to determine the number of staff necessary to care for children.

4. When 9 or more children are on a field trip, at least 2 adults shall accompany the children. The counselor-to-child ratios in Table DCF 252.425 shall be met on field trips.

(b) Support staff, such as maintenance, clerical, housekeeping, and food service staff, may only be considered in determining counselor-to-child ratios if the support staff meet the qualifications of a camp counselor and are giving full attention to the care and supervision of children.

(c) A camp counselor may not engage in any duties that are not related to caring for children while he or she is counted in meeting the required counselor-to-child ratios.

Acceptable duties could include routine daily housekeeping in the area where the children are, such as dusting, floor sweeping, table/chair washing, straightening the room, putting out bag lunches with milk, preparing snack in the room, etc., if these are part of the counselor's job responsibility prescribed by the camp and do not consume the full attention of the counselor.

In camps where space used by children is used for other purposes outside the hours of operation, prohibited duties include moving furnishings and equipment into storage before children have departed.

252.425(2)(c) continued

If support staff are used as counselors, the schedule of differing job responsibilities in relation to counselor-to-child ratios must be determined. An example may be a counselor who prepares a snack or meal which requires no more than 10 minutes time and who is immediately accessible in case of emergency is still considered to be a counselor while performing these tasks. If food preparation takes more than 10 minutes and/or removes the counselor from immediate availability, the counselor is considered to be support staff for that time period and does not count in determining counselor-to-child ratios.

(d) Children of staff who attend the camp and who are on the premises for supervision and care shall be counted in the determination of counselor-to-child ratios.