



Policy for YoungStar Rating and Ratios

Programs that receive Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy payments from families are required to participate in YoungStar. In order to obtain 2 Stars or more, programs must be in compliance with licensing or certification rules or regulated by a public school board. When a program is operated by a public school board, the public school board is responsible for ensuring the program is following the same standards established by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for licensed group child care centers.¹ Below is a table that applies only to licensed group programs where classrooms do not have mixed ages²:

Age of Children	Ratio of Staff to Child	Maximum Group Size
Birth – 2 yrs.	1:4	8
2 – 2.5 yrs.	1:6	12
2.5 – 3 yrs.	1:8	16
3 – 4 yrs.	1:10	20
4 – 5 yrs.	1:13	24
5 – 6 yrs.	1:17	34
6 yrs. and older	1:18	36

For mixed age groups, licensed group providers must conform to rules regarding staff to child ratios as specified in DCF 251.05(4) Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>.

Licensed family programs operating under standards established by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must comply with staff to child ratios as detailed in DCF 250.05(4) Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>. Certified and provisionally certified family programs must follow staff to child ratios detailed in DCF 250.05(4) Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers.

¹ Wisconsin Stats. s.120.13 (14), states in pertinent part that school boards may: “Establish and provide or contract for the provision of child care programs for children. The school board may receive federal or state funds for this purpose. Child care programs established under this subsection shall meet the standards for licensed child care centers established by the Department of Children and Families.”

² DCF 251 is available here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4024.pdf>

Licensed day camps are required to follow staff to child ratios indicated in DCF 252.42 Licensing Rules for Day Camps for Children at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>. For mixed age groups, licensed day camps must comply with standards for staff to child ratios as explained in DCF 252.42(3).

If the program is found to be out of ratio at the time of the YoungStar rating, the following procedures will be followed in regard to YoungStar rating:

- **Technical Rating**

- If a program is found to be out of ratio at the time of a Technical Rating, the Consultant will not rate the program.
- The Consultant will notify the Regional Licensing office with regard to the program being out of compliance with ratio requirements.
- The Consultant will reschedule the rating for another date. If at that time, the program is still out of ratio, the program will lose eligibility for a Technical Rating and will move to Automated Rating. This will result in a 2 Star rating.

- **Formal Rating**

- If the program is found to be out of ratio at the time of the Evaluation Criteria Verification, the program will not be eligible to complete the Formal Rating until they receive their next YoungStar Renewal Contract or Request for Off-Year Services application. The Consultant will schedule another day to do the Technical Rating. If the program is out of compliance at the rescheduled Technical Rating, the program will lose eligibility for a Technical Rating and will move to Automated Rating.
- If a program is found to be out of ratio at the time of an ERS Observation, the ERS Observer will not complete the observation. The program loses eligibility to complete the Formal Rating and must use the results from their Evaluation Criteria Verification to establish their Technical Rating outcome.
- The Consultant/ERS Observer will notify the Regional Licensing office with regard to the program being out of compliance with ratio requirements.

Further Information for Programs Operated by Public School Boards

YoungStar requirements for staffing of school-age care programs require these programs to follow the group child care licensing rules (DCF 251) regarding maximum ratio of staff to children and group size. If a program operated by a public school board is found by a YoungStar staff member to be out of compliance with ratio requirements, the issue will be brought to the attention of the program Director or Site Supervisor and DCF will be notified. The DCF Bureau of Early Learning and Policy (BELP) will contact the public school board to inform them of the violation of rules.