

4.09 ALLOWABLE NUMBERS

Purpose Statement

Windermere is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all families accessing early childhood education and care programs.

This commitment is underpinned by our legislative obligations; the National Regulations state that organisations must ensure educator to child ratios are maintained at all times.

This policy sets out practices for managing child to educator ratios in family day care and is intended to ensure that all educators are supported in meeting their obligations to maintain ratios.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), educators and contractors.

Definitions

ACECQA: Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

Approved Service Provider: is a service that holds a provider approval authorised by the ACECQA.

Child school aged: is a child enrolled or registered at a school or a child enrolled or registered to attend school in the *current calendar year*.

Education and care service: is any service providing or intending to provide education and care on a regular basis to children Under 13 years of age, other than a service that is excluded under the National Law or Regulations.

Educator to child ratios: is the allowable number of children able to be educated and cared for by one educator.

Family day care educator: is an educator engaged by or registered with a family day care service to provide education and care for children in a residence or at an approved family day care venue.

Policy Statement

THAT EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS BE MAINTAINED, AS PER THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS, TO ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN IN CARE.

Procedures

Allowable number of children

1. An educator can provide care and education for up to **four** young children between the ages of birth and pre-school age (children who have not yet started school).
2. An educator may then have **three** additional children who are school aged.

NOTE: A school, aged child is a child enrolled or registered to attend school in the *current calendar year*.

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3. At no time is an educator to exceed a total of **seven** children in care, ensuring at all times that the above age restrictions are met.
4. These ratios are inclusive of:
 - a. the educators own children if they are aged under 13 years
 - b. children aged 13 years or over if the educator is required to supervise them or if they are enrolled in the educators family day care service.

Adjustments made by the approved service provider

1. The allowable number of children may be lowered for an educator by the approved provider based on the educator's skill, experience and number of existing children in care and their care requirements. This decision will be made in consultation with the educator and be based on the health and wellbeing of the children in the education and care environment.

Adjustments made by the educator

1. An educator may indicate their preference to accept a lower number of children, when the requirements of existing children and/or the skills and experience of the educator suggest that this arrangement is in the best interests of the children in the education and care environment. This decision will be made in consultation with the approved provider.

Additional care arrangements

1. An educator may choose to provide care for relatives' and friends' children for short periods of time at no cost where such an arrangement does not exceed allowable numbers and ratios. These children will not be enrolled with Windermere.

Booked hours of care

1. Educators are responsible for accepting bookings of families and ensuring that these bookings do not exceed the allowable number of children.
2. Educators must advise the service provider of any booking for families accepted or changed as soon as practical.

Exceeding the allowable number of children

1. If at any point an educator finds themselves in a position where they may exceed the allowable number of children, the approved provider must be notified immediately. Where possible, additional staffing support will be made available.
2. Where allowable numbers are exceeded (for any time period), an immediate report is to be made to the approved provider for support options to be explored and a notification recorded and submitted to ACECQA (as per Windermere's Incident Reporting and Management policy). Exceeding allowable numbers is considered a breach of regulation and law.



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Relevant Standards/Legislation

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Related Policies & Links

- *Incident Reporting & Management* procedure
- *Child Safe Environment* procedure