



Supervision of Preschool Children During Naptime (2024)

Policy Number: FO-24-19

Release Date: November 6, 2024

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Applicability: Licensed Center-Based Programs

BACKGROUND

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is committed to supporting child care providers in addressing the periodic staffing challenges they face while providing services. To help program administrators cope with brief staff coverage challenges, EEC outlines alternative strategies in this policy for the supervision of preschool children during naptime in licensed center-based programs. A preschool child is any child at least two years and nine months old but not yet attending first grade.

AUTHORITY

- 606 CMR 7.02: Definitions
- 606 CMR 7.10: Ratios, Group Sizes and Supervision of Children

POLICY STATEMENT

During naptime, two assistant teachers or one teacher-qualified staff person may, due to a temporary staffing challenge on a given day, supervise a classroom of no more than 20 children, all of whom are preschool children, *only* when the following conditions are met.

For the purposes of this policy, an “emergency coverage staff person” is a teacher-qualified staff member who is not in ratio in another classroom at the time this policy is being used and is on site and directly available in case emergency assistance is needed in a classroom using this policy.

This policy may be used for a preschool classroom during naptime *only* when:

- All children are sleeping, resting quietly, or engaged in a quiet activity in the napping area;
- Both assistants or the teacher-qualified staff person supervising naptime are CPR and first aid certified;
- Use of this policy is documented in the program's daily staff schedule, including emergency coverage staff assignments;
- The program's emergency evacuation plan accounts for the use of this policy;
- Accurate attendance is maintained at all times;
- Classrooms are not combined for naptime;
- The classroom has a telephone, cellular phone, walkie talkie, or other communication equipment with direct access to the designated emergency coverage staff on site;
- This policy is not used for more than 60 minutes within any one day, per classroom; and
- All program staff are informed about the planned use of the policy, including plans for when emergency assistance is needed.

A program may utilize this policy in more than one preschool classroom at the same time *only* if the number of classrooms using the policy simultaneously does not exceed the number of emergency coverage staff persons available on site to assist the classrooms if called upon.

This policy is intended to give programs flexibility on occasions when an educator needed to maintain staff-to-child ratio requirements is temporarily unavailable during naptime, either due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness) or the need for a short break.

Program administrators must exercise judgment and discretion in the utilization of this policy. Notwithstanding this policy, all licensees and educators must exercise appropriate supervision of children in their care in order to ensure their health and safety at all times, per 606 CMR 7.10(5).

COMPLIANCE

During licensing visits, a program administrator utilizing this policy must present the adjusted staff schedule reflecting the temporary ratio change to the licensor and explain how they employ these alternative naptime supervision strategies. Programs must also be prepared to share their planned method of evacuation during such naptime periods, and how emergency coverage staff would be contacted and deployed in case of emergency.

A violation of this policy will be considered a violation of the staffing ratios established in 606 CMR 7.10.