



Department of Early Education and Care

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

School Age Child Care Licensing

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Supervision and Program Space

Background

School age child care programs are responsible for monitoring and supervising the ongoing activity of each child. School age child care programs must designate the specific rooms, spaces, or areas that are used by the program and equip the rooms appropriately for school age children. Activity plans shall foster the development of independence and responsibility in children as they grow older by encouraging opportunities for decision-making, choices and independent time.

Supervision for School Age Activities

School age child care programs are required to maintain staff to child ratios of 1 staff person to each 13 children. However, staff assignment may vary according to the activity and the needs of the children. *See* 102 CMR 7.33(2). When determining appropriate staff to child ratios, group assignments, and supervision levels for program activities, it is important to consider the design and layout of the program space, the type of activity, and the characteristics of the children engaged in particular activities in order to determine how to assign staff to children's activities.

Depending on the activities in which children are participating, staff may not be assigned to participate in every activity within the program space. For example, three children may be drawing, two may be playing board games, and two may be working in the computer area, while two others are reading in the library area. These children and the staff assigned to supervise them may not all be located in the same room. A group leader who is not responsible for his or her own group of children may assign assistant leaders to work with small groups of children and move between activity spaces if the group leader can maintain supervision over all of the groups of children at the same time.

Other group activities, such as basketball, a woodworking activity, or a cooking activity, may require a closer level of supervision by the group leader or the site coordinator.

Outdoor activities always require direct supervision.

Children's Characteristics

The characteristics of the group and/or the individual characteristics of the participating children must also be considered when determining the appropriate level of staff supervision during any activity for school age children.

Semi-Public Bathrooms

Children may, with staff permission, go to the bathroom independently. Adult guidance shall be available when requested or needed and staff shall regularly monitor the activity of each child. *See* 102 CMR 7.33(1(a)). The toilet facilities shall provide adequate privacy and shall not be available to the public at times when they are used by the children unless the children are accompanied by a staff person. *See* 102 CMR 7.35(5).

Sharing Space with Other Programs

Licensed programs may share activity space with programs that are exempt from licensure. (For example, Boys and Girls Clubs may have both an EEC licensed after school program and a drop in program that is exempt from licensure.) If these programs share activity space, the staff to child ratio must meet the EEC licensing requirement of 1:13. If these programs go on a field trip together, the ratio must meet the EEC licensing requirement of a 1:10 staff to child ratio. *See* 102 CMR 7.33 (2).

The program's capacity is based on licensed space. Programs may have "designated space" in addition to the licensed space. (For example, Y programs typically use other space, such as gyms and swimming pools, as designated space.) This space is acceptable for use as long as it is pre-approved by EEC School Age Child Care Licensors.

Permission to Leave the Premises

When parents provide written consent, older children¹ may participate in activities located at off-site facilities, such as the library. Programs must maintain documentation of the parental permission, including the activity, the activity location, and the time agreed upon for the child to leave the program. The parent and the child must sign a contract, in which they both agree to abide by the program's rules for leaving the program's premises.

The program has the right to rescind a child's privileges to leave the program's premises if the child's behavior warrants the limitation or if s/he does not honor the contract. The program must document the rescission of a child's privileges with both the parent and the child.

¹ The definition of an older child is determined by the licensee.