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| OCFP Office of Child and Family Policy | Department of Children and Family Services | |
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| | Key Words: 89 IAC 407, Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers, Combination of School Age Children with Preschool "Kindergarten" Children | |
| | Approved by: | |

Interpretation

Applicable To: **Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers**

Policy Citation: 407.45 Definitions:

"Kindergarten child" means a child currently enrolled in kindergarten who is eligible to attend first grade during the next school year.

"Preschooler" means a child from three through five years of age. Children enrolled in kindergarten may be considered either preschool or school-age. Children two years of age may be considered preschoolers or toddlers, depending on their level of development.

"School-age" means a child up to 18 years of age who is enrolled in first grade or higher. Children enrolled in kindergarten may be considered either preschool or school-age.

Section 407.190 Grouping and Staffing

- a) The group sizes and ratio of child care staff to children present at any one time shall be as follows:

| AGE OF CHILDREN | STAFF/CHILD RATIO | MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Infants (6 weeks through 14 months) | 1 to 4 | 12 |
| Toddlers (15 through 23 months) | 1 to 5 | 15 |
| Two years | 1 to 8 | 16 |
| Three years | 1 to 10 | 20 |
| Four years | 1 to 10 | 20 |
| Five years (preschool) | 1 to 20 | 20 |

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School-age:
Kindergartners present 1 to 20 30

- b) The following exception to this Section is permitted: An early childhood teacher aided by an early childhood assistant may supervise a group of up to 30 children if all of the children are at least five years of age.
- c) Whenever children of different ages are combined, as allowed by Section 407.190(d) below, the staff/child ratio and maximum group size shall be based on the age of the youngest child in the group.
- d) Children may be combined in any of the following ways:
 - 1) Infants, toddlers and two-year-olds may be combined; and/or
 - 2) Two-year-olds through five-year-old preschool children may be mixed in any combination; and/or
 - 3) School-age kindergarten children may be mixed with five-year-old preschoolers; and/or
 - 4) Four-year-olds through six-year-old children may be mixed; and/or
 - 5) Children of all ages may be mixed during the first hour and last hour of programs that operate ten or more hours per day.

Programs that combine children in any of the above ways shall have staff training activities and daily schedules to meet the needs of all children in the group.

Question: Can five-year-old preschoolers, who have not yet participated in a formal school setting outside of a day care center be mixed with school age children, including other five-year-old kindergartners?

Discussion: Subsection 407.190(d),(2),(3),(4)&(5) describes the combination of five-year-old children that can be included in a group. Five-year-old children that are considered preschool children can be mixed with other age children under four circumstances:

- 1) five-year-old preschool children can be mixed with 2, 3, and 4 year-old children,

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- 2) school-age kindergartners can be mixed with five-year-old preschoolers,
- 3) four to six-year-old children can be mixed, (school-age or preschool)
- 4) all ages can be mixed the first hour and last hour of the day care program.

Staffing for the youngest child in the grouping must be met. Programming should be appropriate for all ages in each group combination.

Response: Five-year-old preschoolers can be mixed with kindergartners, including six year old kindergartners. Five-year-old preschoolers cannot be mixed with any child over the age of six except during the first and last hour of a day care program.