

General educator ratios and qualifications

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General educator-to-child ratios and qualifications for centre-based long day-care

Ratio and qualification requirements are seen as critical in ensuring the best outcomes for children. This fact sheet outlines the requirements in centre-based long day-care.

Educator-to-child ratios

In South Australia, the educator-to-child ratios for centre-based services are:

Regulation	Age of children	Educator-to-child ratio
123(1)(a)	Birth to 24 months	1:4
123(1)(b)	Over 24 months and less than 36 months	1:5
323	36 months or over (not including children over school age)	1:10
320	Over school age	1:15

In accordance with r. 122, to be included in the educator-to-child ratio you must be working directly with children.

If your service is required to have access to an early childhood teacher, or have an early childhood teacher in attendance, they can be counted in the educator-to-child ratio, provided they are working directly with children.

What does *working directly with children* mean?

Regulation 13 outlines the meaning of *working directly with children* as a person who is both:

- physically present with the children
- directly engaged in providing education and care to the children.

General educator qualification requirements

At least 50% of the educators who are required to meet the educator-to-child ratios for the service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma-level education and care qualification.

All other educators required to meet the educator-to-child ratios must have, or **be actively working towards**, at least an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification.

This is outlined in r. 126(1)(a).

Information about the definition of actively working towards an approved qualification is available on the ACECQA website at: www.acecqa.gov.au/actively-working-towards-an-approved-qualification.

Certificate III-level education and care qualification

If you are actively working towards an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification, you can be included in the educator-to-child ratios as a certificate III-level educator if you meet all of the following:

1. are enrolled in a course for the qualification
2. have commenced the course
3. are making satisfactory progress towards completion
4. meet the requirements to maintain enrolment.

Diploma-level education and care qualification

If you are actively working towards an approved diploma-level education and care qualification you can be included in the educator-to-child ratios as a diploma-level educator if you meet all the following:

1. are enrolled in a course for the qualification
2. have commenced the course
3. are making satisfactory progress towards completion
4. meet the requirements to maintain enrolment
5. hold an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification (or have completed approved certificate-III level core units, or have completed at least 30% of the units of an approved early childhood teaching qualification).

How do I calculate my staffing ratios and qualifications?

To calculate the educator-to-child staffing ratios and qualifications at your service, you need to follow these steps:

1. Determine the educator-to-child ratio for each age group.
2. Add up the total number of educators required to meet the educator-to-child ratio.
3. Determine 50% of the total number of educators in step 2. (This is how many educators you need that must have, or be actively working towards, a diploma-level education and care qualification.)
4. The remaining number of educators must have, or be actively working towards, a certificate III-level education and care qualification.

Age of children	Ratio	Number of children	Number of educators for ratios	Qualification requirements
Birth to 24 months	1:4	8	2	A minimum of 9 educators is required in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 must have, or be actively working towards, a diploma-level or above education and care qualification• 4 must have, or be actively working towards, a certificate III-level education and care qualification.
25 to 35 months	1:5	20	4	
36 months to preschool age	1:10	30	3	
Totals		58	9 (minimum)	

Mixed age groups

Services educating and caring for children where there is a mix of children from the three specified age groups, may wish to calculate the educator-to-child ratios, under the requirements of r. 123(2). This allows children in older age groups to be considered as part of the ratios for children in younger age groups. It is important to be aware, when determining educator-to-child ratios, that adequate supervision must be maintained at all times and the needs of each individual child must be taken into consideration. You must also consider each child's involvement in the program and engagement in meaningful relationships with each other and educators.

The following table describes how mixed age group ratios can be determined.

Age of children	Ratio	Number of children	Mixed group rationale	Number of educators	Qualification requirements
Birth to 24 months	1:4	3	One child from the 25 month to preschool age group can be included with this ratio to maintain a 1:4 ratio.	1	A minimum of 6 educators is required • 3 educators must hold, or be actively working towards, an approved diploma-level education and care qualification • 3 educators must hold, or be actively working towards, an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification.
25 to 35 months	1:5	11	One child has been included in the ratio above; therefore, the service can provide 2 educators as a minimum for 10 children aged 25–35 months.	2	
36 months to preschool age	1:10	19	Minimum of 2 educators to maintain the 1:10 ratio	2	
Over preschool age	1:15	16	One child has been included in the 36 month to preschool age group ratio; therefore, the service can provide 1 educator as a minimum for 15 children over preschool age.	1	
Totals		49		6 (minimum)	

Educator qualifications prior to 2012 that meet the certificate-III level qualification

For services in remote or very remote areas, until 1 January 2020 an educator can be included to meet the educator-to-child qualification requirement for a certificate III-level qualification if they both:

- have been continuously employed as an educator in an education and care service or children's service for a period of at least 15 years up to immediately before 1 January 2012
- are employed by the same approved provider as they were employed by immediately before 1 January 2012.

This is outlined in r. 240.

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