



YoungStar Rating and Ratio Compliance Policy

For the purposes of this policy, “ratios” will refer to both staff-to-child ratios and maximum group size.

Providers that receive Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy payments from families are required to participate in YoungStar. To obtain a 2 Star rating or higher, providers must be in compliance with licensing or certification rules or be regulated by a public-school board. When a program is operated by a public-school board, the public-school board is responsible for ensuring the program is following the same standards established by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for licensed group child care centers.¹ Below is a table that applies only to licensed group providers where classrooms do not have mixed ages²:

Age of Children	Ratio of Staff to Child	Maximum Group Size
Birth – 2 yrs.	1:4	8
2 – 2.5 yrs.	1:6	12
2.5 – 3 yrs.	1:8	16
3 – 4 yrs.	1:10	20
4 – 5 yrs.	1:13	26
5 yrs. and older	1:18	36

For mixed age groups, licensed group providers must conform to rules regarding staff-to-child ratios as specified in [DCF 251.055\(2\)](#) Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>.

Licensed family providers operating under standards established by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must comply with staff-to-child ratios as detailed in [DCF 250.055\(2\)](#) Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>. Certified and

¹ Wisconsin Stats. s.120.13 (14), states in pertinent part that school boards may: “Establish and provide or contract for the provision of child care programs for children. The school board may receive federal or state funds for this purpose. Child care programs established under this subsection shall meet the standards for licensed child care centers established by the Department of Children and Families.”

² DCF 251 is available here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4024.pdf>



provisionally certified family providers must follow staff-to-child ratios detailed in DCF **250.055(2)** Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers.

Licensed day camps are required to follow staff-to-child ratios indicated in **DCF 252.425** Licensing Rules for Day Camps for Children at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>. For mixed age groups, licensed day camps must comply with standards for staff-to-child ratios as explained in DCF **252.425(2)**.

If the provider is found to be out of ratio at the time of the YoungStar rating, the following procedures will be followed:

- **Technical Rating**

- If a provider is found to be out of ratio at the time of a Technical Rating, YoungStar staff will not rate the program.
- YoungStar staff will reschedule the rating for another date. If the provider is out of compliance at the rescheduled Technical Rating, the provider will lose eligibility for a Technical Rating and will move to Automated Rating. This will result in a 2 Star rating.
- YoungStar staff will notify the Regional Licensing Office when a provider is out of compliance with ratio requirements during a rating process.

- **Formal Rating**

- If the provider is found to be out of ratio at the time of the Technical Rating, the provider will not be eligible to complete a Formal Rating until they receive their next YoungStar Renewal Contract or Request for Off-Year Services application.
- If a provider is found to be out of ratio at the time of an ERS Observation, YoungStar staff will not complete the observation. The provider loses eligibility to complete the Formal Rating and will be rated using the results from their Technical Rating.
- YoungStar staff will notify the Regional Licensing Office when a provider is out of compliance with ratio requirements during a rating process.

Further Information for Programs Operated by Public School Boards

License-exempt providers operated by a public-school board are required to follow the group child care licensing rules (DCF 251) regarding maximum ratio of staff to children and group size. If a



license exempt provider is found by a YoungStar staff member to be out of compliance with ratio requirements, the issue will be brought to the attention of the Director or Site Supervisor, DCF Bureau of YoungStar (BOY), and appropriate Regional Licensing Office. The DCF Bureau of YoungStar (BOY) will contact the public-school board to inform them of the violation of rules.