

Supervision of Children in Water Over Two (2) Feet Deep

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.35(3) Supervision of Children in Water Over Two (2) Feet Deep. For water-related activity (such as swimming, fishing, boating or wading) in water over two (2) feet deep, continuous supervision of children must be provided as follows:

Ages of Children	Staff:Child Ratio*
Under two and one-half (2½) yrs.	1:2
Two and one-half (2½) to four (4) yrs.	1:5
Four (4) yrs. and older who cannot swim a distance of fifteen (15) yards unassisted**	1:6
Four (4) yrs. and older who can swim a distance of fifteen (15) yards unassisted**	1:15

***At least one person must have current evidence of having completed successfully a training program in lifeguarding offered by a water-safety instructor certified by the American Red Cross or YMCA or YWCA or other recognized standard-setting agency for water safety instruction. Such person may be a Center Staff member or an employee of a water facility (e.g., local swimming pool).**

Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.07(17) If Children are allowed to participate in water activities where the water is over two feet in depth, the Provider or an Adult shall supervise such activities and must have successfully completed a training program in lifeguarding offered by a water-safety instructor certified by the American Red Cross or YMCA or other recognized standard setting agency for water safety instruction.

- (a) For water-related activities where water is over two feet in depth, the following Staff: Child ratios shall be maintained: Ages of Children Staff: Child Ratio Under 2 1/2 1:2 2 1/2 to 4 years 1:5 4 years & older (who cannot swim a distance of 15 yds. unassisted) 1:6 4 years & older (who can swim a distance of 15 yds. unassisted) 1:8**

Rule Type: Core Rule (Rule 290-2-3-.07(17): Non-Core Rule)

Intent of the Rule

To protect children from water-related accidents by ensuring that an adequate number of staff are present to provide constant and active supervision during water-related activities.

Clarification

To protect children from water-related accidents, children should not be permitted to play or swim without constant supervision in areas where there is any body of water. When children participate in swimming or wading activities, the risk increases in direct proportion to the depth of the water and as the number of active, playful children increase.

Supervision is essential to protect the safety of the children; therefore, staff must closely supervise children of all ages during water-related activities and required ratios must be maintained at all times. It is recommended that staff ensure they are positioned within arm's reach of children when children up to five years of age play in areas where there is any body of water, including swimming pools, ponds, etc. The attention of an adult who is supervising children of any age should be focused on the children, and the adult should never be engaged in other distracting activities such as talking or texting on the telephone, socializing, or completing chores.

Either a staff member or an employee provided by the water facility, such as a lifeguard at the public pool, must have the required lifeguard training. The child care program must have written verification of the training on file which may be a copy of the staff person's lifeguard certificate or a letter of verification from an agency such as the recreation department.

In order to determine adequate supervision of children, required ratios for children under four years of age must be maintained regardless of their ability to swim. For children four years of age and older, ratio requirements are determined by each child's ability to swim the distance of 15 yards unassisted. Children may be separated into groups but the ratio within the grouping must be based on their ages and on the children's swimming abilities. If the child care program cannot demonstrate children's ability to swim, the program should follow the non-swimmer ratio for the entire group.

Indicators

- ✓ Child care program staff should ensure that the required ratios are maintained for water activities where the water is over two (2) feet in depth.
 - TIP: Follow the non-swimmer ratio regardless of children's swimming ability to ensure that ratios are adequate.
 - Organizational TIP: Keep documentation of swimming activities. For example, maintain swim logs which include the names of all staff and children who participate in the activity. The logs should include whether each child has the ability to swim 15 yards.
 - Note:

Ages of Children	Staff: Child Ratios
Under 2 ½	1:2
2 ½ to 4 years	1:5
4 years & older (who cannot swim a distance of 15 yds. unassisted)	1:6
4 years & older (who can swim a distance of 15 yds. unassisted) *FCCLH only	1:8
4 years & older (who can swim a distance of 15 yds. unassisted) *CCLC only	1:15

- ✓ The child care program must maintain current personnel files (if employed by the program) and evidence of lifeguard certification for any person who serves as a lifeguard during the program's swimming activities (on-site or off-site).
 - Note: Lifeguards on duty at public pools may not be counted in the staff:child ratio as they are not employed by the center and their attention is not devoted solely to the staff's children.

- Reminder: If a child care program employs a lifeguard, he/she can be counted in the staff:child ratios.
- Organizational TIP: Maintain a current copy of a staff person's lifeguard certificate or a letter of verification from an agency such as the recreation department in their personnel file.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition <http://cfoc.nrckids.org>