

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 477
Ways and Means

(Delegates Barnes and McCaskill)

**Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Adult to Child Ratios -
Alterations**

This bill increases (from four to five) the number of children younger than age two that are authorized to be in care in a family child care home. The bill also decreases the adult to child ratios applicable to family child care homes, large family child care homes, and child care centers. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can implement the bill's requirements with existing resources. Revenues are not directly affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law:

Family Child Care Homes and Large Family Child Care Homes

Under current law, for purposes of family child care homes and large family child care homes, a child care provider's own children younger than age two must be counted as children served.

Also under current law, there may not be more than eight children in care at any given time in a family child care home. This provision is unchanged by the bill; however, the bill increases (from four to five) the number of children younger than age two that may be cared for in a family child care home.

Additionally, under the bill, rather than requiring at least one adult for every two children younger than age two, there must be an adult to child ratio of at least:

- one adult to every four children younger than age one; and
- one adult to every five children who are at least one year old (but younger than age two).

In a large family child care home, under current law, there may not be more than 12 children in care at any given time and there must be a limit on the number of children younger than age two and an adult to child ratio that complies with specified regulations. Under the bill, MSDE is generally prohibited from setting a limit on the number of children younger than age two – and the adult to child ratio – through regulation that is more stringent than the ratios for a family child care home described above.

However, as already authorized under current law, if MSDE determines that the group size provisions above are unsuitable for a particular family child care home or large family child care home, it may decrease the number of children permitted to be in care at that facility.

Child Care Centers

The State Board of Education must adopt rules and regulations for licensing and operating child care centers. Under current regulations, a child care center generally must have a staff/child ratio of at least one staff for every three infants and/or toddlers (*i.e.*, children older than six weeks but younger than age two).

Under the bill, the regulations must require a child care center to have a ratio of at least:

- one adult to every four children younger than age one; and
- one adult to every five children who are at least one year old (but younger than age two).

Small Business Effect: The alteration of adult to child ratios likely meaningfully affects family child care homes, large family child care homes, and child care centers. Additionally, family child care homes and large family child care homes may be able to serve more children younger than age two.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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km/jkb

Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510