Department: Safe Environments and ERSEA	**Approval Date:**	**Policy Number:** 9090
Regulation Number: 1302.21 Center-based option	**Regulation Topic:** Environmental Health & Safety and ERSEA	**Policy Title:** Staff-child ratios and group sizes

Policy: To ensure center-based classrooms are set up to meet requirements based upon age of children and staff to child ratios, all center-based classrooms must meet the following:

1) Staff-child ratios and group size maximums must be determined by the age of the majority of children and the needs of children present. A program must determine the age of the majority of children in a class at the start of the year and may adjust this determination during the program year, if necessary. Where state or local licensing requirements are more stringent than the teacher-child ratios and group size specifications in this section, a program must meet the stricter requirements. A program must maintain appropriate ratios during all hours of program operation, except:
   a) For brief absences of a teaching staff member for no more than five minutes; and,
   b) During nap time, one teaching staff member may be replaced by one staff member or volunteer who does not meet the teaching education qualifications required for the age.
2) Early Head Start classes that serves children under 36 months old must have two qualified teachers regardless of the group size with no more than eight children.
   a) Each teacher must be assigned consistent, primary responsibility for no more than four children to promote continuity of care for individual children.
   b) A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child's enrollment.
3) Head Start classes have two qualified teaching staff assigned to each group of children regardless of the group size to ensure high quality and safe environments for children.
   a) A class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 15 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers.
   b) A class that serves a majority of children who are four and five years old must have no more than 20 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are four and five years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers.