

HB 5975

- LARA's concern with the wording of child care staff member is the current administrative rules reference the term personnel instead of child care staff member. A staff member is an individual over the age of 18, whereas child care personnel also includes individuals 14-17. This use of child care staff member would eliminate the ability for the personnel to count in ratio, thus being more restrictive than what the department currently requires under the Administrative Rules for Family and Group Homes.
- Good standing is not defined. We cannot support use of this term.
- House Bill 5975 would alter our current ratios of 1 personnel to 6 children to 1 personnel to 7 children for family and group homes. It also does not specify that this increase in children is limited to school-age children. Because (3) does not specify that the 1:7 ratio is for school-age children only, we are not clear if this means that a provider in good standing can take care of up to two additional children over 30 months. Children in this age group require increased supervision and care.
- Increasing the capacities to 7 and 14 would not meet our Family and Group home definitions in statute and rule. It would also impact zoning and health department inspections adding additional costs to our licensees.
- Increasing ratios from 1:6 to 1:7 would conflict with our Administrative Rules for Family and Group homes.

HB 5976

- The department does not support an increased capacity or a change of the definition of a Family Home to care for up to 9 unrelated children, and a Group Home to care for up to 17 unrelated children.
- There is concern for the care and supervision of the children given the increase in ratio and capacity. Increased ratio and increased capacities places a greater burden on the provider for ensuring appropriate care and supervision of the children.
- Licensed providers must maintain compliance with all other licensing rules. For one example, licensed providers must provide appropriate daily activities for children limiting the use of screen time.

- The increased capacity does not consider the number of related children the provider is caring for at this time. It reduces the amount of square footage available to children in care and can negatively impact the care provided to children. Current Administrative Rules require 35 square feet per child.
- HB 5975 states that the provider has to be in good standing to have increased ratios. This bill does not provide that language, which communicates that all licensed providers are able to have increased capacity to care for school-age children. This would include all licensed providers, even those on increased monitoring, provisional licenses and those the department is seeking disciplinary action.
- The proposed language does not include how an individual would apply to care for additional children. As written, the bill gives the licensed providers the ability to self-determine whether they can increase their capacity without oversight from the department. The bill as written does not provide options for enforcement/regulation.
- There is no definition of before and after school care, which makes regulation of this difficult.