

Ratio and Group Size Requirements

Ratio and Group Size requirements will be verified during the SUTQ verification visit. The program will be assessed for SUTQ ratios and group size requirements as outlined on the SUTQ Tiers. Documentation included in the Evidence Portfolio will be reviewed at the verification visit.

Alternate Pathway

- **Alternate Pathway** – Programs can utilize an alternate pathway to meet SUTQ ratio and group size for Step Two (following Step One ratio and group size) and Step Three (following Step Two ratio and group size) when the program meets Education Qualifications, Specialized Training, Administrative Practices and Early Learning Benchmarks for the Step for which they are applying. They then must meet one of the following:
 - The program must be nationally accredited by one of the following approved accrediting bodies – National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) managed by the National Association of the Child Care Providers (NACCP), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), National Afterschool Association (NAA) which is now the Council on Accreditation (COA).
 - Program is able to achieve an overall combined score of five (5) on the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for all ages of children served with no single subscale score on the ERS less than a four (4).
 - Programs must notify the Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist prior to the verification visit or at the start of the verification visit that they are requesting the alternate pathway. All of the other benchmarks must be verified prior to the ERS being conducted.
 - The ERS will be conducted in all classrooms by inter-rater reliable assessors. Scores will be calculated and averaged for the overall score. Scores will be submitted to the SUTQ supervisor to determine if the program has achieved a star rating. This process will be repeated annually upon renewal.
- **Enhanced Alternate Pathway** - Programs that wish to achieve a Step Three Rating via an Enhanced Alternate Pathway must meet all the benchmark indicators for Step Three except for **preschool group size**, receive an overall ERS score of 5, and have an overall CLASS score of 5 or better.
 - Programs must notify the SUTQ Licensing Specialist prior to the verification visit or at the start of the verification visit that they are requesting the Enhanced Alternative Pathway. The verification visit will be conducted and programs must meet all other benchmark indicators. The ERS will then be conducted by inter-rater reliable assessors and if the program achieves an overall ERS score of 5, then a CLASS will be conducted by inter-rater reliable assessors. Scores will be submitted to the SUTQ supervisor to determine if the program has achieved a star rating. This process will be repeated annually upon renewal.