

Using Dividers to Create Separate Spaces in Child Care Centers and Day Camps

**Updates were made to reflect rules effective August 9, 2020. When a program uses dividers to further define a classroom space to serve more children, divider requirements apply.*

Licensing Requirements (contact your licensing specialist for assistance)

Dividers should:

- Be made of nonporous material or other material that can be cleaned and sanitized.
- Be six feet in height.
- Ensure that the space maintains the per child square footage requirement.

Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-12-11 requires the following:

Age	Square Footage
Infants up to 2.5 years old	35 square feet of floor space per child, per room/area
Over 2.5 years old	35 square feet of usable wall-to-wall indoor floor space per child that the center is licensed to serve

Fire Requirements (contact your local fire inspector for assistance)

Dividers should:

- Comply with fire codes.
- Not block exits or exit routes for any group sharing the space.
- Not block an egress, pull station, strobe or fire extinguisher on either side.
- Not block sprinkler heads if the facility has them.

Building Requirements (contact your local building official for assistance)

Dividers should:

- Not alter the approved building layout if they are permanent. When considering any type of wall element (permanent, temporary, operable or portable), programs should contact their local building department about the need for approval of any proposed alterations.

Divider Scenarios

Dividers must meet divider requirements when:

- A large space, like a multi-purpose room/gym or large classroom space, is divided to serve additional children.

Dividers are not required to meet the divider requirement when:

- They are used within a classroom to separate interest areas (e.g., dramatic play, art) for the same group of children.
- The dividers were already approved pre-COVID and the program isn't dividing the space to serve additional groups of children in a way that is different from what was already approved.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. If my program was previously licensed with a barrier that was not six feet high, do I need to add height to the existing barrier?**

If a program has a space that is already approved with dividers that are not 6 feet, those dividers do not need to be changed. If a program wants to create additional spaces to serve more children, and uses dividers, the dividers must meet the divider requirements.

- 2. Is the six feet height requirement for all age groups or is the height less for younger age groups?**

The six feet requirement is for all dividers for all age groups when used to divide a larger space into smaller spaces to accommodate more than one group of children.

- 3. Is a divider made of a material similar to cot material acceptable?**

The rule requires the material to be non-porous or otherwise easily sanitized.

- 4. Can curtains or other thick plastic material be used as a room divider if the curtains have been approved by the building and fire departments?**

If the curtains are at least six feet in height, made from a nonporous material or easily sanitized, and have been approved for use in the space by the building and fire departments, they meet the divider rule requirements.

- 5. Can we drape thick, plastic material (like a shower curtain) from ceiling?**

Contact your local building and fire department to determine what would be permitted.

- 6. If the center chooses to put up dividers in a classroom and there is only one restroom, will the children be able to enter the other space to use the restroom or will another divider need to be in place?**

The children may use the same restroom. It is recommended that the restroom is cleaned and sanitized between each group's use.

- 7. Do programs need to have documentation on file that the six-foot wall modifications have been approved by the building and fire departments?**

Documentation is not required to be on file. However, if structural modifications are made to the building then a building and fire approval are required.

- 8. Can a divider constructed of porous material be covered in non-porous material?**

Yes.

- 9. Can there be a gap between the floor and the room divider?**

Contact your local building and fire department to determine what would be permitted.

- 10. Can the dividers have an opening/walkway, or do they need to be closed off with a divider that is 6 feet tall?**

If it is a divider to establish space, the divider must be 6 feet tall. Rule does not address the entry to the space. Contact your local building and fire department to determine what would be permitted.

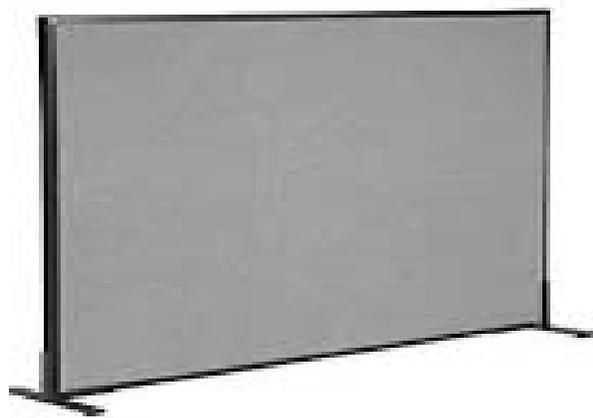
Commonly Used Dividers

Single stand-alone dividers that can be moved around 360 degrees can be used individually, as shown in Examples 1 and 2. When these dividers are placed together, this changes the structure and may require building approval. Programs are encouraged to contact their local building department prior to purchasing.

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4

