

POLICY NO: E - 007

POLICY: TEACHER:PUPIL RATIOS FOR THE CONDUCT OF FORMAL
AQUATICS PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE

ORIGINAL POLICY: OCTOBER 1995

LAST REVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 2002

REVIEW DATE: CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

Appropriate teacher:pupil ratios, in relation to issues of safety, depend upon a number of factors, including:

- the environment;
- the age and level of ability of the class;
- the qualifications and experience of the teacher;
- the type of activity;
- the venue;
- the water quality and temperature; and
- the weather.

The degree to which these factors affect a teacher's ability to instruct, supervise and control a class will influence the extent to which the teacher:pupil ratio needs to be modified.

Formal water familiarisation programs for children in this age group should only be conducted in controlled aquatic environments where the water temperature can be maintained at a comfortable level. The minimum suggested water temperature is 30°C and the ambient temperature should be 1-2°C higher. Teachers should also ensure that the swimming pool is maintained according to standards specified by State and local authorities regarding safety, water purity and sanitary conditions.

The water depth should be consistent throughout the teaching area and clearly displayed.

2. POLICY

a) Ratios

For the safety of the class, the following maximum ratios are recommended:

Children 1 - 3 years of age — 1 parent/carer to a maximum of 1 child (1:1)

The in-water participation of a parent or carer is required for each child. The group should be supervised by an appropriately qualified teacher according to RLSSA Policy C005.

Children 3 - 4 years of age — 1 teacher to a maximum of 5 children (1:5)

To maintain adequate water safety for participants, 1 teacher to a maximum of 5 children is considered appropriate in an enclosed, heated swimming pool where the children can stand (ie chest depth water). It is acknowledged that greater supervision and a higher standard of teaching can be achieved with a lower ratio.

Teachers conducting the program should be appropriately qualified according to RLSSA Policy C005.

b) Number of qualified personnel

In addition to the teacher who is directly responsible for the class, a second person capable of providing emergency assistance should be available at all times.

c) Children with special needs

Some children, particularly those with severe disabilities (physical or learning), may require one-to-one attention.

3. REFERENCES

RLSSA Safety in Swimming Pools: Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation, The Royal Life Saving Society Australia Victoria Branch, August 1991.

AUSTSWIM Policy Statement on Pre-school Swimming Programs, April 1995.

AUSTSWIM Policy on Class Size, April 1995