



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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**Bill:** [H.B. 279 of the 128th G.A.](#)

**Date:** November 4, 2009

**Status:** As Introduced

**Sponsor:** Rep. Foley

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No — No local cost

**Contents:** Modifies child-to-staff ratio and group size standards for Montessori programs that combine preschoolers and kindergartners

### State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

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## Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Continuing law permits a licensed preschool program that uses the Montessori Method of instruction as endorsed by the American Montessori Society (AMS) or the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) as its primary method of instruction to combine preschool and kindergarten children in the same classroom. Current law stipulates that when these age groups are combined, the maximum number of children per staff member be 12 and the maximum group size be 24. This requirement is more stringent than the requirement established for accreditation by AMS or AMI. The current AMS requirement for accreditation is a maximum number of children per staff member of 15 and a maximum group size of 30. The bill eliminates the current law student-to-staff member ratio and group size requirement and replaces it with a requirement that the maximum number of children per staff member and maximum group size be consistent with the accreditation standards of either AMS or AMI.

According to their respective web sites, AMS and AMI currently accredit between them a total of 54 licensed preschool programs in Ohio. The bill may result in savings for Montessori programs that combine preschool and kindergarten children in the same classroom and comply with the current law requirement, as these programs would be permitted to serve more students with fewer staff members. Some programs, however, may already have the larger student-to-staff ratios and group sizes. Currently, Montessori programs may apply for a waiver of the state ratio and group size requirement. According to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), six programs received waivers for FY 2010. The bill eliminates any need for a waiver, which, given the small number of waivers, will have a negligible impact on the workload of ODE staff.