

Guidelines on Staffing/Supervision Ratios for Children/Young People's Activities

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running sports activities for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants. This will minimise any risks to participants, enhance the benefits they draw from the activity, reassure carers, and provide some protection those responsible for providing the activity in the event of concerns or incidents arising.

Due to the number of potential variables, it is not possible to recommend "one size fits all" guidance to cover all activities involving children and young people. There are, however, a number of **key principles** that are recommended as good practice:

It is the responsibility of those commissioning, planning or providing sessions/activities to ensure that those running the activity are suitable to do so i.e.

- Have had a recent Vetting check or consent to the organisation Vetting them
- Have insurance appropriate to their activity
- Have codes of practice
- Have appropriate qualification for their activity
- Have an understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children

Many sports have a system to allow under 18's to receive coaching or refereeing awards, but this should be about developing a young persons sense of belonging & responsibility rather than depending on them to take full responsibility for managing a group of children. Under 18 year old coaches can only supplement the adult coaches supervising the activity

- Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, a minimum of two adults should be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (eg in the event of a participants requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).
- In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that may be required (for example of equipment or for Health and Safety purposes), a risk assessment should be undertaken which specifically informs decision-making about appropriate supervision levels.
- Key factors to assess include:
 - Age of children
 - Additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability)
 - Competence/experience of participants for the specific activity
 - Nature of activity (for example climbing or swimming sessions may require higher levels of supervision than an aerobics class)
 - Nature of venue (whether closed and exclusive, or open and accessible to members of the public)
- Many sports governing bodies have issued guidance on minimum supervision ratios (and a range of other factors linked to the welfare and safety of participants) – these should be adhered to as minimum standards



Recommended Minimum Supervision Ratios

While the risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular activity, the CPSU suggests that the following guidelines are considered as minimum requirements for any activity:

Children under 8 years old:

- One adult to eight participants (with a minimum of two adults)
This is based on the government's guidance for the provision of out of school care for children under eight years old. (*Out of School Care: Guidance to the National Standards, OFSTED 2001*)

Children over 8 years old:

- One adult to ten participants (with a minimum of two adults)

Parents and Carers

Although the CPSU encourages parents/carers to accompany children to activities, we do not recommend those planning or providing activities include carers in supervision calculations, unless the carers/parents are acting in a formal volunteering or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, this should mean that those parents/carers meet all appropriate requirements in terms of;

- appropriate checks,
- clarity about their role
- who has overall responsibility for the group
- what is acceptable practice

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