

Supervising Children and Young People's Sport and Activities

This guidance is for anyone with responsibility for planning or delivering activities for children and young people, or for establishing good practice guidelines.

Why are supervision ratios important?

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.

Benefits include:

- minimising any risks to participants
- enhancing the benefits children draw from the activity
- reassuring parents/carers
- providing some protection for those responsible for providing, funding or commissioning the activity in the event of concerns or incidents arising.

Key considerations:

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 considerations** that are recommended as good practice:

1. What makes an individual suitable to supervise children?

It is the responsibility of those commissioning, planning or providing sessions/activities to ensure the suitability of those running the activity.

This includes:

- being appropriately qualified for their role and the activity
- being subject to a safe recruitment process, including criminal records checks for eligible roles
- having insurance appropriate to their activity
- signing up to comply with a code of practice
- understanding their responsibility to safeguard children

2. What factors inform appropriate supervision levels?

- 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 one participant 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:

- Ages of children
- Additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability or age)
- 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 the venue - whether closed (e.g. a swimming pool) or open (e.g. parkland); private and exclusive to the group or open and accessible to the public); and what types of equipment children may have access to.



3. Sport specific guidance

Many sports governing bodies, facilities and other activity providers have issued guidance on minimum supervision ratios (and a range of other factors linked to the welfare and safety of participants) for specific sports or activities which may exceed the guidance below. Where relevant to the activity 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 following table shows recommended adult to child ratios. These are based on Ofsted guidelines and would be suitable for most organisations working with children and young people.

Remember that regardless of the overall ratio, a minimum of two supervisors is recommended.

Child/Young person's age	Number of adults	Number of children
0 – 2	1	3
2 – 3	1	4
4 – 8	1	6
9 – 12	1	8
13 – 18	1	10

Young people as supervisors

Many sports provide opportunities for under 18's to coach, officiate or organise events for other children, including achieving qualifications and awards.. These positive opportunities allow young people to develop skills, experience and confidence but should not mean that organisations should depend on them to take full responsibility for managing groups of children. Under18 year olds in coaching or other roles should only supplement the adult with overall responsibility for supervising the activity.

Parents and carers as supervisors

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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