



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

5.5

RATIOS OF ADULTS TO CHILDREN

FOR ALL

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RATIOS OF ADULTS TO CHILDREN

Safeguarding best practice dictates adults (over-18s) must always be present when football-related activity takes place for children. But the numbers of adults present depends on three main factors:

- The age of the children involved;
- The degree of risk the activity, location and or venue present;
- Whether there are additional supervision or support needs of some or all the participants e.g. disability or age.

The lower the age of the participants, the higher the ratio of staff must be. If the activity is mixed gender, male and female staff should be available.

Whatever the age of the children and type of activity, **a minimum of two FA-DBS-checked coaches/adults** must always be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of an incident.

Football teams involving players aged 12+ often have a squad of up to 16 players. Therefore there must be a ratio of **at least one FA-DBS-checked coach per squad** and **another FA-DBS-checked coach/adult present at all times**. See NSPCC's recommendation of 1:10 below.

Other football formats, namely 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 involving players aged 6-11 require a higher ratio of staff to squad. Where the children are aged eight or younger in any football activity you will require **more staff** and a **minimum of two FA-DBS-checked coaches/adults** must always be present.

Within disability football, the ratio of volunteers or staff to players needs to be managed on a case-by-case basis. The following may help you to work out how many helpers are required:

- The facilities, including security, spectators, access arrangements, location of changing rooms and toilets;

- The support needs of players;
- Emergency evacuation procedures at the venue;
- Any known health or communication needs;
- Any other needs such as the need for quiet time out or the chance to de-escalate.

All coaches/adults must be clear about their role inducted or trained in safeguarding and anyone supervising, instructing or coaching frequently (more than 3 days in any period of 30 days), must have an in date FA-DBS check.

Remember: if you are using young leaders (under-18) or coaches aged 16-17 they cannot be considered as adults. In fact, you will need more adults not less to supervise because you have more under-18s in your group.

If you have any queries on the subject of adult ratios to children, please contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer. For a full list of County FA contacts, please [click here](#).

*NSPCC RECOMMENDED ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS

- For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every 3 children (1:3)
- For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every 4 children (1:4)
- For 4 to 8 years – one adult to every 6 children (1:6)
- For 9 to 12 years - one adult to every 8 children (1:8)
- For 13 to 18 years – one adult to every 10 children (1:10)

Source

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children#article-top>





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