



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

5.5

RATIOS OF ADULTS TO CHILDREN

FOR ALL

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Safeguarding best practice dictates adults (under-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.

If the children have additional needs e.g. learning needs or a disability the ratio must

be higher to ensure you can meet the specific needs of any given group.

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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The Football Association

Wembley Stadium

London HA9 0WS

T: +44 (0)800 169 1863

F: +44 (0)800 169 1864

W: TheFA.com