GUIDANCE NOTES NO: 5.5

RATIOS OF ADULTS TO CHILDREN
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Safeguarding best practice dictates adults 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 involves;
- Whether there are disability needs within the group.

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 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 coach per squad and another adult present at all times. See OFSTED’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 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.

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.

*OFSTED ADULT-TO-CHILD RATIOS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

- For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every 3 children (1:3)
- For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every 5 children (1:5)
- For 3 to 8 years – one adult to every 8 children (1:8)
- For over-8s – one adult to every 10 children (1:10)

"There should always be more than one adult for any group and at least one should be female. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in these ratios. If you have a number of teenage helpers, you will need more adults not fewer."

Source
www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/Ofsted%20requirements.pdf