

Adult to child ratios when supervising or working with children

It is important that all church activities have sufficient adult staff and volunteers in place to ensure the safety of children – and that these adults are suitable to undertake these tasks. They would usually have been safely recruited, including the relevant safeguarding checks, and properly trained, including safeguarding training.

When a parent attends a children's activity and remains in the presence of their own child(ren) throughout, the responsibility for the supervision of their own child(ren) remains with the parent. For unattended children the level of supervision provided needs to be appropriate to the needs of the children involved in the activity. This could vary depending on:

- age (see table below)
- gender (wherever possible mixed gender groups should be reflected in the adult supervisors)
- ethnicity (wherever possible mixed ethnic groups should be reflected in the adult supervisors)
- behaviour
- abilities within your group/any medical or other special needs
- nature and length of activities
- requirements of location

The recommended minimum ratios of adults to children are shown in the table below. These are based on Ofsted¹ EYFS guidelines for organised children's activities and do not necessarily account for the supervision of children with additional needs:

| Supervising Adults (minimum) | Age of Children | Maximum Number of Children | Ratio |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| 2 | 0-2 years | 6 | 1:3 |
| 2 | 2-3 years | 8 | 1:4 |
| 2 | 3-8 years | 12 | 1:6 |
| 2 | Over 8 years | 16 | 1:8 |

Example 1: The pre-school at St. Michael's Church has 32 children in attendance (15 aged 2-3 years and 17 aged 3-5 years). The minimum number of staff required is 7.

Example 2: The youth club at Ascension Church has 15 members aged 13-17 years. The minimum number of staff required is 2.

Example 3: The Sunday School at All Saints Church has 24 children in attendance (5 aged 2-3 years, 7 aged 3-8 years and 12 aged over 8 years). The minimum number of staff required is 6.

Example 4: The mother and toddlers group at St. Mary's Church has 18 children in attendance (12 aged 0-2 years and 6 aged 2-3 years). The minimum number of staff required would be 2 as the supervision requirement is met by the parent(s) attending with their child(ren).

¹ Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in the UK. <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/about-us>