



CoachGuard
for Parents

Children's Sports Ratios

What parents should expect from supervision guidance

Published ratios are starting points, maximums or programme rules.
Age, ability, activity, venue and individual needs may require more adults.



Usually guidance, not universal law

Outside registered childcare and education, most ratios are governing-body guidance or recognised best practice.

Ask which guidance applies.

General NSPCC/CPSU best-practice starting ratios

1:3

Under 2

1:4

Age 2-3

1:6

Age 4-8

1:8

Age 9-12

1:10

Age 13-18

General supervision guidance for organisations outside education and early years - not a sport-specific coaching limit. Governing-body or programme guidance may differ. At least two suitable adults are recommended. [1]

Published sport-specific ratios

1

Football

ADULT SUPERVISION

Ages 4-8 1:6 | 9-12 1:8 | 13-18 1:10
Minimum two FA-DBS-checked adults. [2]

2

Netball

MINIMUM OPERATING STANDARD

Ages 4-8 1:6 | 9-11 1:8 | 12-17 1:10
Programme-specific ratios can be stricter. [3]

3

Basketball

ADULT SUPERVISION

Ages 4-8 1:6 | 9-12 1:8 | 13-18 1:10
Minimum two adults, whatever the ratio. [4]

4

Athletics

ADULT SUPERVISION

Ages 8-12 1:8 | 13-18 1:10
UK Athletics recommends two adults at every session. [5]

5

Tennis

RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM

Age 3-4: 1:4 without parent support; 1:12 with support
U10 1:10; ages 11-17 1:12. [6]

6

Cricket

COACH TO PARTICIPANT

Nets 1:8 | hard-ball group 1:16 | soft-ball group 1:24
Separate supervision ratios also apply. [7]

7

Swimming

PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC

Pre-school adult-and-child: max 12 pairs per teacher
Teacher in water 1:2; Stages 8-10 max 12. [8]

8

Rugby

UNION + LEAGUE

Union: under 7 1:6 | ages 7-8 1:8 | age 9+ 1:10
League follows the NSPCC age bands. [9a][9b]



Some governing bodies do not publish one universal figure.

Gymnastics, dance and multi-sport providers should explain the guidance and risk assessment they use.

Before you enrol

- ✓ Ask which ratio applies to the session
- ✓ Confirm how many suitable adults will be present
- ✓ Expect more support for higher-risk or additional needs
- ✓ Check the provider on the CoachGuard Registry



coachguard.co.uk



Scan to search and check a club

Sources - each sport row is clickable:

[1] NSPCC, Guidance on supervision levels (Sept 2025) [2] The FA, Ratios of Adults to Children [3] England Netball, Coach to Player Ratios [4] Basketball England, Safeguarding Children Policy [5] UK Athletics, Supervision Guidance [6] LTA, Recommended Coach/Player Ratios [7] ECB, Coaching and Supervision Ratios [8] Swim England frameworks [9a] RFU guidance [9b] RFL Operational Rules 2025

