

OEAP EG: Ratios and Effective Supervision

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of “**Effective Supervision**”, requiring them to take account of:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration).
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place.
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised.
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs).
- Staff competence.

This means that every group should be considered in relation to its individual, component parts. i.e. effective supervision of any given group has to reflect the group chemistry. It is therefore of critical importance that when planning a repeat or on-going series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

Other than the regulations affecting Early Years provision, there is no such thing as a definitive ratio for a specified age group undertaking a particular activity.

This is a risk management issue.

However, some guidance documents set “starting points for consideration”, but this means exactly what it says and will only apply where the activity is relatively straightforward and assuming the group has no special requirements.

e.g. the DfES publication HASPEV (1998) suggests the following “starting points” based on the above provisos:

- School years 1-3, 1:6
- School years 4-6, 1:10/15
- School years 7+, 1:15/20

Without special safeguards or control measures, these ratios will **not** be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

Use the above ratios with professional prudence!

Early Years users must meet DoE and Ofsted requirements.