



# Guidelines for Youth Supervision

How many staff members you have supervising activities depends both on the level of risk involved with the activity and the needs of the children. Children with special needs, high-energy children, and very young ones require more supervision.

The key is to consider each activity, outing, or field trip and provide the best-qualified personnel possible, in ample numbers, to maintain the security of youth and to keep youth safe. The number one priority in child supervision is to “never let children out of one’s sight.” Claims files are filled with tragic stories of terrible things that happened when children were left unsupervised.

## Provide a Minimum of Two Qualified Supervisors

Make sure to use those with specific knowledge of the particular activity, including training, certification, degrees, etc. Depending on the activity—museum visit, swimming, hiking, etc.—qualifications and numbers will vary.

**QUALITY IS ESSENTIAL**  
Provide a minimum of two qualified supervisors for each situation.

## Give Supervision 100 Percent

Periods of supervisory responsibility are not the time for grading papers, making personal phone calls,

conversing with associates, participating in the activity, or other things that may distract from the actual task of supervision. A few seconds of inattention can lead to tragic consequences.

The benefit of having two supervisors means an authorized supervisor is always present. In the event of an emergency, someone may need to go for help while the other supervisor remains behind to watch the children in their care. In addition, supervision in numbers helps to prevent child abuse or accusations of child abuse. Where programs include youth that are physically or mentally challenged, additional supervision will be required.

## Variables that increase the need for more supervision are:

- **Environmental Hazards:** geographic features such as bodies of water that children may fall in, strong currents in areas where youth are swimming, wooded areas where children may become lost, etc.
- **Experience and Qualifications of Staff Members:** maturity and judgment, experience, knowledge, training, etc.
- **Skill Level of Children:** age, number of persons, physical condition, disabilities, etc.



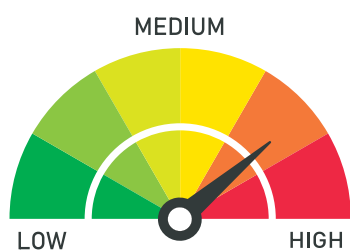
- **How Much Risk the Activity Involves:** ARM recommends that hazardous-risk activities, such as mountain climbing, require one adult per four children. A high-risk activity—such as a field trip—requires one adult per eight children. A low-risk activity, such as attending a class, would require one adult per 12 children.

Water sports and swimming require additional supervision and safety measures. Make sure a

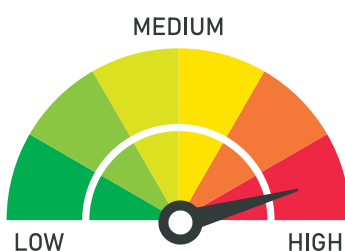
lifeguard is on duty when your pool is open. Most public pools should have a minimum of two lifeguards on duty at all times.

Some children require more supervision than others and require staff or volunteers that have more skill in child supervision. Children who require more attention take time away from other proper supervision of other children. More supervision will be needed in these instances.

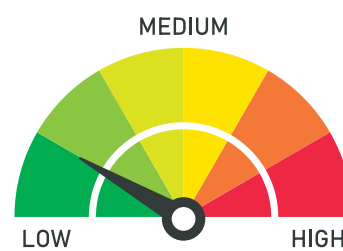
## RECOMMENDED STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS



**Hazardous Risk Activity 1:4**



**High Risk Activity 1:8**



**Low Risk Activity 1:12**

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