

**Good Practice in Activities for Children**

Work with children must be carried out in a ‘safe’ environment. It is good practice to carry out annual risk assessments which take into account the age and activity of the group. Policy should consider the following areas:

**Ensure the ratio of leaders to children complies with the Children Act 1989:**

For 0 - 2 years 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 – 3 years 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 – 8 years 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8’s 1 leader for the first 8 children, then 1:12

* Each group should have a minimum of **two adults** and it is recommended that a gender balance be maintained if possible.
* If a person who has been assigned to help staff a group is prevented from attending at short notice, there is no automatic obligation to cancel the group. It may be possible to secure the services of another suitable person or make other appropriate temporary arrangements so that the group can still run as scheduled.

**Do not work alone**

* it is not safe for the children; if an incident occurred there would be no one else to help deal with it.
* it is not safe for the worker; if an accusation were to be made there would be no one to stand as witness.
* avoid being alone in a room with children (and out of sight of other adults) give thought to the appropriateness of giving individual children or young people a lift in your car and ensure you have parental consent.

**Ensure that meeting places are safe:**

* that the building is safe from intruders.
* that entrances, stairs etc are well-lit.
* that furniture is safe and secure.
* that heating or electrical appliances are adequately guarded.
* that fire, health and safety regulations are known and in place.

**Agree guidelines for dealing with difficulties:**

* agree a policy for dealing with disruption or bullying.
* consider your response to emergencies. Is First Aid provision accessible and adequate? Where is the nearest telephone?

**Be clear about boundaries with regard to touching:**

* keep all activities in public and in sight of other adults
* touch should be related to the child’s needs and would normally be initiated by the child.
* avoid any physical activities that may be construed as sexually stimulating to the adult or child.