



Adventist Risk  
Management, Inc.

# YOUTH SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

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. Special needs children, high-energy children and younger children 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 injuries that happened when children were left unsupervised.



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

**Provide a minimum of two qualified supervisors**

(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.



## Give supervision 100 percent

Periods of supervisory responsibility are not a time for grading papers, making personal phone calls, conversing with associates, participating in the activity or performing other activities that may distract from the actual task of supervision.

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 and 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 for each 4 children. A high-risk activity, such as a field trip, requires one adult for each 8 children, while a low-risk activity, such as sitting in class, would require one adult for each 12 children.

### RECOMMENDED STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

Hazardous Risk Activity 1:4



High Risk Activity 1:8



Low Risk Activity 1:12



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Water sports and swimming need additional supervision and safety measures. Make sure a lifeguard is on duty when your pool is open. The American Lifeguard Association (ALA) recommends having a minimum of two lifeguards on duty at all times. If the swimming pool population reaches 50 swimmers, the ALA suggests a lifeguard should be added for every additional 25 persons as a minimum standard, and every lifeguard chair should be occupied whenever the swimming pool is open.

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 children. More supervision will be needed in these instances.



Adventist Risk Management,® Inc. cares about keeping the children, students and campers in your ministry safe. See more child protection resources on our website at [AdventistRisk.org](http://AdventistRisk.org).

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