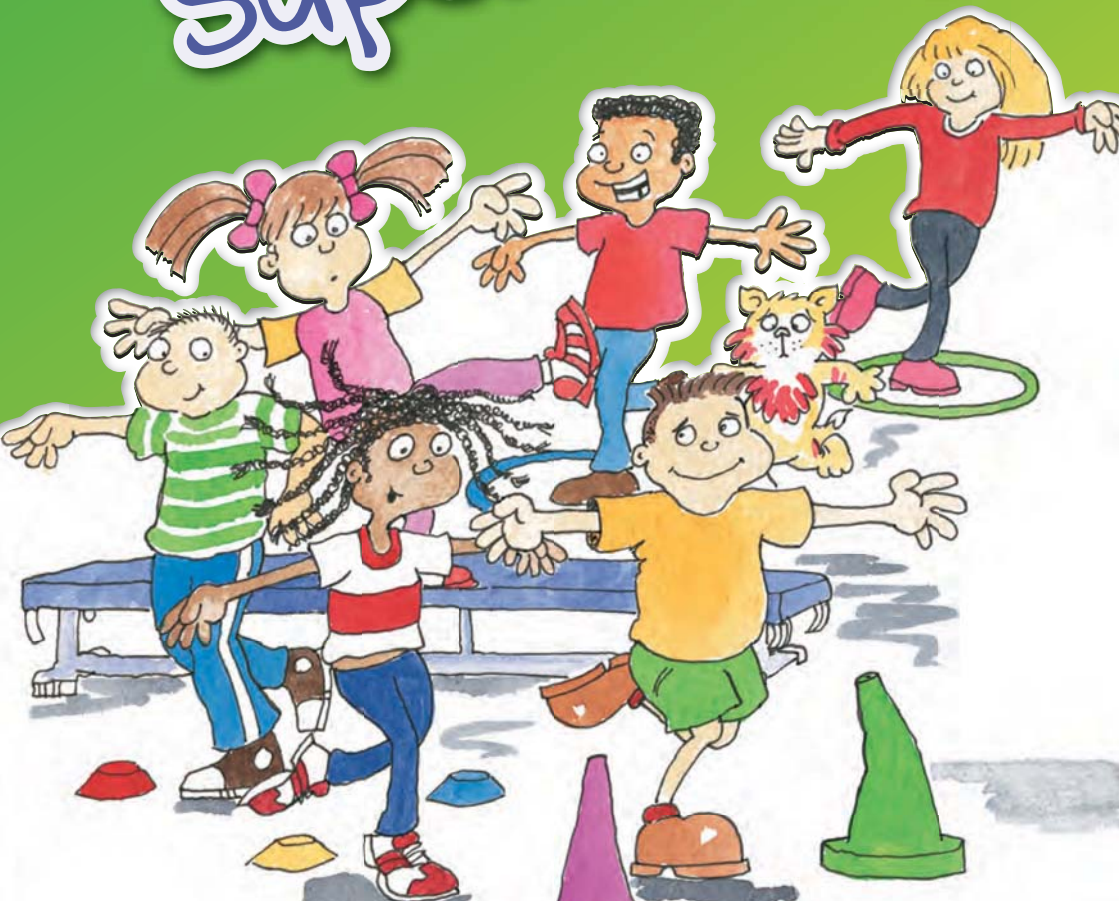


Jenny Mosley's
Top Tips for

Midday Supervisors



Top Tips Series

Positive Press

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Introduction

Being a lunchtime supervisor isn't always easy, but it can be a very valuable and rewarding job. Lunchtimes and playtimes allow the children the opportunity to relax away from the pressures of the classroom, build positive relationships and have fun. For some children though they can also bring stress and additional pressures.

Within your role, supervision is only one aspect of the many jobs that you do from being a play leader to agony aunt! However, although the work may be demanding at times, it can also give you great pleasure to build positive relationships with the children and watch the shyer ones blossom and grow in confidence. You can, with a good team:

- Help to produce an outside environment that both children and adults enjoy being in
- Help to create happy and calm playtimes
- Help children to resolve differences and play cooperatively
- Help to boost the confidence of withdrawn children
- Help to make the playground a safe place for all children
- Help to produce a positive atmosphere in the dining area
- Encourage children to use their imaginations in play
- Teach children new games and activities for their enjoyment

Getting to know the children

The most important aspect of your role is getting to know the children that you will be supervising. Some schools match up supervisors to a specific class so that the children and teacher can develop close and trusting relationships with you.

Take time to chat and show that you are friendly and approachable, that you are there to look after them and that you care about each individual. The children in your care will come from many different backgrounds, with very differing experiences of family life. Some you will find easy to like and get on with, whilst with others it will be more difficult, but it is your role to reach out to every child in your care. You have to remember at all times, that your attitude and behaviour will have an impact on the children and determine how they respond to you.

It will help you to know what children look for and like in their lunchtime supervisors. The following list was compiled from interviews with children all over the country -they were very decisive about what they did and didn't want.

According to the children, the best lunchtime supervisors were:

Smiley and happy

Fair and didn't have favourites

Friendly and warm

Respectful and polite

Calm and didn't shout

Fun and had a laugh

Interested in what they did

Sympathetic and kind

Golden Rules

Golden rules inform the moral values of a school and are discussed and drawn up in Circle Time. Below are the Golden Rules that I advocate for the playground and these should be prominently displayed throughout the school.

Playground Golden Rules

We are gentle

We are kind and helpful

We play well with others

We care for the playground

We listen

We are honest

We don't hurt others

We don't hurt anybody's feelings

We don't spoil others' games

We don't damage or spoil anything

We don't interrupt

We don't cover up the truth

We keep the playground safety rules

Happy playtime rules

It is a good idea to have a set of specific rules also that focus on routines. An example is shown below.

Playtime Rules

When the bell rings we stand still

We play together and look after each other

We let other children get on with their games

We give equipment to Playground Friends

at the end of playtime

We tell an adult if we feel sad or lonely

Rainy days

There will inevitably be rainy days and wet playtimes when the children are kept indoors. These can be hard work and very trying of your patience if the children are not happily involved. You may even be required to keep an eye on more than one class and this will be a potential time for incidents such as fights to develop. To minimise the risk of any problems during wet playtimes the following issues should be considered:

- Make sure the children have sufficient space in which to play
- Make sure that there are sufficient activities to keep everyone occupied
- Make sure there are sufficient staff to monitor what is happening
- Make sure that noise levels do not become too loud and upset some children.

The best solution is to be well prepared with an interesting and varied selection of toys, games and activities that are kept in a labelled box. In order to maintain some novelty value, wet weather equipment could be passed from class to class each half term on a rota system.

Some ideas of equipment for wet playtimes are:

Comics and magazines, paper, coloured pencils, colouring books, puzzle and word-search books, activity books, board games, story books.

Activity days

From time to time, you could organise a special activity day when it is raining. For example, the children could make their own games such as ludo, snakes and ladders, dominoes and drafts which could be laminated and added to the wet weather equipment box.

They could play a group memory game e.g. I went to the shop and bought.... or I went to the zoo and saw.....

They could play 'Hide the thimble' (or other small object)

They could make a paper picture chain

They could make Easter bonnets

They could play 'Guess my object'. From a selection of displayed objects, one child chooses and thinks of one. The other children ask questions until they have guessed the object. It is then removed from the display.

(For other creative ideas for wet playtimes see resources section)

Training Available from Jenny Mosley Consultancies

Jenny Mosley Consultancies provides courses to promote positive qualities and raise self-esteem. Most popular are our lunchtimes and playtimes courses. These courses support midday supervisors and everyone involved in lunchtimes and playtimes to transform this time of day into a haven of creativity and productivity.

Courses for Midday Supervisors

We believe that lunchtimes and playtimes are two of the most important times in a child's day and that our courses for midday supervisors:

- Are best for helping your whole school promote a positive lunchtimes policy;
- Encourage all the adults and children to organise and engage in creative play;
- Help everyone to get the most out of this time of day so that afternoons become calmer, more enjoyable and more productive.

Courses to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Skills

Research tells us that competencies such as empathy, motivation, understanding and managing feelings and getting along with others are crucial in explaining success in the classroom and beyond. We can bring training in the social and emotional aspects of learning into your school and transform the way it is delivered to:

- Help teachers make the most of their teaching opportunities;
- Make a real difference to the level of social and emotional skills;
- Promote positive behaviour and boost self-esteem.

For more information about training, contact: 01225 767157

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