

Policies



Ages: Birth to 18 years

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Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
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How Does a Church Begin Developing Policies?

Step 1

- Contact June Holland, BCM/D, Children/Preschool Ministries Missionary and ask for a copy of church preschool and children policies.
- Contact churches that have policies in place.

Step 2

- Research recommended standards of care (state childcare services, laws applying to employed teachers, fire, electrical, and building codes.)

Step 3

- Consult with your insurance agent.

Step 4

- Meet with your leadership (or preschool/children's team/committee) to study the policies and the research you have compiled.

Step 5

- From your research, formulate policies that meet your church's needs.

Policies to Include:

- **A greeting from the Pastor**
- **Purpose for the Policies**
- **General Policies**
 1. Age of Children
 2. Availability of facilities
 3. Hours for church programs
 4. Guidelines for requesting and using the facility
- **Parent Policies**
 1. Promotion
 2. Age divisions for departments
 3. Arrival and pick up procedures
 4. Infectious disease guidelines
 5. Medication statements
 6. Food and feeding guidelines
- **Teacher/Worker Policies**
 1. Arrival time
 2. Pupil-teacher ratio
 3. Number of workers on duty in the rooms and on the playground
 4. Screening procedures
 5. Background check guidelines
- **Safety Policies**
- **Infectious Disease Policies**
- **Security Policies**
- **Playground Policies**

An outline of the policies manual may include some or all of the following:

- I. **Greeting to Parents** (from pastor, minister of education, or minister of childhood education)
- II. **Purpose of the Preschool Policies**
- III. **Preschool Objectives**
- IV. **General Policies:**
 1. Age of Children
 2. Hours open for regular church programming
 3. Availability of facilities for child care
 4. Pupil-teacher ratio
 5. Opening and closing time statement
 6. Directions for making child care requests
 7. Statement about hygiene and safety guidelines (either included in manual or posted in rooms)
 8. Other items to meet your church needs
- V. **Program Opportunities:** A listing of regular scheduled programs for preschoolers, including time of each.
- VI. **Receiving and Dismissal:**
 1. Explanation of security system
 2. Instructions about how to leave and pick up a child
 3. Instructions for when someone other than parents is picking up a child
 4. Explanation about checking in a child
 5. Directions to parents to leave a child only if a teacher is present
 6. Suggestion about contact person if there is a question, need, or complaint
- VII. **Feeding:**
 1. Encouragement to feed children before bringing them
 2. Amount of feeding that can be done (some churches do not have enough help to spoon feed, and so forth)



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

VIII. **Illness and Medication:**

1. **When a child can and cannot be accepted**
2. **Statements of common symptoms when a child will not be accepted (an official one may be obtained from the American Academy of Pediatrics)**
3. **What to do if a child develops a communicable disease following a preschool session**

IX. **Things to Bring and not Bring to Church**

X. **Suggestions for Parents**

What does your church do once the policies are formulated?

When the preschool/children's team/committee has completed the policies, invite several members-teachers and parents to review the policies. Give the invited group time to ask questions and discuss the contents of the policies. Explain the intended purpose and reasons for the policies in the church. This group (especially parents) can offer valuable feedback and assist in clarifying policies for other persons. **Their review and approval encourages and supports teachers when implementing policies.**

When the team and the invited group have completed their discussion and review of the policies, arrange for these policies to be approved by the church during a business meeting.

- This step may seem unnecessary, but church approved policies become church policy. This allows the enforcer of the policies to refer to the church approved policies when confronted with an adverse situation.

Insurance companies readily accept church approved policy as opposed to policies set by a "church committee/team."

Policies should be abided by at all times. If a church has policies in place but disregards these policies, **the church can be found negligent.**



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Safe Church Committee ***To be added to your church By-laws***

The Safe Church Committee shall be a standing committee, working under the direction of the church council. It shall consist of the Safe Church Director and representatives appointed by the church council. A representative shall be nominated by each of the following boards:

- Trustees
- Deacons
- Christian Education
- Music
- Nursery school
- Representatives-at-large may be nominated by the Safe Church Director, as needed.

A staff member of the church shall be appointed as Safe Church director by the church council based on the recommendation of the senior pastor. All other representatives shall be members of the church who have received Safe Church training. Each representative's term shall coincide with that person's term on his/her respective board of committee.

The duties and responsibilities of the Safe Church Committee are:

1. Developing and implementing safe church policies and procedures for church school and other youth activities.
2. Training all volunteers in children's ministry and youth ministry to be responsible in ensuring the safety of all children and workers.
3. Implementing reporting procedures in the event an incident takes place.
4. Discerning other ways to ensure the safety of all ages in our church and working with the board of trustees and other committees to make appropriate changes.

The Safe Church Director will:

1. Review applications of volunteers in our children's/youth ministry and take appropriate action regarding the suitability of applicants.
2. Maintain confidential storage of all documentation.