



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Dear Pastor and Church Leaders:

JESUS placed a **HIGH PRIORITY** on **CHILDREN**, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* (Matthew 19:14 NIV) With that high priority placed by our Savior on children, we certainly can do no less.

The **BIBLE**, in Proverbs 20, reminds us to train up a child in the way he should go. We know that the ministry of our local Baptist Churches will significantly help fulfill that scripture. As parents and as concerned Christians, we certainly want our children to be encouraged and instructed in the things of God.

As Churches, we are being confronted with issues that require that we be informed about matters which will **PROTECT** our **CHILDREN** from physical or emotional harm. By law, courts are requiring Churches to deal with **LEGAL MATTERS** and **SAFETY ISSUES** that will assist them to insure that the Churches will not be liable for neglect and will better insure the Churches of **PROTECTING** the **CHILD** in every possible manner.

This packet contains very relevant material in regards to policies, safety and security issues. Annually, we will update these materials, keeping you informed of the issues that should be discussed in your preschool and children's committees/teams. Many of your decisions and policies will need church action. We desire to help you be informed about all matters concerning legal liabilities as well as inform you of proactive safety precautions which your church may choose to adopt.

As a child experiences security, he begins to develop a sense of trust that will help form a foundation for spiritual decisions later in life.

As Missionary for Children/Preschool Ministries, I am ready to assist you in any of these matters. May I suggest you keep this packet handy for ready use, and as you received updates, add them to your packet.

The Baptist Convention of MD/DE is ready to walk with you and your church in equipping believers and reaching out to a community full of parents and children.

Blessings,

June

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5. Safety
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Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Safety Emphasis

Current conservative estimates are that from 500,000 to over 1.5 million children are sexually abused each year in the United States.

Many church leaders assume child molesters are strangers—**THIS STEREOTYPE** can **LULL** a **CHURCH** into **FALSELY THINKING** it is **SAFE**.

Statistics show that strangers account for less than 20% of abusers. Churches need to be aware of the following:

- Over 80% of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship.
- The usual offender is 20-30 years old.
- 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18.
- Child abusers often are married and have children.

“If abuse occurs in your church, a respected member will most likely be the molester. EMPHASIS ON “STRANGER-DANGER” will LEAVE your CHURCH ILL PREPARED. While its uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday School teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool workers, teachers in a church-operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, concerned adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy.”

ADEQUATELY SCREEN, then ADEQUATELY SUPERVISE.

- A “two-adult” rule is recommended for any church activity involving children or youth, obtaining parental permission for those times when a worker would be in an unsupervised situation with a child, and discussing suspicious behavior immediately.
- Overnight rule is also recommended: All adult chaperones of overnight activities should be screened in advance.
- Put windows on classroom doors when feasible.
- Have adequate personnel.
- Put a church nursery identification procedure in place.

Young people and adults need seminars in their church about the warning signs of child sexual abuse.

Church leaders should develop a line of reporting to be followed in each and every case of suspected abuse. Knowing the state rules regarding reporting abuse to the proper authorities is crucial.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Security Emphasis

When a church has a doubt about whether it should report, it would do well to remember that a pedophile may have hundreds of victims over the course of a lifetime. The **CHURCH'S DUTY** is to **PROTECT** other **INNOCENT VICTIMS**, so when in doubt, report.

An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church, so a strategy must be in place for response to any allegations.

With an allegation of molestation, the **MOST IMPORTANT** thing a church can do is **NOT DENY**, or **MINIMIZE**, or **BLAME THE VICTIM**. Take all allegations seriously, and let the family know you are going to investigate. You don't want them to feel they have to go to court to get their story heard. You want to **ACT AS CHRIST WOULD** in the same situation.

- Churches can consider providing support groups for victims of child sexual abuse.
- Abuse in a church setting is hard enough to deal with on its own; a church's wrong response just makes the situation even worse.
- 99% of the time, churches deny the situation, shun the family and erect walls—typical church response. This is the best course of action if you want to end up in court.
- Churches face loss of membership and media publicity.

A minister holds a unique position of power, because they are the parishioner's link to God. They believe the minister would not do anything to harm them.

Policies



Ages: Birth to 18 years

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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.

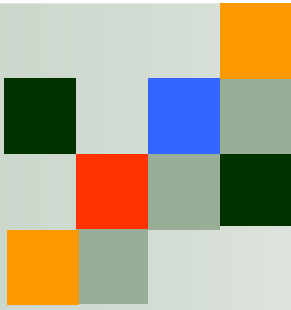
A staff member of the church shall be appointed as Safe Church director by the church council based on the recommendation of the senior pastor. All other representatives shall be members of the church who have received Safe Church training. Each representative's term shall coincide with that person's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



Child Abuse



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

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Child Abuse Policies

Churches today are writing policies for the prevention of child abuse. Procedures are written for the protection of children, staff members, childcare employees, adult volunteers, and the church family.

Adoption of Policy:

1. Appoint a committee/team expressly for the purpose of policy development. The committee/team members should be comprised of several disciplines (law, counseling, medicine, religion, and education, etc.) and represent a broad spectrum of church membership.
2. Create a perception that the church is acting proactively to prevent a future problem, and not in response to past occurrences. Ask for input from everyone. Let the entire church know that a policy is being developed.
3. The final policy should attempt to be comprehensive, should be in writing, should be adopted as an official policy of the church in a church business meeting, and should be available for review at all times.

“It is estimated that one out of three girls and one out of five boys will experience some form of sexual abuse by age eighteen.”

What this means for churches is that none can expect to remain unaffected by the problem.

Worker Enlistment:

- Every applicant for any paid position shall complete an employment application and a consent form for a background check.
- All prospective volunteer children's teachers shall complete a questionnaire and a consent form for a background check. No person shall be accepted for volunteer service before the church has received and studied the completed questionnaire.

Child Abuse Policies (continued)

Worker Enlistment: (continued)

- The prospective volunteer shall be a committed Christian, at least 18 years old, a church member for six or more months, good physical, mental, and emotional health, and possess a pleasant manner with children.
- At least two adult workers shall be present at all activities involving children. At no time shall only one worker be allowed to be alone with one child. Also needed is a small window in the classroom doors, protective procedures for changing diapers and assisting in rest rooms. Supervision of teachers should be ongoing, with designated staff members or division directors available to teachers, as needed.
- No adult or youth with known prior incidents of sexual misconduct with minors shall be permitted to serve in any capacity involving custody or supervision of children.

Work Training:

- ⇒ Each new worker should be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as, the policy of the church on reporting child abuse.

Worker Supervision:

- ⇒ Church staff should supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program site from time to time.

Reporting Sexual Abuse:

1. Document all your effort at handling the incident.
2. Report the incident immediately to your church's insurance company attorney, and appropriate church staff.
3. Contact the proper civil authorities.
4. Notify the parents.
5. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child is secured.

In the case of an actual allegation, it is imperative that the church report sexual abuse. *The Church Law & Tax Report-Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church I and II* suggests several guidelines.

Definitions of Child Abuse

As defined by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse:

Non-accidental injury, which may include:

- ⇒ **Beatings**
- ⇒ **Violent shaking**
- ⇒ **Human bites**
- ⇒ **Strangulation**
- ⇒ **Suffocation**
- ⇒ **Poisoning**
- ⇒ **Burns**



The results may be:

1. **Bruises**
2. **Welts**
3. **Broken bones**
4. **Scars**
5. **Permanent disfigurement**
6. **Long lasting psychological damage**
7. **Serious internal injuries**
8. **Brain damage**
9. **Death**

Neglect:

The failure to provide a child with basic needs:

- ⇒ **Food**
- ⇒ **Clothing**
- ⇒ **Education**
- ⇒ **Shelter**
- ⇒ **Medical care**
- ⇒ **Abandonment**
- ⇒ **Inadequate supervision**

Definitions of Child Abuse (continued)

As defined by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse

Sexual Abuse:

The sexual exploitation of a child by an older person such as:

- ⇒ Rape
- ⇒ Incest
- ⇒ Fondling of the genitals
- ⇒ Exhibitionism
- ⇒ Pornography

It may be done for the sexual gratification of the older person, out of a need for power, or for economic reason.

Emotional Maltreatment:

A pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth such as:

- ⇒ Constant criticizing
- ⇒ Belittling
- ⇒ Insulting
- ⇒ Manipulation
- ⇒ Providing no love
- ⇒ Providing no support
- ⇒ Providing no guidance

Recognizing Signs of Abuse

Abuse or neglect need not have occurred for a student to be in need of protection. It is not necessary to wait until a student has been harmed to intervene.

1. Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or abrasions (often in various stages of healing).
2. Consistent lack of supervision.
3. Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, or unattended medical needs.
4. Extremes of aggression or withdrawal.
5. Moves with discomfort and shies away from physical contact.
6. Wears inappropriate clothing for the weather in order to cover body.
7. Withdrawn, depressed, or listless.
8. Torn, stained, or bloody underwear.
9. Irritation of the mouth, genital, or anal area.
10. Difficulty sitting or walking.
11. Inappropriate sex play, acting out seductiveness or promiscuity.
12. Sudden changes in school performance, appetite, or perceived self-worth.

When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe a student is in need of protection, the necessity of reporting applies.

Is Your Church Abuse Safe?

Please check which box applies

1. Do you or your ministry leaders interview potential workers with minors? Yes No
2. Does your church use a volunteer application for all new recruits? Yes No
3. If you use a volunteer application, does it include a question like:
"Have you ever been convicted of a child abuse crime?"
(if you do not use a volunteer application, answer no) Yes No
4. Have you ever checked the references from a volunteer you didn't know very well? Yes No
5. Have your volunteers been trained on what to do if they suspect a child has been abused? Yes No
6. Does your church take any precautions to prevent false allegations of child abuse? Yes No
7. Do your volunteers need official church approval to have an activity with a child or several children? Yes No
8. Are your volunteers ever left alone with a child or group of children? Yes No
9. Do you have any guidelines that prevent a volunteer from taking a child home in their car? Yes No
10. Does your preschool or children's ministry have a policy on taking children to the restroom? Yes No
11. Does your ministry closely supervise teen volunteers who work with children? Yes No
12. Are you and/or your pastoral staff prepared to handle a child abuse situation if it should occur at your church? Yes No

YOUR SCORE: If you answered yes to. Pease put check in box that applies.

- 11 out of 12 Excellent!
(Out of the 12)
- 9 to 10 Good
(out of the 12)
- 1 to 8 I'm glad you're reading this material
(out of the 12)

Sample Church Policy for Handling Abuse/Molestation Incidents

Whenever an incident arises in which a church employee or volunteer is accused of child abuse or sexual molestation of a minor, it is the policy of the church to take the following steps and actions.

NOTE: *Legal disclaimer; consult a local lawyer, as individual states may have requirements that supersede or otherwise restrict these policies.*



Following Steps and Actions:

1. The accused party will be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

2. Upon an accusation being made, a representative of the Church Board of Directors will notify and consult with the church attorney and the liability

insurance carrier representative for the church. Recommendations received from these sources will be adhered to.

Sample Church Policy for Handling Abuse/Molestation Incidents (continued)

Following Steps and Actions: (continued)

3. The church shall on a regular basis keep all interested parties notified of the progress in the investigation and other matters, subject to counsel from the church's lawyer or insurance company.

4. If the investigative process, or the church's own investigation, clearly show that the accused is in fact guilty of the incident then the church shall take all reasonable steps to cooperate with law enforcement authorities in any action they may take against the accused.

5. From and after _____, the Church shall maintain a record and back up _____(date) file which details the preventive steps taken by the Church in advance of any such incident which may be the subject of this Policy. These records shall record in writing the steps, policies, procedures, and implementations which the Church has prepared and take to prevent the types of incidents which this Policy addresses, to the end that the Church shall not be found to have been negligent in this area, nor to have contributed to any such incident in any way.

6. During the investigative process, the Church Board may tap into the knowledge, experience database, or other information which may exist at the headquarters of the Church denomination, or at other churches, organizations, or repositories which might better enable the Church Board to respond to an incident in an appropriate way, seeking to limit damage to the church and to all individuals affected, as far as may be possible.

Sample Church Policy for Handling Abuse/Molestation Incidents (continued)

Following Steps and Actions: (continued)

7. After consulting with the church attorney and insurance representative, and heedful of their advice, the Church Board shall direct ministerial and other appropriate church staff or volunteers to reach out to the family affected by the incident, in every appropriate manner, seeking to minister Christ to them without further regard for the eventual legal outcome of the incident.

Ten Steps to Prevent Child Abuse in the Church by Keith Hamilton



1. Any volunteer or paid worker who works with children age 18 or under should be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy of the church on the reporting of child abuse.

New paid or volunteer workers should also be required to view a child abuse prevention video and read the written materials available on this subject to help the worker gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern.

The definition and training should help workers identify child abuse in the future if they see signs of it.

While exact definitions differ from state to state and between military and civilian regulations and laws, most definitions agree on several common elements of the abused or neglected child (see below).

“...a child whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by acts or omissions of his/her parent or other person responsible for his/her welfare.”

U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, Administration of Children, Youth and Families

Sample Church Policy for Handling Abuse/Molestation Incidents (continued)

Ten Steps to Prevent Child Abuse in the Church (continued)

2. **The church should adopt the “two adult” rule**, which requires a reasonable number of adult workers to be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of the children and youth, but with a minimum of two workers at all times.
3. **The leadership should supervise on an ongoing basis** and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.
4. **Every paid and volunteer worker should have an application on file with the church.** The application should include relative questions pertaining to working in a children or youth ministry. The application should include areas of current address information, former churches, references prior instances of child abuse as a victim or accusation, and general experience in working in a children or youth ministry. Also, a legal release statement should be on file in the church office to conduct criminal background and reference checks. A volunteer should be a member or attending a church for six months before serving.
5. **References should be checked** on anyone working with children or youth. The reference check should be completed on all paid and volunteer workers. A reference check includes the references listed on the application plus former churches of membership. It is always helpful to ask references for additional references.
6. **A criminal background** should be conducted on all paid employees and volunteers having contact with children under 18 years old. The criminal background check could be accomplished through a local law enforcement agency or through a website like www.screenchurchstaff.com or www.volunteersselect.com. It is very important the criminal background check is conducted as a nation-wide criminal background check.
7. **Each worker should be interviewed** personally by the supervisor of the ministry area. Documentation of the interview like the application or other personnel documents must be kept confidential and in a secure location.

Sample Church Policy for Handling Abuse/Molestation Incidents (continued)

Ten Steps to Prevent Child Abuse in the Church (continued)

8. **An identification system should be adopted so that the adults who drop off a child are the same adults or the adult's designee who picks up the child to reduce the possibility of kidnapping and liability.**
9. **Comply fully with your state's child abuse reporting statute.**
10. **Keep the church leadership informed of any suspicion of child abuse and report the child abuse suspicion to the appropriate authorities.**



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Hygiene



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Hygiene Practice and Policies

Teaching and ministering to preschoolers and children includes providing clean and orderly environments where the child can explore, create, learn, and play. Promoting good hygiene procedures is essential in order to provide protection from exposure to, and the spread of infectious diseases.

A child's feeling of protection comes from a healthy environment

Being aware of cleaning procedures and hygiene practices and policies protects and insures the health, safety, and emotional well being of preschoolers, children, their families, and the church.

The following hygiene standards are recommended because preschool and children's rooms are used frequently and by different groups. These standards insure that the toys and equipment in every room are ready for use at any time. Teachers and children are protected from disease and injury, and the church is protected in the event of an injury, accident, or spread of infectious diseases.

General Procedures and Practices in Rooms

- Both preschool and children's teachers, paid or volunteer, are required to attend an orientation and received instructions in proper hand washing, uses of gloves, and diapering techniques applicable to their age group.
- Teachers will be instructed as how to respond to emergency injuries and illnesses as well as how to clean and disinfect materials, toys, equipment, and rooms.
- All teachers will wash their hands using the "Hand Washing Procedures" (in this document) when they enter a classroom.
- Teachers of infants and one-year-olds will wear smocks while teaching.
- Bleach water solution (recipe in this document) will be prepared for disinfecting cribs, toys, and equipment during a session and at the end of each session.
- Bleach solution will be used to disinfect cribs, eating tables, areas where food is handled, toileting areas, toys, and teaching materials.
- All rooms are kept orderly and clean, disinfecting as needed throughout older age group rooms.

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Bleach Water Disinfecting Solution

NOTICE: One of the most commonly used solutions for disinfecting in the childcare setting is the homemade solution of household bleach and water. It is easy to mix, nontoxic, safe (if handled properly) and kills most infectious agents.

CAUTION: Keep bleach solution and bleach out of the reach of children. Mix bleach solution with tap water outside the room and away from the children. Discard any unused bleach solution at the end of each session. **Store bleach in a locked closet away from the children's area.**



Recipe for Bleach Water Disinfecting Solution

1/4 cup bleach OR 1 tablespoon bleach

1 gallon of cool water OR 1 quart cool water

PREPARE the bleach water solution out of the presence of children. Add the household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) to the water. Mix fresh for each session. Change the solution at least once during a two-hour session.

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Suggested Cleaning Procedures

Cribs, Equipment, and Teaching Materials

- Avoid the use of stuffed animals and fabric toys as they cannot be cleaned after a child mouths one.
- After removing sheet, clean crib rails and crib mattress by washing in warm soapy water, rinsing in clear water, and disinfecting with bleach solution. Dry chrome crib rails with disposable towel to prevent rusting. Let mattress air dry.
- Throughout the session disinfect eating areas, toilet seats, and toileting areas (using same method as described above) after each individual use.
- Designate one crib for each individual baby during a session.
- After each session, clean toys and teaching materials in babies through three-year-old room. Scrub materials in soapy water, rinsing in clear water, disinfecting in bleach solution, and leave to air dry.
- Clean and disinfect mouthed toys and materials after each child's use. Wash in soapy water, rinse in clear water, and dip in bleach solution and leave to air dry.
- Disinfect plastic dolls after each session. Dolls with hair should not be used, as the hair cannot withstand the disinfecting solution.
- Wash home living dress-up clothes, doll clothes, or other fabric items regularly.
- Avoid the use of hats, caps, and headscarves unless they can be disinfected after each individual use.

Diapering and Toileting

- ⇒ Check diapers at 30 minutes intervals.
- ⇒ Change babies in their own cribs.
- ⇒ Change older babies and two's on a vinyl mat on the floor in a designated areas of the room.
- ⇒ Disinfect the mat with bleach solution after each use.
- ⇒ All teachers are required to wear latex gloves when changing diapers or assisting with toileting needs.
- ⇒ Teachers should wash their hands after removing gloves.
- ⇒ Clean restroom surfaces (faucet handles and toilet seats with bleach water solution or a chlorine-containing scouring powder or other nontoxic bathroom surface cleaner/disinfectant several times a day if possible, but at least once a day and when soiled.

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Diapering and Toileting Procedures

Diapering Procedures

- ⇒ Collect a sheet of waxed paper, pre-moistened disposable towelettes (check for allergies), clean diaper, disposable latex gloves (approved for medical use), trash disposal bag (small paper or heavy-duty plastic zip-lock bag), and child's personal towelettes.
- ⇒ Place waxed paper on top of the clean diaper and slide it under the child.
- ⇒ Put on disposable latex gloves.
- ⇒ Unfasten, remove, and roll soiled/wet diaper in waxed paper.
- ⇒ Clean child's diaper area with pre-moistened towelettes and put used towelettes in waxed paper.
- ⇒ Fasten clean diaper securely.
- ⇒ Remove gloves trying to enclose wrapped soiled/wet diaper and used towelettes. Hold diaper in right hand. Pull the top of the right-handed glove down over the diaper so that the glove covers most of the diaper. Hold the partly concealed diaper in the left hand. Pull the top of the left-handed glove down over the diaper concealing the remainder of the diaper.
- ⇒ Drop the enclosed soiled/wet diaper in the paper disposal bag and dispose of it in a covered trash container that has been lined with a plastic trash bag.
- ⇒ Wash the baby's hands with a towelette. Assist older preschoolers with hand washing.
- ⇒ Invite the child to return to the activity area.
- ⇒ Disinfect the diapering area with bleach solution.
- ⇒ Washing your hands following the "Hand Washing Procedures" (see this document).

Toileting Procedures

- Assist young preschoolers with toileting if needed.
- Use gloves when assisting a child.
- Remove your gloves and assist the child in washing their hands.
- Wash your hands using "Hand Washing Procedures" (this document) after assisting a child.
- Instruct or assist older preschoolers and children in proper hand washing after they use the toilet.

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Hand Washing

Hand washing is important in preventing the spread of infection and should be routinely practiced by teachers and taught to children 18 months and older.

Hand Washing Procedures

1. Use antibacterial soap and warm running water (if available) when washing hands. If running water is not available, provide pans of soapy and rinse water and a pan of bleach solution in the room. Rub hands vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds.
2. Wash all surfaces including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails. Rinse soap from hands.
3. Disinfect hands in bleach solution.
4. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.
5. Turn water faucet off with a disposable towel (instead of using bare hands) then dispose of towel in trash.

Teachers and children should wash their hands after wiping their eyes or nose, before and after cleaning or touching an open wound, after using the bathroom, and before serving food.

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Infectious Disease, The ABC'S of Safe and Health Child Care ([http V/www.cdc.gov/hip/abs/practi9.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hip/abs/practi9.htm))

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Hygiene, Health and First Aid



Teachers

- ✓ Wash their hands with soap and water when they arrive in the room, before holding a child, after wiping a nose, assisting with toileting, as well as, before and after feeding a child.
- ✓ Use 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon of water to disinfect toys, cribs, tables, diapering area, and materials in the room.
- ✓ Wear gloves when assisting with diapering and toileting needs, first aid needs, and cleaning up blood spills or body fluids.
- ✓ Disinfect areas contaminated with bodily fluids with a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.
- ✓ Stock a first aid kit as recommended by the Red Cross or a physician.
- ✓ Complete an Accident/Injury Report form and Incident Report when a child has an accident or incident. Give parents a copy and file a copy in the church office.
- ✓ Need to be trained in first aid and CPR.
- ✓ Have available each Child's Information Sheet and check it for allergies, special needs, and any other health information.
- ✓ Ask parents to keep children who are ill at home until they are free of a fever for 24 hours before they return to church.

Hygiene Practice and Policies (continued)

Hand Washing is the Best Prevention

Take time to wash:

- When you first arrive
- Before handling food or bottles
- After using the restroom
- After changing each child's diaper
- After any contact with body fluids
- After cleaning up



Everything you ever wanted to know about washing hands:

- Wash with running water and antibacterial soap
- Wash front and back of hands
- Wash for 15-30 seconds
- Dry hands with disposable towel
- Turn off faucet with disposable towel
- Dispose of towel in appropriate receptacle

***Wash and wipe your hands together,
live in health forever!***

Illness/Prevention



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



Childhood Illness and Prevention Policies

Protecting youngsters from germs and illness is not always possible, but it is our responsibility to help children avoid these illnesses as much as possible.

Keeping ill children away from other children is part of that responsibility. A child should remain at home for 24 hours after having a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, sore throat, eye infection or skin rash that has not been treated.

The parent should be contacted and asked to pick up their child if any of the following symptoms occur:

- Armpit or fever-strip temperature of 100 degrees or higher (children younger than 3 months with 100.4 needs to be seen by a doctor)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained rash on skin
- Green mucus discharge from nose
- Nits in the hair
- Red eyes with a mucus discharge

If a child contracts a childhood disease following a session in a preschool department, the church should be notified.

Germs are all around us and often infect young children

Universal Precautions

Universal: Universal means taking the right precautions all the time; not taking risks.

Precautions: Precautions means planning for the right equipment to be on hand and having a set of safety rules to follow.

Equipment: Bleach solution of 1/4 cup to 1 gallon of hot water (mix daily), mops, buckets, liquid soap (keep locked up), paper towels, and a foot-peddled trash receptacle with lid.

Childhood Illness and Prevention Policies

Universal Precautions (continued)

Rules:

Hand washing

- When?** Upon Arrival
Before feeding food or giving bottles
Before and after toileting and diapering
After cleaning vomit, spit-up, blood, runny noses, and soiled clothing
- How?** Place hands under warm, running water
Use liquid soap and lather
Create friction by rubbing vigorously between fingers, around and under nails and on the back of hands and around wrist for at least 20 seconds
Rinse hands with warm running water
Dry thoroughly with a paper towel. Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet (original germs are on the faucet)
Place towel in a foot-peddled trash receptacle
- Why?** Viruses are removed when proper hand washing procedures occur.



Cleaning Spills

- What?** Diarrhea, vomit, spit-up, or blood
- How?** Using latex gloves, pour bleach solution around edge of the "spill", clean from the outside to the inside. Disinfect mops, and buckets with bleach solution.

It is our responsibility to help children avoid illnesses as much as possible.

Childhood Illness and Prevention Policies

Universal Precautions (continued)

Rules: (continued)

Reducing Infection Risk for Children and Adults

What? Infection means viruses such as colds or flu; Hepatitis B or HIV spread through blood; bacteria such as strep spread through urine, feces, mucus and saliva.

How? Killing bacteria and viruses with bleach solution
Keeping a bag of latex gloves and wipe-up supplies at hand (in your pocket)

Removing gloves:

Pull from the top downward, leaving the glove inside out.
Place the removed glove in the palm of the other glove.
Pull from the top turning inside out with first glove inside the other glove. Germs stay inside the gloves.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

If information regarding a child who has an immunodeficiency, whatever the cause, is available to the Minister of Childhood Education, the minister will make this information available only to those caregivers who need to know in order to protect the child against other infections. This need to know, however, does not require knowledge of HIV status. Parents of children enrolled in preschool activities shall not be privy to any confidential medical information.


Some Signs and Symptoms in Childhood Illnesses

Chickenpox: Fever, cold symptoms, tiredness, and itchy rash with red, raised blister.

Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye: Redness of eye, swelling of eyelid, mucus drainage from the eye, itching and watering of the eye.

Childhood Illness and Prevention Policies

Some Signs and Symptoms in Childhood Illnesses (continued)

Fifth Disease:	Bright red rash on cheeks, lacy looking rash on arms and trunk.	
Head Lice:	Itching scalp, nits in hair.	
Influenza:	Headache, runny nose, sore throat, cough, loss of appetite, fever, aches, chills, tiredness.	
Impetigo:	Small honey-colored, crusted sores.	
Measles:	Cold, sore throat, dry hacking cough, high fever, red rash beginning on the face and moving down the body.	
Meningitis:	Severe headache, sensitivity to light, stiff neck, nausea and vomiting, lethargy and irritability.	
Mumps:	Swollen glands in back part of cheek, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, cold symptoms, fever.	
Pinworms:	Intense itching in anal area that may wake child at night.	
Rheumatic Fever:	Arthritis, heart rhythm problems, rash, fever, bizarre motions.	

Childhood Illness and Prevention Policies

Universal Precautions (continued)

Some Signs and Symptoms In Childhood Illnesses (continued)

Scarlet Fever: Sore throat, bright red rash beginning on trunk and spreading over entire body, fever, dry flaky skin, red and swollen tongue.

Sore Throat: Dry, scratchy throat, painful and difficult swallowing.

Tonsillitis: Sore throat, pain in swallowing, drooling in infant, refusing to eat, chills, fever, aches, headache, ear ache, swollen neck glands, bad breath, cough.



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- Schiff, M.D. & Steven P. Shelov, M.D., *American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Symptoms*. Villard Books (New York, New York, Random House 1997)
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Health Criteria for Children's Ministries

The following list of symptoms will determine if a child should not be admitted to our nurseries and classrooms:



If a child shows signs of any of these symptoms while in our care, the child will be isolated from the others and parent or guardian will be contacted.

In the case of children with allergies who might exhibit some of the above-mentioned symptoms, exceptions will be made.

1. Persistent coughing
2. Persistent sneezing
3. Any discolored nasal discharge
4. Vomiting
5. Inflamed throat
6. Earaches
7. Fever (over 99 degrees; must be fever free for 24 hours)
8. Runny nose and/or eyes
9. Unusual fatigue and irritability
10. Complaints of stomachache
11. Swollen glands
12. Rash (except diaper rash)
13. Diarrhea (two or more loose bowel movements)

Our desire is to protect all children and volunteers from exposure to illness. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a healthy ministry environment.

Safety



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



Safety Policies

Safety in preschool rooms is important not only on Sundays but anytime preschoolers are at church.

Keep this safety checklist as a guide.

Room:

1. Preschool rooms are located on ground level.
2. Walls of preschool rooms are smooth surfaces, covered with non-toxic paint and free of any obstructions which could be hazardous to preschoolers.
3. Floors of preschool rooms are covered with tile and/or low pile carpet in good condition to avoid loose or uneven edges. Floors are cleaned after each use.
4. Ceilings are in good repair, free of water damage or loose pieces.
5. Electrical lighting is installed properly, with all bulbs and wiring enclosed in appropriate settings and out of reach of preschoolers.
6. Preschool windows have safety glass and are in good repair. Cords of window shades are out of reach of children.
7. Room temperatures are kept at a comfortable setting (72-74 degrees F°). All heating and cooling units are inspected annually and are out of children's reach.
8. Unnecessary clutter is unattractive and unsafe. Remove items which are not used in the age-appropriate teaching activities.

Doors:

1. Preschool doors meet the fire code requirements of your area.
2. Doors have a small window in the door or beside the door to allow visibility to person checking on the room.

Equipment:

1. All equipment is designed for the age-group using the room.
2. Cribs and mattresses in rooms for babies and ones meet national safety standards.
3. Crib rails are always raised to the highest setting when a child is in the crib.
4. Rails may be partially lowered when a teacher is changing a diaper.
5. Small items which could cause choking are not used in preschool rooms.
6. Trash containers are kept out of reach of preschoolers.
7. If a water source is available in the preschool room, the thermostat is set to avoid hot temperatures, which could be harmful to young children.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Room Monitoring:

1. Preschoolers may be left in preschool rooms only when designated adults are present.
2. Keep an appropriate ratio of teachers to children, with always at least two adults in each preschool room.
3. Enlist the preschool division director or other designated leader to be available to monitor activity in the hallways in the preschool area.
4. Keep an information card on each child, including names of the child's parents and any allergies which the child may have.
5. All preschool teachers follow your church's security policies.

Restroom Use:

1. Restrooms are adjoining or near the preschool room if at all possible.
2. When a teacher must assist a child, the restroom door should be left partially open.
3. Remove locks from restroom doors to prevent young children from locking the door when alone in the restroom.

Poisonous Substances:

1. Keep all potentially poisonous substances out of preschool rooms.
2. Be aware of plants which could be poisonous if touched or ingested.
3. Avoid having cleaning products stored in preschool rooms.

If the sanctuary and adult education space is not nearby, develop a plan for quickly reaching parents when needed.

Emergency Procedures:

1. Provide a telephone with emergency numbers posted in the preschool area.
Communicate the fire escape procedures to everyone working in the preschool area.
Display the fire escape route in each room.
2. Designate an emergency exit crib in which babies can be placed and rolled to safety by the teachers.
3. Provide other disaster plans, such as instructions to follow in case of a tornado, earthquake, or hostage situation.
4. Inform parents of your emergency procedures, to avoid confusion if such an emergency should occur.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Emergency Procedures (*continue*)

5. Provide training in infant/child CPR for preschool teachers.
6. In the event of injury, the teacher will:
 - Send for help
 - Notify parents
 - Avoid moving the child
 - Remain calm and keep the child comforted until help arrives
7. All teachers will have access to injury documentation forms and will fill out information on each illness/injury to be kept on file.

What a wonderful privilege to be able to teach and care for preschoolers in a SAFE and loving environment!

Safety Addresses

Handbook for Public Playground Safety and a toy list with recalls, updates and safety standards. Consumer Products safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207, 1-800-638-2772 www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prht-mi/96172.html

Safe Toys (send self addressed envelope for toy booklet) Toy Manufacturers of America, P.O. Box 866, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159

Lead prevention brochures-Lead Free Kids, Inc., 100 E. 31st Street, Box 8595, Minneapolis, MN 55408-0595

Poison Information-National Poison Center Network, 125 DeSota Street, Pittsburg, PA 15213

Choke Tester-Department Safe Toys, P.O. Box 17, Long Beach, CA 90801

Child Medical Information Diaper Bag Tags-NLSS Specialties, P.O. Box 1897, 2111 Kennesaw Due West Rd, Kennesaw, GA 30144

General Safety Information-American Academy of Pediatrics, Division of Publications, 141 North Point Blvd., P.O. Box 927 Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0927

Safety Checklist

- _____ Enlist at least two teacher for every room.
- _____ Provide 25 to 35 square feet of space for every child and teacher in attendance.
- _____ Remove any unnecessary furnishings or supplies.
- _____ Check the floor for small objects that could choke a child.
- _____ Use a disinfecting solution made of 1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water to clean toys, wash teacher's hands, and wipe off preschool furnishings and equipment. If a baby puts a toy in her/his mouth, clean the toy, rinse it, and allow it to air-dry before giving it to another child. Discard stuffed animals or other toys that cannot be sanitized.
- _____ Cover all electrical outlets.
- _____ Place cleaning supplies and plastic bags out of the reach of children.
- _____ Make sure dangling cords are out of children's reach.
- _____ Check all toys and furnishings for rough, sharp edges, or splintering.



Safety Devices at Church

Telephone

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S departments need a **TELEPHONE** nearby. The division should have an accessible telephone with appropriate numbers posted clearly and conveniently. **All teachers (including extended teaching care) should know the location of the phone and how to access an outside line (cell phone may be used).**

If all preschool and children's department are not located in the same general area, it may be necessary to consider an additional phone so that all departments will have quick access to a phone.

Secure Doors

Sometimes a little extra resistance when opening a department door may be enough to discourage an uninvited person from "wandering" into a preschool room. A simple hook and eye may offer such a resistance and still be opened, if needed, with extra pressure. Check local fire codes before considering this kind of door fixture.

Security Checks

Some churches already have someone (a church member) who walks about the church buildings during church services to check for strangers or others in the hallways. Request that this person checks the preschool and children's areas several times during Vacation Bible School and other times of ministry.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Safety First

Begin now completing these statements:



1. The nearest fire extinguishers to my department are located _____

2. I know all of the preschooler's (those I teach) parents and others who are authorized to come for the children. Yes _____ No _____
3. In case of poisoning at church, I would phone _____
4. I can locate a parent or guardian of each child I teach very quickly. Yes _____ No _____
5. The first aid kit is located _____
6. In the event we needed to evacuate our department room, we would go _____

7. If I needed to know if a child was allergic to the tasting activity I had planned, I would _____

8. Foods I would not give to preschoolers because of strangulation danger include

Preschool Safety Guidelines

Preschool teachers have many important responsibilities. One of those is to provide a safe environment in which preschoolers may learn. The preschool room must be both safe and clean, in addition to providing a positive learning environment. This article will focus on the safety aspect.

It is possible that the room in which you teach is used by several organizations. You may wish to involve people from each of these organizations in a "safety check" of the room or of the entire preschool area, including the playground. This important action should be taken on a regular basis. Following are some questions and/or suggestions about making your preschool room or area safer for preschoolers.

Security

- Do you have a system of child identification so a child may be picked up by an approved person? These systems have been simplified and are easy to use.
- Do you keep information cards available for parents or guardians to leave emergency information (including allergies) on each child?

First Aid and Emergencies

- Is a first aid kit available to the preschool area?
- Is a telephone in or near the preschool area?
- Are emergency telephone numbers (police, fire, hospital, poison control) posted nearby? A list of medical personnel with the church who may be called in an emergency is helpful.
- List teachers who have been trained in first aid and CPR.
- Are fire escape routes posted in each room in the preschool division?
- Have preschool workers been instructed in the use of fire extinguishers and evacuation procedures for fires, tornadoes, or other disasters?

The Room

- Is the room too cluttered? Are there too many tables and chairs?
- Avoid rocking chairs in rooms where younger preschoolers are on the floor.
- Crib slates should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart with mattress fitting snugly.

Preschool Safety Guidelines

The Room *(continued)*

- Caution workers never to leave a side of the crib down if a child is in the crib.
- Place safety covers on all electrical outlets not in use.
- Toys should be in good repair or should be removed from the room. Check for sharp edges, missing or loose wheels, cracks in plastic, and splinters in wooden toys.
- Avoid stuffed animals and other stuffed toys, especially animals with beads or button eyes.
- See that all first aid, and cleaning supplies, sharp objects, and other teacher tools are out of reach of young children.
- Check all activity area materials in rooms for middle and older preschoolers. Remove cracked plastic pans, plates, and so forth; provide blunt tip scissors; check wooden blocks and puzzles for splinters.
- Toys for younger preschoolers should be large enough to be safe from swallowing and have no sharp edges or loose parts.
- Avoid bringing coffee and other hot drinks into rooms with preschoolers.
- Heating bottles in a microwave oven is a dangerous practice. This liquid will heat from the inside and a baby can be badly burned. Consider using a slow cooker which can warm more than one bottle at a time.
- There should be at least two teachers in a room with preschoolers at all times.
- It is advisable to set an age limit on person allowed to pick up a preschooler (even if the child is a brother or sister).

Resources or Storage Room

- See that the door is locked except when in use.
- Request that children not be allowed in the resource room.
- Keep out of reach disinfecting solutions, cleaning materials, soaps, and so forth.
- Keep out of reach sharp objects, such as pencils, pens, scissors, knives, and staples.

Restroom

- Check the temperature of the hot water and adjust to avoid burns.
- If a rest room is on the hall, a teacher should accompany preschoolers. More than one child at a time may be taken so the task can be accomplished in a few trips.
- Avoid storing items in bathrooms connected to preschool rooms. Store cleaning and disinfecting materials in another place or on a high shelf.

Preschool Safety Guidelines

Playground

- Playground equipment should be six feet away from fences and buildings.
- Gates should have a safety latch.
- Keep fence in good repair.
- Check daily removing poisonous plants, litter, insect nests, hives, or beds.
- Check playground equipment for sharp edges, missing or loose parts, or deteriorated, splintered wood.
- Cover sand bed when not in use.
- Place shock and water absorbent material under equipment and extending six feet beyond.
- At least two teachers should be on the playground with a group of children.
- If there are "blind" spots on the playground, ask one teacher to stand where the space can be seen.
- Take the children to and from the playground in an orderly manner. A safe method is to have one teacher lead the way and one walk behind the group.

THE VALUE OF MINISTRY IS ENHANCED even further when we provide (to the best of our abilities) safe learning environments for our children. **Play it safe...**regularly check your department or division area to make it a safe and happy place for preschoolers.



Safety Walk

Include all teachers of preschoolers in a **SAFETY WALK**. On your safety walk, include the following:

1. In rooms for babies, check to see that the door is wide enough for a crib to exit. If not, provide at least one port-a-crib for use in emergencies.
2. Look from ceiling to floor in search of possible hazards. Make corrections as needed.
3. Clear unnecessary equipment, supplies, trash, and clutter out of each room, hallway, closet, cabinet, and stairwell.
4. Look for protruding nails (or other sharp objects), sharp corners, broken tile, damaged carpeting, leaky ceiling, unsafe structure, and other hazardous areas of items. Repair or replace each item.
5. Remove small toys or other small objects (such as thumb tacks or paper clips) from all preschool rooms. Anything that can fit into a 35mm file canister can choke a preschooler.
6. If lead paint has been used, remove it and re-paint with lead-free latex or other durable paint.
7. Check to be sure that windows are secure and safe.
8. See that doors and hallways are unobstructed and easily negotiated.
9. Check stairwells for loose railings, chipped stairs, or other hazards. Make necessary repairs immediately.
10. Clean all closets, cabinets, and other storage spaces so that they are free of clutter and fire hazards.
11. Cover all electrical outlets with safety covers.
12. Plan an exit route from the room in case of fire or other emergency. Post an exit diagram in each room.
13. Look for areas of mold, mildew, or dampness. Clean and dry these areas. (Allergens lurk in dampness.)
14. Remove all drapes and curtains because they harbor allergens. If necessary to control light, put blinds on the windows.
15. Include outdoor play areas in your safety walk.

After the safety walk, make recommendations for correcting each potential hazard. Follow up to see that corrections are made.

Food Safety and Poison Control

Poisonous and Toxic materials

- List of poisonous plants (from local county agent or Poison Control Center) is posted in each room.
- Art materials are checked for toxic and harmful ingredients. Powdered substances are not used. Glitter is avoided.
- Teachers remove all medications from their purses. Medications are kept in located area away from children.
- Teachers do not administer any medications (including non-prescription items) to children. Cleaning items are stored in a locked closet away from the preschool and children's areas.

Foods

- Parents are consulted **before** giving any child any food. Communicate with parents about the snack that will be served each day.
- Information sheet on each child is kept and checked for allergies to foods and other materials.
- Preschoolers remain seated while eating foods and drinking drinks.
- Foods to avoid are seeds, nuts, beans, raw carrots, celery, peanuts, raisins, whole grapes, popcorn, apples with peelings and peanut butter.
- Teachers are careful to give a baby's bottle only to him/her and that children do not exchange foods they have eaten from.
- Teachers, preschoolers, and children wash their hands before and after eating.

Poisonous Plants and Flowers

One of the primary ways infants and toddlers examine new materials is with their mouths. Every toddler will at some point put a book, a piece of a puzzle, or the corner of a cardboard block into his/her mouth. Understanding that this is a common practice for all infants and toddlers (some more than others), use caution when choosing plants and flowers with young children. **This list is not exhaustive.** If you have any doubt, contact your local county extension agent or the *National Poison Control Center* for further help. Never assume a plant or flower is safe. Check each one!

Plant	Toxic Part	Plant	Toxic Part
Azalea	ALL PARTS	Lantana	ALL PARTS
Bird of Paradise	Green seed pods	Larkspur	ALL PARTS
Burning Bush	Leaves	Lily-of-the-Valley	ALL PARTS
Caladium	ALL PARTS	Mistletoe	Berries
Castor Bean	Seed	Mock Orange	Fruit
Chinaberry	Berries	Morning Glory	Seed
Columbine	Berry	Mountain Laurel	ALL PARTS
Cyclamen	Tuber	Mushrooms, poisonous	ALL PARTS
Daffodil	Bulb	Narcissus	Bulb
Delphinium	ALL PARTS	Oleander	Leaves
Dieffenbachia	ALL PARTS	Philodendron	ALL PARTS
Elephant Ear	ALL PARTS	Pinks	Seed
English Ivy	Leaves	Poinsettia	ALL PARTS
Four O'clock	Root, seed	Potato	Seed, sprouts
Foxglove	ALL PARTS	Rhododendron	ALL PARTS
Hens & Chickens	ALL PARTS	Rhubarb	Leaves
Holly	Berries	Scotch Broom	Seed
Hyacinth	Bulb, leaves, flower	Spider Lily	Bulb
Hydrangea	Leaves, buds	Sweet Pea	Stem
Iris	Root	Yew	Bark, Needles, Seeds
Jerusalem Cherry	ALL PARTS		

Caution: Small Objects may be Hazards to Children Under the Age of Six

How many times have you seen these words on the box of a toy you just bought? Have you ever noticed this same warning on the bag that toys from fast-food restaurants come in?

Choking on balloons, certain foods, and small toys is the number one cause of accidental death of children.

Here are some simple things you can do to help prevent the children in your department from choking.

Balloons

According to the *Consumer Products Safety Commission*, **BALLOONS** account for **43 PERCENT** of **CHILDREN'S DEATHS** related to children's products.

Bright and colorful balloons are fun to watch or hold. But when a latex or rubber balloon pops or hasn't been blown up it can be deadly. Some children might chew on balloons because they find the color, smell, and texture of balloons interesting to taste. **ONE TINY PIECE** inhaled by a child could cause the child to choke. Once a piece of balloon is in the windpipe it is very hard to get out. The Heimlich maneuver may not work.

Many children's hospitals have banned rubber and latex balloons from their hospital because balloons are dangerous. Local florists and hospital staffs know that these types of balloons will be removed before the arrangements are delivered. Mylar balloons (the silvery metal kind) are still permitted.

Caution: Small Objects may be Hazards to Children Under the Age of Six

Balloons *(continued)*

To Protect Children:

- √ Do not let preschool children blow up a balloon.
- √ Do not let children put a balloon in their mouth.
- √ Always supervise children when they play with balloons. Better yet, never use balloons around children.

Food

Preschoolers, ages four and under, can choke on certain food. **Avoid using nuts, popcorn, or hard candy in Sunday School.** These foods, along with hot dogs and grapes, represent real dangers to young children. However, grapes can be made safe by cutting them into small pieces, not just in half.

Toys

The *U.S. Consumer Products Safety Council* sets the age guidelines on toys for safety reasons. When purchasing new toys **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION** to the recommended age on the box. If church members donate toys, check for the age level on the toy or check the age level on a similar toy at local toy store. Beware of using toys that are above the age level of your department since the toy may have small parts or pieces that could cause your child to choke. Play it safe!

Vehicle Requirements

Whenever transportation is provided by paid staff or volunteers, all requirements regarding transportation must be met. Any vehicle used to transport children shall comply with the following requirements:

1. A vehicle shall not be used to transport children in excess of the maximum seating capacity. The maximum seating capacity of the vehicle is based on the manufacturer's suggested seating capacity or on a minimum of 13 inches of seating per child.
2. All passengers shall be able to sit comfortably in a stationary padded seat with a back that is properly anchored to the vehicle.
3. Vehicles used to transport children shall be maintained in a clean, safe operating condition, free of hazardous objects or other nonessential items that could injure children if thrown about as a result of a collision.
4. Children shall not be transported in vehicles or parts of vehicles which were not designed for the purpose of transporting people, such as truck beds, campers, and trailers.
5. When transporting children, vehicles shall be visibly marked with the name of the facility or sponsoring organization, with the exception of public transportation.
6. Each vehicle operated by a center for transportation shall have door locks. The driver shall be responsible for keeping the doors locked when the vehicle is moving.
7. The transporting vehicle shall be covered by medical and liability insurance as required by state laws.
8. A vehicle used to transport children shall have an operable heater, that is capable of maintaining a temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit inside the vehicle and an appropriate ventilation system.
9. A first aid kit and fire extinguisher shall be taken on each field trip.

Requirements vary from state to state. Please consult the ***Department of Human Services Minimum Standards for Day Cares***—for a list of requirements pertaining to your state.

Driver Qualifications

Whenever transportation, including field trips, is provided by paid staff or volunteers, all requirements regarding transportation must be met.

All drivers, including volunteers, shall:

- 1. Be at least 18 years old and have an operator's license of the type appropriate for the vehicle that is valid in the driver's state of residence.**
- 2. Have no conviction of driving offense within the last three years.**

Requirements vary from state to state. Please consult the *Department of Human Services Minimum Standards for Day Cares*—for a list of requirements for your state.



Transportation Procedures

Whenever transportation, including field trips, is provided by paid staff or volunteers, all requirements regarding transportation must be met.

The following requirements pertaining to transportation procedure shall be met at all times:

- 1. A schedule showing accurate route and itinerary shall be planned and kept at the center to show approximately where the vehicle is at any given time.**
- 2. The driver shall be provided with:**
 - A. A copy of the scheduled route**
 - B. The name, address, and telephone number of the child care center**
 - C. Names of children being transported**
 - D. A method to contact the children's parents in case of an emergency**
- 3. Safe conduct to and from all vehicles and safe off-street loading spaces shall be provided so that the children are protected from backing vehicles, from walking between vehicles, and from all traffic hazards.**
- 4. Attendance shall be checked each time children board and exit the vehicle.**
- 5. Children shall not ride more than 60 minutes one way, except for field trips.**
- 6. Children shall remain seated while the vehicle is in motion, and no part of a child's body may extend from windows.**
- 7. Vehicles containing children should never be left unattended.**
- 8. The use of tobacco product on or around the vehicle is prohibited while children are being transported.**

Requirements vary from state to state. Please consult the *Department of Human Services Minimum Standards for Day Cares*—for a list of requirements for your state.

Passenger Restraints

Whenever transportation, including field trips, is provided by paid staff or volunteers, all requirements regarding transportation must be met.

Children who are being transported in a passenger car, van, bus, or truck shall be properly secured in a child passenger restraint system (car seat) or seat belt. However, buses with a capacity for 10 or more passengers that meet state and federal requirements for school buses are exempt from this requirement.

1. Children under the age of four shall be secured in a car seat.
2. The car seat shall be:
 - A. Federally approved
 - B. Installed according to the manufacturer's instructions
 - C. Appropriate to the height, weight, and physical condition of the child, according to the manufacturer's instructions
 - D. Properly maintained
3. Children under the age of four shall be properly secured in the rear seat of the vehicle.
4. Each seat belt shall be properly anchored to the vehicle and fit snugly across the child's hips.
5. All adult passengers, except those in a full-size school bus, and the driver shall be properly secured by seat belts, unless the driver or passenger has written verification from a doctor licensed in their state who says that he or she is unable to use a seat belt for medical reasons.

Requirements vary from state to state. Please consult the *Department of Human Services Minimum Standards for Day Cares*—for a list of requirements for your state.

Activity Safety Checklist

1. Has the activity ever presented problems for the church before? Have injuries ever been sustained by participants in past church activities of this type?
2. What is known of the risk potential of this activity? Does the church insurance carrier know whether churches around the country have experienced repeated problems with the activity?
3. Have 2 or 3 church leaders been asked their opinions of the activity? Do one or more of these leaders have concerns about the safety of the activity?
4. Has a local physician been consulted as to whether he or she has treated, or know of, injuries that are considered to be associated with this activity?
5. Has the church attorney been consulted for an opinion on the activity? Does the attorney know of court cases which have involved churches or other organizations as a result of engaging in the activity?
6. Do the organizers of the activity feel comfortable involving their own children in the activity? Are there individuals in the church who have participated in this activity before, and who can give an opinion of the risk involved?
7. After following the above steps as appropriate, does a consensus emerge that:
 - ◆ the activity is generally considered safe
 - ◆ the activity is generally considered dangerous
 - ◆ that no one has enough information to determine the potential risks of activity
8. What is the public perception of this activity? Is it an activity that most people would consider inherently dangerous?
9. Is there enough staffing available if the activity is held, so that adequate adult supervision is present at all times?
10. Are there adequate first aid supplies, as well as a written, concise, clear set of instructions written by a physician, to be followed by adult caregivers if needed in an emergency?
11. Is there some means set up ahead of time to summon doctors, ambulances, or other help if needed in the event of an accident or emergency during a church sponsored activity?

Too many "yes" answers to questions 1-9, and too many "no" answer to questions 10-11, mean that the activity should be re-considered as perhaps too dangerous to be held by the church.

First Aid Kit

These materials are basics. There may be additional supplies you wish to include. Store the kit in a cool dry place and **OUT OF THE REACH AND SIGHT OF CHILDREN**. Check supplies for expiration dates and replace as necessary.

- Adhesive tape
- Assorted bandages and gauze (sterile)
- Antiseptic wipes
- Band aids
- Choke tube
- Cotton balls and Q-tips
- Disposable gloves
- Drinking cups (paper)
- Drinking water (1 gallon)
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Instant cold pack
- Plastic bags (sealable for disposal of cloths/gauze used in handling blood)
- Soap (antibacterial)
- Stainless steel scissors
- Tweezers



Outdoor and Playground Safety

- _____ Parking lots and street entrances have appropriate traffic signs that are visible and readable. Adult safety patrol is available while children are coming and leaving.**
- _____ Entrance doors have controls to prevent fast closing.**
- _____ Mats and carpets are in good condition to prevent tripping and slipping.**
- _____ Entrance steps are checked for loose railings.**
- _____ Playgrounds use guidelines described in the Handbook for Playground Safety from U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, (www.cpsc.gov) for specifications on age appropriate equipment, fall surfaces, impact material, and other safety precautions.**
- _____ Equipment is checked frequently for loose parts, protruding bolts, sharp edges, corners, and splinter wood.**
- _____ Pupil/teacher ratio is maintained on the playground, and teachers space themselves so they can observe, interact, and guide children. Children are not allowed on the playground unless teachers or trained leaders are present.**
- _____ Rules for play on the playground are set and kept.**
- _____ Surfaces are checked daily for broken glass, sharp objects, poisonous plants and are kept free of fertilizers and weed killers.**
- _____ Tripping hazards (stumps, roots, cracked cement slab) are removed.**
- _____ High risk activities (rock climbing, rappelling) are avoided.**

Indoor and Room Safety

- ⇒ Church policy is adopted to require all employees and volunteers to be educated on:
 1. safety issues and concerns
 2. to exercise caution at all times
 3. trained on what is safe and unsafe
 4. report hazards
- ⇒ Emergency lighting operates properly and is tested frequently. Electrical, building, fire codes, and emergency evacuation plans are up-to-date.
- ⇒ Telephone with emergency numbers is located near preschool and children's areas.
- ⇒ Aisles and hallways are unobstructed and walking areas are well lit.
- ⇒ Stairways are free of clutter, storage, and slip hazards. Stairwells are checked for loose railings.
- ⇒ Doorways and rooms are uncluttered, and doors remain closed at all times.
- ⇒ Doors are secured. Hall monitors closely observe entrances to preschool and children's rooms. Security checks are conducted several times throughout the day.
- ⇒ Room contents are age-appropriate.
- ⇒ Rooms are checked for unsafe equipment:
 1. splintering chairs
 2. protruding nails
 3. damaged carpet
 4. dangling electrical cords
 5. exposed electrical outlets
 6. repairs are made immediately and unsafe items removed from the rooms
- ⇒ Preschool materials and toys are safe, nontoxic, and free of sharp edges, small parts, and openings or hinges.
- ⇒ Review the books *Teaching Preschoolers: Steps Toward Faith* and *Preschool Sunday School for a New Century*.

Indoor and Room Safety *(continued)*

- ⇒ **Make sure equipment is secured so that it cannot be pulled over, fall on, or harm a child in any way.**
- ⇒ **Check to see that materials are safe, used appropriately by the child and teacher, and guidelines for age usage as recommended on the boxes and labels are followed.**
- ⇒ **Require teachers to obtain approval from the director (who is educated on evaluating what is safe and unsafe) before changing activities, crafts, or substituting materials, supplies, and equipment.**



Are You Prepared?

- ✓ Evacuation route map is posted by the door of each room in the event of tornado, fire, or other emergency.
- ✓ Leaders are familiar with the evacuation routes for their room.
- ✓ Leaders are familiar with the locations of fire alarms and fire extinguishers.
- ✓ A plan to get all the children out safely and quickly is in place.
- ✓ Parents are aware of the designated area in which to pick up preschoolers and older children in the event of an emergency situation.
- ✓ Tornado and fire drills held at least once a year.
- ✓ Emergency lighting is in place and tested each month.
- ✓ Fire alarm is operational.
- ✓ Phone numbers for emergency services are located near phones.
- ✓ Leaders know the location of the first aid kits.
- ✓ At least two or three adults are trained in CPR and Pediatric CPR and list of these leaders is located in each room.
- ✓ Each child's family has completed an information form with emergency numbers.
- ✓ Phones are located in strategic locations in the preschool and children's area in the church.
- ✓ Emergency response team has been enlisted and are on site when children are at church. A team can consist of trained personnel in first aid, a nurse, or doctor.

If you feel unsure about whether or not you are prepared for an emergency or disaster, call your local Red Cross, fire department, or emergency management agency for help.

Security



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



Security Policies — Procedures

From “*Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*” by Richard Hammar

There are four major areas in which policies and procedures must be established to provide safeguards against sexual abuse:

1. Worker selection
2. Worker supervision
3. Reporting obligations
4. Response to allegations

All paid church employees should have to undergo a thorough screening process as part of the job application procedure. The procedure should consist of an employment application, a screening form, a personal interview, reference checks and completion of a criminal records check authorization form, when deemed appropriate.

Screening form should ask the following questions:

- Applicant's name. Identity should be confirmed by a driver's license or other photographic identification.
- Address
- A full explanation of any prior criminal convictions for sexual abuse, molestation or related crimes.
- The area of youth work the applicant is interested in.
- Any training or education in youth-related work.
- A description of church membership over the past 5 years.
- A description of any youth work in churches or other organizations over the past 5 years.
- Names and addresses of 2 references.

People applying for higher risk positions such as; groups, camps, overnight or largely unsupervised activities involving children or youth, should have an interview with a responsible staff member trained to screen children and youth workers.

Security Policies — Procedures (continued)

Screening should be used for all workers, both paid and volunteer. Volunteers should only be permitted to work with children and youth after they have been members of the church for a specified amount of time (i.e. 6 months).

Adults who plead guilty or who were convicted of either child sexual abuse or physical abuse should not work with children in a volunteer capacity. Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with a pastor before they can work with children.

Current conservative estimates are that from 500,000 to over 1.5 million children are sexually abused each year in the U.S.

Many church leaders assume child molesters are strangers — this stereotype can lull a church into falsely thinking it is safe.

Churches need to be concerned about strangers, but the majority of cases have been people associated with the church for a long time.

Statistics show that strangers account for less the 20% of abusers. Churches need to be aware of the following:

- ◆ Over 80% of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- ◆ Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship.
- ◆ The usual offender is 20-30 years old.
- ◆ 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18.
- ◆ Child abusers often are married and have children.

**“If abuse occurs in your church,
a respected member will most likely be the molester.
Emphasis on “stranger-danger” will leave your church ill prepared.”**

While its uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday School teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool workers, teachers in a church-operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, “concerned” adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy.”

Security Policies — Procedures (continued)

Adequately screen, then Adequately Supervise

- ◆ A “two-adult” rule is recommended for any church activity involving children or youth, obtaining parental permission for those times when a worker would be in an unsupervised situation with a child, and discussing suspicious behavior immediately.
- ◆ Overnight rule is also recommended: All adult chaperones of overnight activities should be screened in advance.
- ◆ Put windows on classroom doors when feasible.
- ◆ Have adequate personnel.
- ◆ Put a church nursery identification procedure in place.

Young people and adults need seminars in their church about the warning signs of child sexual abuse.

Church leaders should develop a line of reporting to be followed in each and every case of suspected abuse. Knowing the state rules regarding reporting abuse to the proper authorities is crucial.

When a church has a doubt about whether it should report, it would do well to remember that a pedophile may have hundreds of victims over the course of a lifetime.

The church's duty is to protect other innocent victims, so when in doubt, report.

Security Policies — Procedures (continued)



An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church, so a strategy must be in place for response to any allegations.

With an allegation of molestation, the most important thing a church can do is not deny, or minimize, or blame the victim.

99% of the time, churches deny the situation, shun the family and erect walls — typical church response. This is the best course of action if you want to end up in court.

Take all allegations seriously, and let the family know you are going to investigate. You don't want them to feel they have to go to court to get their story heard. You want to act as Christ would in the same situation.

Abuse in a church setting is hard enough to deal with on its own, a church's wrong response just makes the situation even worse.

Security System: A Top Priority for Your Preschool Ministry (continued)

Identification Card System

Permanent identification cards (one for each child) may be issued to parents with information such as the child's and parent's name and a security card. The cards generally are about credit card size and are laminated. Parents keep the cards in their possession for use each time they pick up their child.

Another "permanent card" approach is to issue parents a family card rather than a card for each child. The family card indicates the name and security number of each child in the family.

Still another variation of the card plan is for the teacher to give the parent a simple name card each time the child comes to the room. The parent returns the card to the teacher when he comes for the child, and the card is stored in the room.

When permanent I.D. cards are issued, document the issue date and other information on a I.D. Card Information Form for your files. This form might include date, parent's names, address, phone number, children's names, security numbers, number of cards issued, and so forth. When security cards are lost and reissued, this information can be recorded, also.

The little girl's eyes lit up when she saw the man at her preschool department door. "I'm Sarah's daddy," the man said to the preschool teachers. With happy chatter and bouncing curls, 3 year old Sarah excitedly went with the man. However, the preschool teachers soon discovered that the man did not have Sarah's mother's permission to take Sarah.

- ◆ Such a circumstance could be a tragedy in the making. Does your church have a procedure ensuring that only authorized adults can pick up preschoolers at the end of each session? If not, the preschool committee and other church leaders need to guide your church in approving and implementing such a plan.
- ◆ Various plans are being used by churches of all sizes, large and small. Most of the plans are variations of three basic security systems, cards, tickets, and tags.

Which plan would work best in your church?

Security System: A Top Priority for Your Preschool Ministry

(continued)

Claim-Check or Ticket System

Many churches use a claim-check system in which a parent takes the perforated end of a form or ticket that matches the part kept by the teacher. Matching numbers, letters, or other symbols are printed on both ends of the ticket. The ticket portion kept by the teacher may provide space for the parent to jot down information about the child, including special needs and location of the parents. Once the child is picked up by the ticket bearer, both portions of the ticket are destroyed by the teachers.

The ticket method can be a simple and inexpensive as using rolls or preprinted tickets which may be purchased in bulk. Use new tickets each session and write the names of children on the appropriate ticket stubs. Then tape these near the door until parents arrive with matching stubs.

Another method involves printing individually numbered carbon paper forms. After writing the date, child's name and special information on the form, the parent takes the bottom sheet and leaves the original form with the teacher. When the parent comes for the child the teacher matches the numbers printed on both forms. All forms are destroyed after the children have left.

Identification Tag System

A third basic security method is the tag system. Matching tags are provided. The two tags display identical numbers, letters, names, or other symbols. For each session one tag is given to the parent. The parent must present the matching tag when he/she picks up the child. The teacher removes the tag from the child, links the matching tags together, and stores the tags in a secure place for use again with another child.

Commercial child security tags may be purchased, or tags may be made by the church using clip-on name badges, plastic hospital-type I.D. bracelets, or inexpensive plastic key rings.

Security System: A Top Priority for Your Preschool Ministry (continued)

Security Policies or Procedures

Other security procedures usually include:

1. Requiring that parents or other authorized adults (not siblings) pick up preschoolers.
2. Placing masking tape name labels on preschoolers and their belongings.
3. Using a sign-in sheet when parents bring and pick up their preschoolers.
4. Requiring that preschool room doors be kept closed at all times.
5. Providing a minimum of two or more teachers in each room.
6. Asking preschool teachers to wear name badges.
7. Using volunteer or contracted security personnel to provide assistance in church halls, entrance, and near preschool rooms.



When adopting a security system, involve preschool teachers in determining the system which will work best for your church.

Communicate the safety benefits at meetings for parents. Letters to parents and information provided in young married adult Sunday School department also may be helpful. Post sheets with simple instructions near preschool room.

Parents, please help us protect your child by:

- ✓ Showing a teacher your I.D. Card when you come for your child.
- ✓ Coming for your child yourself. Church policies state that preschoolers are to be released to parents or authorized adults only.
- ✓ Knocking and remaining outside the room until a teacher brings your child.

Security System: A Top Priority for Your Preschool Ministry (continued)

Is a Security System Really Necessary?

Even when a church is small and parents are known by teachers, extended session and substitute teachers may not know parents. Churches of all sizes also encounter situations when a friend, relative, or non-custodial parent wants to pick up a child. With a security system in place, the church and the teachers remain accountable to the parent and release children only when security procedures are followed.

Preschoolers are precious and irreplaceable. Establishing a few simple procedures are a small price to pay for the safety of preschoolers and for the peace of mind of teachers and parents.

Security Tips

- ⇒ **Keep accurate information.** Make a list of persons who can and cannot pick up a child. Obtain this information in writing from parents.
- ⇒ **Keep all teachers aware.** The person who comes to pick up a child must have a security card (pass) and proper I.D.
- ⇒ **Get acquainted with parents.** Make home visits.
- ⇒ **If parents call to tell you of an emergency pick up, call them back to verify request and names of persons who will be picking up the child.**
- ⇒ **Use sign in/sign out sheets regularly and consistently.**
- ⇒ **Keep phone numbers and valuable information about the child inaccessible to non-authorized person, put this information in a safe and easy to locate place or use by staff.**
- ⇒ **Keep Emergency Cards, Baby's Schedule Cards, and Child's Information Sheets up to date and accessible to authorized staff.**
- ⇒ **Supervise preschoolers at all times.** Every department/room/group needs a minimum of two teachers.
- ⇒ **Take extra precautions of field trips.** (For example, go to the rest room as a group.) Carry Emergency Cards.
- ⇒ **Make sure a child is released to parents or authorized person only.** Never release a child to a person without proper I.D. and security card.

Supervision



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



Supervision Policies

Supervision Policies for paid and volunteer workers with children up to age 18

1. Adequate staffing for each age group shall be ensured.
2. There must be **at least two approved** adult leaders (with worker information form on file) at all times in the classroom, on trips, outings, and overnight activities with children up to age 18.
3. At every program or activity in the church building, the program director, age group director, or individual appointed by same, will be responsible for checking in on each classroom activity at various times during the duration of the meeting or activity.
4. The program director, age group director, or approved individual appointed by them shall be deemed the supervisor during the time his or her program is conducting any activity, whether inside, outside, or away from the church building.
5. **Being alone with any child up to age 18 should be avoided**, especially while driving, disciplining, during outings or trips, and during overnight activities.
6. Windows shall be installed in doors of all rooms where children birth through age 18 meet. This allows parents, program directors, and age group directors visual access to the room without disturbing the teaching atmosphere.
7. **PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION** — Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. The following guidelines are to be utilized for pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love:
 - **Hugs:** with children age 6 through age 18, one arm side hugs or hand to arm hugs are positive contacts. Avoid initiating and try to prevent full contact or body to body hugs.
 - **Lap sitting:** Appropriate sitting on laps may occur with children age 5 or younger. Discourage lap sitting with school age children. Rather, encourage them to sit next to you.
 - **Causal touch:** Gentle contact during activities maybe on children's head, shoulders, arms, and hands. Physical discipline in never to be used.
 - **Back rubs:** Workers should refrain from giving back-rubs to anyone.
 - **Wrestling or rough-housing:** Workers should not be involved in and should discourage any "rough-housing" or wrestling.
 - **Kissing:** Kissing on the cheek or forehead may be appropriate with children age 5 and under. Kissing of any form is not appropriate with children age 6 through age 18 and must be avoided.

Supervision Policies

Supervision Policies for paid and volunteer workers with children up to age 18 (continued)

8. Discipline — All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider the child. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. ***Physical punishment is strictly forbidden.***

Special Concerns for Children Ages 5 or under

1. Youth (age 14 and older) may work with children ages 5 and under as long as there are at least two approved adults present in the room at all times.
2. Children, ages 5 and under, will be released into the care of the parent presenting the child's security card to the worker only. The child will not be released into the care of other siblings regardless of the presentation of the security card. The child will be released to another adult authorized by the parent who presents the security card to the worker in the child's' room.
3. Security System: A security system is necessary for children ages 5 and under for the safety of the child and for the parent's ease of mind. The following system will be used, updated and changed as needed:
 - ◆ Upon delivering the child into the care of our workers, the parent will be given a security card with their child's name and names of parents. (Parents or responsible adult authorized by the parent are encouraged to keep this card in a safe place until the time they pick their children up.)
 - ◆ When picking up their child, the parent or responsible adult authorized by the parents must slide security card under the door and wait patiently until the worker brings the child to the door.
 - ◆ No child will be released without the presentation of the security card.
 - ◆ If the card is lost, the parent or responsible adult authorized by the parent must go to the program director, preschool division director or the preschool assistant division director. After the parent presents the proper photo identification, a new card will be issued.

Supervision Policies

Special Concerns for Children Ages 5 or under (continued)

4. Annually parents will be required to complete a preschool form indicating any food allergies and any special care instructions for those working with their child, or when changes with the child necessitates updates.
5. Workers will follow all written instructions of the parent, being especially sensitive to children's allergies when serving food.
6. A ***notarized Medical Authorization form*** must be completed by the parents of any minor under the age of 18 in order to participate in any activity out of the normal weekly program. (This would include anytime the parents dropped off their children and then returned at a later time to pick them up. This form will remain on file in the Church office for a period of one year. Certified copies of the Medical Authorization form must be in the possession of the activity leader for all those attending. This form must be renewed annually and upon changes in any information.



Special Concerns for Children in Grades 1 through 6

- ◆ A ratio of one adult to six children shall be maintained for each outing, trip, or activity beyond the normal weekly program. Parents who have been church members for at least one year may be used to ensure this ratio, provided they have read and understand the policies for working with children and complete and sign a temporary worker information form.
- ◆ All trips, outings, and any activities beyond the normal weekly program will require a signed parental consent form for each child attending. This form must be in the possession of the activity leader before the minor, under the age of 18 may participate. At the end of the trip, outing, or activity these forms will be turned into the church office to be filed.

Supervision Policies

Supervision Policies for paid and volunteer workers with children up to age 18

Special Concerns for Children in Grades 1 through 6 (continued)

- ◆ **A *notarized Medical Authorization form* must be completed by the parents of any minor under the age of 18 in order to participate in any activity out of the normal weekly program. This would include anytime the parents dropped off their children and then returned at a later time to pick them up. This form will remain on file in the church office for a period of one year. Certified copies of the Medical Authorization form must be in the possession of the activity leader for all those attending.**
- ◆ **All adult leaders for any overnight activity, must have on file a worker information form in order to participate, unless the activity is for all parents and their children. In this case the adult leader in charge must meet this requirement.**
- ◆ **For any overnight activity, there shall be one approved adult responsible for every six children of the same sex.**
- ◆ **During any overnight activity, individuals will not be allowed to enter the sleeping accommodations of the opposite sex. Every attempt will be made to ensure that the accommodations for each sex are as far apart as possible.**
- ◆ **_____ Church shall not conduct any overnight activity for children in the third grade or younger unless their parents are with them during the entire activity.**
- ◆ **For the safety and security of our children, parents are required to pick up their children promptly at the end of the program or activity. No child will be allowed to roam inside or outside the church building. They must be in the immediate care of their parents or participating in a program.**
- ◆ **When transporting any child, safety belts and shoulder straps must be used. There may be only one child per safety belt in the vehicle.**
- ◆ **The driver of any vehicle transporting minors under the age of 18 must be at least 21 years of age.**

Supervision Policies

Supervision Policies for paid and volunteer workers with children up to age 18



Special Concerns for Youth in Grades 7 through 12

⇒ All trips, outings, and any activities beyond the normal weekly program will require a signed parental consent form for each child attending. This form must be in the possession of the activity leader before the minor, under the age of 18 may participate. At the end of the trip, outing, or activity these forms will be turned into the church office to be filed.

- ⇒ **A notarized Medical Authorization form** must be completed by the parents of any minor under the age of 18 in order to participate in any activity out of the normal weekly program. This would include anytime the parents dropped off their children and then returned at the later time to pick them up. This form will remain on file in the church office for a period of one year. Certified copies of the Medical Authorization form must be in the possession of the activity leader for all those attending. This form must be renewed annually and upon changes in any information.
- ⇒ All trips, outings, and any activities beyond the normal weekly program will require the ratio of one approved adult responsible for every five youth of the same sex. Parents who have been church members for at least one year may be used to ensure this ratio provided they have read and understood the polices for working with youth and have completed and signed a temporary worker information form.
- ⇒ In counseling with a youth, avoid being isolated. Make sure at least one other adult knows what you are doing and will periodically check up on the meeting. Use rooms with large windows in the door or keep the door open during counseling.
- ⇒ Appointments made by the adult leaders with youth must only be made with parental permission making sure the parent knows the beginning and ending time of the meeting. The meeting should only take place in a public setting.

Supervision Policies

Supervision Policies for paid and volunteer workers with children up to age 18

Special Concerns for Youth in Grades 7 through 12 (continued)

- ⇒ **At no time shall a volunteer or paid youth worker pursue a dating relationship with a youth. Youth workers must always be sensitive to youth with “crushes”.**
- ⇒ **During any overnight activity, individuals will not be allowed to enter the sleeping accommodations of the opposite sex. Every attempt will be made to insure that the accommodations for each sex are as far apart as possible.**
- ⇒ **When transporting youth, safety belts and shoulder straps must be used. There may be only one youth per safety belt in the vehicle.**
- ⇒ **Drivers for any youth activity must be at least 21 years of age.**
- ⇒ **When driving, an adult should not be alone with a youth.**

Supervision Policies

Policies for enlisting workers for preschoolers, children, and youth to age 18

1. A volunteer must be an active member of _____ Church for at least six months before being considered for a position working with preschoolers, children, or youth.
2. All new workers are required to complete the potential worker orientation course before they begin working.
3. All workers (new and existing) must fill out a worker information form which will be kept on file in a secure and confidential manner.
4. References given on the worker information form will be contacted by the office of the Minister of Education.
5. Each potential worker will be interviewed in person by the program director or division director in the area they will be serving.
6. At the completion of the process, the potential worker's name may be submitted to the Church Council for recommendation to the church body for opposition working with preschoolers, children, or youth.
7. Temporary workers (those who help once a quarter or less) must be members of _____ Church for at least one year prior to helping and will be required to complete and sign a temporary worker information form after reading and understanding all the policies for working with preschoolers, children, and youth. This temporary form will last for one church year.
8. Only members (six months or longer) of _____ Church, who have completed either the Worker Information Form or the Temporary Worker Information Form, may assume any leadership role.



Supervision Policies

Policies for enlisting workers for preschoolers, children, and youth to age 18 (continued)

9. All paid employees who work with or have direct access to children up to age 18 will be required to submit to a criminal background check before being hired.
10. Adequate records will be maintained at all times in the following manner:
 - A. Informational records on each worker shall be kept in a secure, confidential and limited access location.
 - B. Records will be updated upon any changes in a paid or volunteer worker's status.
 - C. Records shall be maintained in a simple, but clear filing system.
 - D. A periodic review of each record shall be made to ensure the accuracy of the records.
 - E. Each record shall be handled in a strictly confidential manner!



Playground Safety



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



How Safe is Your Playground?

By R. Scott Wiley

Did you know that grass, dirt, or asphalt are inappropriate surface materials for playgrounds?

1. Does your playground have a surface covering that cushions falls?

- A child falling onto a hard surface risks serious injury. Impact absorbing materials such as wood fiber, sand, pea gravel, or rubber matting, can reduce the potential for injury. Make sure the depth of the surface material is proportionate to the height of your play equipment. Provide space around and under each piece of equipment for children's potential accidents. The size of these "accident zones" depends on the type of equipment—minimum of six feet in all directions for stationary equipment with greater distances for moving equipment.

Children using improper equipment are more likely to be injured.

2. Is your playground equipment appropriate for the age of your children?

- Toddlers and young children (ages 14 months – 5years) have different abilities from older children (5years – 12). The equipment should fit your children's development levels.

Adults can monitor risk takers and handle injuries quickly.

3. Does your playground have adequate adult supervision every time children are present?

- Children should always have an adult present. Never allow children on the church playground unsupervised. Accidents can happen even with adults present.

4. Do you regularly check and maintain your equipment?

- Check the equipment monthly. Note and repair broken pieces, exposed nail heads, bolt ends, loose parts, or other hazards. Maintain the surface of the playground to keep up impact absorption.

For additional information pertaining to playground safety, contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington D.C. 20207. website: www.cpsc.gov

Playground Safety

The entire surface of a playground should be of appropriate material, but the fall zones, those areas directly under and around equipment, are the most dangerous.

Appropriate Material

There are different depth requirements for loose fill based on the height and the activity taking place on the equipment but, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the general rule is 12 inches of loose material is sufficient.

Loose Materials Advantages

- Low initial cost
- Easily installed
- Does not pulverize
- Not ideal for microbial growth
- Material is readily available
- Not susceptible to vandalism

Loose materials Disadvantages

- Requires regular maintenance
- Weather reduces cushioning potential
- Depth is displaced by use
- Can be swallowed
- Conceals animal excrement
- Conceals trash
- Spreads easily outside containment area
- Can't be installed over asphalt

Synthetic Materials Advantages

- Some can be installed over asphalt
- Low maintenance
- Consistent shock absorbency
- Not displaced by use
- Accessible to the handicapped
- Provide good footing

Synthetic materials Disadvantages

- High initial cost
- Must be used on level surfaces
- Can be flammable
- Subject to vandalism
- Rubber tiles can curl up and cause a tripping hazard

Always make sure all concrete footings are properly buried and keep in mind the climate and availability of material when selecting the surfacing material.

Playground Safety

Fall Zones

Fall zones are defined as the area under the equipment and 6 feet in all directions from the edge of the equipment. Slides and swings have different fall zones based on the height of the apparatus.

Slides:

To determine the fall zones for slides higher than 4 feet, add 4 feet to the height of the slide. For example, a 6 foot slide has a fall zone of 10 feet beyond the exit of the slide.

Swings:

For swings, the fall zone is twice the height of the cross bar or swing hanger that the swing is attached to. For example, if the swing hanger is 10 feet high, the fall zone is 20 feet in front and 20 feet in back of the swing seat when it's directly under the swing hanger.

More than 40 percent of playground injuries at schools are related to inadequate supervision

Supervision

As with all events involving children, supervision at your playground is a requirement that cannot be overlooked. There is no recommended ratio of children to adults, but a ratio similar to a classroom, such as 20 to 1, generally is considered adequate. Always keep in mind that the age of the children and children with special needs can affect the proper ratio.

In addition to keeping order at the playground, a supervisor has a number of duties.

1. Performing routine inspections of the equipment
2. Completing simple maintenance tasks.
3. Report hazards that cannot be immediately fixed. If a piece of equipment is broken and the supervisor cannot fix it, children should not be allowed to use the equipment until it is fixed.

Playground Safety

Supervision (continued)

4. Be aware of all hidden areas, crawlspaces, tunnels, boxes, and do periodic checks of those places.
5. Continuously move throughout the playground.
6. Realize that children can wander into hazardous situations in less than 1 minute.
7. Be aware that direct eye contact with a child oftentimes will halt inappropriate behavior.
8. Be aware of strangers. A playground is a common target for child abduction and molestation.
9. Stress the don't-talk-to-strangers message at the playground.

Supervisors should receive annual training on the use of the equipment and different supervision techniques, facilitating, teaching, and commanding.

Supervision Plan

A supervision plan should be tailored to the site. When developing the plan, get the children involved in creating the rules, **observe the playground in use and evaluate the site.** Once the rules are established, post them in the playground and review them with the children. Remember, a 2 – 5 year old will remember 2 or 3 rules, and children 5 and older will remember up to 5 rules. Always enforce the rules in a consistent manner.

Also, have a plan in place for when an injury occurs.

Supervisors should be trained in first aid and have a stocked first aid kit available at all times. File an injury report after all injuries. Have the child identify which piece of equipment the injury occurred on and give details of what happened.



Playground Safety

Safety

Looking back, many of the injuries at playgrounds could have been avoided with some safety precautions.

Strangulation is the leading cause of playground fatalities.

Strangulation

In many cases, drawstrings in sweatshirts, coat, or clothing become entangled in a piece of equipment. The top area of slides and higher climbing apparatus are two trouble spots.

The best way to avoid the hazard is to close all gaps in equipment, eliminate any protruding bolts or nuts and never have V-shaped openings where material or body parts can become stuck.

Entrapment

Entrapment is another key safety hazard. The general rule is all openings must be smaller than 3.5 inches or larger than 9 inches. Head entrapment occurs when the body fits through a space but the child's head does not. Young children's heads are larger than their bodies. An opening of 3.5 inches is too small to allow feet first entry and a 9 inch opening is large enough for a head to pass through.

Don't allow bike helmets to be worn while on playground equipment. The standards for head entrapment spacing do not include adequate spacing for bike helmets.

Templates

Test templates for the torso and head can be made of cardboard or wood. The torso template should measure 6.2 inches by 3.5 inches. The head template should be a circle 9 inches in diameter. Use the template to test the opening in guardrails, between ladder rungs, and openings in other pieces of equipment.

Playground Safety (continued)



Safety Tips

Platforms more than 6 feet in height should provide an intermediate standing surface where the decision to halt ascent and pursue an alternative means of descent can be made.

Guardrails or protective barriers should be in place to prevent children from falling or jumping from elevated platforms. Remember, children will come up with creative, and sometimes dangerous uses for playground equipment.

There should not be more than two swings in a bay or support structure. Swings should be at least 24 inches apart from each other and 30 inches from a side support. This also applies to tire swings.

All S-hooks on hanging or swinging equipment should be closed.

All pinch points, such as on teeter-totters, should be closed.

Partial car tires or other shock absorbing material should be embedded in the ground underneath the seats of a teeter-totter or attached to the bottom of the seats to prevent a child's limb from being crushed under the seat. Teeter-totters also can be quipped with a spring mechanism that will eliminate this risk and allow a child to use the teeter-totter alone.

Keep children off the equipment if it is wet.

Animal swings that could ram into a child should be eliminated.

Your playground also should be fenced. This will keep the children from wandering away as well as keep others out.

Playground Safety (continued)

Age Appropriate Equipment

Although many of the factors in planning a playground are important, selecting the correct equipment for the users provides the foundation on which all of your safety measures will be built.

Playgrounds should be built for two age groups, 2-5 years and 5-12 years. If both age groups will be served, the playground should be divided by a buffer zone of shrubs or benches. Children also should be directed by supervisors to the correct equipment for their age.

A 4 year old attempting to play on equipment intended for a 10 year old will find the steps and railings too far apart and will not possess the strength needed to use the equipment correctly. The majority of age inappropriate injuries occur when 1 – 4 year olds are using equipment designed for older children.

Appropriate equipment for 2 to 5 years olds

- Areas to crawl
- Low platforms with multiple access points, such as ramps and ladders
- Ramps with handles attached for grasping
- Low tables for sand, water, and manipulation of materials
- Tricycle paths with various textures
- Flexible spring rockers
- Sand area with covers
- Shorter slides

Equipment for the younger group also should be kept closer to the ground.

Playground Safety

Age Appropriate Equipment (continued)

Appropriate equipment for 5 to 12 years olds

- Rope or chain climbers on angles
- Climbing pieces
- Horizontal bars
- Cooperative pieces, such as tire swings
- Merry-go-rounds
- Seesaws
- Swings
- Slides
- Spiral slides
- Sliding poles
- Open space to run and play ball
- Semi-enclosed structures to promote fantasy play and socializing



Heavy use equipment for the older children should be spread out around the playground to avoid heavy concentration of users in a single area and improve safety. It is especially important to locate swings, slides, and merry-go-rounds in remote areas. Be careful not to locate swings too close to a fence.

Equipment recommended to avoid include: ropes that become frayed at the ends, trapeze bars, exercise rings, and trampolines.

Playground Safety

Surface

Falls from equipment account for more than 70 percent of playground injuries, and 80 percent of those occur at playgrounds with unsuitable surfaces.

Appropriate surfaces are loose fill, such as sand, pea gravel, shredded tires, wood chips or wood mulch, or synthetic surfaces, such as rubber tiles, rubber mats, or poured-in-place rubber. Inappropriate surfaces include asphalt, concrete, dirt, and grass.

Loose surfaces are less expensive to install but require more maintenance than synthetic surfaces. Loose fill must be raked, tilled, and replaced on a regular basis, especially in high traffic areas. Synthetic surfaces need to be cleaned and repaired occasionally.



There is no perfect playground surface, but surfaces need to absorb some of the force of a fall to prevent an injury.

Falls from only 1 foot can cause a concussion, and a fall from 8 feet onto dirt is equivalent to hitting a brick wall at 30 mph.

Forms



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Local Church Self-Evaluation Form

Use the following list to help your congregation assess its policy needs for the prevention of child abuse in your church. Read each statement and mark the appropriate response in the column to the right. By completing the form, you will be able to see at a glance the areas needing attention.

Statement	Yes	No	Unsure
1. We screen and check references for all paid employees, including clergy, who have significant contact with children or youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with children or youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We train at least annually all volunteer or paid workers with children or youth to understand the nature of child abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We train at least annually all volunteer or paid workers with children or youth in how to carry out our policies to prevent child abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Our workers are informed of state law requirements regarding child abuse and their responsibility for reporting incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We have a clear reporting procedure for a suspected incident of child abuse that follows the requirements of our state law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We have insurance coverage available in case a child abuse complaint occurs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. We have a clearly defined building usage strategy as a component of our child abuse prevention plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. We offer at least annual educational opportunities to parents of children and youth about how to recognize and how to reduce risks of child abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We take our policies to prevent child abuse seriously, and we are committed to their enforcement for the safety and security of all our children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Checklist

- We currently screen all paid employees, including clergy, who work with youth or children.
- We currently screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with youth or children.
- We do a reference check on all paid employees working with youth or children.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, both paid and volunteer, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse.
- We take our policies to prevent sexual abuse seriously and see that they are enforced.
- Our workers understand state law concerning child abuse reporting obligations.
- We have a clearly defined reporting procedure for a suspected incident of abuse.
- We have a specific response strategy to use if an allegation of sexual abuse is made at our church.
- We have insurance coverage if a claim should occur.
- We are prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Policies for Working With Preschoolers – Children – Youth

Enlisting Policies for Individuals (paid and volunteer) working with children up to age 18

1. A volunteer must be an active member of _____ Baptist Church for at least six months before being considered for a position working with preschoolers, children, or youth.
2. All new workers are required to complete the potential worker orientation course before they begin working.
3. All workers (new and existing) must fill out a worker information form which will be kept on file in a secure and confidential manner.
4. References given on the worker information form will be contacted by the office of the Minister of Education.
5. Each potential worker will be interviewed in person by the program director or division director in the area they will be serving.
6. At the completion of the process, the potential worker's name may be submitted to the Church Council for recommendation to the church body for a position working with preschoolers, children, or youth.
7. Temporary workers (those who help once a quarter or less) must be members of _____ Baptist Church for a least one year prior to helping and will be required to complete and sign a temporary worker information form after reading and understanding all the policies for working with preschoolers, children, and youth. This temporary form will last for one church year.
8. **Only members** (six month or longer) of _____ Baptist Church, **who have completed either the worker information form or the temporary worker information form, may assume any leadership role.**
9. All paid employees who work with or have direct access to children up to age 18 will be required to submit to a criminal background check before being hired.
10. Adequate records will be maintained at all times in the following manner:
 - *Informational record on each worker shall be kept in a secure, confidential, and limited access location.*
 - *Records will be updated upon any changes in a paid or volunteer work's status*
 - *Records shall be maintained in a simple, but clear filing system.*
 - *A periodic review of each record shall be made to ensure the accuracy of the records.*
 - *Each record shall be handled in a strictly confidential manner!*



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Childcare Worker Position Description

Position: Childcare worker in the church nursery
Reports To: Nursery Supervisor/Coordinator

General qualifications required:

1. All childcare staff members shall be of good character and be of the Christian faith.
2. All childcare staff members shall:
 - A. Be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy.
 - B. Have a basic understanding of children and their needs.
 - C. Be adaptive to a variety of situations.
 - D. Be willing to grow in their knowledge of children through periodic education and training events.
3. All childcare staff members shall have a physician's report stating that the staff member is in good health and has presented the result of a Tuberculin test.
4. _____ Church hires without regard to race, sex, or national origin.

Educational qualifications required:

All childcare staff members shall have completed the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Duties of childcare staff member:

1. Provide physical, emotional, and intellectual support and stimulation to each child in your care, as appropriate for the circumstance.
2. Provide appropriate guidance to each child in your care.
3. Develop a relationship of trust and continuity with the children in your care, which will enhance each child's development of positive self images.
4. Provide support and assistance to parents when they arrive with their child.

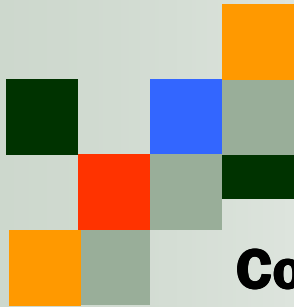
Performance expectations of a childcare staff member:

1. Be punctual. Notify the nursery supervisor in advance if you must be late.
2. Be reliable in your attendance. Notify the nursery supervisor in advance if you must be absent.
3. Attend periodic training and education events provided by the church.
4. Be polite, friendly, and courteous to others, both children and adults.
5. Do not engage in physical punishment/discipline of any child.
6. Cooperate with other childcare staff and with parents.
7. Abide by and apply the childcare policies of _____ Church at all times.

I have read the position description for childcare staff members of _____ Church and understand its contents. My signature below indicates my agreement and covenant to abide by the requirements set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Confidential Volunteer Application Form

This application is to be completed by all for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. It will help our church family provide a safe and secure environment for boys and girls.

Personal:

Name _____ Date _____

Present Address _____ SS# _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Occupation _____ Martial Status _____

On what date would you be available to begin? _____

What is your minimum length of commitment? _____

Are you over the age of 18? YES NO

Do you have a current driver's license? YES NO if yes, please list your driver's license number: _____

Have you ever been charged with, indicted for, or plead guilty to an offense involving a minor? YES NO if yes, please describe all convictions for the last Five years: _____

Were you a victim of abuse or molestation as a minor? YES NO

(If you prefer, you may refuse to answer this question. Or you may discuss your answer in confidence with one of the ministers rather than answering it on this form. Answering yes or leaving the question unanswered will not automatically disqualify you).

Church Activity

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____

When were you baptized? _____

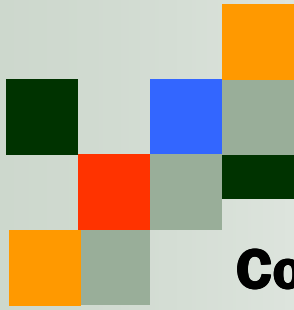
Have you joined our church? _____

If no, of which church are you a member? _____

List (name and address) other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

List previous church work involving children:

Church Name	Church Address	Type of work performed	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Confidential Volunteer Application Form (continued)

List all previous nonchurch work involving children:

Organization	Address	Telephone number/s

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for teaching children:

Personal References (not former employers or relatives)

Organization	Address	Telephone number/s

Applicant's Statement

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize references or churches listed in this application to provide information (including opinions) they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations, provided they do so in good faith and without malice.

I waive any right I might have to inspect references provided on my behalf. Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of this church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the content thereof and I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature _____	Date _____
Witness Signature _____	Date _____

I will submit to reference check and/or criminal background check. YES NO

Note: This application will be filed and locked in the care of the Children's Ministry coordinator.

Disclaimer: This form is solely for illustrative purposes. State and local laws may vary. It is recommended that each church solicit the advice of an independent and qualified attorney. Baptist Convention of MD/DE, LifeWay Christian Resources nor the Southern Baptist Convention assume any liability for reliance on this form.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Primary Screening Form Information

Below is information that you will need to gather to generate the proper screening form.

- 1. Purpose statement, safe and secure area for children. Not an employment application.**
- 2. Date**
- 3. Full name of applicant; verify with photographic identification, such as driver's license from state where church is located.**
- 4. Full local address, along with telephone number.**
- 5. Information as to type of youth or children's work desired, date when applicant can start and minimum time of commitment.**
- 6. Questions as to prior criminal convictions.**
- 7. Question as to whether applicant has been abused or molested as a minor. Allow for privacy or discussion as to this question.**
- 8. Questions concerning church membership for at least 5 years. Include all previous youth/children work. List each church's name, address, dates, and type of work.**
- 9. Questions concerning non-church work with names, address, dates, and type of work.**
- 10. Have applicant list education, gifts, etc... that prepare him/her for youth/children work.**
- 11. List of Personal References with addresses (no former employers or relatives).**
- 12. Affidavit of truth, authorization, release, and waiver.
Agreement to be bound by church rules.**
- 13. Have form signed, dated, and witnessed.**
- 14. Have applicant sign request and authorization for criminal record check.**





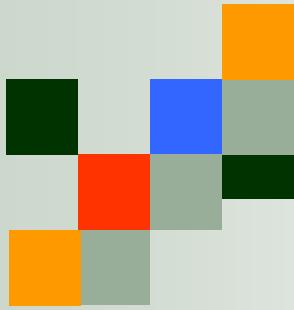
Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Confidential Reference Contact Form



Below is information that you will need to gather to generate the proper Confidential Reference Contact form.

- 1. Applicant's name.**
- 2. Reference or church contacted, if company or church, include name of person contacted.**
- 3. Contact date and time.**
- 4. Name of person who did the contacting.**
- 5. How contacted? (phone, letter, personal)**
- 6. Summary of contact. Make special notice to comments concerning fitness for children or youth work.**
- 7. Legible signature of person making contact, also position and date.**



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Employment Application

This type of application should be completed by all who seek any position that will involve the supervision and/or custody of children or youth. You should tailor the application to the specific circumstances in your congregation. However, the employment application should include, at a minimum, sections for personal identification, job qualifications, experience and background references, and a waiver/consent to a criminal records check.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Name _____

Are you over the age of 18? YES NO

Present address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Position applied for: _____

Date you are available to start: _____

Qualifications:

Academic achievements: (Schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion)

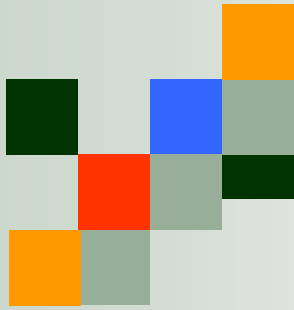
Continuing education completed: (Courses taken, dates of completion)

Professional organizations: (List any in which you have membership)

First Aid Training? YES Date Completed _____ NO

CPR Training? YES Date Completed _____ NO

Previous Work Experience: Please list your previous employers from the past five years. Include the job title, a description of position duties and responsibilities, the name of the company/employer, the address of company/employer, the name of your immediate supervisor, and the dates you were employed in each position.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Employment Application (continued)

Previous Volunteer Experience: Please list any relevant volunteer positions you have held and list the duties you performed in each position, the name of your supervisor, the address and phone number of the volunteer organization, and the dates of your volunteer service.

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, theft or motor vehicle violations?) YES NO

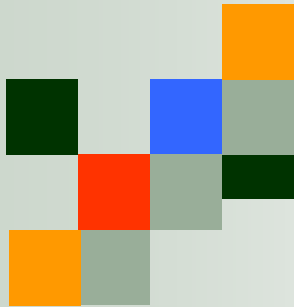
If yes, please explain: _____

References: Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. Please list people who have known you for at least three years.

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
Day Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____
Address: _____
Day Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____
Address: _____
Day Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Permission for Release of Information From Criminal Records

I hereby give my permission for the release to _____ of _____ information from law enforcement files concerning any past history of sex offenses or offenses against children with which I may have been charged or convicted.

I understand that the information to be released will concern only charges and/or convictions of carnal knowledge of a child under 14 years of age, sexual battery, seduction of a child under the age of 18, touching a child for lustful purposes, disseminating sexually oriented material to children exploitation of children, carnal knowledge of a stepchild, adopted child or a child of a cohabiting partner, or unnatural intercourse. No information will be released on any criminal record which does not relate to these particular crimes.

I understand that information will be released on any conviction, and pending charges, or any arrests if I have been arrested two or more times.

I understand that _____ has the right to require this record check as a condition of employment.

I understand that I will be sent a copy of any information released from your files pursuant to this permission form and that I have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of this information.

I understand that this information will be used only for employment purposes and will not be re-disseminated to other persons or used for any other purpose.

Name: _____ Social Security Number: _____

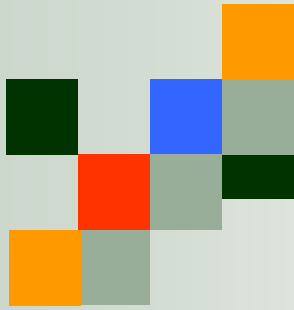
Street or Box number: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of witness: _____ Date: _____



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Form for Reference Check

Each personnel file should have a record of each contact made with previous work and church references.

Applicant Name: _____

Reference Name: _____

Reference Address: _____

Reference Phone: _____

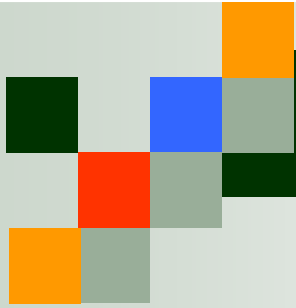
1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?
8. Do you know any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and or youth? If so, please describe.
9. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.
10. Please list any other comments you would like to make:

Reference inquiry completed by: _____

Signature

Date

This is a sample form, Please tailor it to the specific need of your local congregation.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Membership Form for the Local Church Task Force for the Prevention of Child Abuse in the Church

Pastor

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Member of Personnel Committee

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Member of Board of Trustees

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Lay Leader

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Minister of Youth/Director of Youth Ministries

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

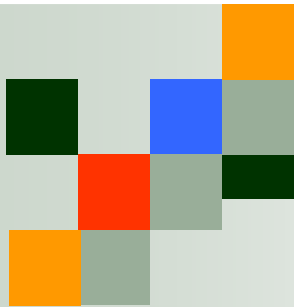
Minister of Children/Director of Children Ministries

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Director of any Weekday Program for Children

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Parental Consent Form

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name of Parent/s _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

In Case of emergency (other than parent) contact

Name: _____ Phone: _____

The undersigned does hereby give permission for our (my) child, _____
To attend the (event/activity) _____ sponsored by _____

The trip is scheduled to depart from (location) _____ on (date) _____

At (time) _____ and to return to (location) _____ by (time) _____

on (date) _____ .

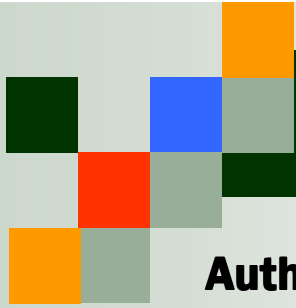
The trip/activity will be held at (location) _____

I do hereby also give my permission for the above named child to ride in any vehicle designated by the adult in whose care the minor has been entrusted, provided the child is in a safety belt and if available, a shoulder strap while participating in the activities sponsored by (name of church) _____ .

I, the undersigned, understand that this form will incorporate all the terms and conditions of the notarized Medical Authorization Form on file at the church. I also understand that if my child does not have a notarized Medical Authorization Form on file that one will be completed by me before my child will be allowed to participate.

I, the undersigned, do hereby release and forever discharge all sponsors and (name of church) _____ from any and all claims, demands, actions, or cause of action past, present, or future arising out of any damage or injury while participating in this event.

Signed _____ Date _____ Relationship to child _____



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Authorization to Consent to Health Care for Minor

I _____ of (county) _____ Maryland, am the custodial parent having legal custody of _____
A minor child, age _____ born (day/month/ year) _____

I authorize the following adult/s, in whose care the minor child has been entrusted:

Name _____ Address _____
Name _____ Address _____
Name _____ Address _____

To do any acts which may be necessary or proper for the health care of the minor child, including, but not limited to, the power (1) to provide for such health care at any hospital or other institution, or the employing of any physician, dentist, nurse, or other person to whose services may be needed for such health care, and (2) to consent and to authorize any health care, including administration of anesthesia, x-ray examination, performance of operations and other procedures by physicians, dentists, and other medical personnel except the withholding or withdrawal of life sustaining procedures.

This consent shall be effective from the date of execution to and including _____ to _____

By signing here, I indicate that I have the understanding and capacity to communicate health care decisions and that I am fully informed as to the contents of this document and understand the full import of this grant of powers to the agent/s named herein.

Date: _____ Name (Print) _____
Custodial Parent Name (Signature) _____

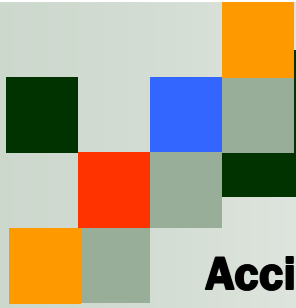
State of Maryland County of _____

On this (day) _____ of (month) _____ (name) _____ personally appeared before me the named _____ to me known and know to me to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and he/she executed the same and being duly sworn by me, made oath that the statements in the foregoing instrument are true.

Notary Public _____

My Commission Expires: _____

Official Seal



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Accident/Injury Report Form

Name of Church: _____

Address of Church: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Injured child/adult _____ Birth date _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Date of accident/injury _____ Time of accident/injury _____

Location of accident/injury _____

Conditions at accident/injury (weather, etc...) _____

Description of how accident/injury occurred _____

Description of action taken on child/adults behalf _____

Was parent/guardian advised of accident/injury? YES NO

Was parent/guardian advised to seek medical attention for injured party? _____

Name/s of person/s supervising at time of accident/injury _____

Name _____ Name _____ Name _____

Form completed by _____ Date _____

Disclaimer: This form is solely for illustrative purposes. State and local laws may vary. It is recommended that each church solicit the advice of an independent, qualified attorney. The Baptist Convention of MD/DE, LifeWay Christian Resources nor the Southern Baptist Convention assume any liability for reliance on this form.

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Preschool Room Safety Checklist



- Passageways are not blocked
- Emergency exits are marked
- Emergency cribs are identified
- Exit routes are posted
- Emergency lighting is working
- First aid kit is accessible to all rooms but out of reach of preschoolers
- Telephone is accessible in preschool area
- Outside doors are secured
- Room is well lighted
- Door and cabinet handles are secure
- Waste container is out of reach of children
- All furnishings are in good condition
- Paint or wall paper are in good condition
- All storage cabinets are attached to the wall and doors are secure
- Electrical outlets have safety covers
- Cleaning supplies are out of the reach of children
- Harmful supplies are out of the reach of preschoolers
- Water temperature does not exceed safety guidelines
- Room is free of clutter
- Toys are in good repair
- Hygiene supplies are located in each room
- Heads of cribs and doll beds are against a wall
- Adult size chairs are only in rooms with babies
- Microwaves are located away from preschoolers
- Diaper bags are out of the reach of preschoolers
- Crib slats are less than 2 3/8 inches apart
- Sharp edges in younger preschool rooms are covered

Essential for Excellence:

Connecting Preschool Sunday School to Life in *Essentials for Excellence: Connecting Sunday School to Life*



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Vacation Bible School Enrollment Form



Child's Name _____ Birth Date _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Physician _____ Phone _____

Food, fabric, or plant allergies _____

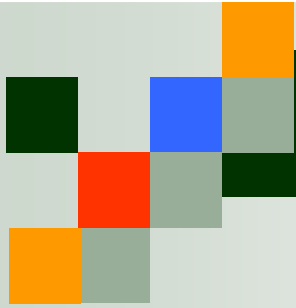
Animal allergies _____

Medical allergies _____

Do you attend church on a regular basis? YES NO

If yes, where? _____

Special notes to teacher:



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Allergy Poster

If your child is allergic to any of the ingredients listed today, please print your child's name on an adhesive notepad along with the item he/she cannot taste. Stick the note at the bottom or edge of the poster. Be sure to check this poster each day and leave a new note, if necessary. We also ask that you inform the teacher each day of your child's allergies.



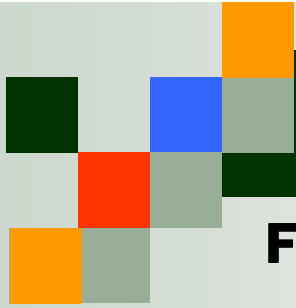
Today's Snack and Nature Items

Allergy Notes

Place notepad here

Place notepad here

Thank you, Your Child's Teachers



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Field Trip Planning Form

Date of Field trip _____ M T W TH F

Destination _____ Departure Time _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Person _____
Phone Number _____

Transportation: Bus Van Walk

Trip objectives/s

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Activity/s follow-up

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Prior experiences of children related to this field trip: _____

Have you visited this site location? YES NO

Why is this location appropriate for children? _____

Safety precaution needs for this field trip: _____

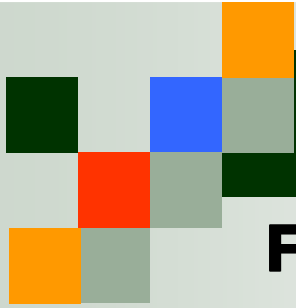
Special requirements for field trip, i.e. money (specific amount), snack/meal: _____

Name/s of persons accompanying group on the trip:

- 1. _____ 2. _____
- 3. _____ 4. _____

Attach a copy of notification to parent/s that will be distributed if the field trip is approved.

Teacher's Name _____ Date of request _____



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Field Trips

Field Trip Permission

This form must remain on file for every child in the program. No child will be allowed to leave the week day early education program without written permission.

I give my permission for my child to go on any field trip that is to be taken this year. YES NO

I would be able to help by accompanying my child's group as a helper when asked. YES NO

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Field Trip Notice

Location _____

Date _____

Departure Time _____

Returning time _____

Special Needs _____

Teacher/class name _____

Helpful Addresses



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Helpful Addresses

American Academy of Pediatrics
Division of Publications
141 North Point Blvd.
PO Box 927
Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0927
General Safety Information

Baptist Family & Children's Services
7175 Columbia Gateway Dr., Suite F
Columbia, Md. 21046
1-800-621-8834

Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 2301
Matthews, NC 28106-9882
1-800-222-1840

Church Mutual Insurance Co.
3000 Schuster Lane
PO Box 357
Merrill, WI 54452-9988

Kaplan School Supply Corp.
PO Box 609
Lewisville, NC 17023-0609

American Red Cross
Baltimore Headquarters
4700 Mount Hope Drive
Baltimore, Md. 21215
410-764-7000

**Center for Disease Control
& Prevention (CDC)**
for the ABC of Safe or Healthy
Child Care or contact: Public
Health Foundation
Attention: Order Department
PO Box 753
Waldorf, Md. 20604
1-800-41TRAIN to order with credit
Cards. 1-301-843-0159 to send
Purchased order by fax.

Department Safe Toys
PO Box 17
Long Beach, CA 90801
Choke Tester

Christian Ministry Resources (address listed above)

CDC National AIDS Hotline
1-800-342-AIDS

Risk Management Handbook for Churches and Schools
James F. Cobble, Jr. & Richard R. Hammar

Selecting & Screening Church Workers
James F. Cobble, Jr.

Safety Checklists for Churches and Schools
James R. Cobble Jr.

Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse (1&2 training resources)
Trainers Guide Video Tape/Trainees. Steven W. Klipowicz

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Helpful Addresses

Johnson & Johnson Parenting Videos
PO Box 45119
Jacksonville, FL 32232-9916

Lead Free Kids, Inc.
110 E. 31 Street
Box 8595
Minneapolis, MN 55408-0595
Lead prevention brochures

Maryland Department of Human Services
Saratoga State Center
311 W. Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Md
410-767-7414 (General Information)
410-767-7805 (Child Care Administration)

NAEYC (National Assoc. for the Education of Young Children)
1834 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, DC 20009
1-800-424-2460

National Child Abuse Hotline
National Lead Information
Clearinghouse
1-800-422-4453

National Poison Center Network
125 DeSota Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Poison Information

NLS Specialties
PO Box 1897
2111 Kennesaw Due West Rd.
Kennesaw, GA 30144
Child Medical Information
Diaper Bag Tags

National Recreation and Parks Association
National Playground Safety Institute
2775 South Quincy St. Suite 300
Arlington, Va. 22206
1-703-820-4940

Office of Information & Public Affairs
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington DC 20207
publications@cpsc.gov
For publications on: toy safety, children's safety, playground equipment, children's furniture, poison prevention, fire safety, electrical safety, indoor air safety, and more.

Outdoor Recreation, Inc.
3828 Bloomingdale Rd.
Kingsport, TN 37660
1-800-634-9374
(ask for playground 101 and playground audit guide—both free)

Resources for Infant Educators
1550 Murray Circle
Los Angeles, Ca 90206
1-213-664-5330





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Helpful Addresses

Risky Business

Church Hiring and Volunteer Selection
A Legal and Policy Guide
Lynn Robert Buzzard, Esq.
Susan Edwards

Baptist State Convention of NC

PO Box 1107
Cary, NC 27512-1107

Safe Place (book) Edited by Marv Parker
Guidelines for Creating an Abuse-Free
Environment (cd-rom included)

Christian Publications, Inc.

Camp Hill, PA
www.christianpublications.com

The First Three Years

PO box 36
Newton, MA 02195

The Guardian System

David Middlebrook

Toy Manufacturers of America

PO Box 866
Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10159
Send self-addressed envelope for safe toys
booklet

The Soap and Detergent Association

"The ABC's of Clean"
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

US Consumer Product Safety Commission

Publication Request
Office of Information and Public Affairs
**US Consumer Product Safety
Commission**

Washington DC 20207
Hotline: 800-638-2772
publications@cpsc.gov

For publications on: toy safety, children's
safety, playground equipment, children's
furniture, poison prevention, fire safety,
electrical safety, indoor air safety, and
more.

Legal Issues Resources

**Toward 2000: Leading Preschoolers in
Sunday School**, Convention Press, 1995,
\$4.95

**Toward 2000: Leading Preschoolers in
Sunday School Packet**, Convention Press,
1995, \$12.95.
1-800-458-2772

Effective Church Committee Work,
Convention Press, 1996, \$12.95 Contains
Volunteer Screening Form.
1-800-458-2772

**Growing Together: Sunday School Leader
Enlistment Campaign Kit**,
Convention Press, 1996, \$12.95 contains
Volunteer Screening Form
1-800-458-2772



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Helpful Addresses

Law and Church

\$10.00 annually, published quarterly.
Center provides legal information to churches and other non-profit organizations
Chris Doss, Director
**Center for the Study of Law and the Church,
Cumberland School of Law,
Samford University
Birmingham, AL. 35229-7015
1-800-888-7303**

Risky Business: A Legal and Policy Guide

Campbell College Church-State Resources Center, 1994. \$10.00 Contains information on hiring and volunteer selection. Order from George Shore,
**Baptist Convention of NC
PO Box 1107
Cary, NC, 27512-1107**

Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

\$49.95 Kit contains video, book, training manual, and cassette tape.
**Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 1098
Matthews, NC 28106
1-800-222-1840**

Church Law & Tax Report, bi-monthly

newsletter. \$39.00 annually
**Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 1098
Matthews, NC 28106
1-800-222-1840**

Church Law & Tax Report, CD-Rom

\$99.00 annually
**Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 1098
Matthews, NC 28106
1-800-222-1840**

Guidelines for Infectious Disease Policy and Procedures to Help Mississippi Churches

, \$50.00 plus postage
**Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
PO Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205
1-601-968-3800**

Developing Policies on AIDS and Infectious Diseases

**Florida Baptist Convention
1230 Hendricks Ave
Jacksonville, FL 32207
1-904-396-2351**

Serving Children with HIV Infection in Day Care, 1991 \$11.95

**Child Welfare League of America
440 First St. NW Suite 310
Washington DC 20001-2085
1-908-225-1900**

Model Child Care Health Policies (#716), 1993,

**NAEYC
1509 16th St.
Washington DC 20036-1426
1-800-424-2460**

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Helpful Addresses

HIV/AIDS: A Challenge to Us All

Free Contains two videos and guide book

Pediatric AIDS Foundation

1311 Colorado Ave
Santa Monica, CA 90404
1-310-395-9051

Handbook for Playground Safety, **US Consumer Product Safety Commission**

Washington DC 20207
1-404-730-2870

The Protection Series, A series of five booklets
on church liability risks, child abuse,
safety etc.

Church Mutual Insurance Co.

300 Schuster Lane
Merrill, WI 54452
1-715-536-5577

Child Safety Program

\$149.95 Word Contains manual,
cassette, video.
1-800-933-9670 ext 2037

Child Health Alert Newsletter, \$29.00
annually. Newsletter evaluates the latest
developments that affect the health and safety
of children.

PO Box 610228
Newton Heights, MA 02161
1-617-239-1762

Online Screening

Christian Ministry Resource

www.screenchurchstaff.com
704-821-3845

Screen Now

800-310-2558
www.screennow.com

Brotherhood Mutual

www.brotherhoodmutual.com
888-606-7869

Special pricing for Brotherhood Mutual
customers

Playground Safety

US Consumer Product Safety
www.cpsc.gov

General Information

www.churchlawtoday.com

Center for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov

Christian Publications

www.christianpublicatons.com



Summary



Ages: Birth to 18 years

By *June Holland*

Safety and Security Materials Assembled by
The Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

In Conclusion...

Every church should consider a process for managing risk. Even though risk management has many components, every church can follow a few simple guidelines to minimize risks involved in ministering to children. When putting a plan into place, consider consulting your church's legal counsel as well as your insurance agent for advice.



Safety and security issues are two priority considerations in risk management relating to children. Any guidelines set for the child should be included in a set of policies and adopted by the church. Consider the following when setting policy regarding safety and security with children.

Providing for children at church always has risks

Six month rule: A person must be an active member of the church for a minimum of 6 months before working with children. You may choose to put in place a 12-month rule.

Screening: Every person, paid or volunteer, who wishes to work with children, needs to complete an application form, participate in an interview, and be willing for the church to conduct a criminal background check.

Two adult rule: There should always be a minimum of two nonrelated adults working with children. A husband and wife team would be considered as one adult.

Doors with window: Every room in which children meet needs to have a window in the door or some means by which to see into the room.

Negligence: This is one of the main reasons churches are being sued. To lessen the risk of being sued for negligence, take time to think about every activity or program provided for children.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

In Conclusion...

Negligence (continued)

Consider every aspect of the program and where dangers exist. *List potential hazards and decide what actions need to take place to correct the problem. Ask yourself questions like these.*

1. Does the equipment in the room have sharp edges?
2. Are there steps or other such hazards on which children can fall or trip?
3. Can chairs and tables easily be knocked over?
4. Is a regular maintenance schedule followed on vans or buses used to transport children?
5. Is the driver of a van or bus properly licensed?
6. Are there enough adults in the room or on the bus with the children? A proper adult/child ratio needs to be followed.
7. Is there opportunity for an adult to be alone with a child? There shouldn't be.
8. Are there any objects in the room with parts small enough to break off and become a choke hazard?
9. Is equipment properly maintained and in good working condition?
10. Are accurate records kept?
11. Do you have emergency plans in place? Are exit routes and contingency plans in place in case of fire, earthquake, tornado, or other major disasters?
12. Do you have plans for communicating with parents in case of such an emergency?
13. If snacks are served, are you aware of allergies or other hazards, such as choking, related to food items?

Avoidance: Be able to say no to an activity or program if it does not fit into your church mission and purpose.

Modification: Trying to gain control of an activity to minimize injury or accident.

Retention: Identify areas in which the church is willing to self insure. The church needs to have money available to cover things not covered by insurance, avoidance, or modification.

Transfer: Plan for ways to transfer responsibility away from the church. One of the easiest ways to do this is to have adequate insurance coverage. Your church insurance agent can help you.

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry



Leadership Enlistment and Child Abuse Policies

- All teachers are 18 years of age.
 - Complete a Confidential Worker Application Form along with permission for a background check (www.lifeway.com/staff_p0001.asp)
 - Member of the church for at least six months.
 - Approved by the Children's Director and church.
-
- Check with the church insurance policy and your church attorney before using youth as teachers.
 - A minimum of two adult (not from the same family) teachers are with the children at all times in room, during rotation, during restroom breaks, and while transporting children.
 - Pupil/leader ratio is maintained at all times (see *Preschool Sunday School for a New Century* and *Children's Sunday School for a New Century*).
 - Classroom doors have small windows for viewing the room.
 - All teachers and leaders receive a written job description and training and policies and procedures for teaching, security, child protection, and how to respond to and report child abuse (even when the truth cannot be determined).
 - Church staff or designated church leader monitors all activities and ministry sites both on and off the church property.
 - Employed leaders are provided detailed job descriptions to prevent employees from acting beyond the scope of their authorized authority.
 - Require that there be no unsupervised cross-gender contact. For instance, don't allow a male teacher alone with a female youth or child.
 - Children will be in a room only when a teacher is present. No children will be in rooms alone.
 - A designated staff member investigates and confronts any inappropriate behavior.
 - Leaders and teachers should not present themselves as a professional or licensed counselor unless they have received a psychological training and licensing data from an accredited institution.

The Safety and Security Challenge

Children and leaders alike can have a better week when the environment is safe and everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency.

Safety and security issues should be a part of every worker's training experience.

Here are some tips to help you insure your event is as safe and secure as possible.

Safety

Even though we don't want to think about it, accidents do happen. However, you can take precautions to prevent as many potential accidents as possible. Before the first day of an event, perform a safety walk through both the inside and outside of your church campus, especially areas that will be used by preschoolers and children. Check for the following:

Inside

- Stocked, readily available first aid kits. Make sure all workers know the location of first aid kits and telephones.
- Emergency numbers are clearly posted next to every telephone.
- The names of leaders who are certified in first aid and CPR identified and posted.
- Fire exits are marked and easily accessible.
- Safety plugs are placed in exposed outlets.
- Furnishings and equipment are in sound working order.
- Chair and table legs are stable, screws are tight and nails are unexposed.
- Toys and resources are appropriate for each age group and are free of loose parts or jagged edges.
- Carpet is free of holes and frayed edges.
- Disinfectant and cleaning supplies are stored out of the reach of preschoolers and children.
- Rooms are free from items within a child's reach that could be choking hazards.
- Plants in the rooms are nontoxic.

Safety and security is everyone's responsibility, but especially the leaders.



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

The Safety and Security Challenge

Safety (continued)

Outside

- Playground equipment is checked for loose screws, exposed nails, cracked plastic, or broken metal.
- Swings are tight and in working order.
- Ground coverings (mulch, gravel, sand) under swings and other equipment are of adequate depth to provide proper cushion.
- Fence latches are in working order.
- Grounds are clean and free of holes, broken tree limbs, protruding objects, and toxic plants.
- Passenger unloading and loading areas are clearly marked.
- Sufficient outdoor lighting is available for night events.

Security

Security measures should be strengthened because of the additional numbers of children and adults going in and out of the building during a typical event day. Consider the following guidelines:

- Begin or reinforce existing security procedures during the event.
- Release children and preschoolers only to authorized persons. Make notations on enrollment cards as to who is authorized to pick up each child.
- Consider distributing cards with the kid's names when they arrive in the morning. Release them only to persons presenting a card.
- Children should be well supervised and leaders should make sure all children are picked up after the event, are on the proper bus, or otherwise cared for.
- Consider having a security team to monitor the facility during the event.

F.Y.I

1. Enlist a member of the church with medical experience to serve as the event nurse.
2. Create and enforce a "two person rule" that requires at least two adults to be with anyone under the age of 18 at all times.
3. Create a fire and emergency evacuation plan, and train all workers on how the plan works.

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Security and General Policies

- ◆ **Make sure that your church has adequate insurance coverage** by having an attorney knowledgeable in insurance and liability matters review your coverage before beginning.
- ◆ Have parents complete a **“Child's Information Sheet”** with accurate information. Issue each parent a security card for their child. Parent/s need to present their security card when picking up their child. No child will be released to anyone less than 18 years of age.
- ◆ Parents will sign their child in and out when arriving and upon departure.
- ◆ Persons other than the teachers and children remain outside the room.
- ◆ Adequate number of children will be maintained in the room according to space as well as teacher/pupil ratio.
- ◆ Teachers are to be in the room **20 minutes before** the session is to begin. They begin teaching when the first child arrives and continue until the last child leaves.
- ◆ Enrollment cards are completed for each child coming to class. Parents are given, in written form, the daily schedule.
- ◆ Attendance sheets are kept for each day.
- ◆ **In counseling situations, take all threats and discussions of suicide seriously.** Refer a potentially suicidal person to a qualified professional counselor for immediate help. Document your recommendations to the person in written form at the time they are made and follow up to see that he or she gets adequate help.
- ◆ Inform parents and obtain their permission to photograph their child if photographs are taken during a session/event.





Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Defensive Policies

**Number one defense is education. Overcome the feeling
“it could never happen here.”**

Nursery Schedule:

- ⇒ Post schedule one month in advance
- ⇒ Notify assigned worker a day before to avoid last minute hunt for volunteers
- ⇒ Workers in nursery are to arrive early
- ⇒ Nursery open during all church functions

“Abuse Proof” Your Children’s Rooms:

- ⇒ Windows in classroom doors
- ⇒ Dutch doors in nursery
- ⇒ Lock all out of the way rooms and closets
- ⇒ Have baby changing tables in plain view
- ⇒ Children should use bathroom prior to service
- ⇒ Children should never use bathroom alone during service
- ⇒ Ushers should circulate during service

Church Protection Policies:

- ⇒ No one allowed to work alone in nursery
- ⇒ No teams of works from the same family (husband/wife, mother/son)
- ⇒ Usher should call parent, if necessary, not worker
- ⇒ Only approved workers or substitutes allowed in rooms
- ⇒ Allow only parents to retrieve children from nursery
- ⇒ Do not permit any child to leave room with anyone at anytime without parent

Screen Volunteers:

- ⇒ Questionnaire
- ⇒ Personal interview
- ⇒ Background check
- ⇒ Supervised trial period — personality, chronically late, more interested in talking than in child’s well being, unwilling to abide by rules.

Steps for Securing a Safe Environment

- ⇒ **Raise the church's awareness of dangers seminars**
- ⇒ **Training**
- ⇒ **Screening Volunteers**
- ⇒ **Denying Access**
- ⇒ **Be alert to abnormal behavior**
- ⇒ **Educate children**
- ⇒ **Elevate Preschool and Children's Programs**
- ⇒ **Abuse proof your building**
- ⇒ **Two adults in every room**
- ⇒ **No family members alone**
- ⇒ **Only assigned workers in rooms**



Checklist of Steps to Lower Risk

To eliminate a “negligent hiring” risk:

- ◆ Get a criminal records check.
- ◆ Follow other safeguards.
- ◆ Apply all rules to volunteers.
- ◆ Use the “six-month” rule (prospect must be a member of the church for at least one year).
- ◆ Develop and use a screening form.
- ◆ Verify information:
 - Check motor vehicle records
 - Randomly verify other information
 - Check with police for background records
 - Call the prospects former church

To eliminate a “negligent supervision” risk:

- ◆ Develop and post a policy (sample provided) for all adult caregivers:
 - Use the “two adult” rule
 - Exercise constant vigilance
 - Include an appropriate touching policy
- ◆ Post all policies conspicuously.
- ◆ Educate staff, boards, and volunteers.
- ◆ Report apparent abuse or molestation immediately and include procedure in the written policy.
- ◆ Obtain the local state rules and post them.
- ◆ Learn the rules for ministers regarding permissive or mandatory reporting.
- ◆ Find out if a minister’s reporting is covered by immunity. If not, ask for the local state rules on anonymous reporting.
- ◆ Let volunteers know they can make the church liable for their actions.
- ◆ Have adequate staffing.
- ◆ Use parental release/consent forms.
- ◆ Post emergency procedures, have first aid supplies and guidelines.

Checklist of Steps to Lower Risk

To eliminate a “negligent supervision” risk: (continue)

- ◆ Use claim checks for the nursery.
- ◆ Inspect nursery and Sunday School equipment, toys and furniture regularly
- ◆ Go through a “safety check” for each church activity (sample checklist provided).
- ◆ Get adequate insurance coverage:
 - ⇒ Cover volunteers
 - ⇒ Cover non-owned, non-hired vehicles
 - ⇒ Cover activities off church premises
- ◆ Get a “comfort letter” from the insurance company (sample request provided) that includes:
 - ⇒ A specific list of what is covered
 - ⇒ A specific list of what is not covered
 - ⇒ The specific policy cost each year
- ◆ Write out a policy (sample provided) for handling incidents of abuse and/or molestation:
 - ⇒ Assume innocence where two adults are present
 - ⇒ Talk to a lawyer and an insurance company representative
 - ⇒ Implement a procedure for investigation that includes psychological testing for the possibility of false accusations and/or emotional transference
 - ⇒ Give notification to parties. Establish the scriptural criteria for decisions
 - ⇒ Keep records and take notes for church records
 - ⇒ Maintain a back up file for preventive steps taken by the church
 - ⇒ Tap into the knowledge and experience database of the denomination and others
 - ⇒ Reach out to the family

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Transportation and Field Trips

Requirements for transporting minors vary from state to state. *Check with your state Department of Public Safety and Department of Human Services for day care requirements. Have adequate insurance and abide by coverage rules.*

Drivers must be 21 years of age, be screened and interviewed by church. Have a background check performed and a valid driver licenses for vehicle on file in the church office.

Driver must be:

1. medically and physically fit
2. not use tobacco products or drugs
3. and have not been arrested for DUI
4. have recently reviewed state laws
5. and have had their driving approved by the church transportation committee or staff

Pupil/teacher ratio is maintained as required by state law. **Sponsors are at least 18 years of age.**

Vehicle/s are inspected and adequately loaded with proper number of passengers. Checklist is used to account for person when loading and unloading.

Safety rules are reviewed with passengers before vehicle is in operation and abided by during the trip.

Field trip is scheduled and approved by the director and church. Written transportation route is on file in the church office, and each driver is given a copy of route and person in his/her vehicle.

Parents complete and sign permission slip and health form. **Each passenger's form is in the vehicle in which he/she travels.** Coordinator of trip has copy of the forms with him/her.

A Red Cross recommended first aid kit and an approved fire extinguisher are in each vehicle.



Transportation and Field Trips Checklist

Requirements for transporting minors vary from state to state. **Check with your state department of Public Safety and Department of Human Services for day care requirements.** Have adequate insurance and abide by coverage rules.

- Drivers must be **21** years of age.
- Be screened and interviewed by church.
- Have background checks.
- Have valid driver licenses for vehicle on file in the church office.
- Be medically and physically fit.
- Not use tobacco products or drugs.
- Have not been arrested for a DUI.
- Have recently reviewed state laws.
- Have had their driving approved by the church transportation committee or staff.
- Pupil/teacher ratio is maintained as required by state law.
- Sponsors are at least **18** years of age.
- Vehicle/s are inspected and adequately loaded with proper number of passengers.
- Checklist is used to account for persons when loading and unloading.
- Safety rules are reviewed with passengers before vehicle is in operation and abided by during the trip.
- Field trip is scheduled and approved by the director and church.
- Written transportation route is on file in the church office.
- Each driver is given a copy of route and person in his/her vehicle.
- Parents complete and sign permission slip and health form.
- Each passenger's form is in the vehicle in which he/she travels.
- Coordinator of trip has a copy of the forms with him/her.
- A Red Cross recommended first aid kit and an approved fire extinguisher are in each vehicle.

Disaster and Emergencies

Keep emergency evacuation plans for fire, violence, chemical spills, natural disasters (tornados, earthquakes, mudslides, storms and other emergencies) posted in rooms and hallways. Train teachers what their responsibilities are in the event of any emergency.

Keep emergency equipment and supplies (fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, smoke alarms, flashlights, first aid equipment) available, and in working order. Don't forget to train teachers in their use.

Check with your local fire department, insurance company, and building code agency to make sure that your church meets fire and building codes.

Mark a designated crib for evacuating babies. Make sure this crib goes through all doorways easily. Reinforce crib springs with wood or metal strips so the crib will hold several babies at once. Check to see that the crib rolls well when weighted with several babies.

Keep fire extinguishers, alarms, and sprinklers in good working order. Educate teachers on their usage.

When storms approach, assign one person the responsibility of listening to the weather on an **NOAA Weather radio** with battery back up. If evacuation is necessary, an assigned person will give the plan for evacuating to a designated place.

Have flashlights available for power outages.

In case of an earthquake, gather children in a doorway, under a desk or heavy table, or stand flat against an interior wall. Once shaking has stopped, staff will give directions for evacuation.

If an explosion occurs, follow the plan you follow for fires. **In case of gunfire, secure the door and hide the children under a table, in a closet, or in corner. Stay away from windows and visibility to outside. Do not leave the room for any reason until the police have searched the building and given you permission to leave.**

Speakers in Preschool Rooms



Some well meaning people think that speakers should be put in preschool rooms to enable preschool teachers to hear the pastor's sermons.

The motive for such a suggestion is often one of concern for adults in the preschool rooms. The results of such an action, however, are negative.

These questions need to be asked prior to installing speaker in a preschool room:

1. Why are teachers there during the worship service?

⇒ Teachers are there to teach the preschoolers about God. They are missing the worship service, but a teacher would not want a speaker interrupting what he/she is doing.

2. What will speakers add to the preschool learning environment?

⇒ Speakers will add noise. Speakers will add distractions to teacher and children, and accidents are more likely to happen. Speakers may communicate to the church that what is going on in worship is important but that teaching preschool is not. The same reasons for not installing speakers apply to television monitors in preschool rooms. Perhaps cassette tapes of the worship services could be made available to extended teachers to listen to later at home.

Child/Youth Protection Policy update: Background & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why is our church required to get involved in the issues of child abuse/neglect, etc...? Is this a legal requirement?

Background: Based on media reports, it would appear that more than ever churches are being sued in court, as taking a dispute to court is now part of the American culture. Their biggest concern legally, in general, is sexual misconduct, with a focus on incident of child molestation. There are preventive steps that churches can take to stay out of court, or in the event of litigation, demonstrate that precautions were taken.

Church leaders need to be familiar with the ever changing state of child abuse reporting laws and to understand:

1. What is reportable child abuse in my state?
2. Who are mandatory reporters of child abuse?
3. Where do I report?
4. How are allegations to be handled while under investigation?

How much screening is necessary?

The quick answer is that no amount of screening is enough when you get a lawsuit delivered to your door. However, courts in this country have ruled that what is needed is very minimal. An application process that includes reference checks. Amazingly, research results published by Christianity Today indicates that **70 percent of churches are doing absolutely nothing to screen volunteer youth/children workers.**

Child/Youth Protection Policy Update: Background & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (continued)

The “two adult” rule has been a topic of much discussion in this updating process. It’s important to make the distinction between what is required for the specific ministry of the CDC (subject to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), 07.04.02, Child Care Center Licensing). We have based the “two adult rule” recommendation on group size/supervision ratios as outlined in COMAR (.31 Group Size and Staffing).

Isn't liability insurance supposed to provide coverage?

Liability insurance has exclusions, coverage limits, and conditions. Liability insurance is not an excuse for adequate volunteer screening and supervision policies.

**Hammer, R. 2003. “Law and Disorder: Why your church might end up before a judge and jury, and what you can do to prevent it”. Christianity Today, April 28, 2003.*

Understanding Legal Terms

Charitable Immunity/Religious Freedom: Idea or concept that churches and other non-profit organizations are exempt from law suits. Some states do limit liability but most churches can be sued and are not exempt.

Tort: Refers to activities which cause injury to another person or their property. Negligence is the most common tort. This could be something you do or fail to do. A defamation of character or breach of confidentiality are examples.

Standard of Care: Accepted course or conduct or an accepted way to do a certain task the violation of which could be negligent. Law may impose a legal way to conform to the standard of care. Examples: driving the posted speed but you may still be stopped if speed is not correct to weather conditions, lack of proper ratio of teachers to children.

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Understanding Legal Terms (continued)

Reasonable Person: “Mythical” person who always acts reasonably and appropriately. The “perfect” person who sets the standard of care by which your action will be judged. This person thinks about everything that could happen and prepares for it.

Negligence: Conduct which creates an unreasonable risk of harm to another person of property and results in foreseeable harm. Failure to exercise reasonable care. Examples: careless driving, failure to screen volunteers, failure to maintain equipment, or failure to supervise employees or volunteers.

Liability: Legal accountability. The plaintiff must show standard of care, conduct “below care”, damages, causation of injury.

Damages: Harm done to person or property. Damages normally are categorized as compensatory or punitive. Compensatory damages are designed to make the person whole. Punitive damages are designed to punish a person/corporation.

Infant: Person under the age of majority (normally 18). The law imposes a high standard of care when infants are involved. Law does recognize children at different ages understand risk differently. A 14 year old has better knowledge of risk that a 9 year old but is still consider an “infant.”



Inherently Dangerous: Activity that by its very nature is capable of causing significant harm or injury. Examples: swimming, white water rafting.

Attractive Nuisance: Conditions which are attractive to a child, who is unable to appreciate the danger. Examples: a pond, swimming pool, unlocked playground, or a ladder left unattended.

10 Pointers for Avoiding Church Litigation

1. Learn the rules.
2. Use the preventive forms, policies, and procedures we've developed for you.
3. Do not assume your new program is being carried out. Check and re-check and have someone in charge of assuring that all the steps are always being followed.
4. **Keep records!** Remember the words of another attorney "*Should you get into court the rule is, if you can't prove it, it doesn't exist!*" That means all your preventive measures and precautions must be in writing, backed up by credible testimony of witnesses. Keep a special file cabinet that details all the proof you will need if a problem should ever occur. Otherwise, it's as if you never took any steps at all. The other side of the coin is, do not say, or do anything you would not want to have to explain in a court of law.
5. Educate your staff, church boards, and volunteers to make them aware of the rules, and the policies the church has developed for them.
6. Avoid intense emotions when a problem occurs. Instead, review the rules, and carefully follow them.
7. **Take action if a problem occurs, or when a warning sign exists, or even if you merely have a question.** Call your attorney or insurance company immediately, do not wait until it is too late to take important measure. Keep an attorney on retainer, and make sure your insurance company representation knows, respects, and is responsive to the needs of your church.
8. Evaluate risks and determine what risks your church is prepared to assume. Some church activities may not be worth the risk involved. You may need to consider alternative activities.
9. Plan for outreach to the affected family. After receiving counsel from both your attorney and insurance carrier you should concentrate on ministering to those affected. The goal is not to prevent a lawsuit but to bring the healing power of Christ to the situation. Once you have received proper guidance from your attorney and insurance representative you may proceed to do the job of ministry as they carry out their responsibilities to you and your church.
10. Prepare for a loss. When all else fails, solid insurance coverage is the best backup plan. Be sure your legal costs are covered, as well as any court judgment against the church.

Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

The ALWAYS Rules of The Guardian System

Always remember that child molesters and abusers never look like criminals.

Always report anything that looks like child abuse, seems suspicious, or make you feel uncomfortable.

Always be with at least one other adult when working with children. This is called the "two adult" rule.

Always remember that everyone in the classroom must be screened. Do not allow visitors or parents who have not been screened to remain in the room.

Always make certain that touch is age-level appropriate and is for the purpose of encouragement and affirmation. A sideways hug placing your hand on the child's shoulder or head is an example of appropriate touching.



The NEVER Rules of The Guardian System

Never go into a lavatory with a child without another adult. Always follow the "two adult" rule.

Never go into a lavatory with a child of the opposite sex.

Never release a child to an adult who is not the parent who properly checked in the child. Always ask for proper identification.

Never touch a child inappropriately. Do not slap children, push them, or touch them in a private area.

Never go behind closed doors with a child.

*Taken from *The Guardian System*, David Middlebrook



Safe Environments for Children's Ministry

Checklist

- We currently screen all paid employees, including clergy, who work with youth or children.
- We currently screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with youth and children.
- We do a reference check on all paid employees working with youth and children.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, both paid and volunteer, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse.
- We train all of our staff who work with children or youth, both paid and volunteer, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse.
- We take our policies to prevent sexual abuse seriously and see that they are enforced.
- Our workers understand state law concerning child abuse reporting obligations.
- We have a clearly defined reporting procedure for a suspected incident of abuse.
- We have a specific response strategy to use if an allegation of sexual abuse is made at our church.
- We have insurance coverage if a claim should occur.
- We are prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.