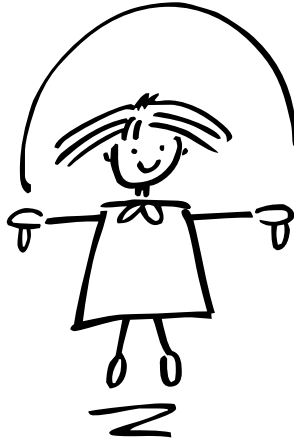


Protecting our Church and Children: What church leaders must know



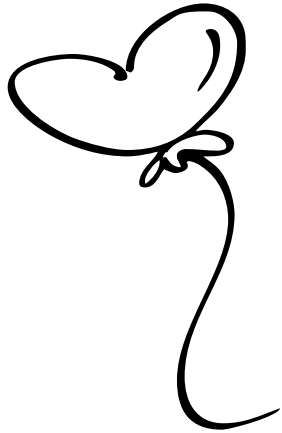
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Why do You Need to Protect Your Church and Children?

Although North Carolina churches are as diverse as its people, they all share a common interest in following scriptural dictates. Matthew 18:5 (NIV) tells us, “Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.” As we follow this dictate to welcome children (and thus God’s presence) into our churches, we assume a legal liability to exercise reasonable care in their safety and treatment. In today’s litigious society, this is not a small undertaking. Churches can be deemed liable for both actions they take as well as actions they fail to take. Fortunately, those things, which we can reasonably do to safeguard the children entrusted to our care also offer protection to our churches against successful claims of negligence. Developing and implementing policies that address leadership, environment, safety, security, and hygiene issues is an effective method of protecting both our church and our children.

This information has been developed specifically with North Carolina churches in mind. Where applicable, North Carolina childcare regulations have been met or exceeded in the recommendations offered. It would be a very strong defense to any allegation of negligence to show that the church acted consistently with state established standards and regulations.

The recommendations in this document are applicable to all areas of ministry that a church might offer to preschoolers and children such as Bible teaching, missions education, music, weekday education, etc. There are additional state regulations that licensed childcare facilities must follow. While it is by no means an exhaustive inventory, it is our hope that the information presented here will tell you as a church leader much of what you must know to successfully protect your church and children.

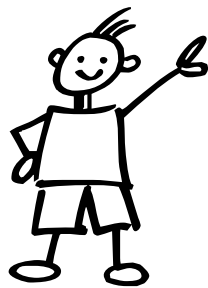
If you need further assistance, contact the Preschool and Children Ministry Team of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina at (800) 395-5102, ext. 433 or jhaywood@bscnc.org.

God’s blessings on you as you safely welcome children into your church family.

Definitions

Preschoolers: Children from birth to kindergarten or five years of age

Children: Children from 6-11 years of age or grades 1-6



Leadership

Possibly the most difficult, but most important aspect of protecting preschoolers and children is in the area of leadership. It is both a legal and moral obligation of churches to ensure that children are entrusted to the care of qualified adults. Safeguarding this obligation requires a system of initial screening, clear responsibilities, on-going training, and adequate staffing.

Screening of Leadership

Checking backgrounds of potential leaders is essential to protecting preschoolers and children from abusers or sexual predators. This is equally important whether the leader is a paid employee or a volunteer. *Time Magazine* (April 29, 2002, p. 43) estimates that 4 percent of the adult population are sexually interested in children (pedophilia), so this is an alarmingly widespread threat.

Currently there is no central agency to process criminal background checks and coordinate information in all 50 states, so the process is often difficult and costly, but vitally important. Links to every state's registry of sexual offenders can be found at <http://sexualpredators.com/>. These registries rely on the offender to report their change of address, so they are often incomplete or inaccurate.

Churches can be found legally liable of negligence if they do not exercise reasonable care in the selection of volunteers, as well as paid leadership, since one is as likely as the other to perpetrate abuse of a child.

Licensed childcare centers in North Carolina require a certified criminal history check from the Clerk of Superior Court's office in the county where the individual resides, a signed "Authority for Release of Information" form provided by the NC Division of Child Development, a fingerprint card using SBI form FD-258, and a signed statement declaring under penalty of perjury if he or she has been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation. If the individual has lived in NC for less than five consecutive years immediately preceding the date the fingerprint card is completed, a second fingerprint card

needs to be submitted in order to complete a national check. All of this information is required to be processed through the NC Division of Child Development and may take several weeks.

Churches should establish screening programs aimed at preventing individuals who have a history or intent to abuse children from being placed in a position where they have access to children. Often the mere presence of a system is enough to discourage predators from attempting to serve in a church.

There are two basic types of child molesters that any system implemented by a church should take into account.

Preferential molesters are less common, but may have many victims since they seek out children to molest. Often they are willing to invest large amounts of time with children, building relationships of trust. A screening program that includes criminal background checks and alerts interviewers is the most effective method to minimize the risk of this type molester.

Situational molesters are more common, but have fewer victims. Rather than actively seeking situations in which they may abuse, they take advantage of situations that present themselves. Since they have fewer victims, criminal records often do not exist so background checks are less effective. Policies that require two or more unrelated adults to be present with preschools or children at all times, viewing windows in all classroom doors, and adequate supervision of teachers are effective deterrents to this type of molester.¹

¹ James F. Cobble, Jr., "Screening Children's Workers: How to protect your church kids from sexual abuse" *Leadership Journal*, Summer 2002.

Before implementing a screening process, churches should take the following steps:

- Involve all concerned staff, leaders, and committees in the decision-making process, including research and education.
- Consult with your church attorney and insurance agent concerning the process, forms, questions, and records to be used and maintained.
- Designate a person who will be responsible for the screening process. This person must be able to discern what information is confidential and what needs to be shared with appropriate staff and/or leadership.
- Inform the church body concerning the need and importance of screening and the methods to be used, including adequate opportunities to ask questions and suggest changes.
- Guide the church to officially adopt policies and procedures to be used and document the action.
- Encourage the church staff and key leaders to undergo the screening process as a sign of acceptance and support.

To minimize the risk of abuse to preschoolers and children, these steps need to be followed in a screening process for volunteer or paid leadership:

- Enlist volunteers who have exhibited commitment to your church or membership in your church for a minimum of six months. Predators rarely are willing to wait to have access to children.
- Use a written application form and a release form authorizing permission to conduct reference, background, and criminal checks. Sample forms can be located at http://lifeway.com/staff_p0001.asp.
- Check references. These may be members of the church who have had the opportunity to observe the potential leader.
- Interview the volunteer. Individuals should be personally interviewed, covering such topics as their Christian testimony, past experience and current interest in working with children, and other church experiences.
- Conduct a criminal background check on any individual who will have unsupervised access to preschoolers and children. Any sexual offense crimes, regardless of how long ago they occurred, disqualify a person from working with preschoolers and children.

- Provide training for all leadership, including church policies and procedures for preschool and children's ministry.
- Keep written documentation of application forms, reference and background checks, interviews, and training session attendance provided in a secure and confidential location. Be sure to include your informal notes, e-mail, and phone conversations in the process.

Job Descriptions and Training

All positions that involve the teaching or care of preschoolers or children should have job descriptions with clear expectations detailed.

Qualifications for leadership with preschoolers or children should be in written form. These qualifications should include submission to all screening procedures and completion of training.

Leadership should have training in policies and procedures, positive discipline guidelines and techniques, preschool and/or child development, appropriate theological concepts, and teaching methods.

Sample Job Description for Preschool and Children Leadership

(Ministry specific responsibilities will need to be added.)

- Be a growing Christian and a positive example for Christ and the church.
- Be actively involved or a member of the church for at least six months.
- Complete a written application form and release form for background checks.
- Support the overall ministry of the church.
- Regularly attend scheduled training and planning sessions.
- Prepare and lead age-appropriate activities and experiences using the church-approved curriculum.
- Be present and prepared at least 15 minutes before a session begins or the first child arrives.
- Know and follow all policies established by the church.
- Build positive relationships with preschoolers and/or children and their parents/legal guardians.
- Follow positive discipline guidelines.
- Work cooperatively with other leaders, including those in other ministries.
- Contact members, prospects, and families regularly to meet needs.

- Maintain records for attendance, allergies, accidents, and other personal data for preschoolers and/or children.
- Immediately report accidents, illnesses, or unusual problems to the designated leader.
- Focus on preschoolers and/or children, refraining from extended conversations with others. Show love, understanding, and acceptance of every child.
- Be free of communicable diseases or conditions.
- Never leave preschoolers or children unattended.
- A minimum of two unrelated adults should be present at all times.
- At the end of your session, return room to its standard set-up, making sure it is clean and toys and/or teaching materials are disinfected as needed.

Adult/Child Ratios

Maintaining appropriate adult to child ratios is critical to developing relationships, teaching effectively, and providing a safe environment.

Always have two unrelated adults present with preschoolers and children for the prevention of possible child abuse and for the protection of leadership and the church should any allegations of abuse occur.

The recommended ratio of adults to preschoolers or children is dependent on the ages of the children present. *(Ratio recommendations for licensed childcare centers may differ from those listed below.)*

Age Grouping	Adult/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Babies - Kindergarten	1:3	12
Babies - Twos	1:3	12
Threes - Kindergarten	1:4	15
Babies	1:2	12
Ones - Twos	1:3	12
Threes - Pre-K	1:4	20
Kindergarten	1:5	24
School-age Children	1:6	26

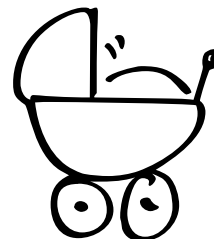
Ages of Leadership

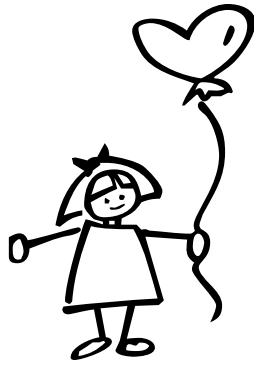
Many churches use youth as preschool or children leadership. While some youth may be more mature than others, a church needs to adopt consistent criteria for its policy. Consider:

- Does the church insurance company have a minimum age for insurance coverage?
- Are there youth activities occurring at the same time as the childcare? Youth are still growing spiritually and need to be involved in the youth ministry whenever possible.
- Is the church willing to do background checks on all youth who will be involved with preschoolers and children?
- Would a "minor" be "in charge" if an emergency situation developed?
- How will guests feel about leaving their preschoolers, especially their babies with a minor?
- If a certain minimum age is set for leadership with preschoolers and children, consider that age alone does not qualify a person for leadership responsibilities.

Note: Any person under 18 years of age working with preschoolers and children does raise concerns. The church needs to engage in a more detailed inquiry of the qualifications of the youth and their level of leadership involvement in the activity.

Caution: In no circumstance should a youth be the primary caregiver or leader and should never be in direct charge of infants. A youth should not be used as the third person in a room with two related adults.





Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect in North Carolina

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-301 states: "Any person or institution who has cause to believe that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the Department of Social Services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. The report may be made orally, by phone, or in writing."

Note: Confidentiality of clergy - current NC law denies the "clergy-penitent privilege" in cases of neglect and abuse.

North Carolina law requires any persons who suspect child abuse or neglect to report the case to the County Department of Social Services. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith.

Abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. Abuse may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, or when a child is abandoned.

In instances where child abuse or neglect is suspected, churches should take the following immediate actions:

- Secure the safety of the child.
- Notify the parents or legal guardians if they are not the suspected perpetrator(s).
- Notify appropriate church leadership and the county Department of Social Services.
- Report the incident to the church's attorney and insurance company.
- Document all actions taken to handle the incident.



Safety

Protecting preschoolers and children at church extends beyond making sure that well-trained and responsible adults are teaching them. Much can be done to enhance the safety of preschoolers and children in our care by careful attention to the facility and the equipment that we provide. The facility and equipment impact...

- Hygiene practices
- Supervision of leadership
- Emergency evacuations
- Unauthorized accessibility to preschool and children areas
- Teaching effectiveness

Safety includes addressing many other issues such as food, medications, emergencies, and first aid.

Safety Checklist for Facilities and Equipment

- Are all furniture and equipment age-appropriate and in good repair?
- Are floors in rest rooms covered with easily cleanable, non-absorbent material such as linoleum or tile?
- Is carpeting easily cleanable, durable, closely woven, and properly installed? *Note: floors in sleeping and play areas may be carpet or a non-absorbent material.*
- Are walls, floors, and equipment in good repair and free of peeling, flaking, chalking, or lead-based paints?
- Do all rooms have adequate lighting? *Note: Florescent lighting with color-corrected bulbs is preferred.*
- Are light fixtures clean and in good repair and are light bulbs completely shielded?
- Are windows and treatments, preferably mini blinds, clean and in good repair? Are they free of looped cords and are all cords out of the reach of preschoolers and children? *Note: Preschool room windows should be 18" from the floor and made of shatterproof glass.*
- Are rooms maintained between 65 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit when occupied by preschoolers and children?
- Do furniture and cabinets have rounded corners or are sharp corners covered with padding? Are cabinets and shelves bolted to the wall?
- Do low cabinet doors and drawers have properly installed safety latches?
- Are chairs safe, comfortable, and pinch-free? Folding chairs of any size are not safe.
- Are baby rooms equipped with no more than two adult-size rocking chairs? Adult-size chairs should not be in other preschool and children's rooms.
- Do you have an appropriate diaper-changing area?
 - Changing tables designed for home use are not appropriate
 - Table sides must be at least 4 inches in height
 - Changing diapers on the floor using a nonabsorbent, washable mat is acceptable
 - A crib should not be used for diaper changing unless the entire crib is disinfected after the diaper change
- Are preschool rooms free of staples, thumbtacks, pushpins, and other sharp objects?
- Are all doors one piece with small rectangular windows that allow viewing of all corners of a room?
 - Doors opening into hallways require a fire rating of 20 minutes or more. *Note: To meet NC fire codes, doors must be purchased with windows already installed.*
 - Classroom doors should open into the hallways unless prohibited by local fire or building codes or if fire escape routes would be blocked.
 - Doors should be at least 36 inches wide to allow for accessibility for handicap walkers, wheelchairs, and evacuation cribs.
 - Dutch doors (two-piece doors) do not meet NC fire-rating codes.

- Are there enough electrical outlets to allow access without the necessity of stretching cords along the wall? Are safety outlets or safety covers properly installed on all receptacles? *Note: Usually two outlets per wall are recommended. Outlets in rooms used by preschoolers two years and under should be 4 1/2 feet from the floor.*
- Are adult-height sinks in all preschool rooms and child-height sinks in rooms for two-year-olds through sixth graders?
 - Are hot and cold water available at each sink? Hot water should be no hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - Are paper towels and soap available at each sink?
 - Are sinks located within classrooms rather than the rest room?
- Are rest rooms connected to the classroom and equipped with child-sized toilets, tile floors, and doors without locks?
- Do preschool rooms have at least 35 square feet of floor area per occupant and children's rooms at least 25 square feet per occupant? The requirement for NC daycare law is 25 square feet of usable space per occupant. *Note: If growth is considered, additional square footage must be considered.*
- Are rooms clean and clutter free? *Note: Materials and equipment not needed for a session should be put in cabinets or removed from the room to a central supply area.*
- Are hallways and stairwells kept free of clutter, and well lighted? Stairwells should not be used for storage of supplies and/or equipment.
- Are rooms for children in first grade or younger located on the level of exit discharge?
- Do rooms have more than one exit, preferably leading to two separate smoke compartments in the building? *Note: Local fire inspectors can assist in determining this.*
- Are cribs in good repair, with snug-fitting mattresses at least 2 inches thick, and slats no more than 2 3/8 inches apart?
 - Is the distance between the mattress and the top of the crib rail at least 36 inches?
 - Are corner posts no more than 1/16 inch in height?
 - Are cutouts too small to allow entrapment of the preschooler?
 - Are drop-side latches secure?
 - Are bed linens tight-fitting?
 - Is there a designated crib equipped with evacuation wheels for use in an emergency?
- Are toys developmentally appropriate?
 - Are toys free of sharp edges or points?
 - Is every removable piece larger than 1 1/4 inches in diameter (for preschoolers age 3 and younger)?
 - Are toys free of parts that could pinch or trap a child's finger?
 - Are toys durable, easily washed and disinfected, and nonflammable? *Note: Stuffed animals or dolls with cloth bodies or movable/removable eyes are inappropriate.*
- Is a telephone easily accessible and are emergency numbers posted?
- Are preschool rooms equipped with covered, plastic-lined trashcans that can be disinfected?
- Are outdoor play areas kept clean and in good repair?
 - Is outdoor play space fenced? The fence must be at least four feet in height.
 - Is play equipment age-appropriate, and is it inspected for wear or damage routinely?
 - Are sand boxes kept covered when not in use to discourage contamination?
 - Is the ground beneath swings and climbing equipment covered in a cushioning material such as pea gravel, sand, or mulch? For depth of ground cover check the "Handbook for Public Playground Safety" at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf> or 1-800-638-2772.
 - Is play equipment free of openings that can entrap a child's head, torso, or limbs?



Food Safety Checklist

- Is formula, mother's milk, or other bottles sent from home fully prepared, dated, and identified for the appropriate child?
- Are bottles requiring refrigeration kept at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below?
- Are bottles that require heating warmed in water in a slow cooker/crock pot? *Note: Never heat a bottle in a microwave oven. Microwave ovens decrease the nutritional value of mother's milk and can cause dangerous hot spots in any liquid or food.*
- Are prepared foods that are to be served obtained only from food handling establishments that have health department permits or inspections?
- Are round, firm foods that might lodge in the throat of a preschooler avoided? *Note: This includes foods such as hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly-spread peanut butter, hard candy, and whole raw carrots.* Are leaders trained to handle a choking emergency?
- Once foods or snacks have been opened, are all leftovers discarded or transferred to clean, tightly covered storage containers and labeled with contents and date?
- Are crock-pots or other equipment used for warming bottles cleaned and disinfected regularly?
- Are reusable cups and utensils washed and disinfected after each use?
- Are infants always fed in an upright position and held by an adult? *Note: Bottles should never be propped or placed in a bed with an infant.*
- Are records of food allergies for all preschoolers and children maintained and consulted? Are leaders trained to respond to accidental ingestion of an allergen?
- Are allergy alert notices for all food to be served during a session posted where parents/legal guardians can easily see them?

Medications

Medications should not be given to preschoolers or children at church. However, if necessary, written authorization by the child's parent or legal guardian should be obtained using a written permission form. (See sample in forms section.) This includes prescriptions as well as over-the-counter medicines, topical ointments and creams, and teething medication.

Medication must be in its original, labeled container and include the original, printed instructions. Dosage may not exceed amounts and frequency on the printed instructions.

Medications should be stored in a separate locked cabinet or locked box specifically for that purpose. Medications requiring refrigeration must be kept in a locked box within the refrigerator. (This applies to leader medications as well.)

Each time medication is given, the caregiver should log the information. (See sample in forms section.)

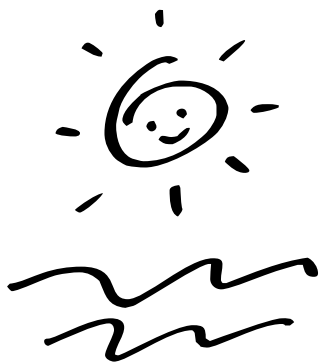
Epinephrine pens prescribed for anaphylactic shock may be kept in a location readily accessible to caregivers but out of the reach of preschoolers and children (for more information check with the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources website at www.deh.enr.state.nd.us/ehs/Children%20Health/Child_Care/Child_Care_Policy_Memos/CC_11-13-01_Epinephrine.PDF). Caregivers must be trained in the administration of the epinephrine pen. Written permission for dosing is required from the child's parent or legal guardian.

Storage Checklist

- Is all storage space kept clean and orderly?
- Are cleaning supplies, aerosols, or any substance that would be harmful if ingested or inhaled kept in a locked room or cabinet? Are the keys to such spaces kept out of the reach of preschoolers? *Note: This does not include mild detergent solutions or disinfecting solutions. These solutions must be clearly labeled and kept out of the reach of children, but need not be kept locked up.*
- Are knives, sharp scissors, and other adult tools kept out of the reach of preschoolers and children?
- Is the door to the resource room kept locked when not in use? Are children prohibited from being in the resource room unless accompanied by a leader?
- Are leaders' purses and/or other personal items kept out of the reach of preschoolers and children?

Emergencies Checklist

- Are building diagrams with emergency evacuation procedures and routes posted by the doors in each room?
- Do diagrams show the location of fire extinguishers and alarms?
- Are leaders trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers?
- Are fire extinguishers inspected routinely?
- Are all exits clear of furniture or other obstructions?
- Is a telephone easily accessible to leaders, with numbers for the fire department, law enforcement, emergency medical service, and poison control center posted?
- Is there a designated evacuation crib for babies (equipped with evacuation wheels), and does it fit through all exit doorways?
- Is there a designated meeting place in the event of an evacuation and are parents aware of this location?
- Are leaders trained in first aid, adult and infant/child CPR, security, and procedures for fires, tornadoes, or other emergencies? (For an example, see <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dcd/emerg.pdf>) Is there a readily available list of these leaders and other trained church members?
- Are periodic evacuation/emergency drills conducted?
- Are first aid supplies kept in an easily accessible location?
- Are first aid supplies routinely checked to ensure sufficient quantities and adherence to expiration dates?



Miscellaneous Safety Issues Checklist

- Are all personal items such as clothing, blankets, diaper bags, and bottles labeled with the child's name? *Note: To avoid introducing unsafe, unsanitary, or inappropriate items into the teaching environment, personal toys should not be admitted to the room, except in the case of comfort items.*
- Are babies always placed to sleep on their backs unless specific medical conditions contraindicate this? *Note: Placing infants to sleep on their backs has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.*
- Are the sides of the crib always up when a child is in the crib?
- Is there a system of routine reviews of facilities and procedures to ensure adherence to all policies? Do all organizations or programs participate in the review process?
- Are coffees or other hot drinks discouraged from being brought into preschool or children's rooms?
- Are rooms arranged so that all areas are visible to the leaders?
- Are excess toys picked up periodically and spills cleaned up promptly to minimize the risk of tripping?
- Are plants non-poisonous and in non-breakable pots?
- Are latex balloons, plastics bags, and Styrofoam objects inaccessible to preschoolers?
- Are signed parental/guardian permission forms used anytime children participate in an activity away from the church? Do the forms include permission to transport the child to the event, if applicable, and a notarized, emergency medical treatment release form?
- If bathrooms are not attached to classrooms, do you have procedures that maintain the two-adult rule when preschoolers or children have to be escorted and/or assisted in toileting?
- Does your church have a procedure to ensure safety of children (1-6 grades) when they are transitioning between church ministries and parents?

Field Trips and Transportation Checklist

- Has adequate and safe transportation been secured to avoid crowding children into a vehicle? (Avoid 16 passenger vans.)
- Does each child have a car seat and/or seatbelt according to state laws?
- Are there enough adult chaperones to maintain proper adult/child ratios?
- Have parents/guardians been notified of the trip and have given written permission? (See example in forms section.)
- Have parents/guardians completed and submitted notarized emergency medical treatment release permission forms? (See example in forms section.)
- Do leaders have both the field trip permission forms and the emergency medical treatment release permission forms in their possession on the trip?
- Do leaders have a first aid kit and other child-specific medications if necessary for the trip?
- Do leaders have a cell phone or other device to communicate between vehicles or leaders on site, or to call emergency assistance if needed?
- Does one or more of the group require the field trip site to be handicap accessible?

First Aid Kit

A well-stocked, readily accessible first aid kit should be available in all preschool and children's areas. A separate, portable kit should be used during outdoor activities and on field trips. Kits should contain at least the following items:

- Disposable gloves approved for medical use
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Thermometer
- Bandage tape
- Sterile gauze pads
- Roll of gauze
- Triangular bandages
- Safety pins
- Eye irrigation saline solution
- Eye dressing
- Pen/pencil and note pad
- Syrup of ipecac
- Poison Control Center telephone number—Carolinas Poison Control Center (Charlotte) 1-800-848-6946
- Cold pack
- Infant/child choking and CPR guide
- Antiseptic
- Red washcloth
- Hand sanitizer





Security

Security involves a deliberate plan for safeguarding preschoolers and children. All churches regardless of size or location should implement a security system.

Advantages of having a system include:

- protection of the preschoolers and children
- protection of leaders from possibly making an inaccurate decision about who may pick up a preschooler or child
- equal treatment of all adults since all must follow the system regardless of their relationship to a child
- peace of mind for parents/legal guardians (Examples: guests and/or parents in custody situations, etc.)
- legal and moral protection of the church by fulfilling their obligation to exercise care in protecting the children entrusted to them.

Security Checklist

- Are information sheets completed on all preschoolers and children? (See sample in forms section.)
- Are information sheets kept in a location accessible only to authorized leaders?
- Are doors to classrooms kept shut and only preschoolers and/or children and their leaders are allowed in the rooms? *Note: Parents or legal guardians should remain in the hall when leaving and picking up their child.*
- Are all leaders trained in the proper security procedures?
- Are at least two unrelated leaders in each room?
- Is a designated leader patrolling the halls or lobby in the preschool and children's areas?
- Are parents or legal guardians required to use a sign-in/sign-out sheet for preschoolers? (See sample in forms section.) *Note: A designated person needs to file these forms in a secure location.*
- Are simple instructions about the security system communicated in writing to parents or legal guardians?
- Does the leader give the parent or legal guardian a security card, tag, or pager for the preschooler?
- Are preschoolers and children only allowed in rooms when authorized supervision is present and only for church-sponsored events or services?
- Are preschoolers allowed to be left and picked up only by authorized adults?
- Is there a procedure for verifying who will pick up a child in case of an emergency if the request must be made by telephone?
- Is the identity of preschoolers and children protected from unauthorized access? *Note: Names should not be posted with pictures in public hallways.*
- Are preschool leaders wearing name badges for identification to parents or legal guardians?

Security System Steps

There are four steps to consider in developing an effective and efficient security system:

1) Log the arrival of each leader and preschooler

For every activity, event, or whenever childcare is provided, each leader will log in and each preschooler's parent or legal guardian will complete the "Preschooler Sign In/Sign Out Sheet" provided with each grouping of preschoolers (See sample in forms section). This form provides the leaders with a record of the arrival and departure of each preschooler as well as a record of the name and location of the parents/legal guardians. These records should be filed and kept in case there is a future question.

2) Label each child with a nametag

The nametag may be a self-adhesive nametag, a piece of masking tape, or a computer-generated label.

3) Provide parents or legal guardians with one of the following security identification items:

A card with a number that matches the number on the sign-in/sign-out sheet. It may be a temporary number for the day, a permanent number assigned to the child, or a permanent number assigned to the family. Use paper or laminated cards.

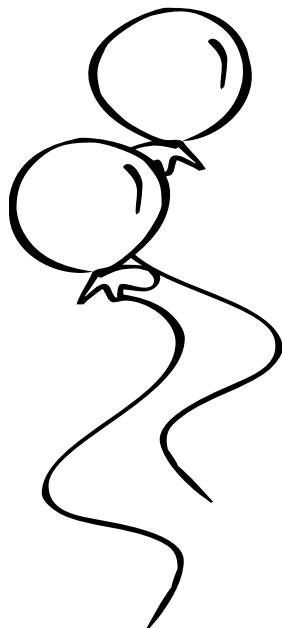
Security tags - In this system, pairs of permanent tags with matching numbers or letters are used. One tag is given to the parent/legal guardian while the other is clipped to the child. Returning parents/legal guardians must present their tag, which the teacher matches with the tag on the child before releasing him/her. The matched tags are stored in a secure location within the room for reuse with another child or they may be permanently designated for a child to use.

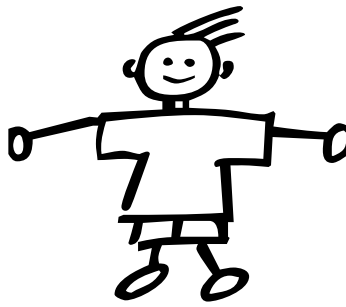
Note: If numbers are used on cards or tags, the number can be displayed on an electronic message board if there is a need for the parent or guardian to return to the preschooler's location.

Electronic pagers - Some churches issue numbered pagers instead of cards or tags, which have the advantage of allowing immediate notification of the parent/legal guardian if they are needed at their child's room. This is especially helpful for guests or nursing mothers.

4) Log the departure of each preschooler and leader

When the parents or legal guardians present their security identification item and sign out on the "Preschooler Sign In/Sign Out Sheet," the leader will release the preschooler to them.





Hygiene

Preschoolers explore the world with all their senses. For the first few years that means most items are explored with their mouths as well as hands, eyes, and ears. Even after they have outgrown this stage, few preschoolers or children have mastered keeping their hands and germs to themselves. Colds and normal childhood diseases alone are reasons enough to warrant diligence. Added into the concerns today are HIV, hepatitis, and other serious health threats. The risks for leaders are just as high as for the preschoolers or children in their care. Establishing good hygiene practices in the cleaning of the environment as well as diapering and hand washing procedures are essential for a church to protect preschoolers, children, and leaders.

Illness

Preschoolers and children showing signs of communicable illness should not be brought to church. If preschoolers or children develop symptoms during care, they should be isolated, the parent/legal guardian contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible, and the parents/legal guardians of the other preschoolers or children are notified of exposure.

Signs of communicable illness that would be reason to exclude the child from participation include:

- A fever (100 degrees or more in the armpit, 101 degrees orally, or 102 degrees rectally)
- Diarrhea
- Severe coughing
- Two or more episodes of vomiting within the past 12 hours
- Red eye with white or yellow eye discharge, until 24 hours after treatment
- Yellow or green nasal discharge
- Scabies or lice
- Chicken pox or a rash suggestive of chicken pox
- Other undiagnosed rashes
- Open skin lesions
- Tuberculosis, until a physician states the child is not infectious
- Strep Throat, until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Pertussis, until 5 days after antibiotic treatment
- Hepatitis A, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment

Cleaning the Environment

The most important tool in establishing good hygiene practices is an effective disinfectant. For preschool and children settings, the recommended disinfecting solution is regular chlorine bleach mixed with water. This solution should be available in every classroom. It is ideal because household bleach is not harmful to the environment. The mixture quickly breaks down into mainly a saline solution and does not trigger the growth of resistant bacteria. It is not harmful to preschoolers or children if accidentally ingested. A chlorine bleach solution is mildly corrosive to surfaces and should be used with care.

Bleach Solution for Disinfecting

1/4 cup household chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water

or

1 Tbsp. household chlorine bleach to 32 oz. of water

The solution should be mixed fresh each session to ensure effectiveness or tested with test strips purchased from restaurant suppliers. The solution should be kept in a properly labeled, unbreakable, hand pump spray bottle. It should be readily accessible to adults, but kept out of the reach of preschoolers. The bleach used to make the disinfecting solution should be replaced every three months or as soon as it loses its smell. This solution should be used to clean all furniture and equipment. When possible, items disinfected with this solution should be allowed to air dry.

Checklist for Disinfecting Facilities and Equipment

Note: "Cleaning" means washed with hot, soapy water. "Disinfected" means using the household chlorine bleach solution.

- Are the sinks, dishpans, sponges, and dishcloths disinfected prior to cleaning and disinfecting toys, teaching materials, cups, or other items used in preschool rooms? *Note: Fill sink or dishpan with disinfecting bleach solution, immerse sponge or dishcloth, and soak for five minutes.*

- Are toys and other items washed in hot water with detergent, rinsed thoroughly, immersed in fresh household chlorine bleach solution for at least five minutes, and then air-dried?
- Are items that are too large or impractical to immerse cleaned and then sprayed with disinfecting solution and allowed to air dry?
- Are disinfected items or surfaces kept from the reach of children while they are drying?
- Are toys, equipment, play mats, and furniture that have been in children's mouths clean and disinfected before coming in contact with another child?
- Are toys, equipment, and furniture in older preschool rooms disinfected at least weekly?
- Are frequently touched surfaces such as refrigerator handles, door handles, and light switch covers disinfected daily?
- Are diaper pails and trash containers disinfected daily?
- Are diaper pails lined with disposable plastic and covered?
- Are toilets cleaned and disinfected daily with additional cleanings when soiled?
- Are sinks cleaned and disinfected daily?
- Are cribs assigned and labeled for a child's individual use?
- Are cribs cleaned and disinfected and linens laundered between users? *Note: In addition, linens should be laundered at least daily and anytime they become soiled.*
- Do leaders wear disposable gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids, such as when changing a diaper, assisting with toileting, performing any first aid procedures, or wiping noses? *Note: A new set of gloves is necessary for each new action or child.*
- Are dress-up clothes, doll blankets, and other cloth items washed routinely?

Diapering Checklist

- Are preschoolers changed on a table or in an area used exclusively for diapering? *Note: Surfaces in designated diapering areas must be nonabsorbent, as well as cleaned and disinfected after each changing.*
- Are disposable gloves approved for medical use and disposable wipes (provided by parent or guardian) used?

- Are soiled disposable diapers put in a plastic lined, covered container, and removed to an outside garbage area daily? Are soiled cloth diapers emptied into the toilet and put into a plastic bag for disposal? *Note: Cloth diapers should not be rinsed.*
- Are both the caregiver and the child's hands washed after each diaper change? *Note: Infants hands may be wiped with a disposable wipe provided by the parent or guardian in lieu of washing.*
- Are steps detailing proper diapering and hand washing techniques posted in each room? (See sample in forms section.)

Hand Washing Checklist

- Are sinks installed at an appropriate height accessible for preschoolers and children?
- Do sinks have both hot and cold running water?
- Is hot water at sinks used by preschoolers and children kept between 90 and 110 degrees Fahrenheit?
- Are soap and disposable towels available?
- Do leaders wash hands upon arrival?
- Are proper hand washing procedures posted near adult sinks? (See form section for proper procedure.)
- Do leaders, preschoolers and children wash their hands:
 - before and after handling food ?
 - after coming in contact with bodily fluids, even if wearing disposable gloves?
 - before and after sand play, water play, or playing with modeling compounds?
 - after handling animals?
 - after going outdoors?*Note: Infants hands may be wiped with a disposable wipe provided by the parent or guardian in lieu of washing.*
- If running water is unavailable in the room, is a hand washing station provided?

Hand Washing Station

To set up a hand washing station for rooms where running water is unavailable, provide one pan filled with mild soapy water and a second pan filled with clear rinse water. Provide disposable paper towels and a covered, plastic-lined wastebasket. Change water frequently.



Policies

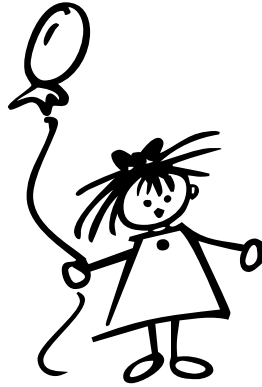
In order to adequately protect the preschoolers, children, and the church, consistency must be maintained in all ministries and from individual to individual. Since Baptist churches are typically democratic in government, the best way to ensure consistency and cooperation is by having the entire church formally adopt policies that address all areas of safety in preschool and children ministry. Such an action elevates the importance of the policies and encourages the entire church to follow the policies. As a note of caution, a church can be found negligent if it fails to enforce the adopted policies that could have prevented an incident.

Steps in Adopting and Implementing Policies

- Form a committee or work group to study and recommend policies.
- Determine the policies and procedures needed to be implemented, obtaining input from as many sources as possible (e.g. church staff, leaders in all ministries, parents, legal counsel, policies from other churches).
- Compile a draft of potential policies.
- Obtain feedback from leadership, parents/legal guardians, and staff, and refine the policies.
- Secure needed channels of approval prior to submitting the policies in a church business session (e.g. pastor, staff, deacons, church council or leadership teams).
- Present the policies to the church body for discussion and adoption during a church business session. Provide copies prior to the session.
- Train leaders, parents, and others who may be responsible for administering the policies.
- Provide printed copies to all parents/legal guardians of preschoolers and children and provide opportunities for understanding and clarification.
- Enforce the policies consistently in all ministries, and with all parents and legal guardians.
- Evaluate the policies routinely for adherence, changing or adjusting them as needed, and taking them back to a church business session for approval.

Common Points to Include in Policies

- Cover letter from the pastor, staff member, or preschool/children committee about the importance of policies for protecting preschoolers, children, leaders, as well as the church and/or a purpose statement for preschool and children policies
- Date when policies were adopted by the church
- General policies
 - Age grading criteria for groupings (e.g. promotion according to NC public school deadline of October 16)
 - Times that children may arrive and be dismissed for regular church programming (e.g. 15 minutes before and after scheduled services/activities)
 - Guidelines for room use and procedures for making child-care requests
 - Pupil/teacher ratios
 - Qualifications of leadership (e.g. age, church membership, etc.)
 - Safety and hygiene procedures
 - Instructions for parental/legal guardian inquiry about their child
 - Instructions for reporting problems or for asking questions
 - Items that may or may not be brought to preschool and children areas
 - Instructions for labeling items brought to church such as diaper bags, extra clothes, etc.
- Times and descriptions of regular programming/ministries offered
- Receiving and Dismissal Procedures
 - Security system
 - Instructions about leaving and picking up preschoolers and children
- Food
 - Instructions concerning allergies
 - Instructions for labeling bottles and other food items
 - Feeding instructions including ages, amounts, and information on snacks that will be served
- Illness and Medication
 - Information about when a child will and will not be accepted for care, including symptoms of illness
 - Procedures to be followed when a child becomes ill at church
 - Statement about administering medications at church
- Forms to be used
- Suggestions for Parents/Legal Guardians



Resources

For updates of this material, contact <http://www.bscnc.org> and look under “Ministries”.

Aronson, Susan

et. al. *Model Child Care Health Policies*. Bryn Mawr, PA: PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993.

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.aap.org>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Childcare licensing laws

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dcd/rultext.pdf>

Children’s Sunday School for a New Century

James Hargrove and David Morrow, Lifeway Press, 1999. (800) 458-2772

Clorox Child Care Center,

<http://www.clorox.com/childcare/>

ETC: A Lasting Impression, Willa Ruth Garlow, LifeWay, 1998. (800) 458-2772

Handbook for Public Playground Safety,

US Consumer Product Safety Commission, <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf> or (800) 638-2772

James F. Cobble, Jr.

“Screening Children’s Workers: How to protect your church kids from sexual abuse” *Leadership Journal*, Summer 2002

Medical Library

<http://www.medem.com>

Nexus Solutions

(888) 639-8788, <http://www.nexus-solutions.com>, Information and resources for evaluating risks and developing an effective child safety program, including “The Good Shepherd Program.”

NLS Specialties

PO Box 1897, Kennesaw, GA 30144, (404) 422-7867. Commercial security tags and diaper bag tags.

General Statues and Codes for Child Care Facilities

http://nrc.uchsc.edu/nn/n_carol.htm

Preschool Sunday School for a New Century

Cindy Lumpkin and Thomas Sanders, Lifeway, 1999. (800) 458-2772

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina

www.preventchildabusenc.org, Information and training on recognizing and reporting child abuse.

Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in your Church

Richard Hammar, Steven Klipowicz, and James Cobble, Christian Ministry Resources
PO Box 1098 Matthews, NC 28106
Website is www.ChurchSafety.com
(Risk management resources and background checks)

Risky Business! A legal and policy guide

Campbell University Church-State Resources Center, 1994. \$10. Contains information on hiring and volunteer selection. Order from Lorene Wilson, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, PO Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512-1107 or lwilson@bscnc.org (800) 395-5102, ext. 414

“Screening Procedures for Preschool Teachers”

http://lifeway.com/staff_p0001.asp

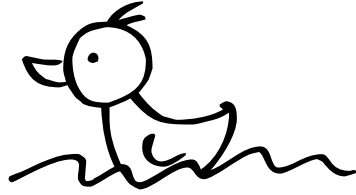
Sexual Predators & Sex Offenders National Online Registry

Provides links to listings of all 50 states. <http://sexualpredators.com>

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.calib.com/nccanch>

Handwashing Procedure



Hand washing is the simplest, most effective way to reduce the risk of spreading disease.

How to wash hands:

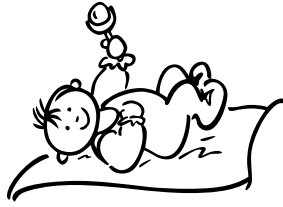
- Turn on warm water. (*Temperature not to exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit for preschoolers and children*) Wet hands and lather with soap.
- Vigorously rub front and back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse thoroughly under warm water.
- Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.
- Use a paper towel to turn off water and put the paper towel in a covered, plastic-lined trashcan.

When to wash hands:

- Upon leaders' arrival in the room
- Before and after handling food
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids
- Before and after sand play, water play, or playing with modeling compounds
- After handling animals
- After going outdoors

Note: Remember to wash hands even if disposable gloves were used in any of these instances.

Diapering Procedure



Diaper all preschoolers using the following procedures in order to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

- Collect all items needed to change the diaper:
 - a clean diaper
 - a sheet of non-porous paper or disposable cover
 - disposable wipes (*provided by parent*)
 - covered, plastic-lined trashcan
 - disposable gloves that are approved for medical use (*using a new pair for every diaper change*)
 - ointments or creams provided by parent or legal guardian
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Place nonporous paper or a disposable covering on the diapering surface.
- Place the child on the covered changing table or mat. Be sure to keep a hand on the child at all times.
- Unfasten the wet or soiled diaper. Clean the child with disposable wipes, wiping from front to back.
- Roll wipes and soiled diaper in non-porous paper or disposable cover and discard in covered, plastic-lined trash can.
- Apply any ointments or creams per parent/guardian written instructions.
- Remove gloves, stripping them inside out, and disposing them in the trashcan.
- Fasten the clean diaper securely.
- Wipe baby's hands with a disposable wipe, or have preschoolers wash their hands at the sink. Return the preschooler to their crib or playgroup.
- Wash hands using Hand-Washing Procedure.
- Clean and disinfect changing surface. Allow surface to remain wet with bleach solution for 30 seconds before drying with a disposable paper towel.
- Wash hands again.

Baby Information Sheet

Date _____

Personal Information

Child's full name _____

Name you use to address your child _____ Child's date of birth _____

Mailing address _____

Home address (if different from mailing address) _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

With whom does the child live? (*parents, guardians, other adults*)

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

List of siblings

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

List of pets

Name _____ Type _____

Name _____ Type _____

List preschool or childcare child attends, if applicable _____

Medical Information

List any allergies _____

In case of accidental exposure to allergens, what steps should be taken? _____

List any medical information that your child's teacher should know _____

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing infants on their backs for sleeping. Please list any conditions that would contraindicate this practice for your child. _____

Feeding And Diapering Information

Breast-fed? _____ Bottle-fed? _____ Pacifier? _____ Comfort item? (specify) _____

Feeding Times

Milk _____ Juice _____ Water _____ Other (specify) _____

Diapering Instructions _____

Security Information

If your security pass should be misplaced, who has permission to pick up your child? _____

Is there anyone that should not pick up your child? _____

Are there any custody arrangements of which the leaders should be aware? _____

In the case of an emergency and a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, whom should we contact?

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Special Instructions Or Information

Preschooler Information Sheet

Date _____

Personal Information

Child's full name _____

Name you use to address your child _____ Child's date of birth _____

Mailing address _____

Home address (if different from mailing address) _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

With whom does the child live? (*parents, guardians, other adults*)

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

List of siblings

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

List of pets

Name _____ Type _____

Name _____ Type _____

List preschool or childcare child attends, if applicable _____

List any special words/phrases the child uses to indicate the need to go to the bathroom _____

Medical Information

List any allergies _____

In case of accidental exposure to allergens, what steps should be taken? _____

List any medical information that your child's teacher should know _____

Security Information

If your security pass should be misplaced, who has permission to pick up your child? _____

Is there anyone that should not pick up your child? _____

Are there any custody arrangements of which the leaders should be aware? _____

In the case of an emergency and a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, whom should we contact?

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Special Instructions Or Information

Child Information Sheet

Date _____

Personal Information

Child's full name _____

Name you use to address your child _____ Child's date of birth _____

Mailing address _____

Home address (if different from mailing address) _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

With whom does the child live? (*parents, guardians, other adults*)

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

List of siblings

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

Name _____ Age _____ Do they live with child? _____

List of pets

Name _____ Type _____

Name _____ Type _____

School child attends

Name _____ Current grade _____

Medical Information

List any allergies _____

In case of accidental exposure to allergens, what steps should be taken? _____

List any medical information that your child's teacher should know _____

Security Information

Is there anyone that should not pick up your child? _____

Are there any custody arrangements of which the leaders should be aware? _____

In the case of an emergency and a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, whom should we contact?

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Special Instructions Or Information

Permission for Emergency Medical Care

In the event that I cannot be reached to make arrangements for emergency medical attention, I authorize the leadership of

(Church Name) _____

to take my child to an emergency room, or to the following physician(s) or his/her associates, for medical care.

Name of Primary Care Physician _____ Name of Dentist _____

Address _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Phone _____

Hospital Preference _____

List any allergies _____

Medications child is currently taking _____

Special instructions _____

I give consent for any and all treatment deemed necessary by the attending physician.
(Attach a photocopy of your insurance card.)

(Signature of parent or legal guardian)

(Today's date)

State of _____ County of _____

This instrument was acknowledged before me on (date) _____ by _____

(Notary Seal)

(Signature of Notary Public)

Permission to Administer Medicine

Church name _____

Child's Name _____ Today's Date _____

Name of Medication _____

Is medication (circle one) Prescription Over-the-Counter

Dates to be administered _____

Times to be administered _____

Dosage _____

How is medicine to be administered? _____

Please Note

- Prescribed medicine must be in its original container bearing the pharmacist's label that includes instructions for dosage, the child's name, the name of the prescribing physician or other health professional, and a current date.
- Over-the-counter medicine must be in its original container, accompanied by the original printed instructions, and within expiration limits.
- Medicine will be administered as authorized in writing by the child's parent or legal guardian, not to exceed amounts and frequency of dosage specified on the medicine label.

Parent or Guardian Name (please print) _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

For church use.

Type of Medicine _____ Type of Medicine _____

Dosage Given _____ Dosage Given _____

Time Given _____ Time Given _____

Date _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Signature _____

Permission to Administer Medicine

Type of Medicine _____

Type of Medicine _____

Dosage Given _____

Dosage Given _____

Time Given _____

Time Given _____

Date _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Type of Medicine _____

Type of Medicine _____

Dosage Given _____

Dosage Given _____

Time Given _____

Time Given _____

Date _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Type of Medicine _____

Type of Medicine _____

Dosage Given _____

Dosage Given _____

Time Given _____

Time Given _____

Date _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Type of Medicine _____

Type of Medicine _____

Dosage Given _____

Dosage Given _____

Time Given _____

Time Given _____

Date _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Incident Report Form

General Information

Child's name _____

Supervising Adult(s) _____

Information on Incident

Date _____ Time _____

Parents notified by _____ Date _____ Time _____

Location where incident occurred

Classroom Bathroom Playground Hall Doorway Other (specify) _____

Equipment/product involved

Chair Rocker Swing Slide Door Hand toy Climbing equipment Ride-on toy
 Other (specify) _____

Cause of injury

Fall to surface Height of fall _____ Type of impact surface _____
 Bitten by child Fall from running or tripping Insect/bee sting Animal bite
 Hit or pushed Motor vehicle Eating or choking
 Injured by an object (specify) _____ Other (specify) _____

Part of body injured

Eye Ear Nose Throat Tooth Neck Trunk Arm/wrist/hand Leg/ankle/foot
 Other part of head or face (specify) _____

Type of injury

Cut Bruise/swelling Puncture Scrape Sprain Burn Broken bone/dislocation
 Crushing injury Loss of consciousness Other (specify) _____

First aid administered _____

Name of person that administered first aid _____

Corrective action taken to prevent reoccurrence _____

Signature of person making report _____ Date _____

Signature of staff member _____ Date _____

Signature of parent _____ Date _____

Field Trip Permission

Leader Copy *(Complete and return to your child's leader.)*

I give my permission for my child *(name)* _____

to attend the field trip to *(location)* _____

on *(date and time)* _____

Allergies _____

Restrictions _____

Emergency Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Other Instructions _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Detach and return the attached copy by (Date) _____

----- **Detach here and return** -----

Field Trip Notice

Parent/Guardian Copy *(Keep this copy as your reminder.)*

Child's Name _____

Class or Group _____

Destination _____ Date _____

Time Leaving _____ Time Returning _____

Chaperones _____

Transportation _____

Special Needs _____

Keep this copy as your reminder.



North Carolina Baptists
Caring. Sharing. Daring.

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