

Safety and Security Policy and Procedures for your Children's Ministry
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Critical Statistics

- 33% of all girls and 16% of all boys will be abused by the age of 18
- 93% know their abuser: 34% are family members, 59% are acquaintances, 7% are strangers
- Less than 10% of abuse is reported to police
- More than 40% of abusers were juveniles, 14% of that number of juvenile abusers were under age 12
- Children are most vulnerable between the ages of 8-12

--Compiled and reported by AWANA and Darkness to Light

“Child protective services finds enough evidence to prove a new claim of child sexual abuse in the United States every eight minutes.” (rainn.org)

Why should our churches be concerned about safety and security?

- Protection of our children
- Opportunity for “grooming” behaviors
- Protection of our leaders
- Protection of our church from adverse media coverage and lawsuits
- First impressions and parental expectations
- Use of volunteer-based ministries
- Church is viewed as easy target by predators
- Part of effective outreach ministry to community

Why do we need written policies and procedures?

- Clarity and consistency of expectations & behaviors by leaders
- Backing of authority of church governing body
- Tangible reminder to remain vigilant in protection of our children

Policy standards: who can serve?

- Two non-related (by marriage) persons over the age of 18 in each class or gathering
- Six-month rule for members, one-year rule for active attenders
- Use only approved workers at all time

Policy standards: beginning & ending the session

- Procedures for secure drop off and pickup of children
- Room conditions for next session

Policy standards: background screening

- Create & use a church approved application
- Conduct reference checks and personal interview
- Include check of criminal records & sex offenders registry
- Driver's license checks for those transporting children
- Ensure security of information

Steps for ensuring compliance

- Provide area supervision during sessions
- Have clear sightlines into classrooms
- Secure entries into classroom areas
- Limit non-custodial traffic in children's areas
- Use approved workers only
- Budget for periodic training and re-screenings
- Develop system for dealing with non-compliance
- Maintain safe volunteer ratios

Adult: child ratios

Age	Adult*:Child	Maximum Group Size
Infants	1:2	12
Ones - Twos	1:3	12
Threes - PreK	1:4	20
K5	1:5	24
Six - Eight	1:6	26
Nine - Fourteen	1:8	26

***always having at least 2 adults in classroom**

Other considerations

- Discipline and classroom management
- Appropriate touch
- Hot beverages and food in classroom
- No medications to be given by teachers
- Curriculum and teaching standards
- Contagious Illnesses exclusion
- Expectation for prompt pickup by parents
- Mark personal items such as bottles, blankets, diaper bags
- Older siblings in classroom with supervising parent
- Universal sanitation standards: diapers, spills, accidents
- Diaper changing and bathroom assistance
- Fire and natural disaster plans
- First aid responses and injury reporting
- Allergies, acceptable snacks
- Shared space issues
- Use of facility by outside groups
- Other considerations that may be applicable to your church?

Handling allegations of abuse

- NC is a must report state
- Report within the first 24 hours of receiving report
- Create and use response team, stress confidentiality
- Offer caring response, take allegations seriously
- Remove accused from service until allegations resolved

- Document allegations and response of church
- Contact insurance company
- Support with offer of professional counseling

How do we create a policy and procedures document?

- Enlist development team
- Consider areas of concern for your church
- Create written document
- Have legal review (optional)
- Get formal approval by church governing body
- Inform and train parents and leaders impacted by policy
- Monitor compliance
- Evaluate and amend, as needed

Policy standards: discipline & classroom management

- Acceptable forms of discipline: redirection & use of natural consequences
- Timeout
- Unacceptable forms of discipline: physical contact with purpose of inflicting pain, yelling, shaking, shaming
- Reflect Christ through extending respect and grace
- Handling recurring behaviors

Policy standards: acceptable touch

- Acceptable: side hugs, high fives, fist bumps, hand holding, touch shoulders, sitting side by side
- Unacceptable: men holding children on lap, kissing on lips, frontal hugs
- Goal is avoidance of impressions of impropriety