

safeguarding

God's children™



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Participant workbook
For Ministries

Group Discussion.

Why would a church be a place that could be targeted by perpetrators of abuse?

Why do we have an even greater responsibility to protect children when we're involved in ministry?

What are the steps we must take to keep ministries safe?

Screening is your first opportunity to prevent.

Why is screening an essential element in keeping children safe?

What steps are involved in careful screening?

Interacting should be guided by clear standards known to everyone.

Why are guidelines for interacting essential for keeping children safe?

What interactions are appropriate for ministry?

What interactions are not appropriate for ministry?

Interacting should be guided by clear standards known to everyone.

Interacting resource: Sample Guidelines

Appropriate displays of affection

- Asking permission before touching
- Hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and hand-slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting close to small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child
- Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger

Inappropriate displays of affection

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Lying down or sleeping beside children
- Massages
- Patting children on the thigh, knee or leg
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth
- Showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, closets, restricted areas, or other private rooms
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development

Monitoring is absolutely essential for safe ministries.

Why is monitoring essential for keeping children safe?

What steps are involved in monitoring?

Monitoring is absolutely essential for safe ministries.

Monitoring resource: Sample Supervisory Plan

Church Nursery

Personnel: Only screened volunteers may work in the nursery. No one under the age of 15 may be alone with children in the nursery.

Nursery volunteers are not permitted to allow unscreened friends or family members to assist in the nursery without applying to be volunteers.

Supervision: The Director of Religious Education will conduct random spot visits to the nursery no less than once each week. Visits will be documented by date, time and the DRE's initials. Once each month, the DRE will spend at least 10 minutes observing the program. Observations will be documented by the DRE in a notebook in the office.

Ratio: One adult volunteer per 5 children.

Physical environment: No paper, foil or decorations may be placed over windows. Nursery room doors and the door of the room across the hall must remain open anytime there is only one adult in the nursery.

Bathroom procedure: Children ages 4 and over will be walked to the bathroom at the beginning of the hour, and the volunteer will stand in the door. Parents will be informed in writing that their children will not be assisted with toileting so they can properly prepare their children. Assisting younger children will be conducted by volunteers with one volunteer assisting and another standing in the door. When only one volunteer is present, the volunteer will be assisted by the receptionist, the DRE or another screened parent.

Diapering will be conducted in the observable diapering area only.

Reporting concerns: Concerns about the nursery program should be reported to:

Training provides everyone with the tools to keep children safe.

Why is training essential for keeping children safe?

What should be trained?

Who should be trained?

Training provides everyone with the tools to keep children safe.

Training resource: Preventing False Allegations

Behaviors that have led to false allegations of abuse.

- Meeting alone in isolated places
- Showing favoritism
- Engaging in physical contact that was misinterpreted
- Wearing provocative or revealing attire
- Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present
- Being nude in front of children
- Sleeping in bed with children
- Giving special or secret gifts
- Graphically discussing sexual activities or encouraging others to do so
- Keeping "secrets" about relationships
- Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection
- Showing affection when no one else is around
- Staring while others were dressing
- Commenting on children's bodies
- Taking pictures while children are dressing or showering
- Shaming or belittling an individual

Responding quickly gives you the power to protect children.

Why is responding quickly essential for keeping children safe?

What can be done to respond?

Responding quickly gives you the power to protect children.

Responding resources: Barriers and Disclosure

Barriers to reporting sexual abuse.

Denial. We don't want to believe that abuse occurs.

Loyalty. We don't want to believe that abuse occurs.

Fear. We could be wrong, or we may not want to be identified.

Protection. We want to protect the victim from embarrassment or pain.

Avoidance. We don't want to get caught in the middle.

Guilt. We should have known or we might be implicated.

If a child discloses abuse.

Listen.

Be sensitive to vague disclosures.

Avoid expressing shock or outrage.

Don't threaten or condemn the alleged perpetrator.

Let the person know you believe him or her.

Tell the person he or she was right to disclose.

Assure the person the abuse was not his or her fault.

Reassure the person that he or she will be safe.

Avoid questions that could make the person feel responsible.

Collect essential details for the report.

Write down exactly what the person said.

Follow reporting procedures.