



First Presbyterian Church, Tuscumbia  
**GUIDELINES FOR NURSERY WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

**What is our purpose for having Child Protection Policies?**

We have been called to care for our children and to honor the name of Christ. To this end, these policies have been developed to ensure a safe, loving environment where Jesus is glorified and enjoyed by all His people. While we rely ultimately on the sovereign protection of our Lord, we also recognize that He has called us to exercise wisdom and prudence in our care for His children.

As a nursery and toddler worker or volunteer, you know what a privilege it is to work with children and what an enormous responsibility comes with caring for others' babies. Children's workers and volunteers are sensitive to a wide range of safety and liability issues surrounding our young ones at church. From food allergies to preventing access by sexual predators, it's vital to understand and implement best practices to protect our kids. This guide is designed to help you do exactly that, to ensure that you have access to the basic information you need to keep kids safe at church, and to give you practical guidance for applying this information. You'll find the basic "must-dos" to keep children in your care safe and healthy and their parents worry-free, knowing their children are in good hands.

**Arrival**

Arrive 15 minutes before church starts. If a child arrives early, ask the parent to stay until the second worker or volunteer arrives. Parents, children, and your co-workers are counting on you to be on time.

All children need to have a nursery packet on file with the nursery coordinator. This document shows allergies, other important medical information, and who is allowed to pick-up a child from the nursery. These documents are kept in the nursery with the accident and incident report forms.

One person must always be stationed at the sign-in area. This allows the parents to feel a special welcome as you greet the family. When the nursery is in use, a system will be used to ensure children are released only to their parents or an authorized adult. Parents will drop off their child at the nursery, alerting workers and/or volunteers about any special feeding or sleeping instructions, serious allergies, and/or medical issues. Parents will sign-in their child and take a pager. Assure them that they will be paged if their baby or toddler gets or remains upset. Upon return, the parent will pick up his/her child and return the pager. Other adults are not permitted to pick-up babies or toddlers from the nursery unless the parent states so at drop off, or he or she is listed in the nursery packet.

Parents and siblings are requested not to visit their child during the time the children are in the nursery. This can cause unnecessary re-adjustment for the child and can upset other children.

## **Age limits**

It is the policy of the church that children four and older should be attending adult worship. Older children will not be allowed to stay in the nursery.

## **Wellness Policy**

We have a role in keeping our nursery a healthy place to bring children. If the child is not well, we will not be able to accept him/her into the nursery. If a child develops any of the symptoms listed below while in our care, we will ask the parents to come and get him/her.

A well child has:

- No fever greater than 99.6 or for the last 24 hours.
- No runny nose that appears thick green or yellow.
- No persistent cough.
- No vomiting/diarrhea currently or for the last 24 hours.
- No pink eye or other infections
- No skin infections (impetigo/boils, ringworm, etc.)
- No unexplained rashes.
- No childhood diseases such as chicken pox, mumps, measles, rubella, pertussis, or scarlet fever.

Children being treated with antibiotics should be on the drug for at least 24 hours before coming to the nursery. Nursery staff are not permitted to administer medication to any child.

## **Inconsolable children**

Workers and volunteers should make every effort to engage unhappy children in play or rock them. Sitting on the floor with the children is very effective and calming. If a child is inconsolable (10 minutes of non-stop crying), the parents are to be paged or notified immediately. Under no circumstances should you let a child "cry it out." This policy will help to fortify the trust between our parents and our nursery staff.

## **Infant Care and Diaper Changing**

Infants are in the earliest stage of development, and in order to foster this development, infants should NOT be restricted to one area (piece of equipment) or activity for long periods of time. Activities such as swings, lying/playing on blankets or mats on the floor, and looking at books and toys are acceptable and encouraged. Do not stand and hold more than one infant at a time. It is a much better solution to place them on a mat on the floor and join them. Infants will be held while given bottles. Diapers need to be checked hourly and soiled diapers need to be changed immediately, placed in a plastic bag, and tossed in the garbage. Nursery workers and volunteers, appointed by the nursery worker, can change diapers. If a worker is present in that particular nursery, she will change diapers instead of the volunteer.

When placing babies in the cribs, they are to be placed on their backs (unless instructed otherwise by the child's parent). Make sure to follow any special feeding or sleeping instruction given by the parent at drop off. If a bottle should need to be heated, please do so in a container of warm water and not a microwave oven.

*(Nursery workers and volunteers must always use GermX between the handling of infants.)*

## **Snacks**

Please check the special instructions list of a child that you are unfamiliar with for allergies before you give them a snack. Make sure all nursery workers and volunteers in the nursery each week know who has allergies to food or other substances. Give older babies a snack as needed. Goldfish crackers and animal cookies are provided. Have a special snack time at the table rather than giving them cookies the entire hour. If the parents did not leave a drink, give each child a separate paper cup with water. Use your discretion as to how much food to offer. Remember this is a snack, not a meal. Children should remain seated at the table until they are finished with their snack and then their hands should be wiped off with a baby wipe. There will be no sharing of snacks or cups. Cups should be labeled with the child's name.

## **Hygiene**

If a child uses a crib, change the sheet afterwards in order to help keep other babies healthy. Place the soiled sheet in the hamper. If a child uses a blanket or burp cloth, make sure to place those items in the hamper. All children should have his/her diaper changed before they leave the nursery. Check diapers as necessary or 15-30 minutes before each session is over. Always place a sheet of protective paper down on the changing table before changing the baby or make sure to disinfect the diaper changing station between babies and always wear gloves. Place soiled diapers in a plastic bag before placing them in the garbage can. Always wash your hands after a diaper change or wiping a runny nose.

Our children's bathrooms have been modified for toddler size; therefore, little to no assistance should be needed. No adult should be alone in the bathroom with a child. Leave the bathroom door open if you must enter the bathroom with the child. Place your hand over the child's hand to assist with wiping if needed. Always supervise the children and the environment carefully.

Toys will be disinfected after each nursery session. All mouth/chew toys that the infants and crawlers or toddlers have had in their mouths should be placed in a soiled toy container and disinfected. A disinfectant that is not harmful to the children will be used in the nursery and toddler rooms.

## **Behavior & Discipline in the Toddler Nursery**

Nursery rules and behavior expectations are for workers to create a calm environment at all times; toddlers are to use their inside voices, no yelling or screaming, no running, no throwing, no climbing on furniture, no rough-housing, and no pushing or hitting. If children express this behavior, remind them in a kind voice of the appropriate behavior that you expect and remove them from the source of the conflict. A child should not be removed from the nursery room for any reason other than when he or she is picked up by the parent. If the behavior continues, it is appropriate to place them in a time-out chair for no more than one minute for each year of their age. Yelling at the children is absolutely prohibited. Also, under no circumstances shall the use of physical force or the threat of physical force be used. If a child is unmanageable after efforts have been made to correct the situation, then the nursery coordinator and parent should be notified. Keep your full attention on the children. Use your eyes and ears, and never turn your back on them. Never leave children unattended. Look for hazards in the room, such as: a climbing child, an overturned chair, or too many toys on the floor for safe walking. The safety of all the children in the nursery room must be maintained.

## **Safety Rules**

The Deacon on duty will have a pager on him at all times during the worship hours. If you need help, page him immediately. The hall entrance door by the nursery will be locked at 9:30 a.m. Please encourage all others to use the side entrances to the church.

## **General Nursery Responsibilities**

Please keep the supply list up to date for the Nursery Coordinator. Items that could be needed are: batteries for toys, baby wipes, diapers, hand disinfectant, snacks, and paper cups for treats, paper towels, disposable gloves, washable markers, sign-in sheets, etc.

There should be a First Aid Kit in the toddler area with the following items: Band-Aids, alcohol pads, child Benadryl, antibiotic cream, cold ice pack, disposable gloves.

## **Nursery Volunteers**

- Should arrive 15 minutes before church or the nursery session starts.
- Should NEVER leave the nursery because they think they are not needed.
- Should NOT leave the nursery until all children are picked up.
- Should NOT bring their older elementary age children to the nursery. They should make other arrangements for them.

AT ALL TIMES THERE MUST BE TWO PEOPLE PRESENT WITH THE CHILDREN. This applies to the paid workers and volunteers.

If a parent volunteer wishes to spank their own child, then they need to do so out of the nursery rooms to avoid the appearance of nursery staff spanking the children, and to prevent frightening the other children.