

## **Discipleship Community Church Nursery Policies Handbook**

### **Activities**

It is our goal for children to have a pleasant visit in the nursery. Nursery workers will talk with them, read to them, and engage them in developmentally and age appropriate activities and participatory games. The children should be involved in activities for the largest percentage of time that they are in the nursery. Videos may be used on occasion, but must be rated G, display appropriate behavior and language, and be approved by the Nursery Coordinator. Music and/or books should be available at all times. In order to foster a Christian foundation in our little ones, we recommend that at least one Bible story be read to the toddlers during each session.

Do not toss or throw children in the air when playing with them. Do not lift a baby or toddler up by holding their hands and lifting their arms in the air, as this can cause shoulder dislocation in many children.

Children should not bring their own toys into the nursery, unless it is a special “security” item. This prevents children from losing toys or having them damaged by another child.

### **Age limits**

Only children of the appropriate age are allowed in the nursery rooms. No child over the age of three during Sunday morning community groups, or four during the worship service and weeknight community groups should be in nursery care. For special events where a wide range of children are present, the children should be separated into similar age groups and appropriate activities provided to keep them occupied.

### **Background checks and general safety issues**

Our nursery workers consist of a Primary Attendant and one or more youth assistants. All Primary Attendants must be approved by the elders and will be required to participate in a training session on our Policies and Procedure and sign that they have read and agree to adhere to the policies in this Handbook. Adults must pass a background check through the National Criminal Database and National Sex Offender Registry. Minors applying to volunteer as Primary Attendants must be at least 15-years-old and have passed the Red Cross babysitting certification course.

Men or boys who are assisting in the nursery will not be left alone with children other than briefly while the other worker takes children to the bathroom.

The nursery will have a sign-in sheet where parents sign-in each child. The sheet should include the child’s name, pager #, the parent's name, the parent's cell phone number, food allergies/sensory needs/special instructions, and persons authorized to pick up the children. The child’s name should be marked out by the worker if they are checked out before the service ends so that an accurate record is kept of children in the room.

Children will only be released to those with a pager and listed as authorized on the sign-in sheet at the end of services.

Under no circumstances should the children be left alone for ANY amount of time. Caregivers are required to directly supervise children by sight AND hearing at all times, even while they are sleeping.

No cell phone use is permitted while on duty, unless contacting a parent with an inconsolable child. All other cell phone use (including texting, e-mailing and any other activity on a cell phone) is prohibited. If parents need to be contacted, the Primary Attendant will make this decision.

### **Care Giver Responsibilities/Duties**

The nursery caregivers will provide proper care and nurturing to babies/toddlers during church services and special events.

1. Become familiar with nursery policies and facilities.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to service or event (earlier if expecting a larger crowd for special services or events).
3. Preparation:
  - a. Pray for wisdom, patience, and to be able to demonstrate God's love to the children.
  - b. Check floors for choking hazards such as coins, marbles, safety pins, jewelry, buttons, crayons, pen caps, nails, screws, etc.
  - c. Make sure all electrical outlets are covered.
  - d. Check pager battery levels to make sure they are charged.
4. Sign-in:
  - a. Greet parents and provide sign in sheet.
  - b. Provide pager to the parent and note the pager number on the sign-in sheet.
  - c. Review sign-in sheet to ensure completeness and special instructions are understood. If the child has an allergy, discuss what snacks are acceptable with the parent (common snacks like Goldfish crackers may contain gluten and red dye).
  - d. If you are unfamiliar with the child, place a label with the child's name on their back.
  - e. Make sure the child's diaper bag, bottle, security item, etc are labeled.
  - f. Bottles and sippy cups should be placed in diaper bags or out of reach.
5. Take care of babies/toddlers in the nursery, following nursery policies for safety and proper care:
  - a. Go over the rules and consequences with the children. No throwing, roughhousing, fighting, yelling, running, or climbing on furniture is allowed. See the Discipline section for more information.

- b. Rock, play with, sing to, play music for and show picture books to babies/toddlers.
  - c. Place mouthed toys in the hamper to be cleaned/disinfected.
  - d. Feed babies when needed or as requested by parents.
  - e. Give snacks to toddlers. Review the allergy section of the sign-in sheet before giving snacks.
  - f. Change diapers/clothing as necessary; check diapers near end of service. Use the diaper changing pad in the closet and wipe it down with Lysol/Clorox after each diaper change.
  - g. If you take a child to the bathroom, make sure the toilet is flushed and they wash their hands.
6. Talk with parents each Sunday about any concerns and joys related to their child.
  7. Clean up:
    - a. All pagers should be turned off and placed back on the charger.
    - b. Toys shall be put away in their proper places.
    - c. Wipe down all used toys and equipment (tables, trays, etc.) with provided Lysol or Clorox Wipes.
    - d. Vacuum any crumbs or debris with the vacuum in the closet.
    - e. The diaper pail must be emptied into the outside dumpster at the end of the worship service nursery session.
    - f. All lights should be turned off.

### **Cleanliness**

The nurseries should be the cleanest rooms in the Church, which is for the safety of both the children and workers. The guidelines below will help to facilitate this:

- Spills should be cleaned up immediately.
- Workers should sanitize their hands after each diaper change or cleaning any bodily discharge, such as wiping noses. Hand Sanitizer is located in the closet for convenience.
- Toys and teethers placed in a child's mouth should be placed in the bin labeled "To Be Washed" after the child is done playing with it. The Nursery Coordinator is responsible to make sure that the toys and teethers in this bin are sanitized each week.
- Used toys and equipment surfaces (i.e. walker trays, swings, tables, and chairs) are to be sprayed with sanitizer or wiped down with Clorox/Lysol wipes at the end of each day the nursery is used. This should be done by the scheduled Primary Attendant(s) and assistant(s) as a team effort.
- Soiled bedding should be washed after use. The Nursery Coordinator is responsible to make sure all other bedding is washed monthly using unscented, liquid laundry detergent.

### **Diaper Changing and Bathroom Trips**

9Rubber gloves, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing surface spray are to be provided in the nursery for the safety of the child and the worker.

Parents should supply diapers, wipes, a burp pad, bib, and a change of clothing for their child each time they drop off their child. DCC will supply extra diapers and wipes as backup.

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Use the diaper changing pad in the closet and wipe it down with Lysol/Clorox after each diaper change.

Keep all items (cleaners, wipes, etc.) out of the reach of children.

Only apply powder, lotion, or medicated cream if provided in the child's bag.

Workers should sanitize their hands after each diaper change.

If another nursery worker is available to remain with the other children, potty-trained toddlers will be taken to the bathroom as needed. Children must never be left alone in the bathroom, classroom or hallway. If sufficient coverage is not available to remain with the other children, the parent will be paged.

### **Discipline**

Always maintain a Christ-like attitude when instructing the child and model the love and respect you are asking the child to show you and others. As a nursery worker your goal is to engage the child relationally, which will give you an opportunity to influence the child's life.

The safety of all of the children in the nursery room must be maintained. No running, climbing on furniture, throwing, rough-housing, or fighting (pushing, hitting, kicking, or biting) can be allowed. To help ensure this policy, we have set in place a method of discipline to address behavior that is nearing or outside the set boundaries of the classroom. In these cases, classroom leaders will use the 1, 2, 3 method to address the child's behavior. This will be done in a firm but loving manner!

1. If children break a rule, remind them in a kind voice of the appropriate behavior that you expect and remove them from the source of the conflict.
2. 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.
3. If a child is unmanageable after efforts have been made to correct the situation, then the parent should be notified.

*If the worker feels the child is beyond their control at any point before step 3, the Primary Attendant may decide to page the parent for assistance.*

Disruptive behavior should always be handled in the room, not in isolation with the worker and a child alone.

Never humiliate a child in front of others or in private.

If a child needs correction, it should be done in a firm, but calm tone and should address only the behavior (“no hitting”) and never the character of the child (“bad boy”).

Also, tell the child the behavior you want to see when giving correction (“No hitting; please use your words to say what you want”).

The following will help ensure expectations are understood by all involved.

### *Set the Standard*

Clearly communicate expectations and rules so that boundaries are established. Also, clearly communicate the consequences of behavior to the contrary. For example, make sure the children know that a 1 count is a warning, a 2 count is a time out, and a 3 count means they have to leave and meet with their parents.

Review these rules often, as well as the following steps, which will be the result of any behavior to the contrary.

1. Explain to the children that if they do something that is against the rules you will: say the child’s name, remind them \_\_\_\_\_ is not allowed, and then say, “That’s one.”
2. Explain to children that if they do something again that is against the rule you will: say the child’s name, remind them \_\_\_\_\_ is not allowed, then say, ”that’s two; now take a time out”. Explain to the children that they will be expected to sit on a time out chair. Explain to the children that this time should be spent thinking about their behavior and what they need to do differently to become part of the class activities again.
3. Finally, explain to the children that if they continue a third time behavior that is unacceptable you will: say the child’s name, remind them \_\_\_\_\_ is not allowed, then say, “that’s three; now come with me”. Explain to them that they will have to leave the nursery or activity and go with the nursery worker to speak with their parent(s). Explain to the children they will not be able to return to the class until it next meets.

### *Follow Through*

If a child breaks an expectation or rule that has been communicated it is vital that the leader address the behavior to ensure consistency for the children, as well as the staff.

Upon the first occurrence, the leader will say the child's name followed by a reminder of the rule that the child has broken and "that's one". Proceed with the class without saying anything further unless the child appears to be in need of special attention.

If there is a second occurrence the leader will repeat the child's name and the rule that has been broken followed by "that's two; now take a time out". Note: time out for children should correspond with their age (no more than one minute for each year of their age). After the time-out the child may rejoin the group. This behavior should be brought to the attention of the parent when they are picked up from the nursery.

If after the time out the child continues in unacceptable behavior a third time the leader will repeat the child's name then say, "that's three; now come with me" and remove the child from the activity/classroom and page the child's parent. The child will not be able to return to the nursery until it next meets.

If the nursery workers feel a child creates an unsafe environment, or unacceptable behavior has been discussed with the parent(s) three times within three months and the child continues to cause fights, show signs of aggression or is difficult to handle, the child will be suspended from the nursery for 6 months and the parent will have to keep the child with them or find other care outside of the church.

### *Suggestions*

Pray before each class that God would grant you wisdom, discernment, patience and love as you serve the children.

A child is usually disruptive because they either crave attention, they are bored or they are confused. The solution:

- a. Keep children from being bored by preparing activities and materials prior to class time. Trying to figure out as you go creates space and down time for children to misbehave.
- b. Fuzzy rules and no consequences are a guarantee for misbehavior. Set clear expectations and consequences and enforce them fairly and consistently.
- c. Try to re-direct potentially problematic behavior.
- d. Don't reinforce misbehavior with too much attention, briefly address it and move on.
- e. Create a positive culture by proactively giving attention to positive behaviors.

Remember there are limits to what we as workers may be able to do. You are in the nursery with the children for a limited time and therefore may find it difficult to affect change in children with more severe behavior problems. Do your best to enlist the help of parents in these cases and always be mindful of our example:

"The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

Psalm 145:8

### **Emergency Procedures**

A First Aid kit is located in the labeled drawer behind the door to the hallway.

In the event a child is hurt or injures another child, parents will be paged. If the incident leaves a mark or bump or worse, the nursery worker will complete an Accident Report Form (found in the hanging folder rack by the door) and give it to the Nursery Coordinator.

Fire escape and evacuation routes should be posted in each room.

In the event of an evacuation:

- The roster should be picked up by a worker and taken to the designated assembly area with the children.
- In case of Fire or other emergency (non-weather related) evacuation: Children will be evacuated to the back parking lot in order to stay out of the way of emergency vehicles entering the property. This back lot is where parents can pick up their children.
- In case of Weather emergencies (tornado, etc): Children will be taken to the classroom next door (King's Kids' 4-7 yr old classroom). This is the most central area of the building and therefore offers the most protection.
- Workers should calmly but quickly organize the children for evacuation. The calm reaction of the workers will be comforting to the children.
- The Primary Attendant must ensure that rosters were picked up and classrooms are fully evacuated before leaving the building. Doors should be left open after each room has been evacuated.

### **Hours**

The nursery will open 10 minutes prior to the beginning of a church function and will promptly close 10 minutes after the event is over.

### **Illness policy**

For the protection of all children and workers, neither children nor workers with any of the following symptoms will be admitted into the nursery:

- Fever within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Untreated Pink Eye or other eye infection
- Ear infection
- Symptoms of childhood diseases – chicken pox, fifth disease, hand foot and mouth disease, etc.
- Any unexplained rash

- Any communicable disease
- Croup
- Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits

Children with a severe runny nose (colored discharge) or sore throat will be denied admittance if children under the age of one are present and may otherwise be denied admittance at the discretion of the Primary Attendant.

If the child is on an antibiotic, he/she must be on it for at least 24 hours before coming into the nurseries.

If a child is visibly ill, he/she should be removed from the nursery in the care of a nursery worker, and the parents should be paged immediately.

Parents should notify the Nursery Coordinator if their child develops any communicable disease within the 24-48 hours after being in the nursery. (Ex. Chicken pox, pink eye, fifth disease, etc.)

### **Inconsolable children**

Workers 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. A crying baby that needs to be calmed may be walked in the hallway outside the nursery room if another worker is available to stay with the remaining children.

If a child is inconsolable (10-15 minutes of non-stop crying), the parents are to be paged. 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.

### **Infants**

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.

Practice SIDS prevention...When placing babies in the cribs, they are to be placed on their backs (unless instructed otherwise by the child's parent).

## **Medications**

The nursery workers WILL NOT administer any medication; parent(s) will be paged to come to the room and administer it.

## **Minimum Care-giver to child ratio**

Each adult nursery worker may care for 8 total children, including her own, with no more than the following ratios:

- 1 adult per 3 infants
- 1 adult per 4 toddlers
- 1 adult per 6 children ages 3 years and older

For each nursery aide that is a minor, the ratios above may increase by 50%, to a maximum of 12 total children.

## **Scheduling**

Before being added to the nursery schedule, all Primary Attendants must be approved by the elders and will be required to participate in a training session on our Policies and Procedure and sign that they have read and agree to adhere to the policies in this Handbook. Adults must pass a background check through the National Criminal Database and National Sex Offender Registry. Minors applying to volunteer as Primary Attendants must be at least 15-years-old and have passed the Red Cross babysitting certification course.

All parents of nursery age children who have been attending our church for 3 or more months will be asked to serve in the normal schedule rotation after meeting the above requirements.

The schedule will be mailed out and/or e-mailed quarterly. Initially, it is the responsibility of the Nursery Coordinator to schedule nursery workers for worship services and functions requiring childcare. However, if a nursery worker is unable to cover their scheduled shift, it is their responsibility to find a substitute from the approved list to fill in for them. Nursery workers may use the DCC Nursery Facebook Messenger chat group to request someone else fill in for them, but it is their responsibility to follow up with individuals if no one volunteers. Please notify the Nursery Coordinator by text or e-mail about any changes in the schedule.

## **Snacks**

Appropriate snacks are available in the nursery closet. Do not give a child snacks brought from home for another child. Due to possible allergies, snacks cannot contain peanuts.

Review the allergy section of the sign-in sheet before giving snacks. Common snacks such as Goldfish crackers may contain red dye and gluten.

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The following sources are gratefully acknowledged in compiling these Policies and Procedures:

- Agape Bible Church, as per its Nursery Policies & Handbook posted on their website at <http://www.treasuringgod.com/children/Nursery-Policies-Handbook.pdf>
- Fellowship Baptist Church of Longview, TX, as per its Nursery Policies and Procedures for Staff and Volunteers Updated Feb 16, 2013 posted on their website at <http://www.fellowshipbaptistlongview.com/FBC%20Nursery%20Policies%20and%20Procedures%20for%20Staff%20and%20Volunteers.pdf>
- Lexington United Methodist Church as per its LUMC Policies and Procedures, Jan. 2004, posted on their website at [www.lexumcsc.com/storage/nursery/nurserypolicies%2001-10.pdf](http://www.lexumcsc.com/storage/nursery/nurserypolicies%2001-10.pdf)

Nursery Worker Volunteer Form

I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the Policies and Procedures set forth in this document.

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Signature

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Date

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Name (Printed)