



DEVELOPING A NURSERY POLICY

Getting Started

Advent Christian General Conference | Dept. of Student & Family Ministries

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO CONSIDER

- **Room Safety**

The place to start when writing any nursery policy is with an examination of the room itself. The question to ask is: Are there any potential hazards to children that exist directly related to the room and its equipment? If so, those sorts of things need to be taken care of. The physical safety of the children entrusted to the care of the church's nursery staff is of the utmost importance.

Things to look for might include:

- ✓ Sharp objects within reach.
- ✓ Chemicals that are either visible or kept in an unlocked storage unit.
- ✓ Objects within reach of the children that could be a potential choking hazard.
- ✓ Damaged toys or equipment.

- **Room Cleanliness**

Equally as important as general room safety is the cleanliness of the room that is being used for the nursery. If the room (or facility) being used as a nursery is not clean, or is not sanitized on a regular basis, children are exposed to germs and could become ill as a result. Therefore, regular and complete cleaning and sanitation is a must for nursery facilities.

Things to consider in regards to nursery cleanliness should include:

- ✓ Regular vacuuming (or washing of floors).
- ✓ Regular washing of all exposed surfaces.
- ✓ Periodic cleaning of all storage areas.
- ✓ Proper disposal of all diapers and any other soiled objects.
- ✓ Cleaning of all toys, books, and other such objects after each use.

- **Room Equipment**

It is vital that, in any church nursery, adequate and *safe* equipment is provided so that an acceptable level of infant care can be maintained. Without proper equipment in place, nursery attendants are likely to be left with insufficient resources to care for the children God has placed in their care.

Some basic room equipment to consider purchasing might include:

- ✓ Cribs and/or Pack 'n Plays (with crib sheets)
- ✓ Infant safe toys
- ✓ Diapers (multiple sizes) and proper diaper changing equipment (i.e. changing tables, baby powder, corn starch, wipes, plastic gloves, a "Diaper Genie," etc.)
- ✓ Blankets
- ✓ Extra clothes

- ✓ Tissues and paper towels
- ✓ A sink with soap (so attendants can wash their hands)

- **Abuse Prevention Procedures**

Children of all ages are vulnerable to abuse. This can occur outside of the church, certainly; but it all too often happens within the church. It is important, then, for churches to maintain nursery procedures designed help to prevent the possibility of abuse taking place while infants are under the church's care.

Some procedures to consider might include:

- ✓ Ensuring that two *approved* nursery attendants are present in the nursery whenever children are being cared for.
- ✓ Ensuring that there are no *private areas* in the nursery where children could be taken away from the watchful eye of both attendants.
- ✓ Appointing an individual who is not serving in the nursery to check in on the nursery a few times during each service or church function.

- **Check-In and Check-Out Procedures**

The development of check-in and check-out procedures is vital in a church nursery, if the church is to ensure that a proper chain of care is maintained. Having parents check their children in and out, and subsequently logging those transactions, ensures that children are well taken care of and not neglected while on the church premises. Additionally, it helps to ensure that *only* authorized caregivers take responsibility for a child and helps to avoid situations where a stranger could abduct a child due to a lack of knowledge on the part of the nursery attendants.

- **Clear Expectations for Nursery Attendants**

Another key aspect of keeping children safe in your nursery is making sure that volunteers receive a clear set of expectations. This should include a clear and comprehensive outline of all responsibilities and policies that pertain to serving in the nursery.

Expectations might include:

- ✓ When nursery attendants are expected to arrive. (A minimum of 15 minutes before a service or function is recommended.)
- ✓ The church's basic expectations for the care of infants (i.e. what to do when they cry, how to change diapers, what to do if a medical issue arises, etc.).
- ✓ Check-in/Check-out procedures.
- ✓ Cleanliness and sanitation expectations.
- ✓ Any other expectations outlined in your church's policies.

- **Training for Nursery Attendants**

In addition to maintaining a clear set of expectations, it is equally important to ensure that the church provide training for new *and* existing nursery attendants. Each new attendant should receive training in all the policies and procedures outlined by the church. Additionally, all existing nursery attendants should receive a yearly refresher to ensure that the quality of care is sustained by all who volunteer.

Such training should include:

- ✓ Teaching and discussion which outlines all policies adopted by the church related to the care of children, as well as, specifically, to nursery care.
- ✓ Clear communication regarding all weekly expectations of nursery attendants.
- ✓ First Aid and infant CPR training.
- ✓ How to respond in an emergency situation (i.e. response to a serious health issue with a child, evacuation in case of fire, how to respond if an intruder is identified, etc.).
- ✓ An explanation of proper communication with parents (i.e. what to say when they pick-up or drop-off their children, when it is necessary to contact them *during* a church service or function, how to communicate any issues that may arise, etc.).
- ✓ Abuse prevention training.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

- **Present the need** for a more significant set of policies regarding your nursery, as well as some initial ideas, to the church board or leadership team.
- **Form a committee** to research and develop some policies and procedures that will work for your church.
- **Examine any existing policies and procedures** your church already has regarding the church nursery to gauge their adequacy.
- **Examine the policies and procedures** of other churches and organizations.
- **Ensure that your policies and procedures provide the *necessary protection*** for your church's infants and your nursery attendants.
- **Submit your policies and procedures** to the church board & congregation for implementation.
- **Implement your policies and provide training** to your church leaders and your nursery attendants.