

First United Methodist Church of Cleburne

Nursery Policies and Procedures

Philosophy

As members of the UMC, we uphold the rights of children and acknowledge that children are a sacred gift from God. In proclaiming that sacredness, we in the Church carry a commitment to enable all children to experience the fullness of life as Jesus proclaimed.

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them. "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.

-Mark 9:36-37

"...Permit the children to come to Me, do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

-Mark 10:14

Mission

At FUMC we promise to surround our children in a community of love and forgiveness that they may grow in their service to others. Our intention is to minister to the needs of all children and provide them with a caring community where all may be nurtured in a dignified and loving manner.

Nursery Hours and Requests

A nursery is provided for infants and toddlers for all church services and requested church-wide events and activities. The nursery will open 15 minutes prior to the beginning of a church function and will promptly close 15 minutes after the event is over. Any special request for nursery service needs to be submitted to the Nursery Coordinator at least 7 days prior to the date of the event. All nursery workers must be notified 72 hours in advance of the potential nursery request.

Nursery Scheduling

Initially, it is the responsibility of the Nursery Coordinator to secure the proper staff (paid workers and volunteers) for Worship Services and functions requiring childcare. (The Nursery Coordinator is accountable to the Director of Children's Ministries) However, if a volunteer is unable to cover their scheduled shift, it is their responsibility to find a substitute from the approved list to fill in for them. Please notify the Nursery Coordinator by phone or email about any changes in the schedule. If a paid nursery worker cannot work as scheduled, then he/she will be responsible for finding a substitute from the approved Nursery Staff List and the NC must be notified immediately.

Adult/Child Ratios

There should be no more than 12 children at a time in any of the nursery rooms. Every effort needs to be made to keep the ratio of the one adult to every six children, and one adult to every 4 infants. We also require that at least two workers be on duty at all times.

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.

Nursery Staff

The staff should be composed of a Nursery Coordinator and at least 4 paid nursery workers, in addition to volunteers. Paid workers must be 15 years old and all paid workers are to have current CPR/First Aid training Certification and abide by all rules and provisions contained in this handbook as well as our Safe Sanctuary Policies.

Nursery Volunteers

Our nursery volunteers consist of parents, youth, and other members of our church family who assist our paid staff. All parents of infants or toddlers will be asked to volunteer to assist in the nursery during one service approximately once ever 2 months by the NC. The schedules will be mailed out and emailed quarterly. The church office will also send out a reminder card or email before the scheduled Sunday volunteers are to work. All volunteers will be required to participate in a training session on our Policies and Procedures, fill out a volunteer form, and complete the Background Check before working in the nursery. New church attendees will be asked to wait 6 months before working in the nursery.

Worker Dress Code/Behavior

Pants are considered professional attire for nursery employees. Please do not wear short shorts or other inappropriate, suggestive, or unclean attire while working in the nursery. The provides smocks/aprons are required to be worn by nursery employees, and requested to be worn by volunteers, over their clothing for cleanliness and to allow them to be easily identified by their parents. Our nursery staff and volunteers are the fact of the church to many visitors. Please present yourself appropriately. NO cell phones are to be used during working hours and no food eaten in the nursery by workers.

Room Preparation

1. Check the room for orderliness
2. Prepare cubbies for use and set out labels to assign newcomers to a cubby.
3. Prepare toys for children
4. Have all diaper changing materials ready for use.
5. Put on clean nursery smock or apron
6. Wash Hands
7. Put out sign up/out sheet

Greeting the Children

One of the paid nursery workers should warmly greet the children and their parents while the other workers are involving the children in appropriate play and activities. The greeter needs to make sure the parents sign in and place their child's belonging in the appropriate cubby.

Nursery Activities

All activities for children will be developmentally and age appropriate. The children should be involved in these activities and participatory games for the largest percentage of time that they are in the nursery. Children will be encouraged to participate in these activities by the nursery workers. Music and books should be available at all times.

Resources for appropriate games and activities are available from the nursery coordinator. It is our goal for the children to have a pleasant visit in the nursery, and to achieve this, the workers (both paid and volunteers) should interact with the children as they play and talk with them. In order to foster a Christian foundation in our little ones, we recommend that at least one Bible Story be read to toddlers during the Sunday School hour.

VIDEOS- Videos may be used on occasion, but must be approved by the NC. Videos must be rated G, have Christian and/or educational themes, and display appropriate behavior and language.

SNACKS- appropriate snacks are available in the cabinets. Do not give a child's snack brought from home to another child. Due to possible allergies, snacks given cannot contain peanut, chocolate, or red dye. Snacks will only be given in the tiled areas of the rooms while the child is seated. There should be no food given on the carpeted areas. Children shall also be given their personal drinking cups only while they are seated, and removed when they are finished drinking.

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. When warming bottles simply heat the water with tap water.

-Diapers need to be checked hourly (at least) and soiled diapers need to be changed immediately.

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

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:

- All equipment surfaces (i.e. walker and trays, swings, mats, tables, and chairs) must be cleaned with the provided bleach/water solution at the end of each nursery and not until every child has left the nursery.
- All toys that have been handled and mouthed must be cleaned with the bleach and water solution or run through a dishwasher before use by another child.
- Sheets must be changed after use by each child and washed after each nursery session. All used blankets and smocks/aprons must be washed once a week (or more, as needed). Please place all dirty laundry in the basket in the storage closet.

- Carpet spills should be cleaned up immediately.
- Workers are not to eat nor drink in the nursery, especially in front of the children.
- Workers must follow general hand washing guidelines posted in the bathroom and sings areas in the nursery. Workers should wash their hands after each diaper change or cleaning any bodily discharge, such as wiping noses.
- All diapers must be planed in the diaper disposal (diaper genie or champ)
- All nursery trash must be gathered and taken to the dumpster after each nursery session/

General Policies and Discipline

Age Limits – Only children of the appropriate age for a room are allowed in the nursery rooms. No child over the age of five (not in Kindergarten) should be in the nursery rooms. For special events where wide ranges of children are present, the children should be separated into similar age groups and appropriate activities provided to keep them occupied. For activities other than worship services, children up to 5th grade are allowed in the nursery with opportunity to engage in age appropriate activities. Bins containing age appropriate games and activities should be located in the nursery.

Illness Policy – 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 contacted immediately.

Inconsolable children – workers should make every effort to engage unhappy children in play or rock them. Sitting on the floor with the children in very effective and calming. If a child is inconsolable (15 min of nonstop 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 the nursery staff.

Discipline – The safety of all of the children in the nursery room must be maintained. No throwing, hitting or biting, or kicking is allowed. 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 conflict. If the behavior continues, it is appropriate to place them on a time-out mat for no more than 1 minute for each year of their age. Yelling at children is absolutely prohibited. Also, under no circumstances shall the use of physical force or the threat of physical force by used. If a child is unmanageable after efforts have been made to correct the situation, then contact either the NC or the parent. 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 the nursery staff spanking the children, and to prevent frightening the other children. All discipline issues must be document on a Discipline Incident Form.

Safety – Please remind parents that they must sign in their child and include any special instructions. Please inform parents that the child’s parent needs to be the one to pick up their child. [Future- Pagers are available and often make parents more comfortable with leaving their child.] For the safety and cleanliness of our rooms, please lock nursery doors after church events. Last person out needs to make sure both doors are locked.

Clean-up and Departure

The above-mentioned cleanliness procedures must be done at the end of each nursery session. Toys shall be put away in their proper places. The diaper pail must be emptied into the outside dumpster and the end of the nursery session. All lights turned off, and doors locked. All nursery workers must stay until all cleaning procedures have been completed and all children are gone.

Confidentiality

All information about the children in our program and their families shall remain confidential unless it is determined that harm may come to the child and in that event, the NC and Children's Minister should be notified immediately and actions will be taken in line with Safe Sanctuary procedures. It is expressly understood that gossip is forbidden.

Emergency Procedures

Please refer to the emergency procedures in each room. If a serious injury occurs, an Accident Report Form needs to be filled out by the attending paid nursery worker and given to the NC. A telephone is available in the nursery for emergency use only. A first aid kit must be available and accessible as well.

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

Name _____

Date _____