

ALL SAINTS WACO

MINISTRY TO CHILDREN POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Collect for the Care of Children

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

(BCP, p. 829)

Program Description

The Nursery will be available for children 4 and under during Sunday services and when specifically stated for other events. The Children's Area will be available for school aged children, Kindergarten through 5th grade, during the sermon portion of the worship service and when specifically stated for special events.

Check-In

Parents will check their child in and out of the nursery using the sign in sheet. Each child will wear a nametag while in the nursery.

School aged children will begin in the worship service with their families. They will then "follow the cross" out of the sanctuary immediately following the gospel reading and will be escorted by that week's children's ministry volunteers to their classroom.

Supervisory Plan

Two adults and/or youth should be present in each room, except in emergency situations or when assisting a child in the bathroom, to provide the appropriate level of supervision. There must be at least one individual over the age of 18 per classroom. At least one female must be assigned to the classroom. In the event of an emergency, at least one person should remain with the children; they should never be left unsupervised.

Our adult/child ratios are as follows:

- NURSERY: Two (2) adults for up to ten (10) young children; one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to five (5) young children
- SCHOOL AGE: Two (2) adults for up to twenty (20) children; one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to ten (10) children
- **A minimum of 2 caregivers will be present at all times.**

Appropriate Dress

Pants and dresses are considered proper attire for workers. Please do not wear short shorts/skirts or other inappropriate or suggestive attire while working. It is recommended that volunteers dress comfortably as they may be playing on the floor with young children. Volunteers should not bring firearms, pocket knives, or tobacco products into the nursery and children's ministry areas.

Greeting

Workers will greet children and parents as they enter, by name if possible. For children who are walking, kneel down so that you're on eye-level with them and greet them personally. Each child should be made to feel welcome, included and loved while they are in our care!

Pick-up procedures:

Unless special arrangements have been made, only parents and siblings over the age of 13 are allowed to retrieve children from the nursery and children's areas. Parents may retrieve their children from the nursery during the "passing of the peace" time of the Eucharist Service or at the end of the scheduled event. School aged children will be escorted back to the sanctuary by the children's ministry volunteers.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency situation in which 911 must be called, the volunteer will first call 911, then notify the child's parents and the ministry coordinator.

All Saints Waco staff and volunteers are not permitted to administer any medication, even if a parent requests it, except in a life threatening situation. For example, in the case of a life-threatening allergic reaction please try to get a parent to administer an EpiPen but if that is not possible, please do so following the instructions on the EpiPen.

Discipline

- We value connection over participation.
- Please get on a child's eye level and make eye contact with them when communicating.
- Model and connect *before* you correct.

Discipline should be handled by following these steps:

1. Attempt to redirect the child. Model the accepted behavior.
2. Talk with the child, and state clearly what the problem behavior is. Provide suggestions of what the child should do instead (if the child is old enough to understand). Provide two choices if possible.
3. If the child continues to exhibit problem behavior, the volunteer should discuss the behavior privately with the ministry coordinator and child's parent.

Caregivers will never use physical contact or yelling as a form of discipline.

Contacting Parents

In the case of a child who is sick or inconsolable for 10 minutes, the child's parent may be reached via the contact number on the sign in sheet.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with the children should be appropriate and meaningful. It may be used to show children the love of Christ by encouraging them, protecting them, and guiding them to their destinations. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Asking permission before touching
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- Arms around shoulders

- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during prayer

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- Private meals with individual children or youth
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching

Restroom/Diapering

When a toddler or preschool child is using the restroom, the restroom door should remain ajar so that any assisting adult is visible from the classroom/hallway, but the child using the restroom is blocked from view. Children should be supervised in the restroom at all times. Please wash your hands upon arriving, after diapering, after helping in restrooms, and before snacks.

For children who are potty trained – take them to the toilet (or at least ask) every 1 hour they are in your care. Accidents can and will happen. If they do, just reassure the child that “accidents happen” and clean them up. Place soiled clothes in a bag. Please leave the bathroom door partially ajar when attending to a child.

Diapering Procedures

Each child should be changed at least once (if needed) per 1.5 hour stay. If possible, we should never send home a wet/dirty child.

- Gather supplies before you take the baby to the diaper changing area. Gather a clean diaper, gloves, wipes, and a plastic bag for the soiled diaper.
- Never leave a baby alone at the diaper changing area – not even for a moment. Always keep a hand on the baby. Some babies are active during diaper changes and even “quiet” babies can flip suddenly. Position your body as a barrier to the baby’s rolling off. It helps to distract a baby with a picture, song, finger play or small toy.

- Talk to the baby during the nursery routine. You might smile and say something like “All done.” Short simple sentences that you repeat with routine events help babies begin to understand words more quickly. If possible, say a short prayer of blessing over the child.
- Clean the diapering area. Place diaper and wipes in plastic bag and throw in the trash can. Clean any spills on the changing pad and wipe pad with Clorox wipe.
- Clean your hands. Use running, warm water and soap. Wash fronts, backs, between fingers and under nails. Dry with a paper towel and follow with hand sanitizer.

Contagious Illness

Parents need to keep children out of the nursery and children’s catechesis area when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100 or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Runny nose accompanied by other symptoms of a contagious illness.
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Skin infections/boils
- Ringworm, impetigo, lice
- Any symptoms of childhood disease such as scarlet fever, measles, mumps, rubella, active chicken pox or whooping cough
- A rash that is undiagnosed or contagious
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

A child must be symptom and fever-free for at least 24 hours before attendance in any early childhood class.

Photographs

Please refrain from taking pictures of children in our care. All Saints Waco staff may occasionally take pictures of children, but pictures will only be used with permission from the child’s parents.

Cell Phones

Workers should keep cell phones on vibrate. Please refrain from using your cell phone in the presence of children except in the event of an emergency.

Closing Procedures

Please make sure your room is in order when you leave.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Any person (adult or teenager) working with children is considered a “mandated reporter” concerning suspected child abuse/neglect. In the state of Texas, a person suspecting child abuse must report the actual or suspected child abuse within 48 hours. Please notify the ministry coordinator if you suspect any abuse or neglect.

Volunteer Screening and Training for Child Protection

Adults interested in volunteering with children will complete a personal history statement, background check, and MinistrySafe online training. MinistrySafe training must be renewed every 2 years. Approved volunteers will have been attending All Saints for at least 6 months. Youth volunteers must be at least 14 years old and will complete a volunteer application and review this policy document.

Please return this portion to the ministry leader.

ALL SAINTS WACO - EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES

I have received the All Saints Waco early childhood policy document, and I have read and understand its contents.

Printed Name

Date

Signature

The subject of abuse and neglect can trigger powerful feelings and sensitivities. The statistics indicate that our parish includes people who have been abused, and some who have abused others. Like you, we are saddened by its prevalence and long-term impact, often felt well into adulthood. As His children, we are called to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). We are respectfully requesting information to discern whether you may need special care and/or considerations as a result of your personal history.

A positive response won’t automatically disqualify you from being employed or volunteering. Our purpose in asking is to initiate the conversation, make informed decisions and care for you as your church family. Have you ever:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes _____ No _____
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes _____ No _____
- Been charged with child neglect in a civil proceeding? Yes _____ No _____
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes _____ No _____
- Committed an act of child neglect or physical abuse? Yes _____ No _____
- Been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)? Yes _____ No _____
- Have you or someone close to you been a victim of or affected by these behaviors? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please give brief description: _____

Printed Name

Date

Signature

These topics can be troubling. If you are experiencing emotional distress and/or feel the need to talk with someone about these areas, please talk with Fr. Michael Funderburk.