

Nursery Policies and Procedures

Purpose

To demonstrate this congregation's commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming space for infants and toddlers to play and grow in God's love and to feel that love through the presence of our staff and volunteers.

Objectives of the Policies and Procedures

- To have a user-friendly document which outlines all policies and procedures pertinent to the nursery
- To make clear the congregation's expectations of staff and volunteers
- To ensure parents who entrust their children to our care that we have their best interests at heart

Responsibility for the Nursery

- General oversight of the nursery is the responsibility of the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry with the support of the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry.
- A volunteer Nursery Coordinator will supervise the nursery directly.
- One or two paid attendants will be responsible for caring for the children typically alternating Sunday mornings.
- Volunteers are welcomed, desired, and needed to help care for children in the nursery, help clean and maintain it, and to help the Nursery Coordinator.
- The Personnel Committee will be responsible for the process of receiving applications and hiring paid staff.

Operation of the Nursery

- The nursery will be open from 8:30-12:30 every Sunday morning, unless worship has been canceled. It will be open for worship services and special events at other times if there is a need.
- The nursery is provided for the care and faith formation of children while their parents or guardians are participating in worship or other church activities on Cross of Life property. Parents are expected to be available in case of emergencies or disruptive behavior (see the policies for behavior and emergency response below).
- The nursery is available for children up to the age of four.
 - Parents who wish to use the nursery for children over the age of four can discuss this need with the attendant(s) and the Nursery Coordinator.
 - If the nursery reaches capacity for the number of children allowed, parents will be asked not to leave children over four years of age in the nursery. If this should become a consistent need, those responsible for the nursery will discuss increasing the nursery attendants to accommodate.
- The acceptable ratio of children to adults is:
 - One adult to four children if more than one child under 18 months who is not yet walking is present.

- One adult to six children if one child under 18 months who is not yet walking is present.
- If all children present are over 18 months and walking, the ratio is one adult to eight children. Staff will have the option to ask for help from the Nursery Coordinator, Council Chairperson for Children’s Ministry, or Director of Youth and Children’s Ministry any time there are more than six children in the nursery. The person responsible will find an approved volunteer or will volunteer until the nursery closes.
- This policy complies with and exceeds Georgia state standards for childcare: http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CCLC_Rule_Guidance.pdf. (Page 16).
- **Check-in and check-out procedures**
 - All children will be signed in and out for each visit to the nursery.
 - See appendix ____
 - Parents are expected to clearly label any personal belongings they leave in the nursery. Labels will be provided for any additional labeling needed.
 - Children will be released only to a parent or legal guardian, unless permission has been given in writing for another adult to pick them up. Older siblings are not eligible to sign children out of the nursery.
 - If the person picking up the child is authorized, but is not known to the nursery staff, a photo ID will be required for pick-up.
 - Any changes in legal guardianship should be immediately updated by the parent dropping off the child in order to ensure the child’s safety.
 - Children will not be released to anyone who is not approved, but in the case that a parent or former guardian is not allowed to pick up the child, that restriction should be clearly communicated to the nursery attendant(s) to avoid any confusion.
 - In the case that anyone is specifically prohibited from picking up a child, the only other people who can be authorized will be the legal guardian(s) and the emergency contact.
 - Changes in custody or in the names of adults approved to pick up children should be reported to one of the following people, who will ensure that the information is shared with the others, and otherwise kept confidential: the Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children’s Ministry, the Director of Youth and Children’s Ministry, and the Senior Pastor. If applicable, the child’s Sunday School teacher will also be notified.
 - Changes in custody or guardianship can indicate stress and conflict for the family experiencing them. Cross of Life wishes to be a source of support for families in any time of crisis. The Senior Pastor offers pastoral care with full confidentiality.
- **Health**
 - Parents are responsible for notifying the nursery attendant of any health concerns that could come up while their child(ren) are in the nursery.

- While the Nursery seeks to accommodate the needs of all children regardless of developmental stage or abilities, if a child with extreme health needs makes it difficult for the attendants to care for all the children present:
 - The child's participation in the nursery will be discussed with parents.
 - If an additional volunteer would make the child's participation feasible, the volunteers will be asked to commit to being in the nursery on a regular basis.
 - If sufficient attendants cannot be found, the parents are asked not to leave the child in the nursery for the child's own health and safety as well as that of the other children present.
 - Cross of Life will continue to work with the family and seek solutions which will allow their continued participation in an environment which is safe for all involved.
- **Any allergies should be noted on the sign in sheet.** If the child has a severe allergy, the parents are asked to verbally explain it to nursery staff.
- To prevent accidental allergic reactions, no peanuts or peanut products will be allowed in the nursery. Parents are asked not to bring anything containing peanuts or peanut products with their children to the nursery.
- Parents are asked not to bring children to the nursery who have shown symptoms of contagious illness in the past 24 hours (such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, etc.).
- Children on antibiotics for a contagious illness must have taken it for at least 24 hours before coming to the nursery.
- **Discipline**
 - If a child is behaving inappropriately, the nursery attendant(s) will tell the child specifically what behavior is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is.
 - If this measure is not effective, the child will be guided to another activity.
 - If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be moved away from the other children to play separately.
 - If the child's disruptive behavior continues, the attendant(s) will notify the Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, or the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry. The child's specific behavior and a course of action will be discussed with the parents.
 - When only one attendant is present, and a child's continued disruptive behavior makes it difficult to care for the other children present for the remainder of the child's time in the nursery:
 - the attendant will notify the Nursery Coordinator, Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, or the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry.
 - An additional volunteer or the Coordinator will be asked to help for the duration of the child's stay. The child's specific behavior and a course of action will be discussed with the parents.
 - There will be no tolerance for physical punishment or verbal abuse as methods for discipline. If a child's behavior is extremely disruptive or is a danger to the child or others (including attendants) help should be sought immediately and the Nursery Coordinator will discuss the child's continued participation with the parents or guardians as soon as possible.

Volunteers

- The Nursery Coordinator's responsibilities will include:
 - Checking and replenishing supplies
 - Coordinating substitutes
 - Communicating with staff to make sure expectations are being met and to resolve any concerns the staff may have.
 - Reporting regularly to the Director of Youth and Children's ministry about any questions or concerns.
 - Turning in paperwork (time sheets, attendance, reimbursement requests)
 - Communicating with staff about covering special events
 - Inviting applicants when there is an open position to be filled
 - Other responsibilities as outlined elsewhere in this document.
- Other Volunteers
 - Anyone helping to care for children in the nursery will:
 - Be eighteen or over and have graduated High School or acquired a GED and
 - Pass a background check
 - OR--
 - Volunteer with someone who meets the above requirements (this can be the paid staff person)
 - The nursery may not be staffed at any time by minors only.
 - If a volunteer becomes difficult for the paid attendant to supervise, behaves in a disruptive way, or consistently fails to comply with policies and procedures, the paid attendant will report the situation to the Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, or the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry.
 - Cross of Life reserves the right to dismiss volunteers, who will be subject to the same policy outlined for the dismissal of paid staff.

Staff

- The Director of Youth and Children’s Ministry will
 - Regularly update this policy
 - Keep a list of approved volunteers
 - Be responsible for making sure background checks and First Aid/CPR certifications are up to date
 - Communicate regularly with the Nursery Coordinator and the Council Chairperson for Children’s Ministry about how things are going
 - Help resolve issues as needed and make sure the staff and volunteers are properly supported in their ministry to our children.
- Paid Nursery Attendants
 - Selection and Hiring
 - Search
 - The Nursery Coordinator will invite potential applicants
 - In the event that the Nursery Coordinator does not find an applicant, advertisement of the position will be discussed with the personnel committee.
 - Application process. Applicants will:
 - submit both a preliminary and supplementary application to the personnel committee
 - Pass a background check
 - Have a personal interview with the personnel committee and the Nursery Coordinator (this interview may be waived on the discretion of the personnel committee if the applicant is already well known to the congregation).
 - Provide three references
 - *See sections II and III of the policy and procedures for hiring attached to the Supplementary Application for more information on suitability for hiring.*
 - Post-hiring. New staff will:
 - Attend an orientation with the Nursery Coordinator
 - Become familiar with this policy and church policies for emergency response and sexual abuse prevention.
 - Complete a training period with current attendants, the length of which will be determined by previous experience.
 - Be certified in Infant and Child First Aid and CPR, or provide documentation of prior certification
 - Qualifications. Paid attendants should:
 - Care about children and enjoy spending time with them
 - Be friendly and welcoming to parents during drop-off and pick-up
 - Understand expectations and be willing to fulfill them
 - Be physically able to lift 50 pounds
 - Be eighteen or over and have completed high school or acquired a GED
 - Previous experience is desired, but not required

- Expectations
 - Be on time for work and be prepared to receive children when the nursery opens
 - Consistently check children in and out on the sheets provided
 - Make sure personal belongings are sufficiently labeled and returned to their families
 - Care for and engage with the children while they are in the nursery
 - Consistently fill out time sheets
 - Keep the nursery orderly
 - Each week, disinfect toys as needed
 - Notify the Nursery Coordinator when supplies or equipment are needed
 - Supervise volunteers, especially if minors are helping, and make sure they are in compliance with all policies and procedures. A volunteer who is a minor or who has not completed high school or acquired a GED should never be left alone with the children.
 - Be familiar with and knowledgeable about the nursery policy, Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy, and Emergency Response Policies.
- Support System
 - Questions and concerns about the nursery can be addressed to the Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children’s Ministry, or to the Director of Youth and Children’s Ministry.
 - Questions and concerns about terms of employment or employment status can be addressed to the Personnel committee
 - Questions and concerns about payment can be addressed to the Children’s Ministry Council Chairperson or the Bookkeeper.
 - In the event that the volume of children in the nursery exceeds the acceptable level stated in this policy, volunteers will be called in until a permanent solution can be reached.
- Substitutions and Special Events
 - The Nursery Coordinator will arrange substitutions and coverage for special events such as worship services at times other than Sunday morning, funerals, congregational activities, etc.
 - Paid attendants will be asked to cover special events.
 - The paid attendant with seniority will be asked first
 - Regular payment rates will apply to special events
 - In the event that none of the paid attendants can cover a shift:
 - A list of approved volunteers will be asked if they are available. The policy listed above for volunteer qualifications will also apply in the event of substitutions. The nursery will not be opened without an approved adult present.
 - One volunteer will be paid the regular rate, if they so desire.
 - If they do not wish to be paid, the amount will be considered a donation and credited to that volunteer’s donation history.

- If the number of children in the nursery for the special event exceeds the standards stated above, additional volunteers will be paid the regular rate if they so desire.
- Dismissal
 - In instances of dismissal of an employee, especially one who is also a member of Cross of Life, the employee's feelings will be handled with care and respect and their continued participation and involvement at Cross of Life will be encouraged.
 - Immediate Dismissal
 - Employees dismissed for one of the no-tolerance behaviors as listed below will no longer be eligible to work or volunteer in the nursery or other Cross of Life programs for youth and children.
 - If the former employee or volunteer wishes to continue participating in the congregation, boundaries will be discussed with those responsible for the nursery, the personnel committee, and the Senior Pastor
 - There will be no tolerance for the following behaviors or situations; any of these will lead to immediate dismissal after the first offence.
 - Leaving children unattended
 - Any instance or accusation of abuse or neglect
 - Arriving to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, bringing drugs or alcohol to work, or using them while at work
 - Bringing a weapon to work
 - When one of these behaviors or situations is reported:
 - The attendant will be immediately asked to leave church property and informed of termination.
 - An appropriate substitute or substitutes will be found to cover the nursery.
 - The Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, the Senior Pastor, and the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee will all be informed.
 - If abuse or neglect is suspected, the Cross of Life Policy for the Prevention of and Response to Abuse and Neglect will be in effect.
 - The information will otherwise be kept confidential until a decision about whether and how to inform nursery families of the change in staff can be reached by those listed above.
 - In the event of consistent failure to meet other expectations of the position as outlined above:
 - The Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, and the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry will outline mandatory improvements in performance.
 - The personnel committee and the Senior Pastor will be consulted.

- If all improvements are not made, this will constitute grounds for dismissal.

Equipment and Supplies

- Cleaning procedures
 - A professional cleaning service does basic cleaning of the nursery once per week
 - Each week the attendant(s) will disinfect toys as needed (especially toys which received mouth contact)
 - After every use the attendant(s) will disinfect the changing table
 - Attendant(s) are expected to thoroughly wash hands and properly dispose of dirty diapers and wipes after each diaper change (see changing policy)
 - Periodically, a volunteer washes linens
 - Once per year, volunteers assist with a thorough cleaning and organization, at which time toys and equipment which are damaged or dingy will be disposed of and replaced as necessary.
- Changing Policy: to be posted above the changing table in the nursery bathroom.
 - It is preferable that another person be present when a child is to be changed. This is both to prevent any possible abuse or accusation of abuse and to provide supervision for the children remaining in the nursery.
 - Always leave the bathroom door open when changing a child.
 - If there is only one nursery attendant, the other children should be given a toy to play with close to the bathroom door so that the attendant can watch them while changing.
 - NEVER LEAVE CHILD UNATTENDED ON THE CHANGING TABLE
 - Use protective gloves
 - If a child has his/her own diapers and wipes, use them. If not, extra diapers are located in the cabinets above the changing table. Wipes are located in the corner of the changing table.
 - Lift child under the armpits and gently lay child down.
 - ALWAYS leave one hand on the child when changing a diaper.
 - Follow any instructions given by the parents concerning rashes, ointments, powders, etc.
 - After replacing the child's clothes and taking the child off of the changing table:
 - Place bowel movement diapers in a plastic bag (located in the cabinet above and to the left of the changing table) before placing in trash.
 - Throw away all soiled diapers and wipes immediately.
 - Disinfect changing table with disinfecting wipes.
 - Wash hands thoroughly. Wash hands before changing another child.
- Maintenance
 - Any maintenance issues will be reported to the Nursery Coordinator, the Council Chairperson for Children's Ministry, or the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry
 - They will either be entered in the Friday Fixers' log or brought to the attention of the Council Chairperson for Property Management
- Supplies
 - Disinfecting wipes
 - Tissues
 - Age-appropriate snacks which do not contain peanuts or any peanut products.
 - Changing-table liners

- First Aid kit
- Disposable gloves
- Batteries
- Labels for personal belongings
- Nametags/labels for large events such as funerals
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Donations
 - Donations of non-plush toys and equipment will be accepted
 - They will be inspected by the attendant(s) or the Nursery Coordinator, with the right to refuse donations which are damaged, unsafe, or unnecessary
 - All donations will be inspected and thoroughly cleaned before use

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- All attendants are expected to be familiar with the most current version of the Cross of Life Emergency Response Plan available. A copy will be made available in the nursery. The following policies address ways in which emergencies in the nursery present unique difficulties.
- First Aid and Medical Emergencies
 - If only one attendant is in the nursery when a medical emergency occurs, help should be sought immediately.
 - If the crisis is life-threatening, the attendant present should call 911 or other appropriate emergency response number on the phone provided in the nursery, then alert either a teacher in the adjoining Sunday School classroom or an usher.
 - A list of emergency contacts will be provided in the nursery and should be checked during the annual thorough cleaning for any necessary updates.
- Other Emergencies
 - The evacuation map provided in the emergency response plan will be posted in the nursery.
 - In the event that evacuation is necessary on a Sunday morning, one of the ushers will assist the attendant(s) in evacuating the nursery (or make sure that another member does so), unless reaching the nursery presents a health or safety risk to the responder.

Sexual Abuse Prevention

- There will be absolutely no tolerance of abuse or failure to properly report suspected neglect or abuse by nursery staff or volunteers.
- Nursery staff and approved volunteers are expected to be familiar with the most current version of the Cross of Life Policy for Prevention of and Response to Abuse. A copy will be made available in the nursery.