



## Faith Communities Keeping Children & Youth Safe

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### Child and Youth Protection Policy Checklist Churches

Here is a menu of items to be included in a child and youth protection policy for a church.

- Name of church – a policy can be modeled after another but should be unique to your church
- Definitions of abuse – specific to your state (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/defining>)

#### **Training:**

For whom – indicate how often:

- Staff       All adults       Teachers       Children and youth
- All volunteers who have contact with children and youth

Content:

- Types of abuse, including signs       Risk and protective factors       Response plan

Resources:

- For adults: Harder, J. (2010). *Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press. [www.DovesNest.net/letthechildrencome](http://www.DovesNest.net/letthechildrencome)
- For children and youth: *Circle of Grace*. [www.DovesNest.net/circleofgrace](http://www.DovesNest.net/circleofgrace) or <http://archomaha.org/ministries/safe-environment/circle-of-grace/>

#### **Personnel:**

- Application, background checks, interview, references of all staff
- Application, background checks, interview, references of volunteers who have access to children and youth
- Six-month church involvement before teaching/leading children/youth
- Read and agree to abide by the child and youth protection policy annually

#### **Supervision of children and youth:**

- One adult never alone with one child (when not possible, doors open or move to a public space)
- Nursery       Vacation Bible school
- Sunday school       Youth group activities (especially any overnight activities)
- Children's church       Before and after church activities

#### **Interactions with children and youth:**

- Constructive (nonviolent) and age-appropriate discipline
- Appropriate expressions of affection

**Church facility:**

- Windows in inside doors/walls
- Childproofed (e.g., cleaning supplies, outlets, knives in kitchen)
- Stocked first aid kit

**Response to possible child abuse and neglect:**

- Plan for reporting to authorities (who, when, where to call)
- Plan for keeping children and youth safe
- Plan for notifying nonoffending parent(s)
- Plan for notifying other parents in the congregation

**Response to individual with known sex offense history in congregation:**

- Assessment of congregation's readiness to receive individual to include training on sexual abuse prevention and signs as well as conversations with known abuse victims/survivors in congregation
- Assessment of individual's readiness and appropriateness for participation in church activities to include history, pertinent court orders, treatment status, motivation
- Written plan with individual and professionals in individual's life to include supervision plan and role of individual in church activities clearly defined (no access to children or youth)
- Written plan with congregation to include plan for notification to parents
- Spiritual, emotional, and practical support for individual

**Other:**

- Include a child protection theme in worship – indicate how often
- Notify parents before child or youth is transported
- Community referrals known and readily available: counseling for children and families, basic needs, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness

**Community (beyond church community):**

- Planned outreach for families and children at risk
- Awareness/collaboration with community agencies/personnel (for purposes of volunteering, referrals, services for families and children in church)

**Policy:**

- Adopted
- Implemented – indicate who is responsible
- Accessible (e.g., posted on bulletin boards, website)

Sample child protection policies: [www.DovesNest.net/policies](http://www.DovesNest.net/policies)