



**Empowering and equipping faith communities
to keep children and youth safe in their
homes, churches, and communities.
Website: <http://www.DovesNest.net>
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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 (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/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.* www.DovesNest.net/letthechildrencome
- For children and youth: *Circle of Grace.* www.DovesNest.net/circleofgrace or www.archomaha.org/protestant

Personnel:

- Application, background checks, interview, references of all staff
- Application, background checks, interview, references of volunteers who have access to children and youth
- 6-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 (non-violent) and age-appropriate discipline
- Appropriate expressions of affection

Church facility:

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

Response to possible child abuse and neglect:

- Plan for reporting to authorities
- Plan for keeping children and youth safe
- Plan for notifying non-offending 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, and 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, 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 for: 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 – who is responsible?
- Accessible (i.e. bulletin boards, website)

Sample child protection policies: www.DovesNest.net.