

# First Baptist Church

## Preschool Policies & Procedures Manual

6/24/2010

We thank God for our preschoolers and the opportunity that we are given to teach them at First Baptist Church. We want them to feel loved and have positive church experiences as they grow. FBCME takes seriously our privilege and responsibility to provide quality care and give preschool children a first impression of their loving heavenly Father.

This Policies and Procedures Manual gives information and clarification concerning the programs and ministries for preschool age children. These guidelines are not intended to be restrictive but rather to enhance and improve our ministry.

Please read this manual carefully and cooperate with us in this effort. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Because He Lives,

Tammy Middleton, Director of Children & Family Ministries

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## **Mission Statement**

The Preschool Ministry of First Baptist Church is designed to partner with parents and provide a secure, nurturing environment for preschoolers to be introduced to their loving, heavenly Father and learn that Jesus is God's Son and is the foundation of salvation.

## **Purpose of Our Preschool Ministry**

*“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”*

*Luke 2:52 (NIV)*

Our goal for the growth of preschoolers is based on Luke 2:52. Children grow as Jesus grew – mentally (*in wisdom*), physically (*in stature*), socially/emotionally (*in favor with man*), and spiritually (*in favor with God*).

Therefore we seek to:

- Partner with the home in nurturing the spiritual growth of a preschooler. We help equip parents to be the primary influence of the spiritual formation of their child.
- Encourage parents/guardians to actively participate in worship, Bible study, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry opportunities.
- Lay a strong spiritual foundation in the life of each preschooler we teach, with the hope that when older, each child will accept Jesus as their Savior.
- Help preschoolers understand:
  - God made me.
  - God loves me.
  - Jesus wants to be my friend forever.
- Provide activity-based teaching, which includes Bible-learning activities that engage the five senses; helping preschoolers master Biblical truths through creative means.
- Make church a happy, clean, and safe place to learn.

## General Policies

1. Preschool facilities will open for receiving children 15 minutes prior to regular church-wide activities and services.
2. Preschoolers must be brought to their department by a parent /adult guardian or a sibling over the age of 16, and will only be released to the parent/adult guardian or sibling over the age of 16.
3. Preschoolers should be picked up immediately following the service or function. This prevents children becoming upset when they have to wait too long and also shows respect for the child's teachers.
4. To avoid congestion and maintain safety in the Preschool Department, it is recommended that only one parent/guardian deliver and pick up the child from his/her room. When picking up your child we ask that you wait at the door of your child's room until your child is brought to you.
5. Preschoolers may be brought to the Preschool Department only when the person bringing them is attending a church function.
6. For the safety of our preschoolers and to provide the best teaching environment, only preschoolers and approved teaching personnel are permitted in preschool rooms.
7. Under no circumstances are children to be left in the Preschool Department unattended at any time.
8. In order to provide safety and enable teachers to provide activities that meet the needs of preschoolers, the use of the Preschool Department and equipment is limited to preschoolers. (Preschool rooms and furnishings are not multi-age appropriate).
9. Supplies and/or equipment may not be added or removed from preschool rooms without consultation with the Preschool Division Director and Director of Children & Family Ministries.
10. For the safety of our preschoolers and the liability protection of our adults, at least 2 teachers should be in the room with preschoolers during any given session.

## Health Policies

**Infectious Disease Policy:** Any child, volunteer, teacher, or other person in the Preschool Department who is suspected of having an illness will be asked to leave the department. Such person may not return until the signs and symptoms of the illness are no longer present. With a child, the condition shall be reported to the custodial parent or legal guardian. Signs and symptoms of a suspected illness include the following:

1. Severe coughing, causing the individual to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
2. Sore throat.
3. Difficult or rapid breathing.
4. Stiff neck.
5. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period).
6. Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when in conjunction with other signs of illness.
7. Conjunctivitis (pink eye).
8. Exposed, open skin lesions.
9. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
10. Yellowish skin or eyes, or
11. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.

\* A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before they can return to the nursery.

For the protection of all children and adults at church, parents are requested not to bring a child who appears to be ill.

If a child contracts an illness following a session in the Preschool Department, parents should notify the Director of Children & Family Ministries so that other parents and teachers can be informed.

Parents should report any allergies and special needs to their child's teacher and department director.

**Head Lice:** A child identified having head lice shall not be permitted to return until treatment has occurred.

**Medication:** Written authorization from the custodial parent or legal guardian must be obtained to dispense prescription and non-prescription medications. This authorization must be dated and signed by the custodial parent or legal guardian and contain the child's name; the name of the medication to be dispensed; and date, time and amount of dosage to be given. This record shall be initialed or signed by the Preschool Department director, or Director of Children and Family Ministries, who will administer the medication.

## **Hygiene Policies**

Maintaining a germ-free environment is a top priority. Because hands are the main carriers of germs, we enforce strict hand washing policy for all caregivers.

Teachers and caregivers should wash hands\*:

1. Upon arrival into the preschool room.
2. Before preparing, serving, or eating food.
3. Before and after feeding infants or children.
4. After using or helping a child use the toilet.
5. After every diaper change.
6. After removal of disposable gloves.
7. After contact with bodily fluids (such as spit up, nasal discharge, tears, saliva, urine, stool, or blood).
8. After handling soiled items.

Infants and children should wash hands\*:

1. Before handling or eating food or snacks.
2. After every diaper change.
3. After using the toilet.
4. After contact with bodily fluids.

\*According to the Center for Disease Control, the proper method to wash hands is to wet them, rub soap into a lather and rub hands together for 15 seconds. Rinse. The faucet should be turned off with a paper towel after drying your hands. Provided hand sanitizer is also an option.

### **Diapering Requirements:**

1. Gather all necessary items.
2. Lay child on impermeable surface.
3. Put on a new pair of disposable gloves (at care-giver's discretion).
4. Remove wet/soiled diaper and use wipes to clean child. (Use only wipes provided by parent or wipes labeled hypoallergenic).
5. Place wipes and diaper in lined receptacle with lid.
6. Remove gloves by pulling the glove inside out from the wrist so that all residue remains inside the glove.
7. Put on clean diaper.
8. Clean changing area with sanitizing solution after each use.
9. Wash hands with soap and water after each diaper change.
10. Also check children near the end of the session. Send them home dry!

## **Bathroom/Diaper Changing Policies**

Diaper changing or potty breaks will be given every session, a minimum one in Sunday school and during the Service, etc.

Diaper changing should be done on the changing table provided in the nursery. (Mustard Seeds room) Have the necessary materials (diaper, wipes, powder, etc.) with you, you should not walk away from the child once he/she is on the changing table.

When escorting a child to the bathroom, leave the door open at least three inches (whether a man or woman is in the bathroom). The child may not need assistance; if this is the case the door should still stay open unless teacher/volunteer is comfortable with the child handling this task themselves.

Youth workers are not permitted to help with the bathroom or give diaper changes unless given authorization directly from the Preschool Dept. Director. An adult should always be available if needed.

## **Bodily Fluids Procedures**

1. Control bleeding by applying pressure with a clean towel or cloth and care for the injured appropriately depending on the severity of the situation.
2. First Aid supplies are located in all the preschool rooms.
3. In order to protect everyone, disposable gloves are provided (at worker's discretion) when handling any accident involving blood or body fluids. This includes:
  - a. Wiping a runny nose.
  - b. Cleaning a cut or scrape.
  - c. Changing a diaper.
  - d. Assisting a child with toileting needs.
  - e. Any time there is a risk of coming in contact with blood, spit up, mucus, urine, or stool.
4. If an emergency prevents the use of gloves, immediately clean the exposed skin with soap and water to reduce the possibility of infection.
5. Any teacher or volunteer with an open wound or lesion will keep it covered until the area has healed.
6. Clean any affected surfaces with disinfectant. (Bleach Solution: ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon cool water OR 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart cool water – or Clorox spray).
7. Wash hands, even after wearing gloves.

## **Accidents/Injuries**

1. In the unlikely event a child is injured seriously, parents will be notified immediately.
2. If a child sustains a minor injury (i.e. bump, bruise, scrape), parents will be notified when the child is picked up.
3. All accidents and injuries will be reported to the Preschool Department Director and the Director of Children & Family Ministries.
4. An *Accident/Incident Form* will be completed for every accident. These reports can be obtained from the department director and will be signed and dated by the teachers and parent/guardian and will be kept on file.
5. The Department Director will give parents a copy of the completed accident/injury form.

## Room Cleaning Procedures

*The primary sanitizer used is a bleach solution, mixed fresh daily, or Clorox spray.*

*The Center for Disease Control recommends:*

### **For bathrooms, diapering areas, etc.**

¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon cool water OR 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart cool water

### **For disinfecting toys, eating utensils, etc.**

1 tablespoon bleach to 1 gallon cool water OR 1 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart cool water

1. In rooms with cribs, beds must be stripped of used linens and other items as the children leave.
2. Each bed (including mattresses, rails, and any items attached to the beds such as mobiles, mirrors, etc.) should be wiped thoroughly with bleach solution or Clorox spray and left to air dry.
3. Diaper changing surfaces must be sanitized at the end of each session.
4. Tables and countertops used for food preparation and eating must be sanitized before and after using.

Toys and equipment used by older preschoolers and not put into their mouths should be cleaned or put in the dirty toy bin when obviously soiled. A soap and water wash followed by clear water rinsing and air drying should be adequate.

### **Washing and Disinfecting Toys (Department Director or Custodian Responsibility)**

Toys mouthed by a child must be sanitized before another child plays with that toy. When a baby or toddler finishes playing with a toy, teachers should retrieve it from the play area and put in a bin reserved for dirty toys. (This bin should be out of children's reach). Toys can be washed at a convenient time and then transferred back to their proper location.

1. To wash and disinfect hard plastic toy:
  - Scrub the toy in warm, soapy water. Use a brush to reach into the crevices.
  - Rinse the toy in clean water.
  - Immerse the toy in the CDC recommended bleach solution and allow it to soak for 10-20 minutes or wipe down with Clorox spray.
  - Remove the toy from the bleach solution and rinse in cool water.
  - Air dry.
2. Children in diapers should have only washable toys.
3. Stuffed toys and those not easily washed and sanitized should not be used for any session.
4. Toys too large to immerse in water must be washed and sanitized by wiping.

5. Toys used outside, on the playground, or inside with sand must be washed before they are returned to the room.
6. Clean, disinfect, and air dry the tables, chairs, toys, cabinets, sink, toilet, etc. (Refer to Room/Toy cleaning procedures).

**End of Session Clean Up:**

1. Put away all items, art equipment, and supplies to their designated places.
2. Make sure all puzzles and items having more than one piece are complete before putting them away.
3. Sweep or vacuum any debris.
4. Furniture and equipment should be arranged according to Sunday school placement. Any furniture that was move should be returned to its designated area at the conclusion of each program.

## Safety

At First Baptist Church, we believe a few simple procedures are a small price to pay for the safety and security of our preschoolers and for the peace of mind of teachers and parents.

1. Only persons 18 or older may teach in the Preschool Department. (See "Youth Helpers" for information regarding teenage teachers).
2. All preschool rooms should have at least 2 teachers present for any given session.
3. Because preschool equipment and room furnishings are developmentally specific and age specific, only preschoolers may use preschool rooms.
4. Entry into preschool rooms is limited to preschoolers and their teachers during teaching sessions.
5. Each preschool room has a divided door for teachers to see who is at the door and parents to see inside the room. However, "peeking" should be done sparingly! Onlookers unnecessarily upset young children and distract teachers from their tasks.
6. Names of preschoolers with food allergies will be posted in plain view.
7. Foods served for tasting activities or snacks will be posted to notify parents.
8. Bottles, sippy cups, and pacifiers must be labeled with the child's name.
9. Running, shouting, etc. should be reserved for outside play.
10. Because of the potential danger for eye damage, glitter should not be used with preschoolers.
11. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each preschool room.
12. Fire Extinguishers are available in the Preschool Department.
13. First Aid Kits are located in each preschool room.

## Security

1. Parents/guardians will complete sign-in and sign-out procedures through KidzPro\* upon entering the Preschool Department.
2. Children will only be released to an authorized adult or sibling over the age of 16.
3. Parent custody/legal guardianship changes must be reported to the Director of Children & Family Ministries. (Written legal documentation must be presented and kept on file).

\* KidzPro is the check-in system used by First Baptist Church. KidzPro goes far beyond tracking attendance and providing a reporting system. By using KidzPro, key information about the children being cared for is readily available:

- medical and allergy information;
- guardian contacts and special legal circumstances can be noted;
- etc.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

*Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes mandates that any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families. The Florida Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-96-ABUSE.*

All incidents of suspected abuse should be reported to the department director and Director of Children and Family Ministries as soon as possible.

Ministerial staff should follow these procedures:

1. Notify the child's parents, guardians, or teachers if appropriate.
2. Document all efforts at handling the incident.
3. Report the incident as soon as possible to the First Baptist Church's Board of Directors and to the church's insurance company and attorney; then follow their professional guidance and recommendations.
4. Seek help for those involved through the guidance of a professional counselor.

## Guidelines for Discipline

1. Give encouragement freely. Use criticism sparingly.
2. Set reasonable limits (consider the child's age and needs).
3. Be consistent.
4. Accept a child's feelings that he cannot control; but stop his disruptive or destructive behavior.
5. Correct a child's behavior with love and respect.
6. Avoid embarrassing a child.
7. Do not force a child to say, "I am sorry." He may not be sorry. If you force him to say he is sorry when he is not, you may be teaching him to lie.
8. Avoid threats.
9. Notice and acknowledge a child's appropriate behavior. (Spend most of your time this way, and you will not need to make much time correcting misbehavior).
10. Do not force preschoolers to give up toys as a means of teaching sharing. Sharing is *voluntarily* giving something up to another. Require "*taking turns*" instead.
11. Provide interesting and challenging things to do and reduce the possibility of behavioral problems.
12. Give emotional support to the child who misbehaves. Misbehavior is often a plea for help.
13. Let the child learn from natural or logical consequences of his actions. (If he misuses the blocks, he may not play with the blocks for a while).
14. Help each child feel good about himself. A healthy self-concept is the right of every child made in the image of God.
15. Corporal punishment will never be administered by the preschool staff.

### To avoid basic discipline problems:

- Plan, prepare, and be ready to teach.
- Never be late. (The first one in the room is usually in charge!).
- Play quiet music in the room and use a quiet speaking voice.
- Avoid "clutter build-up" in the room. (Too many scattered toys frustrate and overexcite).
- Be friendly-firm. (Children need to know you love them and are in charge).
- Consistently enforce three rules:
  - I (the teacher) will not allow you (the child) to...
    - Hurt yourself.
    - Hurt others.
    - Hurt the things we use in our room.

## Parent Responsibilities

Parents are a child's first and most important influence. Teachers at church count it a privilege to partner with parents in laying foundations for faith in young lives.

All **members** of First Baptist Church who have children in the preschool department are placed on the rotation schedule as soon as they have completed the Reducing the Risk Training, have submitted all necessary paperwork, and have agreed to a background check.

Parents can help teachers by observing the following guidelines:

- Become familiar with the Preschool Policies and Procedures. These policies have been adopted by our church family and are enforced for the well being over every child in our care.
- Remember that each policy and guideline is based on the desire to provide a safe, secure learning environment for your child. If you do not understand the reason for a policy or guideline, please ask the Director of Children & Family Ministries, or preschool director to discuss it with you.
- Attend quarterly parent meetings.

### **Before coming to church:**

1. Remember to label all items (i.e. diaper bags, pacifiers, bottles, cups, clothing, etc.) with your child's name.
2. Preschoolers who are being toilet trained need to bring extra changes of clothing in a labeled bag.
3. Leave personal toys at home. They make sharing too difficult and may not be appropriate for use in teaching. (An infant's "security toy or blanket" would be an exception).
4. Bring your child regularly to church. He will feel more secure and eager to enter his room when church becomes the established routine.
5. Talk to your child positively about going to church. Use names of your child's teachers and friends in his room when talking about happy times at church.

### **Checking in and out your child:**

1. Bring your child to the central 'Check In' location. Give any necessary information about your child. (Allergies, special physical needs, feeding and sleeping preferences, etc.) Please keep your child's information up to date.
2. A name tag will be placed on your child, and label on any belongings if needed. (Diaper bag, etc.) You will receive an adhesive label, with your child's name and assigned number on it. The parent picking up the child will need to be wearing this. The teacher will look for this label before releasing the child.
3. Then you can take your child to their classroom. Please knock at the door and wait for the teacher to greet you. For the security of our preschoolers and their best teaching environment, parents and siblings should not enter the preschool room. (Nursing mothers are an exception). Traffic in and out of the preschool room causes disruptions in teaching and unnecessarily upsets young children already in the room.

4. Tell your child you will be back for him, and then leave promptly. Prolonging the goodbye only makes separation more difficult for your child. Should your child experience prolonged anxiety, teachers will send for you.
5. When picking up your child, please wait for the teacher to bring your child to you. For the safety and security of our children, we ask that you DO NOT open the door, all of the children are excited to go home, and a child might slip out.

*Special note to parents of younger preschoolers: If you need to check on your child, ask a preschool staff person to help you. They can check and give you a report. Your baby is smart and knows the sound of mother's voice! If you check on your child yourself after he has settled in and your child becomes upset because he sees or hears you, please be prepared at that time to take your child with you. It may be too difficult for your child to separate from you more than once.*

**Tips and Suggestions:**

1. If a child has a problem at church, it is better to discuss this with his teachers at a time other than Sunday morning. Never discuss a child's problem in his presence.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate in Take It Home Parenting Events offered at the church throughout the year. These may include topical studies, workshops, conferences, and training sessions for preschool leadership.
3. Use the "take-home" literature provided by preschool programs. These will help you continue at home what your child learned at church.

## **Policies for Teachers**

Teachers in the preschool ministry of First Baptist Church play a vital role in partnering with parents to lay a spiritual foundation for young children.

### **Preschool Ministry Volunteers and Leadership:**

To be considered for a volunteer or leadership position in our preschool ministry, an individual must:

1. Be a member of First Baptist Church.
2. Interview with the Director of Children & Family Ministries and the Preschool Department Director.
3. Complete the Reducing the Risk training.
4. Submit a screening application.
5. Agree to a background check.
6. Be willing to follow all policies and procedures of the Preschool Ministry.

### **Training:**

All preschool volunteers and leaders will be expected to attend periodic training sessions each year. Training opportunities are offered through our church, association, and state and national conventions.

Training will help ensure all volunteers and leaders are well prepared and informed about their curriculum, teaching methods, safety and security procedures, and other important preschool issues.

CPR Training will be offered throughout the year.

### **Expectations of Teachers:**

- Use and teach according to the curriculum furnished by the church.
- Plan regularly with other teachers in the department.
- Prepare the room and have materials ready BEFORE the first child arrives. Be in the preschool room a minimum of 15 minutes before the session begins.
- Be responsible for securing a substitute when absent and notify the department director in advance when possible. (Provide teaching plans for substitute).
- Assist in cleaning the room and putting away all the materials at the end of the session.
- Cooperate with teachers in other church programs concerning room arrangement and storage/use of materials.
- Participate regularly in both corporate and personal worship and Bible study.
- Minister to preschoolers and their families.
- Support the work of the church through prayer and faithful service.

## **Teacher Responsibilities**

### **Preschool Department Director:**

- Pray for teachers before each session.
- Greet preschoolers and parents as they arrive.
- Maintain department security system (KidzPro).
- Maintain department records.
- Maintain schedules.
- Enlist and assist in training teachers and substitutes for the department.
- Lead teachers in regular planning meetings.
- Use and follow the curriculum provided by the church.
- Work directly with the Director of Children & Family Ministries.

### **Preschool Teacher:**

- Gather teaching materials and supplies prior to a session.
- Plan and prepare prior to a session.
- Assist in cleaning the room and putting away materials at the end of the session.
- Visit, make contacts, and minister to the children in your class and their families.
- Work directly with the Preschool Department Director.

## **Youth Helpers**

In order to train future teachers, youth may be enlisted to assist in the preschool department. No youth under the age of 16 may be allowed to serve as teachers or assistants in the preschool department.

### **Qualifications for Youth Preschool Volunteers:**

- Be a member of First Baptist Church.
- Be 16 years of age or older (with someone over the age of 21 in the building).
- Be approved by the Preschool Department Director and Director of Children & Family Ministries.
- Complete the Reducing the Risk Training.
- Be expected to follow the policies and procedures for all preschool teachers.

## Screening Procedures for Preschool Volunteers

In recent years, news stories of violence and abusive conduct toward children by adults have been shocking. Child sexual abuse seems to be increasingly in the headlines. It leads us to the obvious question, “Could something like that happen here at First Baptist Church?”

We believe preventative measures help to avoid problems down the road. In addition to the simple, effective policies and procedures already in place, we require a screening process for all those who work with minors (preschoolers through senior high). The screening process includes an application form to be completed by all volunteers for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors and by all church employees who will have contact with minors in the church facilities or on church sponsored activities.

The implementation of this screening process will help our church family provide a safe and secure environment for all boys and girls who participate in our ministries and use our facilities. The screening process will help our church work as a team toward a common goal of being proactive rather than reactive. We want to protect our children from sexual abuse or child molestation by employees or volunteers in this church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations. We want our church to be the safest and most loving environment possible for every child and youth who enters our doors.

The complete screening process is as follows:

- The individual must be a member of First Baptist Church to hold a leadership position.
- The individual must interview with the Director of Children & Family Ministries and the appropriate department director.
- The individual must complete the Reducing the Risk Training.
- The individual must submit a screening application.
- The individual must agree to a background check.
- The individual must be willing to follow all policies and procedures of the appropriate department.