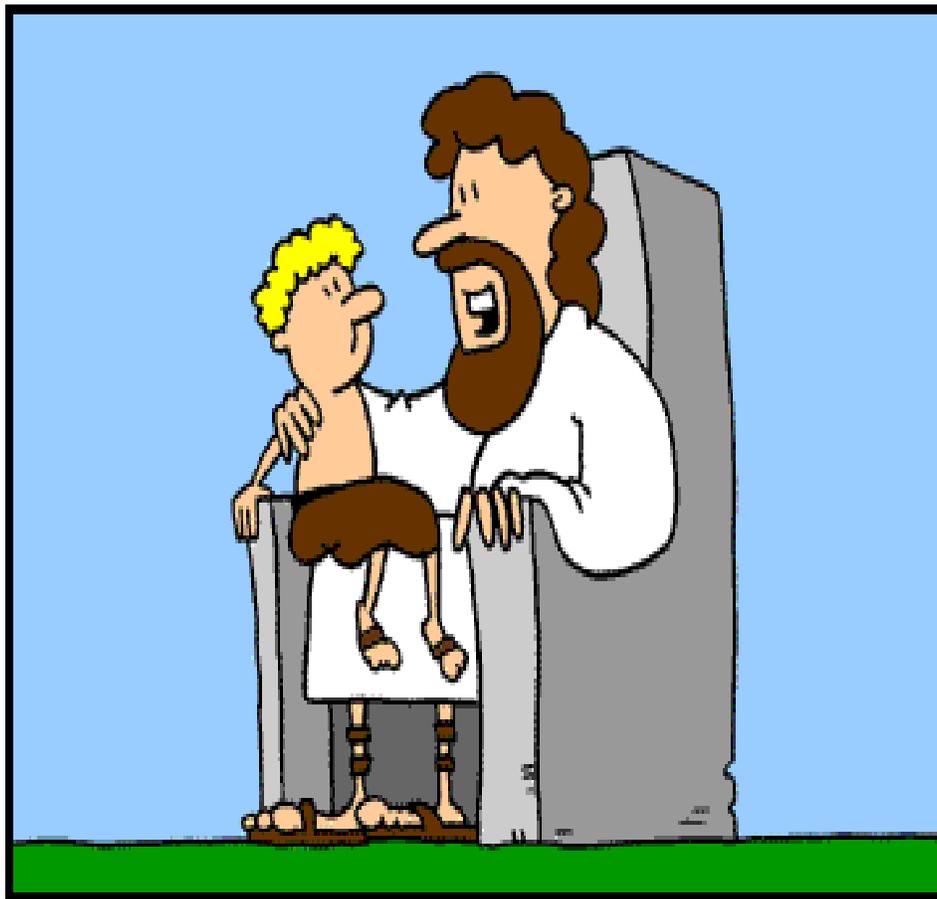


**Teays Valley Church of God
Children's Ministry
Handbook and Policy and Procedures Manual**



**February 2012
Wendy Hicks**

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide policies and procedures for the Children's Ministry of Teays Valley Church of God and the volunteers who work in that ministry. The policies and procedures are a work in progress and will be evaluated annually or upon request and will be altered if necessary to ensure that the children and families of Teays Valley Church of God receive the best possible care and consideration.

VISION AND VALUES

Mission

To lead all children to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

Vision

Inviting all kids to know Christ in a way that transforms their daily lives and the lives of those around them.

Values

TRUTH-BASED

We believe that God's Word is foundational truth, and it is our heart to train every child to use it as their guide, authority, and conscience in everything.

RELATIONAL

We believe that life-change happens best in the context of relationships. Gifted, godly, and passionate adults who exhibit Christ to children, their families, and each other will show kids how to do the same...this modeling will impact God's Kingdom for generations to come.

ADVENTUROUS

We believe that walking with Jesus is exciting and as a result that going to church should be fun. Therefore, it is our commitment to challenge children to pursue a thrilling and vibrant growing relationship with Christ.

INNOVATIVE

We believe in inspiring kids to greatness by pursuing excellence in our programs, risking in our attempts to be innovative and by examining everything we do in order to remain biblical, relevant and effective.

NURTURING

We believe that spiritual growth happens best in an atmosphere of emotional safety, physical security, and sanitary conditions. We are committed to exceptional standards in these areas.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

A CHILDREN'S WORKER SHOULD BE...

1. A CHRISTIAN- Our ultimate goal in the Children's Ministry is to lead kids to Christ, and then help them grow in their Christian life. Therefore, our volunteers should have a personal relationship with Christ themselves! If you are unsure about where you stand in your relationship with God, do not hesitate to talk to one of the pastors. We would be delighted to open God's Word and share with you how you can know for sure that you are saved and a child of God!

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. REGULAR in church attendance and involvement. Not only the Children's Ministry functions but also the regular worship services and other church events.

Hebrew 10:25 "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

3. ENCOURAGING IN SPEECH- Our words should be encouraging, uplifting and positive. There should be no insults, cut-downs, gossip, slander or any talk where someone may be hurt, especially in the presence of children. Humor should reflect a walk with God.

Colossians 4:6 "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

1 Peter 4:11 "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God."

4. AN EXAMPLE IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER- Because workers in our Children's Ministry should be examples and a positive influence on the children they minister to, they should refrain from activities that do not glorify or honor God and in "gray areas" should be sensitive to the convictions of others in both their actions and conversation. In your personal life you should be committed to Bible study, prayer, and Christ-like living.

Titus 2:6-7 "Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness."

5. RESPONSIBLE IN LEADERSHIP

This involves attending meetings and training or communicating when unavailable. This includes not planning events or outings without the knowledge and clearance of the Children's Pastor. Give respect to church procedures by following them.

I Peter 2:17 "Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers."

6. FAITHFUL IN COMMITMENTS MADE

When you give your word, keep it. If you say you will do something, or be somewhere, follow through on it. If something happens where you cannot, then communicate so that those affected can take necessary action.

I Corinthians 4:2 "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

Proverbs 28:20 "A faithful [volunteer] will be richly blessed."

7. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The spiritual upbringing of children belongs first to the parents. The church's role is to supplement the training in the home. Always seek to work with the parents of the children whom you minister to. Seek their input, listen to their concerns. Never side with a child against a parent, or contradict a parent in front of a child. You are on the parent's team! If you have a concern about a parent, or a home situation, talk to the Children's Pastor immediately.

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

8. TEACHABLE IN SPIRIT

This may be the most important trait of any volunteer who is seeking to serve the Lord! We all have weaknesses, but if we remain teachable, there is always hope! We must be willing to listen to constructive criticism and prayerfully consider the input of others. We do not need to always agree, but if we fail to listen we hurt only ourselves and rob ourselves of another chance to grow.

Proverbs 12:15 "The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice."

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

POLICY AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

TVCOG supports and maintains an environment free of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct) for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children. It is against the law and against TVCOG's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

TVCOG will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to church activities.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

CHILD ABUSE: REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

Child abuse is a serious crime and TVCOG intends to prosecute child abuse in any form to the fullest extent of the law. You are under these obligations as a volunteer:

1. Reporting requirements- All volunteers and employees shall immediately report and document any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult or open door policy of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.
2. Incident of abuse defined- An "incident of abuse" means any occurrence in which any person:
 - Has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, youth or Vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - With respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - Exposes a child, youth or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

3. Imminent threat- In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or actual abuse exists, any witness shall immediately contact the Pastor and Children's Director to request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident of abuse shall complete a written report of the incident of abuse and submit the report to the Pastor and Children's Director (or in his/her absence other appropriate staff or board member).
4. Obligation to report to Law Enforcement- In all cases where any volunteer or staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the volunteer or staff member in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected by either known or unknown persons inside or outside of TVCOG, the worker shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency's child abuse investigators. The volunteer or staff member shall make a written record of the name and the title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendations made by the investigator and submit a copy of the written record to the Children's Director and Pastor.
5. Internal Reporting Procedure- The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact the Pastor and Children's Director. The reporter shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident of abuse.

• **Conclusion of no abuse**

If TVCOG's Pastor/Children's Director and/or legal counsel conclude that there is not reasonable cause to believe the abuse may have occurred, TVCOG's legal counsel shall provide a written report to the appropriate board documenting the conclusions reached and the basis for those conclusions. The contents of the report presented by legal counsel where no abuse was found shall be confidential unless requested by law enforcement officials.

• **Conclusion of abuse**

If TVCOG's Pastor/Children's Director and/or legal counsel conclude that there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse may have occurred, the incident will be reported to the appropriate local law enforcement agency's child abuse investigators.

VOLUNTEER AND CHILD PROTECTION

TVCOG intends to ensure the health, safety and well-being of volunteers and children. As a precaution and to ensure strict accountability from one adult to another, follow these rules:

1. Two teachers in room-Two adults should remain together in a classroom at all times. If not, keep the door open or stay in close proximity of the window.
2. Restroom Policy- Volunteers should help a child use the restroom only if the child is three years or younger. In this case, the volunteer needs to use the nursery potty. The nursery provides privacy for the student with the curtain but access for the teacher, if needed. If a child is three years or younger, the volunteers should leave the outer door of the restroom open. If a child is over the age of three, the volunteer should check the restroom before the child enters it and then wait outside for the child.
3. Appropriate touch- Appropriate touch is part of a healthy ministry. These are the following guidelines for when, where and how to use appropriate touch. These are also the guidelines for actions you as a volunteer should NEVER take.

Using good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to touch kids:

- an arm around the shoulder
- short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- a brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- handshake and high-fives

NEVER:

- never touch a child in anger or disgust
- never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- never touch a child between the chest and knee.

4. Taboo topics

Certain topics of discussion are best left to parents and their children.

The following topics are best discussed as part of the official curriculum of TVCOG taught by a TVCOG teacher or left for parents and their children to discuss. If you have a question about the propriety of discussing one of these topics, speak with the teacher or leader in charge of the area in which you serve:

- End Times Doctrine, Satan - if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion, Hell - if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion
- Human sexuality or reproduction or Female menstrual cycle
- Drugs, alcohol, or other questionable behavior before salvation

ATTENDANCE

TVCOG takes seriously the obligations to its children. Attendance is one of the important obligations and volunteers must abide by these guidelines.

1. Arrival

It is requested that volunteers arrive no less than 15 minutes prior to the event at which they are serving.

2. Departure

Volunteers should remain at the children's ministry event until the last child has been picked up by a parent or other adult the parent has approved through written consent.

3. Notification

Volunteers should call their coordinator to inform them of their absence and confirm that a substitute has been found.

4. Substitute Requirements

Volunteers should make every attempt to find a sub from the provided list of children's workers. If he or she is unable to find a substitute, the volunteer should contact the appropriate coordinator.

SECURITY

Please follow these rules to make sure our children are safe:

1. Stranger in the hall-Only parents, children's ministry volunteers, church staff, and children are allowed in the Children's Ministry area. All other adults (including any other church members) should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the Children's Area. If there are any questions or concerns associated with a stranger in the area, a staff member should be notified immediately to question the stranger.

2. Child custody issue-Due to the nature of child custody laws, volunteers must act diligently in making sure the correct people are picking up their children. Please be aware that only parents with custody of their child may pick up the child. If there are any questions regarding this procedure, please notify a Director or Pastor for clarification.

NURSERY AND PRESCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Check in policy- Children will be checked in at the appropriate classroom. Parents are to fill out a sticky tag for each child, half placed on child's back, the other half remains in the parents' possession.
2. Age requirement- Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, volunteers must be at least 13 years of age to volunteer in the nursery or toddler area.
3. Diaper procedure- Volunteers must wear disposable gloves while changing diapers and must wear new gloves with each change. Volunteers must disinfect diaper changing area after each diaper with wipes or spray provided. Volunteers must disinfect their hands after changing diaper.
5. Room clean-up policy- It is the responsibility of the volunteers to put away all toys and equipment used in the nursery area.
6. Check out policy- A child may not be released unless a parent or authorized person has a security card which corresponds to the name tag on that child. If an adult attempts to pick up a child without the corresponding security card, the nursery coordinator or children's pastor must be notified to make the decision to release a child.
7. We have a well-baby policy. We do not provide care for sick children. If a child is sick, they should not be accepted into the program. If they get sick, or are discovered to be sick, during the program, go get the parents. A child will not be admitted with any of these symptoms: matter in the eyes, frequent coughing, and runny nose (anything but clear discharge). If you suspect a child is ill, please call the staff member in charge.

ELEMENTARY PROCEDURES

1. Check in/out policy. Children will be checked in at the appropriate classroom. Parents will check them in on the sign in sheet. Children may only be released to adults.
2. Age requirement- Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry pastor, volunteers must be at least 16 years of age to work in the elementary class.
3. Room clean-up policy. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to put away all toys and equipment used in the classroom.
4. We have well-child policy. We do not provide care for sick children. If a child is sick, they should not be accepted into the program. If they get sick, or are discovered to be sick during the program, go get the parents. A child will not be admitted with any of these symptoms: matter in the eyes, frequent coughing, and runny nose. If you suspect a child is ill, please call the staff member in charge.
5. Bathroom policy. An adult must accompany a child to the restroom. While the child waits outside of the restroom, the adult must check the restroom prior to the child using the facility. While the child is using the facility, the adult must wait outside for the child.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

In case of an emergency, do the following:

1. Medical concerns- Immediately report any medical needs or concerns to the parents, Director and Pastor. If 911 is called, the teacher should remain calm and divert the attention of the other children, and the victim should be kept quiet and lying down. Do not attempt to move the child. Obtain a First Aid kit when necessary.

2. Weather alert- If there is a fear of dangerous weather, volunteers should wait for a Director or Pastor to instruct them in what to do. In no way should a volunteer act in such a way as to incite panic among children or other volunteers.

3. Fire- The first priority in any case of a fire is that all children and volunteers' safety is maintained. Any attempt by volunteers to put out a fire is absolutely forbidden unless judgment to do so is unquestionable and presents no possible danger to anyone present. In the event of a fire, teachers are asked to lead children from the building through the nearest marked exit. Please stress the following rules:

- Children should be encouraged to stay calm.
- Children should be encouraged to walk.
- Children should follow the teacher's lead.

4. Media response- In the event of a severe accident or tragedy, it is likely that the media will be on site to cover the incident. It is important that all volunteers not say anything which could be mistaken or misquoted by the interviewer. The Pastor, Children's Ministry Director or an assigned Board Member will address all media.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Volunteers must follow these guidelines in notification of parents:

1. When to pull a parent- A parent should be called from their class/service by Director or teacher in the event that the child is completely inconsolable (after ten minutes of care) or a danger to himself or other children.

2. Teacher initiated discipline issue- In the event of a teacher initiated discipline situation, the teacher should report it to the Children's Director. The Director will then notify the parent to discuss the appropriate action to be taken regarding the incident. It is left to the Director's judgment to bring in the teacher and Pastor to further discuss the incident and appropriate measures to be taken.

DISCIPLINE

Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement is always encouraged. The Director or Coordinator shall advise volunteers on the best age appropriate discipline methods.

Follow these rules for discipline:

1. Consistency

Maintain consistency in handling discipline problems. Discipline must be consistent to be effective. When warnings are issued, disciplinary action must be followed through. At the beginning of class, remind your class of the guidelines.

2. Remind

Make a prompt and personal response to inappropriate behavior. Correct a behavior the first time and every time. Remind the child that this is their only warning before they will be reseated.

3. Reseat

If a child has been reminded of the rules and issue the warning that reseating will follow a second infraction, if he/she persists in undesired/distracting behavior, he/she will be moved from his/her chair and reseated next to an adult.

4. Remove

If a child's behavior isn't corrected after being moved to sit with an adult teacher, the child will be removed from the class and taken directly to his/her parents.

5. Reward

Acknowledge and reward positive behavior. Encourage children who are behaving and following the rules.

5. Plan

Plan your lessons thoroughly. Often the best deterrent to a discipline policy is a well-planned class.

6. Pray

Pray for your kids and your patience consistently. Ask the Lord to guide you throughout the class.

APPLICATION AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

TVCOG uses many volunteers to serve in various roles throughout the Children's Ministry. Workers are screened using the following procedures:

1. Application

All children's ministry volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application and Consent to Background Checks forms, including signing the Doctrinal Statement and providing references.

- A. Background Checks: Security background checks for persons 18 years and older, including a search for criminal history, *may be* conducted through an agency authorized to perform a security background check. The results of the security background checks will be reviewed by the Children's Director and Pastor.
- B. Confidentiality: All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the result of the security background check, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be considered confidential. The written results of the security background check initially will be reviewed by the Children's Director. After this initial review, if the children's Director determines that further review should be made, he/she may consult with the senior pastor to conduct further inquiries, as necessary.
- C. Storage of confidential records: The pastor will maintain a secure storage facility in the church office for all volunteer applications and results of all security background checks. Volunteer Profiles and background checks may be required to be updated from time to time, but only if the worker is still a current volunteer.

2. Criminal History Check

Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on deferred adjudication or regular probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes either, misdemeanor or felony, cannot serve in any area of children's ministry.

3. Revocation

TVCOG reserves the right to revoke any volunteer's ability to serve and the right to refuse anyone an invitation to serve in the Children's Ministry. Should such be necessary, a meeting will be scheduled with the Pastor, necessary church leaders, and the person in question to discuss the reasons why service in children's ministry is not possible at this time.

**Somehow, I had a feeling they'd be up here too.
The children will be in heaven!**



VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This Children's Ministry Handbook and Policy and Procedure Manual contains important information about the children's ministry at Teays Valley Church of God. I understand that I should consult the Director of Children's Ministry if I have any questions that are not answered in the handbook. I also acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur at any time. My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read this entire handbook, including, but not only, the sections on:

- Child Abuse Reporting and Investigation
- Security
- Emergency Procedures
- Discipline
- Appropriate/Inappropriate Touch

Signature with date

Director of Children's Ministry Signature with date
