

Children's Ministries Handbook

Newborn-Kindergarten
Guidelines for Parents and
Workers

“Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Mark 10:14

A Note to Parents

Dear Parents,

We welcome you to Grace Church of Mentor Children's Ministries. We hope this information will be helpful in making the nursery an enjoyable experience for you and your child. The mission of our Child Care Facility is to provide a safe, loving environment for all God's children placed in our care **while parents worship, study God's Word, and serve in the church.**

Our trained volunteer staff is dedicated to providing the best possible care for your child. It is their desire and prayer that every child will some day come to faith in Christ.

Your adherence to the following guidelines will enable us to provide children with the good care you want them to have and we want to give. If you have a suggestion for enhancing this ministry, please let us know. We welcome your comments.

We encourage you to save this booklet as a handy reference.

The Pastoral Staff and Childcare Coordinators

Worship Guidelines

The reason for attending church is worship. For the sacredness of corporate worship, the preaching of the Word, and to avoid distraction to others, we ask parents please utilize our Child-care ministries during worship.

If your child must remain out of our Childcare classrooms, we ask that you remain in the Welcome Nook area. Seating is available for your convenience. Please do not linger in the fellowship hall area as this is now our overflow worship seating. If you prefer to have your child with you in the auditorium, please make sure that your child is not a distraction to worship.

If your child is ill or unable to be in his classroom for health reasons, please keep the child at home for that day.

Thank you for helping us by observing these guidelines.



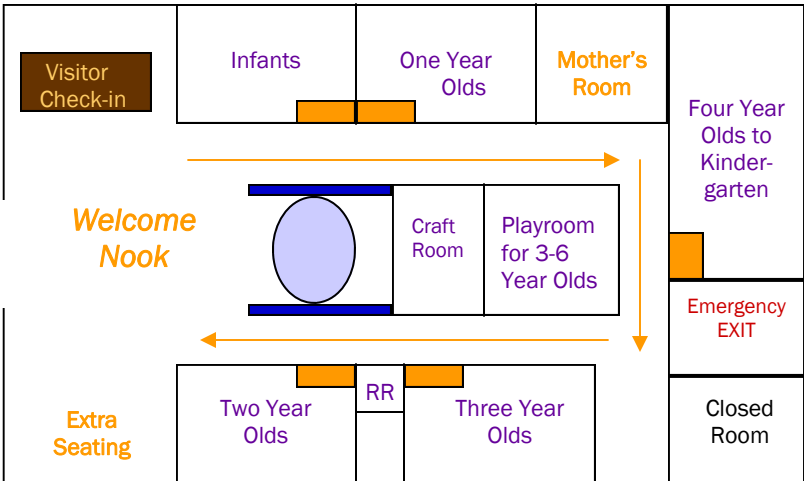
Our Facilities

Grace Church's Child Care wing provides care and instruction for children ages birth-Kindergarten. In addition to the Welcome Nook, general playrooms, and Mother's Room, there are five classrooms in which to care for children:

- Infant room (birth -11 months)
- One-year-old room
- Two-year-old room
- Three-year-old room
- Four-year-olds through Kindergarten room

All rooms offer an approved small snack (animal crackers/ cheerios) during each service, per parent approval (and developmental level for infants). Beginning in the two-year-old classroom, children receive structured teaching in God's Word, appropriate for age and developmental level. *We ask that no parents or children be in the playroom or craft room before or after services.*

Our Childcare Facility Layout



Parents may enter any area in orange.

Coming and Going

The caregivers and teachers will begin welcoming children 15 minutes before each service.



Please take your child to his appropriate classroom and complete the sign-in sheet on the counter. You may list any instructions or special needs (i.e. allergies, etc.) at this time. Once you sign your child in, you will be given an animal-shaped numbered security tag to identify you with your child at check out time. For your convenience, we have a pager system available upon request. Please give our workers instructions on when you prefer to be paged according to your knowledge of your child. We will notify you via silent pager if your child needs you during the service. For safety and insurance purposes, parents may not remain in their child's classroom unless they are the regularly scheduled worker for that service. We ask that only your family be in the Childcare Wing for crowding concerns.

If your child is having difficulty entering the classroom, one parent is welcome to remain in the check-in area only for a short time. Usually children that are sad quickly become interested in the activities or other children and stop crying. Children will only be allowed to cry continuously for a short time or according to your instructions until we page the you. After leaving your child in his appropriate classroom, please do not return to the room before you are ready to sign your child out unless you have been paged to the room by the child care staff. There is a Mother's Room available if you have to nurse during the service. *Please complete the check out process when you take your child to nurse.*

Coming and Going, continued

In consideration of those serving in our classrooms, please pick up your child immediately following the service and then visit and fellowship with others.

For protection of your children and to avoid confusion, *a child will be returned ONLY upon presentation of the proper ID tag by the parent/guardian.* If a tag is lost, a child will be released only by a member of the security team. The security team member will release the child if a valid form of ID is presented and a copy made for our files. Your help and consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please return your pager to the nursery worker at this time.

Please do not send an older child to pick up your child. Children will only be released to parents or guardians.

Diaper Bag Checklist

We ask that you send a diaper bag only for children in the infant room through two-year-olds. If your older child has a special situation, please let his teacher know. Please include:

- Extra diapers (disposable only)
- Extra change of clothes (optional for toddlers)
- Bottles, pacifiers, cups – labeled with the child's name

Please do not bring outside toys.



Health and Safety

In order to maintain a reasonably controlled environment and in the event of an emergency, we must require the following worker/child ratios:

Infant and 1-year-old rooms: 1 worker/6 children

2's and 3's: 1 worker/7 children

4's to Kindergarten: 1 worker/12 children

For your child's safety, Grace Church requires that all classrooms have a minimum of 2 workers over the age of 18 at all times. With the exception of your own child, this includes any time when there is only one child in a classroom. Also, within regular service times including 15 minutes before and after each service, parents may not enter the classroom unless they are a childcare worker *in that room for that particular service*.

In case of an emergency (e.g., fire), the child care staff will evacuate the children. Please do not come back to the classrooms. You will be able to pick up your child outside the building in the parking lot near the storage barns.



Illness

Parents are requested not to leave children in the classrooms if they have been sick.

Guidelines to follow:

Please keep your child at home:

- ◆ 24 hours after the end of a fever
- ◆ If there has been vomiting/diarrhea within 24 hours
- ◆ If there is a skin rash (other than diaper) or evidence of lice
- ◆ If you suspect strep or have had a culture taken and the results are not known. If positive, keep the child at home for 24 hours after treatment has started.

In regard to other childhood diseases, consult your pediatrician who will know when the illness is no longer contagious.

Our caregivers **may not** administer any medications. A health care professional is on-call each service. If there is any question of illness when your child arrives, the staff may contact this professional who will determine whether the child may remain in the classroom. If we discover your child does not feel well while he/she is in our care, we will page or locate you immediately. We will then separate the ill child from the other children for their health until you return.



A Note to Caregivers/Teachers

Dear Caregiver & Teacher,

This is your ministry. Thank you for using the gifts the Lord has given you and serving in the Grace Church of Mentor Child Care Ministry. We pray that your experience in working with these children will be a pleasant and rewarding one.

All workers over 18 years old are required to complete a Children's Ministries Security Screening Application before serving in our classrooms. This policy and procedure is for the safety and protection of both the children and you. Information will be held in confidence.

Based on past experience, insurance, health, and safety code, we have found the following guidelines to be necessary to provide a safe, pleasant, and effective environment for our Childcare Facilities. Please become thoroughly familiar with them.

The Pastors & The Child Care Staff

*Cindy Seelinger, Director, Caregiver Coordinator
Charlene Doles, Parent/Caregiver Liaison
Kelley Hixson, Curriculum and Classroom Development*

General Responsibilities

- 1) Prompt, reliable, and cooperative service is crucial to the smooth and efficient operation of this ministry. Most importantly, it is honoring to God.
- 2) Please arrive in your designated classroom no later than 15 minutes prior to the service.
- 3) You will be contacted either by phone or postcard prior to the service you serve to remind you of your commitment. However, we still recommend that you mark your calendar when the schedule is posted at the beginning of each month. If you cannot serve at your scheduled time, please secure a reliable substitute and notify Cindy Seelinger.
- 4) Please refrain from wearing perfumes or cologne.
- 5) Please follow GCM dress standards for Childcare workers.
- 6) Cd's of the morning worship service are available on the front desk if you would like them.

Welcome Desk

- 1) Be present at the desk 15 minutes before services begin
- 2) Greet all families and answer any questions they may have
- 3) Greet all guests and give them a welcome packet. Take guests to the appropriate classroom and introduce them to the teacher. Make sure they understand our ministry and are welcomed.
- 4) Handle any ongoing challenges.
- 5) Return to the desk at the end of each service to assist families if needed.
- 6) File attendance forms in desk.

Lead Caregiver/Teacher

- 1) Lead the classroom in spiritual guidance and attitude.
- 2) Assist parents with the check in/check out process—assign ID tags, pagers, etc. and receive/release the child.
- 3) Oversee the diapering/toileting of children and make sure the parents' instructions are being followed.
- 4) Page parents as needed. Children should only cry for about five minutes unless otherwise instructed by the parent. Please be especially sensitive to newer and visiting parents.
- 5) Oversee evacuation process for your classroom.
- 6) Accomplish any curriculum outcomes as assigned.
- 7) Initiate any needed emergency action.

Assistant Caregiver(s)

- 1) Assist the lead caregiver as needed.
- 2) Assist in the safety and security of the classroom.
- 3) Assist in the nurturing and care of the children.
- 4) Aid the teacher (if applicable) in child attentiveness during instruction.
- 5) Assist in bathroom and diaper duties following safety procedures outlined in Safety Procedures for Children.



General Procedures

Opening and check in

Before families arrive, scan the classroom to be sure it is safe, clean and welcoming to receive children. The lead caregiver/teacher will assist parents with the check in process at the counter.



Class time

Two-year-olds and older receive structured teaching from approved curriculum by the classroom teacher.

Because of availability of facilities, each class follows a rotation for teaching time, restroom breaks, and time in the free play rooms. These schedules are posted in the classrooms.

Diaper changing and toileting

Children should be diapered according to the parents' instructions. Wash or sanitize hands before and after diapering a child and use disposable gloves for each diaper change. A cleaning wipe of some type must always come between you and the child. If creams must be applied, please put them only on the diaper. Use the disinfectant to clean all surfaces after *each* child has been diapered. Male caregivers may never change diapers. Only females over 18 may change diapers.

Female caregivers may take either boys or girls to use the restroom. Male caregivers may only take boys to the restroom. For children ages four and above, please do not enter the restroom except under extreme circumstances. No person under the age of 18 may take a child to the restroom.

Snacks

Offer a snack at the appropriate time in each classroom. *Please check the parent sign-in sheet for allergies or special snack requests.* GCM offers animal crackers in all classrooms, and animal crackers and cheerios in the infant and one-year-old classrooms. Children may use their own cup at snack time. If a child does not have his own cup, offer water in our disposable cups. Be sure to pray to thank the Lord for the snack.

Safety and Illness Procedures

In order to protect the church, children, and you, GCM enforces that two adults must be present during any activity that includes children. Hence, a caregiver should not be alone at any time with a child. Also we can never lay a non-crawling infant on the floor even with a blanket. The only exception is if the child is playing with a hanging gym-type toy over head.

If you need extra assistance for special situations, parent question, illness of a child or yourself, or for any other safety concern, there is a child care coordinator and a member of the security team on duty and available to help at all times. This individual will contact the on-call health care professional in the building if needed.

If you are ill, please find a substitute. Follow the illness guidelines for children as an assessment for yourself.

If any child becomes injured under your watch, please treat the injury with any necessary first aid procedures. If you have a question of the severity of the injury, please page the medical professional on call for assistance. The medical on-call professional will *always* make the call for an ambulance. Any incident report will be completed by the on-call medical professional. Parents will be notified of minor injuries when the child is picked up, or immediately upon on-call medical professional care *intervention*.

Emergency evacuation

Infants and one-year-olds, as many as possible, should be placed in rolling cribs and then wheeled to the appropriate meeting place outside the building (see evacuation routes posted in rooms or at end of booklet).



Two-year-olds on up should form a line and be escorted by the caregivers to the appropriate meeting place. Lead caregiver/teacher should be the last one to leave the room, bringing the sign in sheet, making sure lights are off, doors are closed and all children are safely out of the room.

Children's conduct guidelines

- ◆ Climbing or standing on chairs, tables, boxes, etc. is a safety hazard and should be discouraged.
- ◆ Kicking, biting, pushing, or hitting needs correction.
- ◆ Use inside voices only
- ◆ Children should stay seated while drawing, coloring, or cutting
- ◆ Children should be encouraged to play appropriately with toys.

Promotion of Children

For the safety and organization of our classrooms, children will not be allowed in classrooms that are not their age level. The only exception to this policy are special needs children. Infants will be promoted to the One-Year Old class and one-year olds to the Two-Year Old class the next Sunday after their birthday. Kindergarten children will be promoted in June following their school year. Other children will be promoted three times a year by the following guidelines: Birthday by February 15—promotion in January; Birthday by July 15—promotion in June; Birthday by October 15—promotion in September.

Correction Procedures

Classroom management is easier if you set clear limits. Kindly ask the child to stop the unacceptable behavior and redirect the child's attention if necessary.

If this child repeats the action, remind the child what you previously told him and explain he will now have to have a "time-out" for not following instruction. Have the child sit in a chair away from all activity for a few minutes (usually one minute per age of the child) and ask the child if he is ready to play/act in the correct manner before allowing him to return to activity.

If this child continues to resist instruction, contact the child liaison, and he or she will handle the situation. The liaison will fill out a form for the parent/guardian regarding the situation.

A worker is never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.



Checkout & Closing Procedures

With the exception of the Bible Hour, as the service comes to an end, caregivers should make sure all belongings are neatly back in bags and their bins and ready to be picked up with the children when the parents arrive. For the Infant and One Year-old room, toys that were used go into the bag to be cleaned. All linens that were used must go into the dirty linen bag to be cleaned. The lead caregiver/teacher will again assist the parent with the check out process.



All children when taken out of the classroom must be checked out by the following procedures:

- 1) Take ID tag from the adult and match it to the child's tag.
- 2) Collect the pager if they were given one.
- 3) Mothers taking their child out to nurse during the service must complete the check out process.
- 4) If the parent has misplaced the child's ID tag, the child may not be released without permission from a security team member. If the pager is missing the parent must pay for replacement.

Once all the children are released, clean up any remaining items in the classroom and organize the check-in counter so it is ready for the next service. Spray disinfectant on all major surfaces. All trash needs to be tied and placed by the classroom door. Lights should be turned out and doors closed upon leaving. Take attendance form to welcome desk. Notify the welcome desk if problems or concerns arise with children, parents, or other caregivers.