

# Church, Child and Youth Protection Manual

*Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company*



## Protecting Children

Staff  
Volunteers  
Congregation



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# SOUTHERN MUTUAL CHURCH INSURANCE

## CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION MANUAL

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This manual was developed exclusively for Southern Mutual Church Insurance by Jeff Hanna of **Ministry Continuity Solutions, P.O. Box 1206, Ankeny, IA, 50021.**  
For further information, please visit [www.ministrycontinuitiesolutions.com](http://www.ministrycontinuitiesolutions.com).

*Welcome* to our publication to aid church congregations in the fight against sexual abuse in our society. Our “Church Child and Youth Protection Manual” is available to help churches establish a policy and procedure manual in dealing with this growing problem in our nation.

Jeff Hanna, a former detective, pastor and one of the nation’s most recognized church safety and risk management experts served as the author of “Church Child and Youth Protection Manual” on behalf of Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company.

Please remember the “Church Child and Youth Protection Manual” including the sample forms is only a guideline for your use. Your church is responsible for complying with all laws; state and federal. All materials should be reviewed by a legal advisor prior to implementation.

Our staff is available to present a workshop in your area to help inform your congregation. Please let us know if you would like to arrange a workshop. Also be sure and visit our website [www.smcins.com](http://www.smcins.com) for other helpful information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Bates, CPCU, CRM, CIC, AIS  
President/CEO  
Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

*It had been three years since John was hired as a part-time youth pastor. He was married, a teacher in the local school district, and was well-liked by the staff, parents and youth. However, one afternoon, the senior pastor got a call from another member of his congregation, asking him if he had heard the rumor being circulated in regards to John. He had not. The caller, also an employee of the school system, said that detectives had been to the school to question John. It had something to do with "inappropriate behavior." But that's all the caller knew.*

*Immediately after school the pastor called John and asked to see him. When John came into the office, he said he was shocked that a young, male student had accused him of an indecent act. He swore the allegation was unfounded and that he would be cleared. The senior pastor believed him and pledged his prayers and support. No action would be taken at that time by the church as to John's employment or involvement with the youth.*

*Three weeks later, the senior pastor was shocked much deeper as the parents of one of the male youth group members came to meet with the pastor. They told him that after the incident at the school came out, that their son shared how John had also been abusing him over the last year.*

*The pastor reported it to authorities. In the end, John was charged with several counts of inappropriate behavior with several boys both at school and in the youth group. He plead guilty to the charges and served two years in prison. He is listed on the sexual offender registry and may not have contact with minors. He is without a job, his marriage is over, and he is a broken, desperate man. The youth and families received counseling, and have decided against suing the church. Yet the youth group has never really recovered.*

Variations of this actual story are being repeated all over our country. Authority's best estimates say 500,000 children suffer sexual abuse every year. (1) And those people who wish to do harm to our children are constantly seeking places and opportunities to do so. Unfortunately, one of the paths-of-least-resistance for them is in the church. While most other child and youth-serving organizations realize not only the threat but the potential liability, unfortunately many of our churches still lag far behind when it comes to protecting the children and youth as well as the ministry of the church.

Most churches are not blessed with far more volunteers than they need. Therefore, when a nice-looking, friendly person comes to the church and volunteers to work with minors they are often welcomed with open arms.

But before they do so, church leaders should consider these facts uncovered by ChoicePoint, the nation's leader in conducting background checks on applicants:

ChoicePoint recently conducted an audit of 1.6 million background screens performed during a three year period between 2002 and 2005. The results revealed that more than 86,000 individuals with undisclosed criminal records tried to work or volunteer in the nonprofit sector.

The audit indicates:

- Every six minutes a convicted criminal tries to attain a position at a nonprofit organization
- Every 43 hours at least one convicted sex offender tries to attain a position at a youth-oriented nonprofit organization
- In a review of applicants for a large national youth-serving organization, out of approximately 1.03 million applicants screened:
  - 121,392 had criminal records (12 percent or roughly the population of Hartford, Conn.)
  - 740 of those records were sex-related convictions
  - 305 were Registered Sex Offenders
  - 2,031 were drug-related convictions
  - 153 were murder convictions

This same audit shows the hit rate for our nonprofit customers is 5 percent.

This

statistic means that out of 100 people screened, five of them had a criminal record,

an increase of 2 percent since the 2003 audit.

We can see that people with serious criminal histories are seeking nonprofits (which includes churches) for employment, and possibly to do further harm. Therefore, church leaders need to take a firm stance on this issue and engage in those steps necessary to protect the children and the ministry.

The first step toward changing the culture of the church is understanding the issues. First we need to ask ourselves, **“Who are the offenders?”** In relation to molesters in churches, the perpetrator is not one of those creepy guys with trench coats trying to coax children to take a piece of candy. They are often well-liked, creative, committed people. And they cannot be categorized as single males in their 20’s or 30’s or dirty old men.

Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought, in their book, “Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse”, identify offenders in a wide variety of categories. They include: adolescent offenders, the experimenter, the loner, the boy next door, the aggressor, the group offender, the adolescent female offender, adult fixated offenders, and regressed adult offenders, among others. (2)

That’s correct, as many as 25% of sexual offenses against minors are now being perpetrated by other minors. And yes, a growing number of offenders are female.

Therefore, prior perceptions of who we need to protect against have changed dramatically. Further, some types (preferential offenders) may have hundreds or even thousands of victims, while others (situational offenders) may be a respected father and church leader who has a lapse in judgment or a moment of weakness and engages in inappropriate activity.

Realizing that offenders come in all shapes, sizes, ages and sexes, we need to be sure we have more than one or two informal safeguards in place. It will take more than thinking we could spot an offender. It takes a comprehensive approach to really provide the church and children the best chance to protect against an offender.

Secondly, we also need to be asking, **“Who are the victims?”** Though certain characteristics of vulnerable victims may be considered, just like the offenders, the victims are a widely diverse group as well. Most offenders have a very specific target group. One may prefer girls between the ages of six and eight-years-old, while another may seek older boys between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Once again, a comprehensive approach that protects all minors that have been entrusted to our care is really the best approach.

We simply can no longer hold onto such common statements as:

- “We’ve known this person for years. We’d know if he was up to something.”
- “We would know if this person was offending a child.”
- “People in the church will get mad if we start screening and supervision volunteers.”
- “We just don’t have the time to address this issue.”
- “Background checks cost time and money. We don’t have either.”

As parents, leaders, employees and volunteers working with young people, we have a responsibility to care for the “least of these.” It’s really not about thinking we will know if a person is an offender. It’s very little about having the time or money. It’s about faithful stewardship. God has entrusted these precious little ones to our care and asks us to do whatever it takes to raise them up as people of faith and to keep them safe.

But now is not the time to despair. While we should grieve for those victims and churches that have suffered such a horrific event, we do have hope and help. Our hope is in a God who is far bigger than this issue. And our help is in this manual. You will find here the basics of protecting your children and ministries from harm. While there are never guarantees, by adopting these widely accepted best practices and procedures and engaging in a comprehensive, consistent program, you will be able to move forward with confidence and not fear.

The manual will discuss those key issues that need to be addressed. They fall into these four basic categories:

- Selection and Screening
- Training
- Supervision
- Reporting

Not only will you receive rationale for doing such a program, but a series of checklists, forms, evaluations, and samples. Southern Church Mutual Insurance is honored to be able to provide this to you, as together we work on eliminating child abuse from our churches.

(1) (Finkelhor, D (1994). *Sexual Abuse of Children: The Future of Children* 4 (2), 31-69).

(2) (Heitritter, L & Vought, J (1989). *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse: A Sensitive, Biblical Guide for Counselors, Victims and Families*, 92-99).

## HIRING, SELECTION AND SCREENING

One of the least embraced concepts when it comes to caring for the children and youth in our churches revolves around screening. No one would argue the need to select the best people possible. Hardly anyone would debate the need for adequate supervision. But when it comes to checking on the person you have selected to teach children, that's where the difficulty begins. Some would stretch themselves and agree that employees might need some sort of check, yet many people aren't willing to venture down the road of having to screen volunteers. After all, they are volunteering. Wouldn't that make it even harder to recruit teachers and children's volunteers? Maybe not.

Most of the people who have the biggest concern when it comes to screening are those who no longer have little children. The mindset is, "We didn't need it when our kids were young. Why do we need it now?" But if you consider those with children today, the concept of screening is not only commonplace (schools, day cares, child-serving organizations), but is expected. So the stretch to getting it done may not be as far as some expect.

The entire process of selection and screening should be a part of the overall policies, practices and procedures of your child protection policy. As church leaders, we need to take every step possible to protect the children and youth that are in our care. Secondly, sound procedures that are followed will also protect the adults, should an accusation ever be made.

Let's consider the process.

### Applications

In times past most everyone knew everyone else. This was true, especially in small towns and churches. But with the age of industrialization, job changes, moves, blended families, and larger churches, that is no longer the case. People are coming and going, leaving for awhile, returning, or divorcing and re-marrying. Very few of us could vouch for every aspect of a person's life, especially their past. Most of us do not share those darker places and times of our lives with new people we meet.

Therefore, it's wise to use an application to begin the process of getting to know a person. They do not need to be exhaustive, but should seek basic information as to where a person has been and what they have been doing. It should be viewed as a snapshot of the person you are potentially going to entrust your children with.

Because most churches have far more volunteers than employees in their children's and youth area, it is important to adopt a process where all employees and those volunteers working with minors complete an application.



The applications should be screened by the appropriate committee or individual. You will not only want to look for those with prior church experience, but also for gaps, red-flags, and other concerns.

### Interview

After you have selected the most likely candidates, based on their application, it is important to spend some time getting to know them. Again, this may be done by an individual, but is better by a committee or selection team. You will seek to clarify or expand on items from the application and get to know that person's personality and character a bit better. Ask about their previous experience with minors and if they would mind if you contacted those references they have listed. Also let them know that you may also be conducting a criminal background check on them. Let them know your church takes child protection seriously and that a policy has been adopted to do such screening. Clear up any concerns you may have from the application.

### Screening

Once you have narrowed your applicants down, you will want to find out more about them. It is important that you are consistent with your screening practices. Not only are you trying to protect your children and youth, but also keep the ministry protected should anything ever arise. You will want to show consistency.

- Six-month rule: Part of the screening process is asking volunteers to wait six months before allowing them to have direct contact with children. The idea is to keep a person, intent on doing harm, from having immediate access to children. If you think about it, simply by having a policy where a person has to wait a period of time as you get to know them will be a deterrent to someone who needs immediate access to children. They will not be able to wait and will go elsewhere.
- Reference Checks: Reference checks seek to understand the character of the person. Every person working with minors should have reference checks conducted on them. Call the people listed, introduce yourself and the reason you are calling. Ask mostly open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no." Listen for subtle hints or obvious concerns from the person you are calling. One good concluding question is, "If you had a chance to use this person to work with your children, would you?" Document your findings.
- Background Checks: Background checks seek to understand any criminal history of a person. As was mentioned prior, this is an area of debate and concern. Do background checks really need to be completed? Does everyone need one? Aren't they expensive? After all the debate, the key issue is being able to, as leaders, answer the question, "Are we doing all

that we can to protect the children and those who work with them from harm?" At the end of the day, that's what matters.

The commonly accepted practices of most child-serving organizations lean toward a policy of doing a criminal background check on all employees, and also on those volunteers that have any appreciable contact with children. That could mean a person who only takes a turn in the nursery a couple times a year may not warrant a criminal check. But they certainly should complete an application, be interviewed and have reference checks completed. Those with more than a couple of hours a week should have the background check. Ideally, and to be consistent, some churches have adopted a policy where everyone has to have the check done.

Few of us like the idea that we have gotten to a place in time where we need to screen church workers. Yet, everyone dislikes the notion that their church could be a place where a child was harmed and the church ministry disrupted.

Though there may be some initial concern and uneasiness over these new practices, if churches will adopt such hiring, selection and screening policies, communicate the reasoning behind them, and continue to affirm their commitment to making the church a safe place for children and those who work with them, you will be able to move ahead in ministry with a sense of confidence.

## OVERSIGHT AND SUPERVISION

A church or other organization could have all the policies in the world and still be extremely susceptible to something bad happening. It is important to guard against the philosophy some churches have adopted. In an attempt to satisfy their insurance company or denomination, the leadership grabbed a policy they found elsewhere and changed the names, or worked on and adopted a policy, then put it on the shelf in the office.

Neither of these practices will help you. In fact, they could hurt you. Policies, practices and procedures need to be kept fluid and available. And they need to be followed completely. Though you may have screened applicants, unless you have supervision in place, you are leaving your organization exposed to problems.

In essence, oversight and supervision are the threads that keep everything else in place. Not only should a committee, team or individual see to it that all practices and procedures are being followed, there must also be supervision of the personnel and programs that are in place.

One of the primary rules for supervision states that no adult will be alone with a minor. This is an update on the previous two-adult rule. Where an adult poses much less of a threat when they are teaching a Sunday School class of ten children, once nine of the children leave the room, and the adult is one-on-one with the child, the threat has risen dramatically. Teachers should be trained to never allow themselves to be caught in this dynamic. If it occurs, the teacher should step into the doorways or hallways until other children arrive or the parents come to pick their child up.

The other portion of supervision to provide optimum safety has to do with ratios. Not only should an adult never be alone with a child, but when there are larger numbers of children or an activity is in a more isolated location, the following ratios, from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, should be followed.

AGE OF CHILDREN	GROUP SIZE									
	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Infant (birth to 15 months)	1:3	1:4								
12-28 months	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:4						
21-36 months		1:4	1:5	1:6						
2.5-year-olds - 3-year-olds (30 - 48 months)				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten								1:10	1:11	1:12

*Smaller group sizes and lower staff-child ratios have been found to be strong predictors of compliance with indicators of quality such as positive interactions among staff and children and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Variations in group sizes and ratios are acceptable in cases where the program demonstrates a very high level of compliance with criteria for interactions, curriculum, staff qualifications, health and safety, and physical environment.*

While the above ratios are adequate for church settings, because of the increased isolation that occurs at camps, the ratios are different. The following recommended camp ratios should be followed.

Recommended Staff/Child Camp Ratios:

6-8 years old, 1 counselor to 6 campers  
9-14 years old, 1 counselor to 8 campers  
15-18 years old, 1 counselor to 10 campers

As you can see, any time isolation increases,  
the closer the ratio should be.

Training

One of the best ways to keep safe practices in place is to train your workers. New hires or volunteers should be required to complete basic training. Then, a regular, documented training schedule will not only help you in having better workers, but will also be a big plus for you should you ever find yourself in court. Training raises the bar of expectation and protection.

Reporting

If you know of any church that has had to go through an accusation or incident of child abuse, you would know that none of them would ever choose to go through it again. The process is long, difficult, expensive, and takes the church away from its real ministry focus.

However, if an accusation or real incident becomes known, it is critical, as part of oversight and supervision, that it be reported and dealt with. Do not think that you will be able to or should "handle it internally." The negative fallout from such thinking has been documented time and time again. Every state has clear reporting guidelines. You should know them and train staff and all of those who work with minors on what those reporting laws are. It is best to post them in a public area. Failure to do so is not only breaking the law, but it limits the ability to deal with the victims and offenders quickly. In the long run it can cost money, time, and the further ability to heal.

Finally, it should be noted the vast majority of those who supervise and care for children are great people who have the safety and well-being of the children forefront in their mind. However, sometimes, either without thinking or by design, a worker may place a child in harm's way. Because of this, oversight and supervision should always be in place and never be neglected.

## SAFE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As a church, we not only want our children to learn about their faith and a God who loves them, but we also desire to provide a fun and memorable place they want to attend. And as we seek to reach out to children, youth and adults, we often look for new and exciting ministries, fellowship opportunities and activities that will attract and keep them coming.

Though there is nothing inherently wrong with such thinking, it is sometimes done with little or no thought about safety. Sadly, it is sometimes after a horrible incident that the leadership realizes that more preparation, discussion and oversight should have gone into the plan.

For children, amazing new playgrounds and exciting, bright children's areas and activities are cropping up in churches. For youth, paint-balling, rappelling, dodgeball, and skateboarding are not uncommon new ministries.

We recognize that such events take much more planning than a Bible study or a lock-in. We should also consider how much more dangerous they are as well. By not considering this, the safety of our children and youth and the future vitality of our entire ministry may be put at risk. With that in mind, let's consider several areas that should be kept in mind.

### Permission

Remember, we are dealing with minors. And they are not legally allowed to give permission to participate in an activity that may cause them harm. Therefore, permission slips, health and consent to treat forms should be in hand before allowing a youngster to participate. If not, the consequences for an injury could be staggering.

### Activity Area

Let's say the youth group is going to enjoy a beautiful day at the park talking and throwing the Frisbee around. A pretty non-threatening event, right? Not necessarily. By not taking the time to inspect the play area for glass, sharp rocks, nails, sticks, and other hazards, a nice day at the park may end up with an injury.

Whether youngsters are going to be using playgrounds, nursery areas, camps, fellowship halls or the church parking lots, it is up to the leadership to take the time to check out the area. A quick walk-around is all that is necessary to avoid a minor or major accident. Look for old or broken equipment. Inspect the surfaces, and ask yourself, "Is there anything here I need to remove, repair, or warn others about?"

## Training

All leaders and participants should be trained on any activity outside the scope of their normal “comfort zone.” If rappelling, climbing, paint-balling or any other activity can cause harm, then make sure everyone has a crash course on the activity. Allow those that are uncomfortable or afraid to sit out.

## Equipment

In some cases, the church or members have the necessary equipment on hand for an activity. Sometimes the equipment is borrowed or brought from home. And there are times when another organization may provide the equipment for an event. Regardless of where the equipment comes from, it should be inspected by an expert. Make sure it is not only the right equipment for that activity, but that it is in good working order.

## Supervision

Many of the same supervisory issues should be followed for an activity for safety reasons as for some sort of misconduct. The bottom line is to have trained leaders who can oversee an activity safely and respond if necessary. Proper ratios should be followed. On extreme activities, not following the ratios and the rules could have unexpected consequences.

## Transportation

You have an activity planned, and are ready to go. But how do you get there? Some churches provide a church-owned vehicle. Many rely on parents or other adults to drive. Regardless, several guidelines need to be observed.

- **Select drivers** ahead of time and certify them. Make sure they have a clean driving record and proper insurance.
- **Select vehicles** that are safe and free from maintenance concerns. Safe tires, seat belts, emergency equipment (brakes, flashers, lights, etc) should all be required and approved ahead of time. An inspection and maintenance plan should be adopted.
- **Safe transport** of passengers is critical. By rotating drivers, having communication devices between vehicles, requiring seat belt use, planning your route and having a back-up plan in case of emergencies will make the trip much more enjoyable and safe.

## Insurance

Many churches believe that whatever they do will be covered by their insurance. Only after having a claim turned down do they realize this is just not true. Insurance is an important part of any ministry. But there are restrictions and limitations to coverage. Before considering a new ministry or extreme activity, it would be wise to contact your Southern Mutual Church Insurance agent. Even if the particular activity you want to do is not covered, often coverage can be provided with additional information. However, be willing to recognize an insurance company's reluctance to provide coverage. They might also suggest an alternative way to accomplish the same goal by modifying the event to make it safer.

If you are utilizing another company or renting their equipment, you should ask them to provide a certificate of insurance naming your organization as an additional insured. Ideally, shifting coverage to their insurance company is a good idea.

## Finally

Whenever the leaders of children or youth are looking to provide an activity that should be celebrated and enjoyed, someone within the organization should sign-off on the activity. A defined and followed process of getting approval, though sometimes time-consuming, may actually be a blessing in the long-run. The safety of the children, youth and ministry of the church has no room for lone-rangers who can't work within the framework of the staff and ministry guidelines.

Elsewhere in this workbook is a checklist that will help you determine where you are in the process.



## CONCLUSION

Many good and faithful adults want to do what they can to improve life and help young people grow into committed people of faith. They spend countless hours volunteering and working with these impressionable and exuberant young people. They should be thanked often for their commitment.

However, faithfulness alone will not keep the ministry and these youngsters safe and secure from harm. Unfortunately, there are people in the world who seek to hurt children. Further, there are situations, many of which are preventable, where we place those in our care in harm's way. This may be due to poor planning, inadequate supervision, or recklessness on the part of the adults or the young people.

The impact on the lives of youngsters and their families when they are injured, violated or even killed is enormous. The many ministries that are slowed or destroyed by such an incident is staggering. The time has come for every parent, church leader and member to call for changes to be made. New planning, preparation, mindsets, oversight, and follow-up are essential to reduce or eliminate such tragedies from happening.

God is counting on the adults and leaders of the church to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the children. To do so is an act of good and faithful stewardship.

We believe you will find that, though there may be adjustments necessary in the beginning, in the long run, your youngsters, congregation and leadership will thank you for taking care of them so that they can carry out their call to minister.

We encourage you to gather a team and begin the process of addressing safety and security in your congregation. Use the safety and security of the young people as a starting point for an overall church protection ministry. Young people, families and our Creator are counting on you.

Blessings!

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## EVALUATION CHECKLIST, SAMPLE FORMS AND POLICIES

The following forms are meant to be guides. Because laws in some states may vary, any policies, practices, procedures, or forms that you adopt within your organization should **ALWAYS** be reviewed by an attorney. Southern Mutual Church Insurance is pleased to be able to provide this information and these forms as a service to our customers. However, neither the author of this material nor Southern Mutual Church Insurance are liable for any errors or omissions within these documents and resources.

- Youth and Children's Protection Evaluation Checklist
- Youth and Children's Staff/Volunteer Worker Application Form
- Consent to Participate and Consent to Treat Form
- Health History Information and Emergency Contact Form
- Sample Children and Youth Protection Policy
- Accident/Allegation/Incident Report Form

## YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S PROTECTION EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following form should be completed by a staff member or program administrator. It is designed to evaluate where you are in protecting your children, youth and ministry. If you answer "no" to any of the items, corrective action should be taken.

Item	Yes	No	Comments/Corrective Actions
<b>Hiring, Selection, &amp; Screening</b>			
Do we have written policies and procedures for child and youth protection?			
Do we utilize written applications for all employees and volunteers?			
Do we conduct interviews with all applicants?			
Do we conduct reference checks on all applicants?			
Do we conduct background checks on all employees and those who work a significant amount of time with minors?			
Do we have job descriptions for all positions?			
Are all drivers screened and checked for driving record and insurance?			
<b>Oversight and Supervision</b>			
Do we conduct and document ongoing training?			
Do we post the mandatory reporting rules from our state?			
Do we follow all procedures and do we comply with all reporting laws for our state?			
Do we follow the recommended adult/child ratios?			
Do we comply with the six-month waiting rules for volunteers?			
Do we have side window or door glass on all child/youth rooms or leave doors open?			
Do we adhere to the no-adult-alone-with-a-child rule?			
Do we train leaders in all extreme or at-risk activities?			
Do we have parents sign a permission slip for any activity involving travel or physical activity?			
Do we have a consent to treat and health form signed for each minor participant engaged in travel or physical activity?			
Do we have a written process and forms for reporting accidents, allegations incidents, and injuries?			
Do we inspect equipment, grounds, and activity areas prior to beginning an activity?			
Do we conduct a safety briefing with leaders and participants prior to travel or before engaging in a physical activity?			
Do we plan on having proper first-aid and emergency equipment on hand for travel or physical activities?			
Are all vehicles used to transport inspected for safety and maintenance issues?			

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Youth and Children's Staff/Volunteer Worker Application Form

Position being applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other names you have had: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been at this address? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in this state? \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_M \_\_\_F      Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_ Since when (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

If not, where are you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list residences and churches attended for the last 10 years:

Address	City	State	Church Attended
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please list any work done in a church, volunteer work, or any work involving minors. Include type of work, supervisor's name and contact number.

Dates	Organization	Type of Work	Supervisor's Name	Phone
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Any other employers in last five years:

Dates	Organization	Type of Work	Supervisor's Name	Phone
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is there any reason you should not work with or around minors? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving minors? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes to any, please explain here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Education:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Graduate?</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Degree or course of study</b>
High School	_____	_____	_____	_____
College:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (list):	_____	_____	_____	_____

**References:**

(please list three references with at least one being an organizational or professional reference)

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the church's procedure for verifying the information provided by me on this form or evaluating me for employment purposes, I understand the church may contact persons, employers and/or organizations named by me in this form; conduct a national criminal background check; conduct a sex offender registry check; a social security trace or other appropriate background investigative report which may include information gathered through person interviews with third parties, family members, and persons, with whom I am acquainted. I consent to the church making such checks and understand that this may include information regarding my character, general reputation, and personal characteristics. I further agree to sign any and all documents, consents and/or agreements which may be necessary for the church and its authorized representatives and/or designees to complete the above.

By signing this form, I authorize the church to request and obtain the information described above. Further, I release the church and its denominational agency, affiliates, related entities, agents, employees, and officers (collectively "church") and all references from any claim or liability whatsoever arising out of such request or any information disclosed in response thereto, and I agree to hold the church and all references harmless and will not to bring any action or assert any claim against the church or any reference on account thereof.

I have read and understand the above and affirm that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

**CONSENT TO PARTICPATE AND CONSENT TO TREAT FORM - MINOR**

Planned Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Group/Activity leader name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other adults accompanying group: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

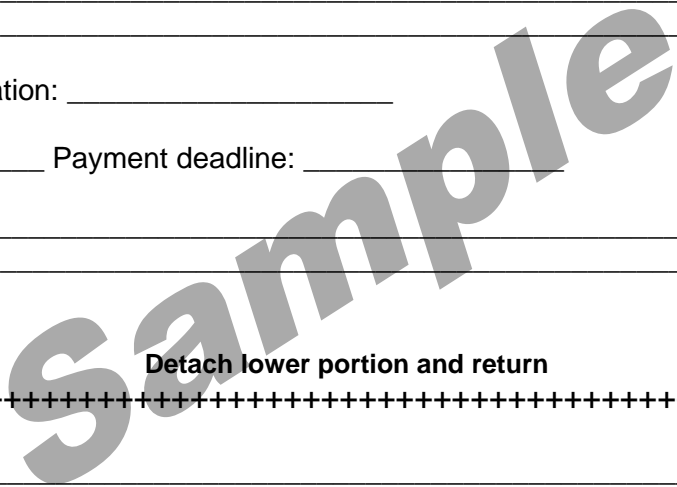
\_\_\_\_\_

Method of Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

What to bring: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Detach lower portion and return**

+++++

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Child's Social Security Number \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

My child, \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in (activity) \_\_\_\_\_

List any activities the child is not permitted to engage in): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT TO TREAT:**

While my child is attending this function, I hereby authorize the adult(s) in charge, or in his/her absence or disability, any adult accompanying or assisting him/her, to consent to the following medical treatment for said minor:

- (i) provide for, approve and authorize any health care at any hospital, emergency room, doctor's office or other institution;
- (ii) employ any physicians, dentists, nurses or other person whose services may be needed for such health care;
- (iii) review and, if necessary, disclose the contents of any confidential medical records; and,
- (iv) execute consent forms required by medical, dental or other health authorities incident to the provision of medical, surgical or dental care to the child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of parent or legal guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

## HEALTH HISTORY INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM

(The following information is confidential and will be used only in case of emergency)

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Child's Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Is your child prone to (check those that apply):

cold       sore throat       fainting spells       bronchitis  
 cramps       convulsions       allergies (list below)

Does your child have or has ever had (check those that apply):

asthma       heart trouble       lung trouble       sinus trouble  
 hernia       appendicitis       appendix removed

Is your child currently under any type of medical treatment?  yes  no

Is there any history of behavioral disorders or emotional disturbances?  yes  no

Has your child been under the treatment of a psychiatrist in the past three years?  yes  no

Date of last tetanus shot: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Please list any prescriptions or over-the-counter medications currently being taken:

Name of medication	Dosage	Times to be taken

What medications may we administer? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any drug interactions, food or other allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any physical disabilities or disorders that may affect their participation in activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any special instructions or comments relating to the questions above or to your child's health and their participation in any activities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Contact Numbers:

Contact  
order

\_\_\_ Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mother name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ relation: \_\_\_\_\_ phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

(name of church)

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**CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

## **I. Purpose**

As people of faith, we have concluded that it is our desire and calling to create environments that are welcoming and free from danger and harm, and where people can grow and prosper in their faith journey. As the people of God gathered as the Church, we recognize the diverse nature of those whom come to us to worship, minister, grow, and who seek grace and mercy. Each of us that gathers are imperfect people, saved by grace.

Through the opportunities we create to interact and be in ministry, we recognize that each of us comes as broken and imperfect people. And sometimes that brokenness and imperfect nature can cause concern and even harm to those within the body. While we seek to be available to and offer the love of Christ to all, we are also called to take measures that will create a safe environment for all who gather.

We especially take our charge to care for “the least of these” very seriously. As faithful adults, we must do all that we can to create a safe and secure environment for the children that have been given to us to nurture and care for. This includes the physical, emotional and spiritual dangers that may confront them. We acknowledge that religious organizations are not immune to incidents of abuse and misconduct. We further acknowledge our limited understanding of the complexities of abuse.

Therefore, we embrace this policy that puts in place the practices and procedures necessary to keep the children free from harm. We also see these practices and procedures as a protection for those adults that have graciously stepped forward to care for the children within our congregation. Finally, we endorse all aspects of this policy, recognizing that by protecting children, and reducing the possibility of abuse, we are also taking critical steps necessary to protect the entire ministry of our church.

## **II. Abuse Defined**

According to the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information,

**Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)<sup>2</sup>
- Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

These situations do not always mean a child is neglected. Sometimes cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and poverty may be contributing factors, indicating the family is in need of information or assistance. When a family fails to use information and resources, and the child's health or safety is at risk, then child welfare intervention may be required.



**Physical Abuse** is physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

**Sexual Abuse** includes activities by a parent or caretaker such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

**Emotional Abuse** is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and, therefore, CPS may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm to the child. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms are identified.

**NOTE:** (The appropriate statutes for your state should be obtained and placed in this section. They may be obtained from the **National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information** site at: <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/>)

### **III. Application Process**

The following steps are necessary in the application process:

- Application completed for every staff member (including permission to do background check)
- Application completed for every volunteer worker that is working with or around minors (including permission to do background check)
- Interview by staff member or committee
- Reference checks conducted on all applicants
- Criminal background checks completed on all staff members and those volunteers that have regular contact with minors
  - (Note: background checks will be conducted by a designated staff member or church official. Results of the background and reference checks will only be shared with those making the decision on whether to place the applicant into a ministry position)
  - Those offenses that would keep an applicant from being hired or selected would include all crimes of violence, abuse, or felonies against people, especially children. Other crimes revealed will be reviewed by the staff.
- Volunteers applying for a position must adhere to the 6-month waiting rule prior to being placed in direct contact with minors (meaning they must have been coming to the church or be a member for at least six months)
- No teens under the age of 14-years-old may be placed in charge of other minors. Those between 14 and 18-years-old must do so only under the direct supervision of an adult
- All applicants must sign and affirm that they have read and understand all policies prior to being placed in the position they are applying for

### **IV. Job Descriptions**

Applicants for any position will be required to read the job description applicable to the position they are applying for. The description should include all physical requirements

necessary to perform the job. It is up to the applicant to read the description and reveal any issues they may have with performing the job.

## **V. Training**

All people working with children will be required to participate in a course on sexual abuse prevention in the church prior to having access to minors. (A suggested resource is: "Reducing the Risk 2, at [www.reducingtherisk.com](http://www.reducingtherisk.com)).

All selected applicants will also be required to participate in regularly scheduled training. This training may include, but not be limited to, issues about their job, abuse, reporting requirements, supervision, safety and security, church guidelines, and first aid. All participants in ongoing training should have their attendance documented. Those who fail to complete the required training should not have access to minors until the training is completed and documented.

## **VI. Supervision**

To guard against the potential of abuse or injury, it is important that all of those working with minors understand the necessity for proper supervision. The following ratios are to be followed:

AGE OF CHILDREN	GROUP SIZE									
	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Infant (birth to 15 months)	1:3	1:4								
12-28 months	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:4						
21-36 months		1:4	1:5	1:6						
2.5-year-olds - 3-year-olds (30 - 48 months)				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten								1:10	1:11	1:12

In addition, the following guidelines must also be followed:

- No adult will be permitted to be alone with one child at any time
- When in a room with children, if there is no window glass, the door must not be closed
- Adults should not be alone with children in the restroom. Trips to the restroom should be with at least two children. Where possible, the adult should be in the doorway and not in direct, physical contact with the child
- Any children participating in dangerous, hazardous or unusual behavior must be corrected and reported to the staff person in charge
- All injuries or suspected abuse should be reported to \_\_\_\_\_ (name or position)
- It is preferred that women change the diapers of infants and children
- All off-site activities will be pre-approved and will include at least two adults. When boys and girls are present for off-site or overnight events, at least one adult of each gender will be present. It is recommended that the two adults be unrelated.

- Behavior that is disruptive to the group will be handled with positive verbal instruction defining behavioral expectations and/or time outs. Physical discipline, isolation and abusive verbal correction is prohibited
- Never allow yourself to be involved in a situation that could give rise to the perception or appearance of inappropriate behavior
- Any physical contact with a person of the opposite sex should be done in a public area and be done modestly and in moderation

## **VII. Accident, Allegation, Incident Response and Reporting**

As an adult leader, you are responsible to respond to and report all acts of physical, emotional or spiritual abuse and any accidents or incidents that could have or did cause injury.

Emergencies: You may be called upon to respond to an emergency (illness, injury, accidents, etc). Render whatever aid that you can on the spot. Remove them from immediate harm. Unless you are trained in first-aid, it is best not to move the victim. Keep them calm and summons immediately. An Accident, Allegation, Incident Report Form should be completed.

Abuse: Abuse is a complex issue. New trends are emerging. It is reported that up to 25% of abuse is at the hands of other children. Further, the category of women offenders is also growing. Therefore, a broad understanding of violators and victims is required to recognize abuse. Training should be completed in this area. Here are three suggested sites:

**Stop It Now!** - <http://www.stopitnow.com/index.html>

**Darkness 2 Light** - <http://www.darkness2light.org/>

**National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect** - <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/>

**ALL** abuse or suspected abuse should be reported to the staff person in charge. A report should be written and reviewed by the senior staff as to who will report and how it will be reported to the authorities.

The following procedures will be followed when confronted with an abuse allegation or incident:

1. Immediately ensure the safety of the child or youth;
2. Report the event immediately to \_\_\_\_\_ (name and position of person designated) but do not leave the child alone while doing so;
3. Make notes as appropriate as to what was seen or heard;
4. Do not discuss the event with anyone other than \_\_\_\_\_ (same as above);
5. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator;
6. Any employee or worker accused of abuse will be removed immediately from contact with children until an investigation by authorities is concluded. The results of the investigation will determine if the person is reinstated or released;.
7. The appropriate staff member (or his/her designee) will:
  - a. Notify the child's parent(s) or guardian(s);
  - b. Complete the Accident, Allegation, Incident Report Form;
  - c. Contact the appropriate authorities (**list the agency in your area or state that is to be contacted**);
  - d. Notify the church's legal counsel and insurance carrier;

- e. Determine appropriate communication necessary to church and media.

**VIII. Policy Violations**

Any employee or child/youth worker that does not follow these policies will be notified of their actions. If the violation is considered to be major (as determined by the staff or committee) the person will be terminated from their position immediately. Pending an investigation and/or review he/she may be reinstated or terminated. Minor violations will be placed in the worker's file. Multiple violations may result in termination.

I have read, understand, and will comply with the Children and Youth Protection policies of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of church).

Signed on this date: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

## ACCIDENT, ALLEGATION, INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of preparer: (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check which is being reported:

accident       allegation       known incident       other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time incident was first reported: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_AM PM

Who made you aware of the incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of child(ren)/youth involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the incident/accident/allegation as you saw it or as it was reported:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did anyone else witness the incident/accident/allegation (list names)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any visible physical injuries observed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If injuries were treated, describe treatment and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was anything said by the victim, witnesses, or accused (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were parent(s)/guardian(s) notified? \_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the incident/accident/allegation reported to authorities? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

If so, who was contacted (list details): \_\_\_\_\_

Was the insurance company notified? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

What other aspects of the incident/accident/allegation need to be shared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_