



**Philadelphia Baptist Church
Next Generation Ministry Policies and Procedures**

Dear Caregiver,

At Philadelphia Baptist we want to do everything we can to make disciples of the next generation (Psalm 145:4). We are so grateful for your willingness to invest in our children. Ministry to nursery-age children is vitally important for helping parents participate in regular corporate worship. Through every stage of children's ministry we have the opportunity to lay a Gospel foundation in young hearts as we partner with families in pointing children to the grace of God expressed in Christ Jesus.

We have adopted the following policies and procedures relating to all children's ministry functions because we love children and desire to protect them. We strive to abide by these guidelines in every circumstance in order to comply with our insurance policy and facilitate a safe and loving environment that is fitting for the body of Christ.

Let us know if you have special circumstances or require serving with a particular age due to physical limitations, needs of your children, etc. We will do our best to accommodate you. Don't hesitate to tell us if you have questions or encounter problems along the way. We are always willing to improve and want to make your investment in children's ministry a delight and not a chore. We believe it is a privilege to tell the next generation the glorious deeds of the Lord (Psalm 78:4)!

Please pray that God would help us as we plant and water seeds of faith and that this would bear fruit for his glory (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). Thank you for taking time to read through these pages as you prepare to serve. May you be richly blessed for your time spent with these little ones.

Grateful for you,

David Brown
Lead Pastor
Philadelphia Baptist Church
3001 Pump House Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
205-967-6023 (Office)
205-276-1974 (Cell)
www.pbchurch.org

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SCREENING PROCESS

Caregivers must complete the following five steps to be eligible to serve in any children's ministry capacity:

1. Be active in the life of Philadelphia Baptist Church for six months.
2. Complete the Confidential Childcare Worker Form.
3. Give written consent to/and undergo a criminal background check.
4. Watch the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training video provided by Ministry Safe, and complete the quiz and certificate.
5. Read through these policies and procedures and sign the Statement of Awareness and Agreement.

SCHEDULING

Caregivers who are unable to serve during their scheduled time should make every effort to find a same-gender replacement. If a replacement cannot be found an email should be sent to David Brown at dbrown@pbchurch.org.

Caregivers should **be ready to welcome children 15 minutes before the start of the service**. It is important to enable parents to get to the service on time and to prevent a chaotic check-in process. It also helps prevent passing a child through multiple caregivers who are covering for those arriving late. This is stressful to shy or crying children and their parents.

If children's ministry classrooms are short-handed for any reason, a "00" will appear in the corner of the screens in the sanctuary. Caregivers who are willing to fill in at the last minute should see the Nursery Coordinator on duty when this number appears. The number will disappear when there are enough caregivers.

CHECK-IN/CHECKOUT

Only parents/guardians may check children in/out unless other individuals (sibling, grandparent, friend, etc.) are listed on the Family Information Card on file. A caregiver should consult with the Nursery Coordinator on duty if he/she is unsure who is permitted to check a child in/out.

At least one caregiver should greet each child warmly at the door and introduce himself/herself to visiting families.

Caregivers should always be cheerful when interacting with parents. They should communicate that investing in their children is a blessing and not a burden. If a child was difficult to care for, a caregiver should not mention it, and say something positive instead. If an incident or issue needs to be communicated (fall, potty accident, etc.), caregivers should remain positive and remind parents that we are happy to care for their children.

In order to pick up children, members must verbally acknowledge their family number and non-members must present their number card. If a number card is misplaced notify an elder to give permission to release the child. **There are no exceptions.**

PARENTS

Parents/guardians will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, cries continuously more than 15 minutes or has a disciplinary problem while participating in a children's ministry activity.

Parents/guardians are invited to visit any children's ministry activity at Philadelphia Baptist Church. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with a children's ministry activities will be asked to complete the caregiver screening process.

Parents who visit classrooms should not be considered caregivers or asked to assist with children who are not their own.

STAFFING AND CAREGIVER RATIOS

Rooms are staffed with a **minimum of two prescreened caregivers**. This rule applies to every function and in every room, vehicle, or enclosed area during church activities involving children.

No child should be left unattended during any children's ministry activity. Caregivers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building at any time. In the event a caregiver finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that caregiver should take the child to a room or building occupied by others or to a location easily observed by others.

Caregivers should check every room and restroom prior to leaving any children's ministry activity.

On the playground, caregivers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints (under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another more open area of the playground.

In order to provide adequate supervision in all children's ministry programs, the following minimum ratios will be observed.

Children Ages 0-1:	1 caregiver for every 3-4 children
Children Ages 2-3:	1 caregiver for every 5-6 children
Children Ages 4-6:	1 caregiver for every 6-8 children
Children Ages 6-12:	1 caregiver for every 9-10 children

RESTROOM

During Sunday school, children ages five and older should use the restroom in the nursery lobby one at a time. A caregiver should stand at the classroom door to supervise the child walking to and from the restroom.

During other children's ministry activities children ages five and older should walk to the restroom in same sex pairs. A caregiver should watch the children walk to and from the restroom. One caregiver and one child should never go into the restroom alone together. Only one person should go into a restroom stall at a time.

Caregivers may not assist children ages five and older in the restroom. Contact a parent if a child five or older needs assistance in the restroom.

ILLNESS

To prevent the spread of illness, children and caregivers must be symptom and fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications) for 24 hours before participating in children's ministry activities.

Symptoms include the following: colored nasal discharge, productive (wet) cough or croupy (barking) cough, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, unexplained rash, open skin lesion, skin infection (boils, ringworm, impetigo, etc.), eye infection or drainage, and communicable disease or infestation such as lice. Children who experience lice should be completely free of lice and nits before reentering the nursery.

MEDICINE

Caregivers may not administer medication of any kind to children including but not limited to: diaper rash cream/ointment, teething gel, pain relievers, etc.

INJURIES

If an injury occurs the caregiver should fill out an **Accident Injury Report**, and have the Nursery Coordinator on duty and a parent read and sign it. In the case of severe injury or medical emergencies an elder should be notified in addition to a parent.

For minor injuries offer appropriate first aid and consolation. First aid supplies are in the cabinets in the nursery lobby.

For major injuries (choking, unconsciousness, etc.) dial 911 immediately. Dial 9 on the nursery lobby phone to get an outside line. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is located in the far left cabinet of the nursery lobby with the AED sticker in the event of a suspected cardiac arrest. The AED will verbally guide a user through the process and is currently loaded with adult sized defibrillator pads. Pediatric sized defibrillator pads are located in a box on the shelf next to it.

EMERGENCY

In the event of a fire, remove children to the nearest exit and away from the building. Young children may be placed together in cribs and “driven” out of the building in case of emergency.

If severe weather occurs, caregivers may be directed to take children down the stairs and into the bathrooms outside the fellowship hall. These bathrooms are directly below the nursery. Be familiar with the fire escape and severe weather maps posted in each room.

Immediately report any suspicious person or behavior to the Nursery Coordinator on duty.

CHILD ABUSE

Philadelphia Baptist Church has zero tolerance for child abuse. It is the responsibility of every caregiver to act in the best interest of the children in his/her care.

Caregivers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all policies and procedures. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from children’s ministry positions. Final decisions related to policy violations are the responsibility of the elders.

In the event that a caregiver observes any inappropriate behaviors (policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual, including suspected grooming behaviors) it is their responsibility to immediately report any observations to an elder. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and Alabama state law to the Jefferson County Department of Human Resources at (205) 423-4850 and/or the Vestavia Hills Police Department at (205) 823-1153. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any caregiver from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate Alabama state authorities.

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in children’s ministry activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies. Any person found to have committed the prohibited act may not be permitted to serve in future children’s ministry activities. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and is grounds for termination of employment for a staff member or employee. Caregivers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in children’s ministry activities.

DISCIPLINE

Caregivers are prohibited from using any form of physical discipline. This includes but is not limited to spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or other physical force. Caregivers may never handle children by shaking, jerking, pushing, pulling, forcing or restricting movement, or grasping clothing. Children may not be handled in any way that may be interpreted as rough or harsh.

For unacceptable behavior children may be distracted or verbally redirected in a firm, but loving tone. If additional intervention is required contact a parent/guardian. **There are no exceptions. Caregivers are NOT permitted to give children “time-out.”**

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Non-intimate, brief side-hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between caregivers and children are important and are generally suitable for our context.

Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never based on the emotional needs of a caregiver.

Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or in the presence of other children or caregivers.

Physical contact in any form should not give the appearance of wrongdoing. Personal conduct must be above reproach at all times.

A caregiver should not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child’s preference not to be touched must be immediately respected even in playful or joking situations. No tickling, coerced hugging or physical play is permitted.

Caregivers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between caregivers and children should be age-appropriate, encouraging, and in accord with Scriptural principles. To this end, caregivers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Caregivers must also refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Caregivers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with or in the presence of any child.

ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

Caregivers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any church facility or during any children’s ministry activity. Caregivers must abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities and during any children’s ministry activity.

MISCELLANEOUS

CAREGIVERS SHOULD TAKE CARE TO READ AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS ON A CHILD’S NAME TAG.

Caregiver clothing should be clean, neat, modest and comfortable allowing for activity with children.

Give your full attention to interacting with each child in your room. Socializing with other caregivers should not interfere with this.

Do not use cell phones during your scheduled nursery time. Never use a phone or other device to interact with a child (share pictures or videos, play games, etc.)

Caregivers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property.

Do not take hot beverages into children's classrooms and keep drinks out of children's reach.

CAREGIVERS

One of the caregivers in each classroom must be female.

Only parents and caregivers are allowed in nursery classrooms.

If a nursery caregiver needs to step out for any reason during a scheduled nursery service, he/she may ask the Nursery Coordinator on duty to cover for him/her until he/she returns. The Nursery Coordinator may also retrieve supplies, serve snacks, alert parents or provide an extra set of hands as needed.

DIAPERS

Caregivers should use diapers from the child's diaper bag if available. Extra diapers and Pull-ups are on/under the changing table. Caregivers should use disposable gloves and parchment/wax paper to cover the changing pad before each diaper change.

Diapers may only be changed on changing tables and children should not be left unattended on a changing table for any reason. Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately after changing.

Diapers should be changed starting 15 minutes before the end of the service and as needed.

Nursery children under five should use the restrooms adjacent to the nursery classrooms. Only females may assist children in the restroom. Caregivers should always keep the door propped slightly open with a foot or door stopper.

If a nursery child has a toileting accident, the caregiver should reassure him/her and change the diaper or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing is available from the Nursery Coordinator if not furnished by the parent.

REDEMING THE TIME

Caregivers should look for frequent and creative ways to point children to the Gospel and incorporate prayer throughout their time rather than simply providing childcare.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE:

30 minutes Arrival/Free Play

20 minutes Snack Time/Coloring Page

10 minutes Bible Story/Song/Prayer

15 minutes Free Play/Check and Change Diapers

10 minutes Cleanup/Depart

CLEANUP

Children should be encouraged to return toys and books to their designated bins during a cleanup time 10 minutes before the end of the service. Return cups to diaper bags, and put coats/sweaters on if necessary.

Caregivers should wash/sanitize hands upon arriving in the nursery, before serving snacks, and after wiping noses, changing diapers, and assisting children in the restroom. Designate any used crib sheets used with the appropriate side of the card found in each crib. The Nursery Coordinator on duty will clean rooms and change sheets as needed.

CHECKOUT

One caregiver should stand by the door to remove nametags and facilitate checkout, and the other caregiver should provide an activity that does not require toys while parents are retrieving their children. Examples include blowing bubbles for children to pop, clapping or marching games, singing songs or reading a book out loud.

SNACK TIME AND BOTTLES

Since food allergies can have life threatening consequences, a child may only be served nursery snacks if permission is indicated on his/her nametag. A child with food allergies may be served a snack from home. Caregivers should take care to wipe the table clean and pick up any snacks spilled on the floor to protect children with allergies.

Caregivers should serve snacks at a designated time and only while children are seated at the table.

Make sure children do not share snacks or cups. Ask the Nursery Coordinator on duty to alert the parent immediately if a child eats/drinks anything other than intended.

Caregivers should check to make sure cups from home only contain water. Anything else must be left in the child's bag. (This does not apply to babies with bottles.)

Caregivers may give bottles if indicated on a child's nametag but are not allowed to feed solids in the infant room. Parents may use a nursery highchair to feed their children as needed.

Caregivers should carefully check labels on cups, bottles, and pacifiers before giving them to children.

SAFETY

Babies should be laid to nap on their back unless otherwise noted on his/her nametag. If a baby turns over you do not need to turn him/her back. Caregivers should not lay babies down with bottles—only pacifiers and a light blanket if needed.

Caregivers should not open windows or tie up curtains. Caregivers should not allow children to lean on or stand in the windows or play with curtains.

This document was adapted from the recommended children's ministry policies and procedures from Ministry Safe.

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Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Philadelphia Baptist Church's Next Generation Ministry Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working in any children's ministry capacity.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated.

I acknowledge and understand that the guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and Philadelphia Baptist Church.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

Caregiver's Name (Please Print)

Caregiver's Signature

Date