

Policies and Procedures for Grace Kidz

Physical Contact

Touch is a part of nurturing children. Physical contact, however, should always be age and developmentally appropriate.

The following guidelines are promoted for pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love.

- a) Hugs: Should be child-initiated. Quick one-armed side hugs are permitted. Avoid initiating full body-to-body contact hugs. Never prolong the hug longer than the child wants.
- b) Kisses: Kisses of any kind are inappropriate
- c) Lap Sitting: Appropriate lap sitting may occur, when needed. Otherwise, encourage children to sit next to you.
- d) Casual Touch: Patting the head or back and giving high fives are appropriate physical contact. Holding hands can also be appropriate, such as during prayer or a game. Avoid touching a child anywhere a swimming suit would be worn and never put your hands under clothing, except as needed for diaper or clothing changes.
- e) Age Appropriate Contact: Keep physical contact age appropriate. Infants might require constant physical contact while older children should only receive quick encouraging contact.
- f) Play: Never throw, toss, or swing a child. Do not lift a child by his arms or legs. Play should never become too rough. Avoid prolonged contact during play, such as with wrestling.

Diaper Changes

All Diaper changes must take place on the designated Diaper Changing Station, located in each classroom. This ensures changes are done in an open area for accountability.

Only Team Leaders should change diapers or clothing. In the case there is a male Team Leader, another designated female volunteer should change diapers.

Restroom Use

In-room Facilities

- a) Classrooms for children ages Toddler through Kindergarten have restrooms located within the classrooms. The doors to the restroom in Toddler through pre-K have a Dutch door so the top portion can remain open while the bottom portion can be closed for privacy. The Kindergarten restroom has a solid door.
- b) If a child needs assistance, the Department Coordinator may enter to assist the child, but the door must be left open either fully or partially.

Public Facilities

- a) Children needing to use a restroom located outside the classroom must be escorted by a Children's Ministry volunteer.
- b) The Children's Ministry volunteer should check to be sure the restroom is safe. The volunteer should remain outside the restroom and wait for the child to exit. If you must enter the restroom, be sure to leave all doors open, even the bathroom stall.

Discipline

Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all disciplinary actions and words. Harsh words and profane language must never be used.

Physical discipline should never be used on a child. If physical contact is necessary to protect a child from harming himself, someone else, or church property, use the minimum amount of contact necessary to ensure safety.

Policy for Off-site Activities

Official Grace Activities

- a) All Children's Ministry Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures must be followed, even when off-site.
- b) All Children's Ministry Policies must be followed at all times, including:
 1. Proper worker-to-child ratios
 2. An adult should never be alone with a child. Examples include: an adult and child walking alone in the woods during a campout, talking together in a closed room, riding in a vehicle together without specific parental consent. One on one discussions must take place in public settings with others around.
- c) During campouts or overnights, adults and children should not concurrently share shower facilities.

Non-Grace activities involving Grace Children's Volunteers

- a) It's important for parents to know when children's volunteers are operating in an official or unofficial Grace capacity.
- b) Private interaction between an adult and child should not take place without parental consent.
- c) Invitations to any private event or activity must be given to the parent rather than the child. Private invitations must be clearly stated as such. The purpose of the stipulations in this paragraph is to avoid parental confusion between official Grace invitations and non-Grace invitations.

Reporting Child abuse or Neglect

If you have reason to believe that a child's physical or mental welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, you must advise the Director or Superintendent immediately.

At the report of such suspicion, the church will then take appropriate steps as outlined in the Grace Presbyterian Church's Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse/Molestation Accusations.

Please take a child's complaint seriously. Stay calm and listen. Provide emotional support. Do not promise the child you will not tell anyone.

You will be asked to fill out a brief Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form available from the Director or Superintendent. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect is confidential and should not be shared with anyone else.

If you have reason to believe that another Children's Ministry worker is involved in inappropriate behavior with children in their care, you must report this immediately to the Director or Superintendent.