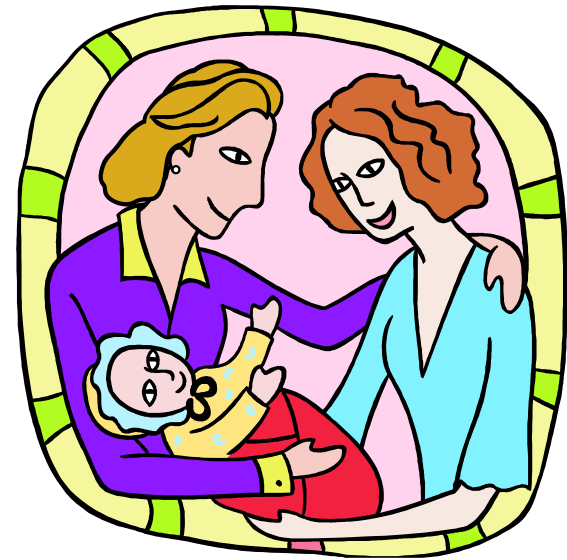


# Nursery Handbook

For Parents & Caregivers



2007

**Visalia Evangelical Free Church**

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Dear Parents and Caregivers to our Little Ones:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the structure and information needed to effectively minister to your children. It is not exhaustive, but hopefully it is instructive as you consider the necessary guidelines to make ministry to children and babies effective.

Those that minister to children do so from a sense of gratitude and love for what we have in Christ Jesus. This ministry may take many forms and will require varying amounts of energy. Regardless of the method, the goal should be allowing God to use our body to reach children for Christ and to assist their parents in the discipling process. The end in view is maturity, as Paul said, "that I may present every man complete in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)

Thank you for your attention to the details in this handbook. Some of it is not pleasant to consider, but our desire here at the Visalia Evangelical Free Church is to provide a safe, loving, Christ-centered environment. We appreciate all you can do to help us in this endeavor.

May the Lord bless you as you minister to children...either yours or others. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Serving Him together,

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&

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- **Sexual Abuse**

The sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography. It may be done for sexual gratification of the older person, out of a need for power or for economic reasons.

- **Emotional Maltreatment**

A pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and a sense of self-worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulation; also, providing no love, support, or guidance.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Familiarize yourself with the definitions and descriptions of child abuse listed above. If you suspect that a child involved in any of the programs of our church has been abused, the following steps are to be followed:

- Report the suspected abuse to the Children's Director or an elder.
- Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. This will be conducted by a member of the church staff or a trained counselor.
- Do not discuss the suspected abuse with the other workers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with your church leadership and the proper authorities.
- You will be asked to complete a Suspected Child Abuse Report. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible. This report is to be completed within twenty-four (24) hours and given to the Children's Director.
- After the suspected child abuse case has been reported by a worker, proper steps will be taken to report the suspected abuse to the designated reporting agency.

## Child Abuse Prevention Policy

One goal of the Children's Ministry Department is to provide a safe, positive, nurturing, and age-appropriate learning environment. Therefore, we have a policy that reflects our desire to prevent child abuse and to stop child abuse, as we become aware of it. This policy that follows is a supplement to the church policy and application process.

Our first line of defense in preventing child abuse is the interview and screening process and the background check that \*all our volunteers in our ministry must complete prior to being placed permanently in a classroom. All people who work with children regardless of their area of ministry are expected to adhere to the policies as outlined in the Policy for Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from their ministry position.

### **Definitions of Child Abuse**

As defined by "The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse":

- **Physical Abuse**

Non-accidental injury, which may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, poisoning or burns. The result may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long-lasting emotional damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage or death.

- **Neglect**

The failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.

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## Vision & Mission of the VEFC Children's Ministry Department

### Vision Statement

To make disciple-making disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ who are committed to loving God, one another and the world. This vision includes the equipping of parents to disciple their children and provide a strengthening atmosphere for the family.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to introduce children to Jesus Christ and enable them to grow to maturity in Him.

### Strategy

**WIN** children to Jesus Christ by:

- Encouraging children to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and become a part of our church family.
- Providing ministries to reach our community with the message of Christ's love for children.
- Training and encouraging our children to be evangelists in their spheres of influence.

**BUILD** children in their faith by:

- Equipping parents in the discipling of their children. Facilitating each child's growth in his/her relation-

ship with Jesus Christ and His Word.

- Fostering skill-building through relevant Biblical teaching and positive role-modeling.

**SEND** children to minister to others by:

- Preparing children to discover their uniqueness and God's mission for their lives.
- Teaching them their responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission, including an emphasis on missions.
- Providing opportunities to serve and reach others with Christ's love.

### Parental Responsibility

- Parents will be requested to refrain from bringing their child to a specific session if the child has a cold, temperature greater than 99.5 degrees orally (100.5 rectally), has a rash, or if diarrhea is present.
- Parents are to bring disposable diapers during the time that their child is in an early childhood session.
- If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior while in an early childhood session, his/her parents will be asked by the Children's Director or teacher to remove the child from activities until the behavior stops.

### Behavior Guidelines (excessive crying)

In the instance that there is excessive crying that goes on for an extended length of time, a parent will be contacted on campus to come to the nursery. They can choose to do any of the following:

- Stay with the child in the nursery.
- Take the child with them to wherever they are on campus.
- Bring the child back after he/she has calmed down and try again.
- [Hopefully one day we will have a room to go to that will have the service piped into to it for those times when little ones get fussy!]

### Advancement to Preschool:

There is a preschool class during first hour for 2-3 year olds. A child may advance from the nursery to preschool when the parent and Nursery Coordinator feel he/she is ready to have a more structured play time with brief teaching time. There is no rush to move a child from the nursery, only when they are ready. **This can happen any time during the year, there is no set advancement time.**

as is now known by medical science, Hepatitis B and AIDS are spread by contact with blood (transfusions) and intimate contact (sexual intercourse and possibly breast feeding). There have been no known cases of Hepatitis B or AIDS spread in day care centers and no documented spread through daily living activities within families. By the very nature of preschooler's activity, diapered infants and toddlers, and normal infant mouth-ing behavior, preschoolers are naturally exposed to a higher rate of infection than are other children.

### **Specific Procedures**

- Diapers shall be changed at the changing table ( with changing paper) which is sanitized after each use. Rubber gloves should also be used. Soiled diapers should be put in a plastic bag, tied in a knot, and placed in a trash container.
- Strict hand washing is of utmost importance in the prevention of the spread of infection. Therefore, care-givers are required to wash hands after each diaper change, after accompanying a child to the toilet, after assisting a child wipe his/her nose, after contact with blood (e.g. a cut or bloody nose), after toileting, after contact with his/her own nasal secretions, and before food preparation. Care-givers should make sure that a child's hands are washed after toileting, after use of tissues for wiping eyes and nose, and before eating. Disposable towels will be used after hand washing.
- When an infant or toddler is seen putting an object in his/her mouth, this object shall be cleaned with disinfecting solution before being returned to the "clean toy" container.
- A disinfecting solution should be used for wiping up all spills, soiling of blood, urine and feces, cleaning of diaper changing tables, cleaning of play equipment and toys, and cleaning of all equipment used by children in the nursery and preschool areas.

### **Expectations**

#### **Of the Volunteer:**

- A commitment to Jesus Christ that is demonstrated through growth and a model of spiritual leadership.
- A commitment from leaders and teachers to the Visalia Evangelical Free Church through membership in our body. [Those who sub or only help once a month in the nursery are exempt until such a time that they would like to be more involved.]
- Fill out a Workers Application form and turn it in to the Nursery Coordinator.
- A teachable spirit exemplified by a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and faithful attendance and participation in training.
- A desire to serve as a member of a team, praying regularly for the other members of the team, the children you minister to, and the church staff.
- A commitment to excellence in your preparation and execution of your responsibilities as one who ministers to children.

#### **Of the Children's Ministry Director & Nursery Coordinator:**

- A commitment to properly equip volunteers in their ministry.
- A commitment to provide adequate facilities, materials, curriculum, and resources to ensure success in our ministry to children.
- A commitment to support each worker in prayer, supervision, and assistance.
- A commitment to provide a clear statement of our philosophy of ministry and job description for each member of the team.

## Our Beliefs at VEFC

We believe . . .

- and hold to the statement of faith of our church.
- children are a gift from God and should be handled with love and care.
- children are important in the kingdom of God and that Christ died to redeem them from their sin.
- children should have a safe, positive, nurturing, and age-appropriate learning environment.
- God has appointed parents as the primary teachers of their children and the church's role is to assist in the cooperative effort of that task.
- successful ministry is the shared responsibility of the ministry staff, volunteers, parents, and the church body.
- ministry should be thoroughly Biblical, creative, and innovative.
- effective teachers are the most important component of our ministry.

## Security & Safety

One of the goals of our children's ministry is to provide a safe, secure, and loving environment for children. In an effort to accomplish this we have several security measures in place to protect our children, their parents, and the church.

### Security Measures

#### **Nursery**

When parents check in their child (birth - 24 months) they are asked to put the child's name on a sign-in sheet as well as their own name and other relevant information.

We will release the child to either parent unless we are made aware of any child custody issues. We will also release a child to an older sibling or other person, if a parent has turned in a written request.

### Safety Measures

#### **Infection Control Policy and Procedure**

In order to minimize the spread of any infectious diseases within the children's ministry and to insure the health and safety of all children and care givers, we have adopted the following policies and procedures.

Infections such as diarrhea and Hepatitis A are primarily spread by a fecal/oral route, meaning that there is a higher spread among children who are in diapers. Infections such as serious forms of meningitis, influenza, chickenpox, and most respiratory infections are spread by contact with respiratory secretions. Infections such as pink eye, impetigo, scabies, lice, and ringworm are spread by person-to-person contact. Fever blisters (Herpes) are spread by contact with saliva. Cytomegalovirus, a viral infection often without symptoms in children, but one that can cause birth defects in unborn babies, is spread through urine and saliva. So far