

TORONTO UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL

Connecting Resources with Ministry

Church Development Discussion Papers

TITLE: Guidelines for a Safe Nursery

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Guidelines for a safe Nursery

- Establish a committee to oversee the nursery.
- Have a Nursery Worker Orientation that includes an explanation of expectations, discipline policies, information on child development, information on fire and emergency procedures, and training in infant CPR.
- Have regularly scheduled orientations and refresher courses for all nursery workers.
- Follow directives outlined in your congregation's Child Protection Policy such as screening everyone who has access to the children and youth in your church, following a practice of two adults present at all times, having windows in entrance doors, and having diaper changing stations in central locations.
- Always have an adult in charge. It is best if the same person is there each week.
- Have a back-up plan for staffing the nursery.
- Minimum adult to child ratio recommendations - 1 adult to 3 infants - 1 to 4 toddlers - 1 to 6 children 3 years and older.
- Have only age appropriate toys in the nursery. If a toy, or parts to a toy, is small enough to fit through a toilet paper tube, do not use.
- Regularly check floors for choking hazards such as coins, marbles, safety pins, jewelry, buttons, crayons, pen caps, nails, screws, etc. Avoid stuffed animals as they are great germ carriers.
- Establish a regular schedule for checking, cleaning and replacing toys and nursery equipment.
- Learn about and practice SIDS prevention.
- Check that mattresses used are firm and flat, do not use blankets or pillows in the crib.
- Check that crib sheets cover the mattress snugly. If a sheet comes off easily when you pull at the corners or sides, do not use.
- Make sure that crib slats are spaced properly. You should not be able to pass a can of soda between the slats of the crib.
- Cribs should not have cutouts in the end panels or corner posts.
- Make sure all electrical cords are out of the way and all electrical outlets are covered.
- Tie up window-blind cords.
- Have a first-aid kit with approved medicines and equipment.

- Install fire extinguishers and check them annually.
- Have adequate smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and change batteries semi-annually.
- Post emergency exits and phone numbers including poison control.
- Have fire drills on a regular basis.
- Always make sure children are seated while eating.
- Don't get too comfortable. Keep checking and revising your nursery policies.

Guidelines for a clean Nursery

- Have non-toxic cleaning supplies readily available to nursery workers but well out of reach of children.
- See that nursery carpets, floors, furniture are thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.
- Check premises for adequate ventilation and test for the presence of lead (especially in buildings older than 1970).
- Have clean crib sheets readily available and have a plan for making sure used crib linens and changing table covers are washed and returned each week.
- See that toys are washed on a regular basis with a non-toxic detergent, and that toys handled by children with colds are washed immediately.
- If there is no sink in the room, have disinfectant hand cleaners available for caregivers.

Communication with parents

- Have a check-in system for parents that includes having them fill out information cards on their children.
- Keep up-to-date information on all children.
- Ask parents to label their child's diaper bag, bottle, spare clothing, toys, etc.
- Be sure to talk with parents each Sunday about any concerns and joys related to their child.

Prepared by Kaye Edwards, Director of Family and Children's Ministries; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Indianapolis.

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