



Lexington United Methodist Church Nursery Policies and Procedures

Philosophy:

As members of the United Methodist Church, we uphold the rights of children and acknowledge that children are a sacred gift from God. In proclaiming that sacredness, we in the Church carry a commitment to enable all children to experience the fullness of life as Jesus proclaimed.

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Mark 9:36-37

"...Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mark 10: 14

Mission Statement:

At Lexington United Methodist Church we promise to surround our children in a community of love and forgiveness that they may grow in their service to others. Our intention is to minister to the needs of all children and provide them with a caring community where all may be nurtured in a dignified and loving manner.

Nursery Hours and Requests

A nursery is provided for infants and toddlers for all church services and many church-wide events and activities. The nursery will open 15 minutes prior to the beginning of a church function and will promptly close 15 minutes after the event is over. Any special requests for nursery service need to be submitted to the Nursery Coordinator at least 7 days prior to the date of the event.

Nursery Scheduling

Initially, it is the responsibility of the Nursery Coordinator to secure the proper staff (paid workers and volunteers) for Worship Services and functions requiring childcare. However, if a volunteer is unable to cover their scheduled shift, it is their responsibility to find a substitute from the approved list to fill in for them. Please notify the Nursery Coordinator by phone or e-mail about any changes in the schedule. If a paid nursery worker cannot work as scheduled, then he/she will be responsible for finding a substitute from the approved Nursery Workers List found in the Nursery Handbook and the Nursery Coordinator must be notified immediately.

Adult /Child Ratios

There should be no more than twelve children at a time in any of the nursery rooms. Every effort needs to be made to keep the ratio of one adult to every six children, and one adult to every four infants. We also require that at least two workers be on duty at all times.

Under no circumstances should the children be left alone for ANY amount of time. Caregivers are required to directly supervise children by sight AND hearing at all times - even while they are sleeping.

Nursery Staff

Our nursery staff is currently composed of a Nursery Coordinator and three paid nursery workers for Sunday morning services in addition to volunteers. Paid nursery workers must be at least 15 years old and all paid workers are to have current CPR/First Aid Training Certification and abide by all rules and provisions contained in the Nursery Handbook, including all policies and procedures.

Nursery Volunteers

Our nursery volunteers consist of parents, youth and other members of our church family who assist our paid staff during Sunday morning services. All parents of infants or toddler age will be asked to volunteer to assist in one of the nurseries during one service approximately once every quarter by the Nursery Coordinator. The schedule will be mailed out and/or e-mailed quarterly. The Church office also sends out a reminder card or e-mail before the scheduled Sunday volunteers are to work. All volunteers will be required to participate in a training session on our Policies and Procedures, fill out a volunteer form, and complete a DSS background check form before working in the nursery. New Church members will be asked to wait for six months before working in the nursery.

Dress Code

Slacks and dresses are considered proper professional attire for nursery employees. Please do not wear short shorts or other inappropriate or suggestive attire while working in the nursery. The provided smocks are required to be worn by nursery employees, and requested to be worn by volunteers, over their clothing for cleanliness and to allow them to be easily identified by the parents.

Room Preparation

1. Check the room for orderliness
2. Set out security labels with pens and permanent markers for putting names on juice cups, etc.
3. Prepare toys for children
4. Have all diaper changing materials ready for use
5. Put on a clean nursery apron or smock
6. Wash hands

Greeting the Children

One of the paid nursery workers should warmly greet the children and their parents while the other workers are involving the children in appropriate play and activities. The greeter also needs to make sure the parents fill out all of the pertinent information on the security labels and that all of their little one's belongings are clearly marked. Properly labeled juice cups should be placed in diaper bags or placed up on the shelf out of reach.

Nursery Activities

All activities for children will be developmentally and age appropriate. The children should be involved in these activities and participatory games for the largest percentage of time that they are in the nursery. Children will be encouraged to participate in these activities by the nursery workers. Music and/or books should be available at all times. Resources for appropriate games and activities are available in the Nursery Handbook and from the Nursery Coordinator. It is our goal for the children to have a pleasant visit in the nursery, and to achieve this, the workers (both paid and volunteer) should interact with the children as they play and talk with them. In order to foster a Christian foundation in our little ones, we recommend that at least one Bible story be read to the toddlers during the Sunday School hour. Oversized, toddler-proof books can be found on the shelves in the room or in the Media Center.

Videos - Videos may be used on occasion, but must be approved by the Nursery Coordinator. Videos must be rated G, have Christian and/or educational themes, and display appropriate behavior and language.

Snacks – appropriate snacks are available in the nursery cabinets. Do not give a child's snacks brought from home to another child. Due to possible allergies, snacks given cannot contain peanuts, chocolate, or red dye. Snacks will only be given in the tiled areas of the rooms while the child is seated. There should be no food given on the carpeted areas. Children shall also be given their personal drinking cups only while they are seated, and removed when they are finished drinking. Do not physically restrain children, but simply take away the snack or cup and return it when the child is seated. This is important to maintain the cleanliness of the nursery and to prevent choking hazards.

Infants

- Infants are in the earliest stage of development, and in order to foster this development, infants should not be restricted to one area (piece of equipment) or activity for long periods of time. Activities such as swings, lying/playing on blankets or mats on the floor, and looking at books and toys are acceptable and encouraged.
- Do not stand and hold more than one infant at a time. It is a much better solution to place them on a mat on the floor and join them.
- Infants will be held while given bottles. When warming baby bottles, use the bottle warmer that is provided, or simply heat with tap water. These procedures will ensure even warming and will preserve the nutrients of the milk of our breast-feeding moms.
- Diapers need to be checked hourly and soiled diapers need to be changed immediately.

- When placing babies in the cribs, they are to be placed on their backs (unless instructed otherwise by the child's parent).

Cleanliness

The nurseries should be the cleanest rooms in the Church, which is for the safety of both the children and workers. The guidelines below will help to facilitate this:

- All equipment surfaces (i.e. walker trays, swings, mats, tables, and chairs) must be cleaned with the provided bleach/water solution at the end of each nursery session.
- All toys that have been handled and mouthed must be cleaned with the bleach and water solution or run through the dishwasher before use by another child.
- Sheets must be changed after use by each child and washed after each nursery session. All used blankets and smocks must be washed after each nursery session.
- Carpet spills should be cleaned up immediately.
- Workers are not to eat nor drink in the carpeted areas of the nursery rooms, especially in front of the children.
- Workers must follow general hand washing guidelines posted in the bathrooms and sink areas in the nursery. Workers should wash their hands after each diaper change or cleaning any bodily discharge, such as wiping noses.

General Policies and Discipline

Age limits - Only children of the appropriate age for a room are allowed in the nursery rooms. No child over the age of four should be in the nursery rooms. For special events where a wide range of children are present, the children should be separated into similar age groups and appropriate activities provided to keep them occupied.

Illness policy – Please refer to the Illness Policy available in the Nursery Handbook for specific provisions. If a child is visibly ill, he/she should be removed from the nursery in the care of a nursery worker, and the parents should be paged immediately.

Inconsolable children – workers should make every effort to engage unhappy children in play or rock them. Sitting on the floor with the children is very effective and calming. If a child is inconsolable (15 minutes of non-stop crying), the parents are to be paged or notified immediately. Under no circumstances should you let a child “cry it out”. This policy will help to fortify the trust between our parents and our nursery staff.

Discipline – The safety of all of the children in the nursery room must be maintained. No throwing, hitting, biting, or kicking can be allowed. If children express this behavior, remind them in a kind voice of the appropriate behavior

that you expect and remove them from the source of the conflict. If the behavior continues, it is appropriate to place them in a time-out chair for no more than one minute for each year of their age. Yelling at the children is absolutely prohibited. Also, under no circumstances shall the use of physical force or the threat of physical force be used. If a child is unmanageable after efforts have been made to correct the situation, then contact either the Nursery Coordinator or the parent. If a parent volunteer wishes to spank their own child, then they need to do so out of the nursery rooms to avoid the appearance of nursery staff spanking the children, and to prevent frightening the other children.

Safety - We utilize a two-part security label system, and the parent must fill out the necessary information on the label and attach it to the back of the child. The parent then keeps the second section and must bring that to the nursery worker in attendance to pick the child up. The child can **ONLY** be released to an **ADULT** with the corresponding number on their label portion. The labels are to be used during all Church functions. A pager system will be in place soon and a parent for each infant and each visitor will be given a silent pager , which is to be returned to the nursery when the child is picked up.

Clean up and Departure

The above mentioned cleanliness procedures must be done at the end of each nursery session. Toys shall be put away in their proper places. Labels and pens will be put away in the cabinet, and time sheets should be filled out and placed in the Nursery Handbook. All pagers should be turned off and placed in the cabinet. The diaper pail must be emptied into the outside dumpster at the end of each nursery session. All lights should be turned off and the doors locked.

Confidentiality

All information about the children in our program and their families shall remain confidential unless it is determined that harm may come to the child and in that event, the Nursery Coordinator and Director of Christian Education should be notified immediately and actions will be taken in line with the “Safe Sanctuary” procedures. It is expressly understood that any gossip is strictly forbidden.

Emergency Procedures

Please refer to the posted emergency procedures in each room. If a serious injury occurs, an Accident Report Form (found in the Nursery Handbook) needs to be filled out by the attending paid nursery worker and given to the Nursery Coordinator.

- A telephone is available in the Toddler Room and is for emergency use only.
- A First Aid kit is located in the marked cabinet in the Toddler Nursery.

Appropriate study and research, and consultation with the members of the Nursery Advisory Committee have been instrumental in compiling these Policies and Procedures, and the following sources are gratefully acknowledged:

- First United Methodist Church of Gonzales, Louisiana, as per its Nursery Policies and Procedures posted on their website at www.firstumcgonzales.org/nurspolc.html;
- Disciples Home Missions, as posted on its website at www.homelandministries.org/FamilyandChildren/nursery.htm;
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I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the Policies and Procedures set forth in this document.

Name

Date