

# First United Methodist Church

## Children's Ministries Childcare Guidelines

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,  
and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.*

*Luke 10:27b*

### **Belief Statement:**

We believe that all children are beloved children of God, and should be treated as the precious children they have been created to be. Each child deserves our best care and attention at all times.

### **Mission Statement:**

In providing childcare our mission is to provide a safe, caring, and loving environment and experience for all children. All experiences will enhance self-esteem, self-expression, and spirituality. Each child will know that they are loved and cared for, and valued as a child of God.

### **Operating Guidelines and Procedures**

**Children:** Our early childhood staff will care for children ages 0-5 on Sundays during all worship services, and for children of all ages during any scheduled special events.

**Caregivers:** Caregivers will be paid staff, volunteers, and Samuel Ministers (teenage volunteers).

**Parents:** Our goal is to establish a positive caring relationship with parents. Caregivers should always greet parents with a smile and kind words and assure them that their child will be well loved and cared for and that they are a blessing to us.

**Guidelines for Teaching and Spirituality:** Our program is based on the belief that children are spiritual and experience the love and presence of God through their relationships and the people around them. As their caregivers we play an important role in helping them learn about and experience God's love, and develop their spirituality. We also believe that children need to learn about God and Jesus through God's Word in the Bible. Therefore our curriculum consists of three parts.

1. **Love:** The most important part of our program is loving the children in our care. We will show our love for them by our acceptance and respect and by our loving words and actions. It is our hope that each child who comes to us will above all else feel loved by us and by God.
2. **Spirituality:** Whenever children are in our care (Worship services and special events) the caregivers will be responsible for presenting the **Sacred Circle Experience**. This is a special religious ritual that was designed to allow the children to experience the love and presence of God, and help them learn about spirituality and prayer. Each child will receive a special blessing at the end of the circle time. It will be done during Sunday morning worship services, and at special events. The Sacred Circle Experience will be taught to new caregivers as soon as they begin working.
3. **Lessons:** An age-appropriate Bible lesson will be presented to children in our care on Sunday mornings during both worship services. During special events the caregivers will read a Bible story from the children's Bible or show a Bible story on the DVD Bible.

### **Guidelines for Safety and Security:**

1. **Safe Sanctuary Policy:** There will always be at least two caregivers in any room where there are children being cared for. This allows for better safety and security of the children and also provides a better environment when dealing with problems or emergencies. More caregivers will be scheduled if a large amount of children are expected for an event.
2. **Registration:** Parents will be asked to register their child with Children's Ministry to provide valuable information regarding allergies, pick-up information, and any special information about their children.

3. **Sign-in:** Parents will sign their child in on the sheet provided, and will include their location within the church, cell phone number, and any special instructions. Pagers are available if needed.
4. **Pick-up:** Children should be picked up only by parents unless special arrangements have been made with the caregivers.
5. **Cleaning:** Toys and equipment will be cleaned after each day or event. Any broken equipment shall be removed if possible, and reported to the Coordinator.
6. **Snack/meals:** Snacks are provided during Sunday morning worship services and occasionally during special events. Accommodations will be made for children with allergies. An allergy roster is maintained in each room and will be updated when new information is provided. We are a nut-free facility. Parents are welcome to provide a special snack for their child as long as it does not contain any type of nuts.
7. **Injuries/Sickness:** If a child is injured or becomes ill the parents should be contacted immediately and the Coordinator should be notified. If a caregiver feels it is a "life or death" emergency they should call 911.
8. **CPR:** It is our goal that each caregiver will be CPR trained and certified. An opportunity will be provided annually for paid staff and volunteers to attend CPR training.
9. **Fire:** In case of a fire or other event requiring evacuation from the building, caregivers will immediately escort the children out of the building and take them to the sidewalk on the north side of the building (near St. Vrain St.) If it appears not to be safe at the sidewalk, the children should be taken across the street to the north parking lot. Parents will be informed to pick up their children outside and not to attempt to come upstairs to pick them up.

**Guidelines for dealing with behavioral challenges:** We believe that it is important to treat children in a positive, loving, and respectful way. Therefore we have several special methods for dealing with challenging behavior.

1. **Redirection:** Changing the situation and redirecting the child to a new activity or a different place to sit, etc. is sometimes all it takes to help a child to behave better.
2. **Holy Listeners:** Sometimes children are having behavioral issues because they are dealing with pain and stress in some area of their life. It is important that they be able to talk about those feelings in a safe, confidential, and loving environment. A Holy Listener is a person who will just sit and listen to the child. They are available every Sunday morning. If a caregiver feels that a child in their care may need to

talk, they can notify the Coordinator and the child will be escorted to talk to the Holy Listener.

3. **Whole body room:** Sometimes children just have too much energy to sit still and stay focused. The whole body room is a place where children can move around and get out some of their energy for a while, and then try going back to the class. If the caregiver feels a child would benefit from the whole body room, they can notify the coordinator and she will find someone to supervise the child in that room.

### **Guidelines for Scheduling:**

1. A schedule will be written and submitted to the Coordinator each month and will then be distributed to each caregiver.
2. Any requests for time off must be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month being scheduled.
3. Caregivers will attempt to find a substitute if they cannot work when scheduled. If they cannot find a sub they must notify the Coordinator as soon as possible.
4. Caregivers will be paid a minimum of two hours for every event. If an event is shorter than two hours do not punch out on the time clock. If no children show up for an event the workers should mark "no-show" on the sign-in sheet and not punch out on the time clock. The coordinator will adjust the time card to include two hours of work.

## **First United Methodist Church**

### **Children's Ministries Childcare Information for Parents**

#### **Our Belief**

We believe that all children are beloved children of God, and should be treated as the precious children they have been created to be. Each child deserves our best care and attention at all times.

#### **Our Mission**

In providing childcare our mission is to provide a safe, caring, and loving environment and experience for your child. All experiences are designed to enhance self-esteem, self-expression, and spirituality.

#### **Our Hope**

Our hope is that each child will know that they are loved and cared for, and valued as a child of God.

#### **What We Do for You and Your Child:**

1. We provide your child with love, spirituality experiences, and biblical lessons.
2. We provide for the safety of your child in several ways:
  - a. We have a Safe Sanctuary policy (There are always at least two caregivers in any room where children are being cared for.)
  - b. We clean and disinfect toys and equipment after each event.
  - c. We will contact you immediately if your child is ill or injured.
  - d. We only release children to their parents unless special arrangements have been made.
  - e. We conduct background checks on all employees who have contact with children.

3. We deal with behavioral challenges in gentle, kind, and loving ways:
  - a. **Redirection:** We sometimes redirect a child to a new location or activity.
  - b. **Whole Body/Movement Room:** Sometimes we take a child to a special room where they can move around and use up some energy.
  - c. **Holy Listeners:** We have special people available to listen to children if they need to talk about something.

### **What You Can Do For Us:**

1. Please register your child with Children's Ministries so we have current information about your child. This is especially important pertaining to allergies and pick-up information.
2. Please sign your child in each time you bring him/her and sign out when you pick them up. Please tell the Caregiver if someone else will be picking up your child.
3. Please do not bring your child if they have had vomiting, diarrhea, or fever in the last 24 hours.

\*Our complete Childcare Policy is available online for further review.

\*If you are interested in volunteering in our Children's Ministry program please see the Nursery Coordinator for more information.