

2. CHILDREN'S MINISTRY GUIDELINES



2.1. NURSERY PARENT GUIDELINES

2.1.1. General Information

The nursery cares for children from birth through age 3. We provide nursery for all stated worship services.

Enrollment

Before your child is admitted into the nursery you must complete a Child Care Enrollment Form (Form 3.5). A parent should complete an Enrollment Form *for each child* to be enrolled and turn it in to the Nursery Coordinator the first time the child attends. The original Enrollment Form will be kept on file. Parents are responsible for updating their child's Enrollment Form.

Special Instructions

Parents are requested to notify the room attendant of any allergies, special instructions, or needs their child(ren) may have. Such information must be written on the name tag **every time** you bring your child into the nursery.

The Children's Ministry requires that children (infant to 3rd grade) who are placed in the care of the church have one parent on site at all times. If there are any questions contact the Director of Children's Ministries.

2.1.2. Sickness / Wellness Policy

All of our caregivers are to be trained in proper health and hygiene guidelines when caring for children. In the nursery we use disposable gloves when changing diapers and afterwards wash with alcohol hand sanitizer and/or antibacterial soap and water.

To further protect the health of your child and other children as well as the caregivers, and teachers, parents are asked to be considerate of other families by using the following guidelines. The Nursery will not accept children who have had any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever, vomiting or diarrhea** – currently or within the last 24 hours (any oral temperature over 100°F, rectal temperature over 101°F)
- **The common cold** – including bronchitis, pneumonia (Children being treated for ear infections who are without active cold symptoms or fever ARE permissible)
- **Sore throat with fever**
- **Croup**
- **Any unexplained/communicable rash**
- **Eye infections, i.e. Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)**
- **Eye or ear discharge**
- **Any communicable childhood disease** – such as chicken pox, whooping cough, Roseloa etc.
- **Any acute infectious disease**
- **Nasal discharge that is clear, yellow or green**
- **Being on antibiotics for less than 24 hours**

If your child has a clear runny nose or other symptoms due to allergies for more than two weeks, please let us know. We realize some symptoms hang on when a child is not contagious.

If you have questions regarding your child's contagiousness, please consult your physician.

Remember, we want all of our children to remain happy and healthy! After having a contagious disease, please check with your doctor. As a general guide, the following chart shows incubation periods for a couple of common diseases.

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Incubation Period</u>	<u>Contagious Period</u>
Chicken Pox	10-21 days	Until all blisters have ruptured or 5 days after onset of rash
Roseola	9-13 days	Onset of fever until 24 hrs after fever is gone

If Your Child Comes to Church Sick

If a child is brought to a classroom or nursery at any time and is apparently sick, the Nursery Facilitator on duty is to direct the parent to the Nursery Coordinator. The Coordinator will remind the parent of our policy, give them a copy of this Sickness / Wellness Policy and ask them to bring the child back when he/she is well.

If Your Child Gets Sick at Church

If, after being dropped off, a child appears to be sick or becomes sick, the Caregiver will inform the Nursery Coordinator or Facilitator who will decide the best course of action, which may include:

- Contact the parent, inform them of their child's symptoms and ask them to take the child out of childcare;
- Allow the child to stay in the Nursery and remind the parent of our policy

If your child becomes sick and may have had contact with other children, possibly passing the illness along, you, the parent, must notify the Children's Ministry Director or Nursery Coordinator immediately (see § 2.5 for contact information). This is especially serious with illnesses such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, roseola, and other diseases of the skin.

Medications

It is the policy of RPC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions).

Parents of such children should address their situation with the Nursery Coordinator when the child is enrolled to develop a plan of action and any necessary training.

First Aid

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parents and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an Incident Report (Form 3.4) will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.



2.1.3. *Check-In and Pick-Up Procedures*

For Children Not Yet Enrolled

Visitors, those who are not yet enrolled in Nursery, should check in with the Coordinator or Facilitator. The parents will be asked to fill out a sticker for their child(ren) for that visit. Once they have filled out the sticker, their child will be directed to the age appropriate room. The parents will also be handed an Enrollment Form (§ 3.5) which they will need to complete before their next visit.

For Enrolled Children

Items to be provided in Diaper Bags:

- Enough diapers for your child.
- If you provide bottles and/or sippy-cups, please make sure they are clearly labeled with the child's name.
- A change of clothes in the diaper bags (if necessary)
- If a child has a pacifier, the pacifier is to be on a "leash" that can be attached to the child's clothes. This will help to prevent other children from picking up dropped pacifiers.
- There is no need to bring in food for your child. There are approved snacks (Original Cheerios, Cheddar Goldfish, pretzels) which the Nursery Caregivers may distribute.

Parents should discourage their child from bringing any toys from home. These toys present hygiene problems, are a distraction to other children, and are difficult to locate among the other toys. However, an exception can be allowed if a child has severe separation anxiety and the parent feels the need for their child to have some type of comfort toy from home. This too should be labeled with the child's name.

Sunday Morning Check-in and Pick-up Procedure (Birth – 3 years)

To provide for efficient check-in, one parent / child should check-in. In other words, parents should try to avoid having their whole family present for the check-in process. If the room is not yet staffed, then parents should wait outside the room until a caregiver or helper arrives.

- The parent should fill out a sticker name tag. Please make sure to fill out all of the information on the tag every week.
 - Child's name
 - Parent's name
 - Parent's location (Worship, side of room, teaching a class, cry room)
 - Special Instructions/ allergies
- The large portion of the tag is to be placed on the child's back.
- The small part of the tag is to be turned in when the child is picked up.

We cannot admit more than three children into a room until we have more than one caregiver.

Potty Training

The Nursery Ministry is very willing to cooperate with the parents when they are potty training their child. We ask, however, that parents:

- provide a complete change of clothes
- communicate to the Nursery Caregiver that their child is being potty trained
- be willing to return to the room to help the child use the bathroom (if necessary)

Picking Up a Child

Please return the small portion of the name tag when you pick up your child. **For the safety of your child we will release the child only to the parent or guardian with the name tag.** In the event that the parent or guardian is unable to present the name tag, a member of the Children's Ministry Team must be contacted. The team member will be responsible for releasing the child to the parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Aggressive Behavior

Biting and repetitive hitting, pushing, scratching or pulling hair are examples of aggressive behavior. If a child is seriously injured, the Coordinator must contact the parent. If a child bites another child or displays any other aggressive behavior, the Coordinator must contact the parent and may ask the parent to sit in and help watch their child for that Sunday and at least two more. The Coordinator is to notify not only the parents of the child doing the biting but also the parents of the child that has been bitten.

2.2. NURSERY WORKER GUIDELINES

2.2.1. General Information

Background Check

The Session of RPC in accordance with Redeemer's "Child Protection Policy" requires all Nursery Caregivers, Teachers and assistants to have a background check prior to serving in the children's ministry. Only the Session or its designees and the RPC staff member directly responsible for the children's ministry see the results of the check. RPC must have the results received prior to the first Sunday worked.

Underage Caregivers

Elementary children are welcome to volunteer with their parents in the nursery, but are not permitted to hold other children, except for their own siblings. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Nursery Coordinator.

Finding a Substitute

Caregivers and Teachers are responsible for getting their own substitutes. The best option for getting a substitute is to swap with other Caregivers, so check the monthly rotation list first. It is advisable to begin looking for a substitute as far ahead as possible. Please notify the Nursery Coordinator of the substitution immediately.

Bathroom Policies

Children in PK-4 or younger should use the bathroom immediately outside their classroom, if one is available. While the child is using the bathroom, the worker should remain outside of the bathroom door. If the child requests assistance, the worker may enter the bathroom, but must leave the bathroom door open.

Children ages five and older may escort themselves to the bathroom. Children who are escorting themselves to the bathroom may only go one at a time. Workers should be aware of the amount of time that a child has been absent from the classroom. If the child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

Workers and children are to wash their hands after every trip to the bathroom.

Unauthorized Locations

For the safety of our children and in order to be good stewards of the building and grounds God has given us, children under the age of 18 are not allowed in any of the following places without their parent or guardian or church staff member present:

- the attic
- the office suite
- the stage area
- the sound booth

- classrooms/ nurseries (except when class is in session and/or nursery services are being provided)
- outside

Any exceptions should be approved by a member of the Children's Ministry Team.

2.2.2. Sunday Morning Routine

Nursery Caregiver Check-In

BE ON TIME. Nursery Caregivers must arrive by 9:15.

Name Tags

The Coordinator, Facilitators and Caregivers must wear a "Nursery Volunteer" tag.

Check Supplies

Caregivers should check the room supplies and make sure that adequate supplies are available. If supplies are missing, please contact the Nursery Coordinator.

Child Check-In

The Nursery Coordinator and Facilitators should greet parents and children as they arrive. The Nursery Caregivers are to help bring the child into the room safely and efficiently in order to make check-in seamless. The Nursery Caregivers should greet the children with a genuine smile and warm words, using their name as they arrive at the door.

Interacting with Children

All Caregivers are expected to show love, understanding and acceptance for all the children. Nursery Caregivers should remember that they are in the room to minister to the children. Fellowship with other workers should take place before or after class.

All Caregivers are encouraged to stoop, squat, hold, sit on a child-sized chair or sit on the floor with the child when interacting with them. Being on their level helps get and maintain their attention.

Feeding

Snacks are not typically provided during the Sunday morning service. Nursery workers are permitted to bottle feed infants as needed per parental permission.

Diaper Changing

Before the parents pick up the child, the Nursery Caregiver is to check that the child's diaper has been changed if necessary. Diapers are to be changed at the changing table on sheets provided. Diapers are not to be changed in the classroom. Workers are to wear a new pair of disposable gloves before each diaper change. Dirty diapers are to be placed in the diaper pail. Dispose of sheet and gloves in the trash. Spray changing pad with disinfectant. Hands are to be washed after changing each diaper. Especially smelly diapers should be wrapped in the provided plastic bags then thrown in the diaper pail.

Cribs

The Nursery Caregiver is responsible for seeing that the sheets are changed after each child uses a crib. Clean sheets can be found in the cabinet by the changing table. Used sheets are to be placed in the dirty basket.

After the Children are Gone

The Nursery Caregivers should seek to leave the classroom clean. The following tasks should be completed:

- Pick up toys, books, cups, etc.
- Leave bathroom doors open
- Put name tags away
- Put mouthed toys in 'to clean' tub
- Spray other large toys and play equipment with disinfectant
- Clean changing pad with disinfectant
- Change all used crib sheets. Place dirty sheets in the dirty basket.
- Turn off lights
- **The diaper pail must be emptied into the dumpster outside the building.**

2.2.3. Regarding Toys

Type and Quality of Toys

Only age-appropriate toys are to be used in Nursery rooms. Any toy with detachable small parts is not to be utilized.

A high standard of toys is to be maintained. Any toy that is broken, torn, rusty, or dirty beyond cleaning is to be thrown out. Toys must be able to be easily cleaned with disinfectant and water.

Evaluating and Replacing Toys

Once a year the Nursery Coordinator and Facilitators will go through each room and evaluate toys for age-appropriateness, quality and ease of cleaning. Toys that do not meet these criteria will be removed and/or replaced.

Care of Toys

Children are taught respect for furniture and toys by insistence that they use them only as they are intended.

All toys are to be sprayed with disinfectant and then placed on the counter to air dry. If a toy has been in a child's mouth, then it is to be placed in the 'to clean' tub to be sterilized. After the toys are dry, they can be returned to the appropriate location.

2.2.4. *Ratios and Staffing*

- 1 adult per 2-3 Infants and Toddlers
- 1 adult per 3-5 Walkers (1 – 3 year olds)
- 1 adult per 5-6 Preschoolers (K4 – K5)
- 1 adult per 8-10 Elementary Students (1st – 3rd Grade)
- **Two adults minimum are required in each room at all times.**
- Families are encouraged to serve together in Nursery
- Mature/Responsible Students may serve as teacher assistants, with parental and teacher consent
- Background checks will be done on all Nursery Caregivers and Nursery Committee Members (Coordinators & Facilitators)
- All Caregivers must have completed the Introduction to Redeemer Class before entering the nursery rotation.
- We encourage our Nursery Caregivers to be rescue breathing/CPR certified by the American Red Cross or its equivalent.

2.2.5. *Age Breakouts for Rooms and Classes*

- **Infant Room:** Birth - approx 12 months (i.e., toddler)
- **Toddler Room:** Toddlers – 24 months
- **PK2:** 24 months to 3 years
- **PK3 – 3rd Grades:** Children in these classes are placed according to the grade they are in school, i.e. if a child is in the 1st grade class in elementary school they will be in the 1st grade class at RPC. **Please do not move your child. We follow the grade system, which a child is in school, for education, spiritual and emotional reasons. To enter the PK3 class, a child must turn 3 years old by September 1st of that school year.**

2.3. DISCIPLINE IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. ... For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.”

Hebrews 12.6 & 10

The teacher's attitude is priority when disciplining. Be genuine, showing sincerity to the child. Just as God accepts unconditionally, so you are to love and accept the children. Have a positive attitude toward them, making positive comments on their behavior. Always be in control of your temper and tone of voice. Pray for yourself and the children.

Discipline is an act of love, knowing that for those who are not disciplined, the result is life full of pain and sorrow. The outcome of discipline should not be anger but an attitude of learning and correction of the behavior so that the child benefits.

Establishing a Plan of Correction:

1. Establish rules and procedures. Discuss these with the class. Let the class understand they are responsible for their actions.
2. Provide positive reinforcement for those who do obey. Try to ignore misbehavior as much as possible, to eliminate the “attention-getting” problem.
3. Wait for compliance before beginning a lesson or moving on. Teach only when you have the attention of the class.
4. Use the child's name in context of the lesson. For example, if Billy is not paying attention, the teacher might say, “if Billy were with Jesus, he would have seen ...” The child will notice even if the rest of the class doesn't.
5. Move to the area of the problem while continuing the lesson. A hand on the shoulder often will remind the child to obey.
6. Deal with the child individually. Do not scold a child in front of classmates. Identify the problem, ask for solutions and discuss alternatives. Be sure to keep the focus on what they are doing and how they need to change.
7. Respond to the misbehavior with clarity and firmness. Firmness means communicating an “I mean it” attitude. “I cannot let you...” carries more weight than “Please don't...”
8. Ask the child to describe their actions. You may have seen the effect not the cause. They may not be able to articulate why they misbehaved, but should be able to describe what they did. If two children were involved, then get both sides.
9. Redirect the child into positive behavior. Once they have been corrected, allow them to rejoin the class.
10. Isolate the child or give him/her some “time out.” Before allowing re-admittance to the group, be sure to talk with the child to work out ways to prevent this from happening again.

11. Allow the child to experience the consequences of misbehavior. This may mean making them clean up the mess they made or having them apologize to the offended person.
12. Talk with the parents privately, not where other parents can hear. Explain what behavior has been occurring, and ask how they handle it at home. You really want their help! Always let parents know of your love and concern for the child.
13. If all else fails, talk with the Children's Director or Coordinator (you probably already have). If pastoral counseling is called for, we will make sure it happens.



2.4. OVERFLOW GUIDELINES

Biblical Principles

At *Overflow*, we desire to create wise Biblical guidelines. We recognize and respect the fact that each family has a responsibility to adopt their own boundaries based on their interpretation of Biblical principles. We have great freedom in Christ to live as a holy people before God. But we must not let our freedom become an opportunity for sin. The following questions are to be used to determine if a given behavior or activity are beneficial.

- ◆ **Is it helpful?** Is the behavior or activity beneficial and helpful? “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful.” 1 Cor 6:12a
- ◆ **Does it threaten to enslave me?** Is the behavior or activity going to lead me to sin? “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be enslaved by anything.” 1 Cor 6:12b
- ◆ **Does it build up?** Is the behavior or activity going to encourage and edify others or could it cause someone to stumble into sin? “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.” 1 Cor 10:23,24
- ◆ **Does it glorify God?** Is the behavior or activity something that you can do in the name of the Lord Jesus and for his glory? “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor 10:31
- ◆ **Is it in opposition to my parents’ wishes?** Is the behavior or activity (area of genuine freedom) contrary to the instruction or wishes of my parents? “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.” Prov 1:8

Guidelines

Concerning Overnight Trips

We have three simple rules for overnight trips.

- ◆ **No Purple** (Pink + Blue = Purple. No guys in girls’ rooms and vice versa, no exceptions.) “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.” Eph 5:3
- ◆ **No Pranks** (No pranks, no exceptions. Someone always gets hurt.) “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” 1 Thess 5:11
- ◆ **No Pairs** (No pairing off, especially guy/girl pairs.)

Concerning Student Drivers

We will not permit students to drive during youth activities out of town. For in-town activities, only students with prior written parent permission may ride with an approved student driver. The *Overflow Consent Form* (Form 3.6) includes a place for parents to permit their child to ride with a high school driver. All student drivers and their parents must complete a *Driver's Covenant* (Form 3.7). Student drivers will be reminded to drive responsibly. Any indiscretions will be properly dealt with.

Concerning Discipline

We are aware that there may be occasions for the expression of discipline within the programming of the student ministry. It is our desire to consider in advance what challenges might arise and be prepared to act wisely, effectively, graciously, and within balance in dealing with behavioral offense. If necessary, the student ministry may contact parents, or even expel a student from the premises if the behavior persists. Parents will always be notified.

Concerning Sensitive Information

As we seek to develop relationships with students, there will be times, when the doors of authenticity are opened, that students may share serious issues like: a drug problem, suicidal depression or even possible abuse. Leadership, whether staff or volunteer, when faced with these potentially life threatening situations, must communicate these issues immediately with the responsible pastor to determine if the situation warrants contacting the student's parents or other authority. Training is provided for volunteers concerning how to best minister in these difficult situations.

Youth Ministry Workers

All youth ministry workers (paid or volunteer) must agree to and follow all policies as set forth in the Redeemer Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry Handbook.

2.5 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY FAQs

Who is on the Children's Ministry Team?

Laurie Sibley (Nursery Coordinator and Children's Director)

lauriesibley@gmail.com | 864.238.5284

Suzanne Brown

Erika Godwin

Meredith Richmond

Matthew Heathman

Where Do I Find Supplies?

Children's Ministry Closet in the Nursery Area.

Where Do I Go For Copies?

The copier is in the Church Office area. Ask one of the church staff for assistance. If you will be making copies on Sunday morning, please arrive early enough to complete the task before worship begins.

Who Keeps Attendance?

The teacher is to fill out the attendance weekly and leave it in the classroom.

Who Should I Contact If A Child Is Ill?

The Nursery Coordinator.

How Do I Find A Substitute?

As soon as possible, contact another Teacher or Caregiver and ask them to substitute. *Please do this as far in advance as possible.* Contact the Children's Ministry Director to inform her of the switch.