

Child Care Policies and Procedures



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Vision and Goals

Partnering with Parents to Disciple True Followers of Christ

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

All ministries in the Cross Church share the same mission: to glorify God by making disciples who enjoy Jesus together. Because we believe that Scripture clearly teaches that parents are the primary disciple-makers in the lives of their children, our hope is to partner with parents in their pursuit of this mission, coming alongside them in the discipleship process.

Our primary aim is to equip parents with teaching and resources to help build a strong, gospel-centered foundation for their children (Eph. 6:4).

Child Care Policies and Procedures

The Cross Church

1. Security and Safety:

1.1 General Requirements for Nursery Workers, Catechism Instructors, and other Child Care Workers:

In order to serve as a Nursery Worker, Catechism Instructor, Youth Teacher/leader or host, or Child Care Worker, the individual must be a member of The Cross Church, an applicant for membership, a child of a member or applicant, be specifically approved by the Children and Nursery Ministry Director or be specifically approved by the elders. Anyone younger than 18 must serve with the supervision of one other nursery worker. Youth Helpers must be at least 8 years old. All workers are approved at the discretion of the Children and Nursery Ministry Director and Elders.

Each Nursery Worker, Catechism Instructor, or Child Care Worker, and each parent, will be given a Child Care Policies and Procedures Agreement Statement (last page of this document) that must be signed, acknowledging that the requirements and commitments have been read and agreed upon. These requirements include reading and agreeing to the Child Care Policies and Procedures and reading, agreeing to, and signing the Child Abuse Prevention Policy. Workers will also be required to complete a background check.

In order to protect against child abuse, the Child Abuse Preventions Policies should be followed. The following additional guidelines should be observed:

- Diapers are not to be changed by nursery workers. If a child needs a diaper change, the nursery worker or supervisor is responsible for contacting the parent. If a child needs a clothing change, the nursery worker or supervisor is responsible for contacting the parent.
- Every reasonable effort should be taken to ensure a childcare worker and child are never alone with the door closed in the restroom or any other room. Workers are expected to remain outside of the bathroom or stall while a child is using the restroom with the door left partially open. In case of emergencies, childcare workers may supervise a child

to the bathroom alone, but the door will remain open, and the childcare worker will follow bathroom procedures (see 1.5 for full Bathroom Policies).

- Parents are given limited access to nursery and catechism classrooms. See 1.2 and 2.7 for specific guidelines.

Postpartum Leave:

A postpartum one years' "leave" of serving in the Nursery is given. The worker will then be added back into the schedule, unless circumstances allow for an earlier return or necessitate a longer leave of absence.

1.2. Sign-in and Pick-up Processes

Parents are to sign-in children at the table in the Child Care Hallway. The supervisor on duty should oversee sign-in and lead or carry the toddlers/babies to the age-appropriate classroom. Parents are encouraged to remain outside of the Nursery Hallway, on the other side of the gate by the check-in table.

Diaper bags, sippy cups/ bottles must be labeled at check in unless they are already labeled.

Parents are encouraged NOT to enter the classrooms unless necessary. We understand that at times it can be helpful for parents to settle their child in the nursery before they leave. If your child needs this extra support, please wait until the check-in rush is over to accompany your child into the Nursery. If your child is unable to settle his/herself after 5-10 minutes with you in the room, we ask that you utilize the Mother's Room and try the Nursery again the following Sunday. If you are in the nursery to help console your child, please be courteous and allow the Nursery Workers to focus on providing care for the children.

At pick-up, parents should wait outside the hallway gate. The on-duty Supervisor should ask for the corresponding security sticker (and child/children's name) to identify guardians. Supervisors will bring the baby or child and their belongings to the parent. No siblings, relatives, or friends will be allowed to pick-up a child unless they bring the corresponding sticker, which will be the indication to the classroom worker that they have the parent's approval. This is for the protection of the child and to keep pick-up times as short as possible. If a nursery worker needs to speak to a parent about behavioral issues, they can either inform the Supervisor who will allow that parent to go back to the nursery room, or the nursery worker can address the parent at a later time.

1.3. Cleanliness, Sanitizing, Illness Prevention, and Injuries

No child with any communicable illness should be brought to the nursery. Please refrain from having your child in the nursery if the following is a concern:

- If your child has had a runny-nose (caused by infection, green-colored), any contagious rash, or pink eye within the last 24 hours.
- If your child has had a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the last 48 hours.

Parents must graciously accept the decision of the receiving Nursery Worker or Supervisor with regard to possibly sick children.

Upon entering the classroom, each Worker should sanitize his/her hands, using the sanitation pump on the back table.

Toys and surfaces will be sanitized after each service and the classrooms cleaned weekly. The classrooms and contents will be deep cleaned 3 times a year.

Each of the classrooms are equipped with a first aid kit. Nursery Workers are permitted to attend to minor injuries. If injury requires medical attention, contact the parent immediately.

1.4. Emergency Situations

In the case of an emergency, such as a fire, evacuation, threat of danger, or lock down of the premises, one Nursery Worker in each room will be designated as the point-person to give directions. The point person will be given the walkie-talkie before the start of the class and will wear the walkie-talkie throughout the duration of the class. The point person will be responsible to guide the Workers and children during emergency situations and maintain communication with the Security Team.

In the case of a fire or if a fire alarm sounds:

- The point-person will communicate with the Nursery Workers and provide clear directions on how to proceed. If fire begins near the Nursery, the worker should use the walkie-talkie to inform the security team and on duty Sheriff.

- Each Worker will seek to remain calm and help keep the children calm. The Workers will use the walking ropes to lead the children to the exit nearest to the Nursery and farthest from the fire or smoke. They will bring the roll sheet to make sure all children are accounted for. See attached possible evacuation routes.
- Once outside, the Workers will seek to transport each child to the designated meeting area located at the black fenced area on the North side of the church.
- Parents are encouraged to meet their children outside at the designated meeting area.

In the case of a dangerous person or lock down on premises:

- The Point Person should use walkie-talkie to maintain ongoing contact with the security team or inform them of a dangerous person.
- Workers will close and lock all classroom doors, including back closet doors and turn off lights, lower the safety bar on the front door, and lower the curtain over the window.
- The Nursery Workers will rally the children into the corner on the same wall as the door, (The Northeast section of the room – on the mats) and stand in front of the children, facing out, and pray, trying to keep the children as calm as possible. Stay away from windows and out of open range. Maintain position until notified to do otherwise by security personnel. The Nursery Worker and class will maintain this position until notified to do otherwise by security or first responder personnel (law enforcement, firefighter, etc).

1.5 Bathroom Policies

Children of potty-training age are expected to be able to use the bathroom without major assistance from the Nursery Worker, Catechism Instructor, or Child Care Worker. This includes undressing and dressing without assistance. Children should wear clothing that can be easily taken off or put on without assistance. If a child still needs a lot of assistance using the bathroom, a pull-up should be considered, or the parents may come up as needed to take the child to the restroom. Nursery workers are happy to help with potty training, but, unfortunately, they do not have the adequate support for a child who is still largely dependent upon adult assistance. In the rare case that a child should need assistance, the worker may help, but keep the door cracked. To avoid individual trips to the restroom, the Little People class will have 1-2 group bathroom trips during the service.

See Child Abuse Prevention Policy.

2. Ministry to Children

2.1. Structure of Nurseries

There will be three classrooms and the Mother's Room:

1. Walkers Nursery: 1 year old class (designed for 1-year-olds who can walk on their own without any assistance)
2. Toddlers Nursery: 2-year-old class (intended for children specifically 2 years of age)
3. Little People Nursery 3–4-year-old class (intended for children 3-4 years of age ****Parents are encouraged to begin training their children to sit in the worship service as early as deemed appropriate by the parents. As a general rule, parents should strive to have their children trained to sit in the worship service by age 4 ½ and use the nursery as a backup. Children 5 years old or older are not allowed to use the nursery.****)
4. The Mother's Room is downstairs and is designed to provide a place for parents with children who aren't able to stay in the nursery alone, or who are actively training their children to sit during a service. It is not a place to play, rather an atmosphere where moms can listen to the sermon with an active or loud infant or toddler. The foyer in the back of the sanctuary is also available to help train children who are learning to sit through the service.

2.2 Behavioral Issues

As the local church we are privileged to come alongside and encourage parents as they teach and train their children. The Cross is dedicated to providing rich and helpful parenting resources and practical counsel through our pastoral team and counseling center. If there are ongoing behavioral issues, parents can seek the counsel of the Children and Nursery Ministry Director, the Elders, or a member of our counseling center. We are committed to providing continued care for parents who are seeking help with a child.

Repeated hitting, biting, spitting, screaming, temper tantrums, and disobedience are unacceptable and will require a parent's immediate attention. Nursery Workers are to contact the parent immediately if a child's conduct becomes a problem. We believe ultimately the responsibility for discipline rests with the parents; however, for minor discipline issues, there are some steps a worker can take before getting a parent. Separating the child to have them sit in time-out and verbal warnings are acceptable. Nursery workers will give strong instruction but will not discipline. Nursery Workers must not raise their voice or become angry. Rather, they should restore with gentleness. The parents should be told of their child's conduct when the child is picked-up, to inform them of misbehavior or encouragement for good conduct. Open communication between workers and parents is vital, and workers should provide encouraging feedback to parents whenever possible.

The Cross Church provides nursery services as a way to serve parents of small children. However, if a child has demonstrated through repeated offenses that he or she is a threat of harm to other children or will not be submissive to nursery workers, the child may no longer be allowed to use the nursery. If a child bites or inflicts damage upon another child two or more times, the parent(s)/caregiver(s) will not be permitted to put the child back into the nursery for a minimum of 6 months. Once this period of time is over, the parent(s)/caregiver(s) must first have a discussion with an elder before the child will be permitted to use the nursery again. There may also be situations wherein a child's conduct is deemed so inappropriate or harmful that he or she will not be allowed to use the nursery for a minimum of 6 months, even if there was only one occurrence. The Nursery Director, along with necessary consultation with the elders and/or security personnel, will determine if the child's behavior should warrant this response. If a child's behavior warrants removal from the nursery for 6 months, the Nursery Director will notify the parents in writing. Any disputes on behalf of the parents should be brought to the elders. The elders reserve the right to deny nursery services, temporarily or indefinitely, to a child if they deem the child's behavior to be detrimental to the safety and well-being of other children and/or to nursery workers.

2.3 Crying

If a child cannot be consoled after a period of 5-10 minutes, parents should be called. Children are not to be left to continue crying unattended. Parents whose children are consistently having a difficult time in the nursery are encouraged to use the Mother's Room, or to bring their children to the Nursery after normal drop off times to help them acclimate. The foyer and Fellowship Hall are also available. We are committed to helping parents

through these difficult stages and are willing to make certain accommodations with the approval of the Nursery Supervisor.

2.4 Nursery Worker Responsibilities

Nursery Workers should arrive for their shift no later than 10:15 AM or 15 minutes prior to the start of a service. Each Worker will print a name tag and will report to their assigned class. The primary responsibility of the nursery worker is to care for and interact with the children. Working in the nursery is a privilege and a unique opportunity to minister Gospel truth both to the child and to their family.

The children will benefit from more structure and deliberate use of the books, coloring, lessons, toys, crafts, music, and puzzles. Talking to other Workers or parents at length (to the neglect of the children) is discouraged. A schedule is provided in the back of the classroom for how the time during the service can be used. Nursery workers should stick to the schedule as closely as possible.

Nursery Workers **MUST** read the child's sticker before snack time to ensure no allergy-related food is given to a child with a food allergy. Parents are required to provide alternative snacks for children with allergies. Children should eat their snacks while sitting around the table.

At the end of each Nursery time, Workers should spray toys and surfaces with alcohol spray located in the back cabinet. Toys should be put away, the trash liner in each garbage can should be removed and replaced, and the floor spot vacuumed with the handheld vacuums or Shark.

Each Nursery Worker will attend an annual **mandatory** meeting where the guidelines, goals, and safety procedures will be addressed. Under extenuating circumstances when a Nursery Worker is unable to attend the meeting, a Nursery Supervisor can provide personal training.

2.5 Nursery Supervisor Responsibilities

The Supervisor will be available to help check-in children before the worship service begins and directly after the singing portion of the service. They will also distribute the walkie-talkies to the designated Point Person in each classroom. They are also available to troubleshoot any problems before, during and after the service. After all children are checked in, they will be

"on-call," as needed. Supervisors will be available after the service to help with check-out.

After the service the supervisor is required to turn off the iPad and printer and unplug the iPad, check classrooms to make sure cleaning has been adequately done, place walkies- talkies on the table, turn off all the lights and collect and bring trash downstairs to be taken out.

Supervisors should arrive for their shift no later than 10:15 AM or 15 minutes prior to the start of a service. Supervisors are responsible for making sure classrooms are safe and ready for the children's arrival. They will make sure snacks and cleaning supplies are well stocked.

Each Supervisor will attend an annual **mandatory** meeting where the guidelines, goals, and safety procedures will be addressed. Under extenuating circumstances when a Supervisor is unable to attend the meeting, another Supervisor or the Children and Nursery Ministry Director can provide personal training.

2.6 City Groups

The Cross Church does not provide formal childcare during City Groups. However, City Group leaders usually opt to have childcare at their groups for children under 4. ***Refer to Child Abuse Prevention Policy.***

Child Care at City Groups will, in general, operate under the same rules and procedures as have been described in this document. If Child Care is offered at a City Group meeting, the following guidelines should be followed:

- One adult woman may provide Child Care at City Group, but she must be approved according to section 1.1 in this document.
- Children 5 and older should sit with their parents or designated adult during the study
- During gender-specific prayer time, the children may go with either parent for supervision.

City Group leaders (and host homes) should refer to and operate according to the Child Abuse Prevention Policies. ****Under no circumstance should children (unless they are siblings who live in the host home) be in unsupervised rooms during City Group. Children should remain in the designated areas during fellowship and mealtime, in the designated Child Care area during the study, and in the designated area during prayer times. The City Group Leader or his wife is responsible for communicating*

*designated areas and specific guidelines for children during group meetings. If children go outside to play during fellowship and mealtime, they should be accompanied by multiple adults and not be allowed to go off into hidden areas where they cannot be seen easily. Children must not be alone, together, at any time during City Group meetings.****

2.7 Catechism Classes

Catechism leaders should arrive between 9:15 am and 9:30 am. Class begins at 9:30 am and ends at 10:00 am. Parents should do their best to arrive on time, both for drop-off and pick-up. Children in the 2–4-year-old class who are not picked up by 10:15 am will be brought to the age-appropriate nursery and left in the care of the Nursery Worker until parent arrives or until after the service. Children in the 5–8-year-old Catechism class will be walked downstairs if a parent doesn't pick them up by 10:15 am. If children in the 2–4-year-old class will also be using the nursery, their parents may sign them into the nursery before the catechism class begins. The catechism teacher will ensure the child is signed up for Nursery and then hand off supervision to the Nursery Worker at 10:15. Children 2-4 who attend the first part of the worship service with their parents but come to the Nursery during the sermon must be picked up from Catechism by their parents at 10:15 and then signed into the Nursery by their parents during the transitional period before the sermon.

Children in the 2- 4-year-old Catechism class should be able to use the restroom by themselves or otherwise in a diaper/pull-up. Nursery bathroom policies also apply for this class. See Section 1.5.

All catechism classes should have two adults present at all times. If a catechism teacher needs a substitute, they must ask another Catechism teacher or get approval from the Elders for another qualified substitute. Every substitute is also required to have a completed background check. Catechism teachers are responsible for ensuring that their substitute is approved according to section 1.1 of this document and has elder approval to lead the class.

Each Catechism Leader will attend an annual **mandatory** meeting where the guidelines, goals, and safety procedures will be addressed. Under extenuating circumstances when a Supervisor is unable to attend the meeting, another Supervisor or the Children and Nursery Ministry Director can provide personal training.

2.8 Off-Campus Children and Youth Events

Official children and youth events that happen off site must still be governed, structured, and supervised consistently with The Cross Church's vision for teaching children and equipping parents. These events may include youth events at a host home or some other location, Bible studies, fellowships, ice cream socials, etc. Those who plan and lead such events are responsible for doing so in such a way that is appropriate, wise, and consistent with The Cross Church Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy. The following procedures/guidelines should be implemented at all official children and youth events:

- Leaders, host homeowners, chaperones, and young adult helpers must complete a federal background check and be approved by the elders to serve in this capacity
- Parents who have not completed a federal background check are welcome to stay at the event with their child, but may not operate in any chaperone or leadership capacity
- Designated areas for the event must be stated clearly by the host/leader as well as areas that are off-limits
- Designated areas must be sufficiently chaperoned by approved adults
- Children/youth must never be alone with an adult other than their parents
- Children/youth must never be alone with each other (this includes children/youth of the same sex)
- Adults, children, and youth must wear appropriate, modest apparel at all children and youth events. Swimwear should be modest, unrevealing, and above reproach.

2.9 Romantic Displays of Affection and Youth Interaction

Public displays of romantic affection among non-married couples are strongly discouraged. Non-married persons are to see themselves as brothers and sisters in Christ and act accordingly. Parents may have different convictions regarding how their youth relate to youth of the opposite sex, but the church requests that in official church gatherings and official youth events, that they act according to 1st Timothy 5:1-2 and do not provide occasions for stumbling for others or draw unhealthy attention to themselves.

3. Leadership and Communication

3.1 Children and Nursery Ministry Director

In agreement with the vision of the Cross Church, the Director is to pursue, in prayer and collaboration with families and the Church body, the Glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom among children and families.

The director is responsible for the oversight of the Children and Nursery Ministries, including ongoing communication with parents and Elder team, coordinating weekly volunteers, recruiting and training new volunteers, managing check-in system and data, attending leadership team meetings, providing oversight, encouragement and guidance for the Supervisors and Nursery Workers and coordinating safety and sanitary protocols.

3.1 Assistant to the Children and Nursery Ministry Director

The Assistant to the Children and Nursery Ministry Director supports the vision of the Church and the Director. The Assistant provides support in all operations of the Children's and Nursery Ministry and is available to step in for the Director when necessary. The Director and Assistant Director will work closely to accomplish the stated goals, provide encouragement and exhortation to one another, and seek to align the Children's and Nursery Ministry with the vision of The Cross and the Glory of God.

3.2 Parent and Nursery Team Communications

Concerns or questions during a service will be brought to the Nursery Supervisor on duty. Other concerns regarding the nursery may be brought to the Assistant Children & Nursery Ministry Director or directly to the Children & Nursery Ministry Director. Urgent needs may be brought to the Children & Nursery Ministry Director directly.

3.3 Child Care Teams and Elder Communications

All Child Care Teams will be in consistent contact with the Elders regarding the needs of the Children's and Nursery Ministry and the families represented therein. They will communicate concerning new procedures and any changes or amendments needed. Concerns regarding Catechism or childcare in City Groups should be brought directly to the Elders. All parties should be proactive about any issues, concerns, or problems that arise and also seek to provide positive feedback. We want to always be improving and glorifying God with the endeavor of caring for our precious children. The elders will take seriously the concerns and ideas of those serving in the Children's and Nursery Ministries and will not be reluctant to meet or communicate with those who serve in this vital role.

The elders, along with the Children and Nursery Ministry Director and Assistant to the Children and Nursery Team director, will work together to ensure that all structures and procedures that guide the Children and Nursery Ministry are consistent with and do not contradict the Cross Church Constitution, recognizing that the Constitution is the official, legal document of the church that can be changed only by a majority congregational vote.



The Cross Church of Pensacola, FL Child Care Policies and Procedures

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand the policies and guidelines within this document provided by the Cross Church of Pensacola. I understand it is my responsibility to comply with and implement all policies and procedures included in this document.

Date _____

Member's Signature _____

Member's Printed Name _____

