



## **Worker Enlistment**

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Any person who has been a victim of child abuse should be separately questioned by the appropriate staff to determine their present qualification to serve in the children's programs. There is evidence that victims of abuse are more prone to become involved in such occurrences in the future.

1. Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, each worker should be required to complete a Preschool/Children Worker Application which is specifically designed for workers who will be working with children.
2. After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service and personal references should be checked. It is suggested that, at a minimum, personal references be telephoned and a written memorandum be made of the contents of those telephone conversations, and that prior employment and church service references be contacted in writing.
3. Any prospective worker who has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse should not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with children.
4. Criminal background checks should be performed on each worker.
5. Standard interview questions should be developed and used in personal interviews with volunteer or employee applicants, after reviewing the applications of the applicant, and checking all references. These interview sheets should be filled out with the results of the interview and kept in the employee personnel file, along with the reference checks and applications. A separate file should be maintained permanently on each worker, whether paid or a volunteer.
6. When an employee or volunteer is engaged to work with children, they should be fingerprinted and photographed and those records should be kept in the employee personnel file.

## **Worker Training**

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Each new worker should be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy of the church on the reporting of child abuse. New workers should also be required to view child abuse prevention video(s) and read the written materials available on this subject to help them gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern. This should help workers identify child abuse in the future if they see signs of it.

## **Worker Supervision**

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1. The ministry should adopt the "two adult" rule, which requires a reasonable number of adult workers to be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of the children, but with a minimum of two workers at all times.
2. The staff should supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.
3. An identification system should be adopted so that the adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick up the child, to reduce the possibility of kidnapping.
4. In counseling sessions with minors, parental permission should be obtained prior to a worker meeting privately with a minor, or the two adult rule should be used even in that instance.

## **Worker Review**

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Workers should annually receive additional training on the risk of child abuse and the prevention of the same. The prevention video and written materials should be reviewed in an organized fashion by all ministry workers, and verification of each worker's participation in the initial training and the annual review should be placed in the worker's personnel file to show that the ministry regularly provided and awareness program of this problem.

## **Reporting**

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### Child Abuse Prevention Reporting Policy

Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person's belief in accordance with this procedure. Nonaccusatory reports (reports that identify the victim of abuse or neglect whether or not the person responsible for the abuse or neglect is known) shall be made to one of the following:

- Local Law Enforcement Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (law enforcement agency)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

- Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

The report shall be made as follows:

- a. An oral report shall be made immediately on learning of the abuse or neglect.
- b. If requested, a written report shall be made within five (5) days to the same agencies or departments.
- c. All reports must contain the name and address of the child, the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, if available, and any other pertinent information.

At the time you first learn of an instance of suspected abuse or neglect, you must advise the ministry leadership of the same information you are required to report to authorities in the above paragraph. This is to ensure that proper steps will be taken by the ministry.

### Reporting Guidelines

1. The ministry should have an express provision in its policy for the reporting of instances of suspected child abuse by anyone in the ministry, including all workers. All workers should be made to be familiar with the reporting procedure. The child abuse reporting statute in the state of Georgia may require the reporting of suspected instances of child abuse to governmental agencies.
2. Fully comply with the child abuse reporting statute.
3. Upon the first suspicion of an instance of child abuse, the following steps should be taken immediately:
  - a. Do not treat any suspicion as frivolous.

- b. Commence the investigation immediately, and conclude it as soon as possible.
- c. Maintain confidentiality of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize confidentiality of the victim and any accused.
- d. Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
- e. Suspend any accused from the performance of duties involving children until the investigation has been completed.
- f. Inform the victim and the victim's family of the steps that are being taken, and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigation. If the child abuse is confirmed, ask the victim and the victim's family what action they would like to take in the matter, and fully cooperate to address their request within the bounds of a legal and prudent response (church legal counsel should assist in this determination).
- g. In instances where child abuse is confirmed, the ministry should immediately dismiss the worker from that position. Consideration of member termination should be considered, as appropriate in the circumstances.
- h. In instances where the evidence is inconclusive, the ministry must take action depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim's and the victim's family's request.
- i. Keep the leadership informed of the investigation with respect to matters which are not confidential, so that the leadership will hear about the investigation from within the ministry rather than from the news media.
- j. Contact the Office of Communications at the Georgia Baptist Convention for assistance in dealing with the media.