



**Empowering and equipping faith communities  
to keep children and youth safe in their  
homes, churches, and communities.  
Website: <http://www.DovesNest.net>  
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### **Child and Youth Protection Policy Checklist - Churches**

Here is a menu of items to be included in a child and youth protection policy for a church.

- Name of church – a policy can be modeled after another, but should be unique to your church
- Definitions of abuse – specific to your state (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining>)

#### **Training:**

For whom - indicate how often:

- Staff       All adults       Teachers       Children and youth
- All volunteers who have contact with children and youth

Content:

- Types of abuse, including signs       Risk and protective factors       Response plan

Resources:

- For adults: *Harder, J. (2010). Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect.* [www.DovesNest.net/letthechildrencome](http://www.DovesNest.net/letthechildrencome)
- For children and youth: *Circle of Grace.* [www.DovesNest.net/circleofgrace](http://www.DovesNest.net/circleofgrace) or [www.archomaha.org/protestant](http://www.archomaha.org/protestant)

#### **Personnel:**

- Application, background checks, interview, references of all staff
- Application, background checks, interview, references of volunteers who have access to children and youth
- 6-month church involvement before teaching/leading children/youth
- Read and agree to abide by the child and youth protection policy annually

#### **Supervision of children and youth:**

- One adult never alone with one child (when not possible, doors open or move to a public space)
- Nursery       Vacation Bible School
- Sunday School       Youth group activities (especially any overnight activities)
- Children's church       Before and after church activities

#### **Interactions with children and youth**

- Constructive (non-violent) and age-appropriate discipline
- Appropriate expressions of affection

#### **Church facility:**

- Windows in inside doors/walls
- Child-proofed (i.e. cleaning supplies, outlets, knives in kitchen)
- Stocked first-aid kit

**Response to possible child abuse and neglect:**

- Plan for reporting to authorities
- Plan for keeping children and youth safe
- Plan for notifying non-offending parent(s)
- Plan for notifying other parents in the congregation

**Response to individual with known sex offense history in congregation:**

- Training and assessment of congregation's readiness to receive individual
- Assessment of individual's readiness and appropriateness for participation in church activities
- Written plan with individual and professionals in individual's life
- Supervision plan for individual
- Role of individual in church activities clearly defined (no access to children or youth)
- Notification to parents
- Spiritual, emotional, and practical support for individual

**Other**

- Include a child protection theme in Worship - indicate how often
- Notify parents before child or youth is transported
- Community referrals known and readily available for: counseling for children and families, basic needs, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness

**Community (beyond church community):**

- Planned outreach for families and children at-risk
- Awareness/collaboration with community agencies/personnel (for purposes of volunteering, referrals, services for families and children in church)

**Policy:**

- Adopted
- Implemented – who is responsible
- Accessible (i.e. bulletin boards, website)

Sample child protection policies: [www.DovesNest.net](http://www.DovesNest.net). Also, *Safe Sanctuaries*: [www.safesanctuaries.org](http://www.safesanctuaries.org).