



Developing Policies



The forming of preschool policies is an individual church project. That is, each church is autonomous. Therefore, each church will need to develop policies to meet its own needs. Developing preschool policies is an important step in improving the ministry and effectiveness of the preschool division of a church. Policies can enhance the work of the division. They give credibility, as well as support, to those persons who serve faithfully in this area. Policies can clarify the work in the division and the guidelines for use of the facilities.

Steps to Begin

The development of preschool policies is an important and serious task. It should be done slowly, carefully, and with much care. The obvious time for a church to develop policies is if there are none, regardless of the size of the church.

Promoting the need for policies or the beginning of forming policies may come from several different people. It may come from a preschool committee. The pastor or minister of education may feel the need to have a set of policies for the preschool division. A minister of childhood education or preschool division director will want there to be a set of policies. The need for policies may come from a question or concern that arises among teachers or parents.

Hopefully, there will be a consensus of opinion by several interested persons that policies are needed.

Who Will Be Involved?

As the committee or work group forms, they will be aware of their assignment and some may come to the first meeting with information and ideas. Determining goals and possible deadlines may be helpful. Discussing ideas, suggestions, and needs to be considered will be important. One or more in the group will need to be designated to gather information and, perhaps, copies of policies from other churches. Choose the best ideas from these, keeping in mind the specific needs of your church. Some areas covered in another policy may not be applicable to your situation.

Formulating the Policies

After much study, discussion, and several meetings, put the policies into written form. These may need to be brought before the group more than once. Share them with others who work with preschoolers to get their input and response. Strive for 100 percent satisfaction with the policies from the work group. The approval of the pastor and minister of education, before final completion, will be valuable.

It is important to carry the policies through the proper channels for church approval during a regular business meeting. Copies should be printed and available to those who show interest in them. Being able to refer to a date of church approval will add credibility to the policies and support to those whose responsibility it will be to follow (and help others abide by) them. When the policies have been approved and accepted by the church, print enough copies for each family of preschoolers to have a copy. See that each preschool family coming into church receives a copy. Be sure that all program leaders and church staff have a copy. See that the policies are well understood by all those who use the preschool facilities. They should be the first ones to follow the policy guidelines.

An outline of the policies' manual may include some or all of the following:

- I. Greeting to Parents (from pastor, minister of education, or minister of childhood education.
- II. Purpose of the Preschool Policies
- III. Preschool Objectives
- IV. General Policies
 1. Age of children
 2. Hours open for regular church programming
 3. Availability of facilities for childcare
 4. Pupil-teacher ration
 5. Opening and closing time statement
 6. Directions for making child-care requests
 7. Statement about hygiene and safety guidelines (either included in manual or posted in rooms)
 8. Other items to meet your church needs
- V. Program Opportunities (a listing of regularly scheduled programs for preschoolers, including time of each

- VI. Receiving and Dismissal
 1. Explanation of security system
 2. Instructions about how to leave and pick up a child
 3. Instructions if someone other than parents is picking up a child
 4. Explanation about checking on a child
 5. Directions to parents to leave a child only if a teacher is present
 6. Suggestion about contact person if there is a question, need, or complaint
- VII. Feeding
 1. Encouragement to feed children before bringing them
 2. Amount of feeding that can be done (some churches do not have enough help to spoon feed, and so forth)
 3. Information about when snack is provided and what it will be
 4. Request for labeling all food, bottles, and so forth
 5. Caution for providing food allergy information
- VIII. Illness and Medication
 1. When a child can and cannot be accepted
 2. Statements of common symptoms when a child will not be accepted (an official one may be obtained from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
 3. What to do if a child develops a communicable disease following a preschool session
 4. Statement about policy on giving medication
- IX. Things to Bring and Not to Bring to Church
- X. Suggestions for Parents

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