



Child Protection Policy



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Definitions

Adult is any individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Teen (LIT) is any individual from age fourteen (14) to eighteen (18) years old.

Baby in Motion is any child under twelve (12) months of age.

Tots in Motion is any child who is walking, from twelve (12) to thirty-six (36) months of age on or before Sept 1st.

Friends in Motion is any child from age four (4) on or before Sept 1st through kindergarten.

Kids in Motion is grades one (1) through five (5).

Leader-in-Training (LIT) is any child ages fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) who has been approved to work along side a teacher / leader with children. An LIT is not included in the staff/child ratio. Exceptions to this guideline may be made on an individual basis by the Children's Pastor.

Teacher, Leader is the adult educator, childcare provider or other childcare staff that is a member of Movement Church. They have passed a criminal history background check and have been approved to work with Movement children.

Children's Coordinator is the staff member responsible for assisting the Director, supervision over classrooms, as well as scheduling of volunteers.

Children's Director is the staff person responsible for supervision & training of staff and volunteers in the children's area. They are responsible for the safety, care and spiritual education of children from birth through grade five (5) while attending scheduled church activities.

Staff/Child ratio is the number of teachers/leaders recommended in relation to the number of children in care.

Abuse is any physical injury, sexual or emotional abuse inflicted on a child intentionally by those responsible for their care, custody and control.

Mandated Reporter is any person who is responsible for care and custody of children. This includes staff and volunteers caring for children while at Movement Church.

Screening Procedures

All teachers, leaders and paid staff members will undergo a screening procedure before being approved to work with children.

The screening procedure includes:

- Children's/Youth Worker's Screening Form
- Permission to Obtain a Background Check
- Personal interview
- Reference checks
- LITs will be required to complete the following:
 - Personal interview
 - Parent/guardian permission form
 - LIT work application
 - Reference checks

All information from these screening procedures will remain strictly confidential and access is highly restricted.

Persons desiring to work with children should be a member-in-good-standing at Movement Church for at least six (6) months prior to being accepted as a screened worker. (Exceptions to waiting six months can be made by the Lead Pastor of our church or Children's Director. Examples may include new employees and college students/adults with favorable references from another church.)

*Completion of forms and passing the criminal history background check does not guarantee acceptance as a children's worker. Other factors such as spiritual maturity and dependability are also taken into consideration.

Staffing

In general, each room in which a child is being cared for are recommended staffed with no less than two (2) screened teachers/leaders. One of these screened workers should be a female. The "two-person rule" provides a person to go for help while one tends to an injured child and it provides a second witness in case of any allegations of wrongdoing. Teachers/leaders should avoid being alone with a child, (other than their own), during church services or sponsored activities.

The following ratios of teacher/leader to children should be observed as a minimum standard:

- (Babies in Motion) Birth to twelve (12) months of age until steady walker: 1 to 3
- (Tots in Motion) Twelve (12) months of age and steady walker through three years old: 1 to 3
- (Friends in Motion) Four (4), five (5) years old and kindergarten: 1 to 3
- (Kids in Motion) First grade through fifth grade: 1 to 3

Leaders-in-Training (LITs) will be assigned to a specific screened adult teacher/leader as a helper. LIT assignments will be approved by the Children's Director/Pastor.

Only scheduled workers, nursing mothers and babies will be allowed in the nursery. Special needs children may require additional one-to-one staffing.

Volunteer/Child Interaction

The volunteers in each classroom should set the example for the children. Classroom order and control is necessary to create an environment in which a child can learn with minimal distractions. Following these guidelines will help insure child safety and provide a witness if an allegation of wrongdoing is made.

- Select a time during your period for children to go to the restrooms in a group.
- Individual children going to the restroom should be escorted by a female teacher. The teacher should not enter the restroom with the child unless the child requires assistance. Male teachers shall not assist children who need their clothing adjusted.
- Only adult female teachers will be allowed to change diapers.
- Exception: A parent or legal guardian may change their own child's diaper.
- If older children soil themselves, a parent/guardian should be located to clean the child.

Recommendations in regards to physical interactions with children include, but are not necessarily limited to, those listed below:

- No throwing them in the air or wrestling with them.
- No holding their hands while they climb on you.
- No holding children on your lap (except for younger children such as toddlers & younger children).
- Refrain from kissing or tickling a child.
- Hugging a child should be performed from the side. Try to avoid frontal hugs.
- No inappropriate touching.

Playground should be supervised at all times children are present.

- Playground supervisors should not allow children to use equipment incorrectly (i.e. running up slides, climbing on top of horizontal ladders or hand ring bridges, jumping off landings, etc.)
- Do not allow children to climb or sit on top of cross bars.
- Do not allow children to climb on the fence.
- Remove any debris and litter including broken glass, stones, bottles or cans.
- Pets are not allowed in the playground.

Do not be alone with a child other than your own. This includes transportation to & from church or events. This is for your protection.

Discipline

Volunteers should establish simple, understandable rules for children's behavior and shall explain them to the children. Reasonable expectations for a child's behavior should be based on age and developmental levels.

Only constructive, age appropriate methods of correction shall be used to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions.

Praise and encouragement of good behavior should be used instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.

If separation from the group is used to establish classroom order, a guideline of one (1) minute per year of age should be used. Always supervise the separated child and never lose sight of them.

Physical punishment shall not be used. This includes, but is not limited to: spanking, slapping, shaking, biting, pulling hair, shoving or pushing. If disobedience reaches an unacceptable level, the parent/guardian and/or Children's Pastor will be asked to intervene.

Never shake an infant! This could cause irreversible brain damage known as "Shaken Baby Syndrome."

Physically restraining a child may be necessary to keep a child from harming him/herself or others. If this is used, care should be taken not to harm the child. When practical, the adult may wrap both arms around the child and hold them from behind until help can be summoned.

Humiliating, threatening or frightening language will not be used as a form of child control or discipline.

No harsh or profane language will be used by the teacher/leader.

Safety & Security

The security and safety of the children entrusted to us are our highest priorities. The following guidelines must be followed as closely as possible:

- Infants through 5th grade will be checked in at the "Check in" stations where they receive a "Child's Sticker" prior to being accepted into their rooms. Cell phones are used as pagers and are paged through our computer systems.
- Parents/guardians will provide the names of authorized persons allowed to pick up their infant/toddler.
- Siblings under the age of sixteen should not be allowed to pick up Infants through Kindergarten Children.
- Parents must show their "Parent Sticker" when picking up their child.
- Nursery through kindergarten classrooms have controlled access and only approved workers are allowed in these areas.
- Children under the age of four (4) will not be accepted into children's classes without a parent/guardian who can provide necessary child information.
- Children infants through kindergarten should be escorted to their class by a parent/guardian after checked in where they will be received by a teacher who will verify "Child's Sticker".
- Children in the 1st through 5th grades should be escorted to their class by a parent/guardian where they will be received by a teacher who will verify "Child's Sticker".

Child Abuse Reporting

Staff and volunteer workers in Children's Ministry at Movement Church, should consider themselves to be "**Mandated Reporters**" to the Division of Family Services under Texas Child Abuse and Neglect Laws (Texas Family Code 261.101).

- Any staff member, teacher or leader who suspects child abuse or neglect has occurred to a child for whom they are caring should contact their church director immediately.
- Church teachers/leaders are not under any obligation to investigate the suspected abuse or neglect.
- Church teachers/leaders are not required to call the TX Child Abuse Hot Line once they contact the church director; however, they still retain that option.
- Once notified of suspected child abuse or neglect, the Lead Pastor, Children's Director or designee, will gather information and make a determination based on "reasonable suspicion" whether to make a report to the TX Child Abuse Hot Line within 24 hours. In any event, a confidential church report will be kept.
- In severe cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, the Children's Director will contact Movement Church Security (Assurance Team) and/or the **Police Department by calling 911**. The Lead Pastor will be notified as soon as possible.
- Any person complying with the Child Abuse and Neglect laws and who makes a good faith report to the "Hot Line" within 24 hours, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal.
- Any person intentionally making a false report to the "Hot Line" shall not have immunity and commits a state misdemeanor crime.

TO MAKE A TEXAS CHILD ABUSE HOT LINE REPORT, CALL 1-800-252-5400, or email <http://www.txabusehotline.org>.

Non-scheduled Childcare

Staffing child care workers for regularly scheduled, church-wide services is the responsibility of the Children's Director and Coordinator. If child care is desired for Bible studies, up-reach practice, class parties, etc., when there is no scheduled church service, staffing will be arranged by the event coordinator. In these circumstances, the following steps should be taken:

- The Children's Director is to be notified
- Rooms are to be scheduled through the church office
- Approved/screened members of Movement Church are to be used for child care. The Children's Director will provide a list of approved workers.
- Pertinent guidelines in this booklet are to be followed:
- Minimum two adult workers per room
- LITs (junior high /high school students) can help but cannot be the only workers nor are they allowed to change diapers.
- Older children should not be in the same room as infants/ toddlers
- No one under the age of fifteen (15) can be paid by the church.

Rooms that are used should be cleaned when finished. The trash is to be taken to the dumpster as dirty diapers smell! Toys used by children should be sanitized.

If a child care worker is to be paid by the church, names, dates and times must be submitted to the Children's Director. A Federal W-4 form may be needed prior to being paid.

