



GABC

PRESCHOOL/NURSERY

PARENTS HANDBOOK

If any child has been abused and we DO know about it and action IS being taken, there are few things to remember when working with this child:

Have lots of patience and understanding.

Report to the parent/guardians each time the child brings up the assault.

Show lots of love and care for the child.

SPECIAL REMINDERS

If you have a parent that continues to hang around the classroom please reassure them that you will take care of their child and that if you need them you will contact them. We need to be able to utilize the system we have put in place. No parent should be staying in the classroom with their child, unless they are on the rotation to serve, because it might upset the other children in the room.

As volunteers, we will love our children and families well by keeping the rooms clean and sanitary, checking security tags, engaging parents and genuinely caring for their children. This makes our parents feel comfortable leaving their children in our care and it shows hospitality to visitors. Parents love their children more than anything and need to be confident that they are safe. We serve them immensely when we provide this type of environment for them.

WAYS TO DETECT ABUSE

This is a HEART BREAKING section to have to communicate to volunteers yet at the same time it is a place where we can help protect our children in CHRIST'S name!

There are many signs of child abuse. Any one sign may not mean anything, but if there are a number of signs, or if they occur frequently, you may suspect maltreatment. Some signs are:

Physical:

- Unusual bruises, welts, burns, fractures, or bite marks.
- Frequent injuries, always explained as accidental.
- Wears concealing clothes to hide injuries.
- Child seems frightened.
- Child seeks affection from any adult.
- Unpleasant, hard to get along with, demanding, often does not obey.

Emotional:

- Self-destructive, apathetic, depressed, withdrawn, passive.
- Seems overly anxious when faced with new situations or people.
- Disorganized, distrustful, or rigidly compulsive.
- Takes on adult or parent roles and responsibilities.
- Throws tantrums, seems impulsive, defiant, antisocial, aggressive.
- Fearful, hyper-alert, lack of creativity and exploration.

Sexual:

- Has torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Experiences pain or itching in genital areas.
- Has venereal disease.
- Appears withdrawn or engages in fantasy or baby-like behavior.
- Has poor relationship with other children.
- Is unwilling to participate with other children.
- States that he or she has been sexually assaulted.
- Acts like an adult, not a child.

It is important to know that over 80% of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim, most abuse takes place within the contact of an on-going relationship, the usual offender is between the ages of 20-30 years, 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18, and finally, child abusers often are married and have children. (Taken from : "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church" by Richard Hammer).

If child abuse of ANY kind (physical, emotional, sexual, malnutrition) is suspected, notify the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT DISCUSS WITH OTHER VOLUNTTERS!

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Letter To Parents

Thank you for your interest in GABC Preschool/Nursery Ministry. This ministry aims to teach our children the gospel, love them with a gospel-centered love, and provide gospel-centered care for each child that walks through the door. We will do this through our curriculum, the way we pray for our children and families and how we train our volunteers.

At GABC, we believe that children are valuable gifts from God. God calls his church both to train children and to protect them from harm. We believe that children, just like adults, need Jesus' saving love. Only Jesus can change children, families, neighborhoods and schools. It is our goal to teach the Gospel of Jesus and the truth of the Bible in a way that is age appropriate and fun.

We also believe that the home is the front line of ministry to children. Since the responsibility for a child's spiritual formation rests primarily in the hands of his or her parents, we want to walk beside parents as they train their children to believe in and follow Jesus—providing the best help and resources that we can.

The five principles of GABC Preschool/Nursery ministry are:

1. That every child would hear the name of Jesus every time they come to GABC, through a gospel centered curriculum.
2. That our children and families are well taken care of. The safety of our children is top priority when it comes to taking care of them.
3. The GABC Preschool/Nursery would be a place full of hospitality for our children and families, but especially for our new families!
4. That our ministry empower parents to disciple their children during the week at home.
5. That our children are a part of the body here at GABC and will therefore be encouraged to be a part of the service by singing with their parents (children age 4 and older).

This handbook is for any volunteer interested in, or already involved, in the GABC Preschool/Nursery ministry. Please take some time to look through every section carefully because it describes in detail the inner workings of this ministry.

At GABC, we love children and believe that families are a gift from God. Because of this, we want to make sure that our volunteers and our leadership team are good stewards of what has been entrusted to us. We believe the policies and procedures contained in this handbook will help us do that well. Please don't hesitate to contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

Tornadoes/Severe Weather

In the case of severe weather, volunteers will be notified to take their children to the interior hallway. They will gather as classrooms up against the interior wall and sit with their backs against the wall, knees tucked under their chin, arms wrapped around the knees, and heads bent down. Once the children are in place, a class role will be done to make sure everyone is accounted for. Volunteers will keep things calm and under control, while comforting the children. (Please refer to the severe weather plans located in your classroom.)

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Praise children for good behavior.

Use lights out or sing songs to help children be quiet. Be creative.

Use a firm tone only when necessary.

Discuss obeying and being respectful with your class often.

Watch your example. Children are great imitators.

Don't ask children to do activities that you are not prepared to do yourself.

Be consistent.

Walk or stand by a child who is being disruptive.

Make eye contact with Children. Get on their level. Use their names when addressing them.

Try to redirect the child to a new activity.

Use choices with the child (ex. "You can choose to stop hitting your friend or you will need to spend some with yourself in time-out").

Use time-outs when necessary. (1 min./age)

Never touch a child firmly or forcefully when disciplining.

Deal with disruptive children individually, away from others.

Encourage repentance and apologies when necessary.

If the above steps do not correct a behavior contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator.

Share the situation with the child's parents when class is over.

Expect God to work in the child's life!!!

SICK POLICY

Parents are asked not to bring their child to any GABC Preschool/Nursery program if any of the following conditions exist:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe Coughing
- Colored nasal drainage
- Pink eye
- Head lice
- Undiagnosed rash
- Open skin lesions
- Any communicable disease

Parents are encouraged to notify the Coordinator IMMEDIATELY when their child contracts a communicable disease. She will make sure the classroom is sanitized thoroughly.

If a child that appears or becomes ill in the classroom the child should be isolated from the other children and both the parents and the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator contacted immediately.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the case of any emergency, you will want to grab the classroom roster that will be printed off at the beginning of each class and hand delivered to your room. Volunteers will refer to this to make sure that all children are present and accounted for.

Each classroom will also be equipped with a flashlight just in case of a power outage. This flashlight will be located in a cubby in each classroom.

Fire

In the case of a fire, volunteers will remain calm, count all the children in their room and lead the children out of the building in an organized, quick fashion. On the way out the door, they will grab their classroom roster. Also children and volunteers will exit out of the northwest exit while EVERYONE else (parents and others) will exit out the east and west main exits. Only Children will exit out the northwest exit. This exit empties into the back of the GABC parking lot. Once there, all children will sit together in their classroom group and volunteers will take role. Once the parents are out of the building, they will walk to the grass area on the west side of the building to pick up their children. It is important that volunteers continue to check security tags when releasing children back to their parents. The GABC leadership team will be posted along the way to assist in make this plan as efficient as possible! (Please refer to the fire exit plans located in your classroom.)

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

GABC Preschool/Nursery Volunteers should:

- Love the Lord and understand the gospel.
- Love children.
- Pray for our children and families.
- Have a good attitude, be a team player and be teachable.
- Have a servant heart.
- Be committed and accept ownership over the role the Lord has called them to.
- Utilize spiritual gifts.
- Fill out a confidential volunteer application.
- Undergo background and reference checks.

All of our volunteers are responsible to...

- Pray for children and their families.
- Prepare for the weekly lesson.
- Prepare all materials for the lesson in advance.
- Prepare your classroom for the children. Be sure to have enough snack, supplies, water, and make sure the classroom looks clean and organized.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- Greet EVERY child and family as they arrive.
- Check for allergy alerts.
- Implement curriculum.
- Restroom breaks.
- Remain until parents pick up all children.
- Sanitize ALL toys.
- Ensure that NO child is released to their parents without matching the security numbers on both the parent portion of the security tag and the child's security tag.
- Clean up all messes.
- Check diapers regularly throughout the class. ALL dirty diapers MUST be changed by a female 15 minutes before service gets out.
- Attend training days through the year.
- Have fun, and share the love of Christ!

CLASSROOMS

Children are assigned to rooms based on development or age. These are the general guidelines for classroom assignments:

Baby Room—Infant to walking well

Toddler Room—Walking well to 3rd Birthday

Preschool Room— 3 years old to 5 years old

Again, these are guidelines. If a parent does not feel their child has matured enough physically or emotionally to promote, they should talk to the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator about their concerns.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Our classrooms will open to children 15 minutes prior to the service start time and will close 15 minutes after the service is over. If children are in your classroom before or after these times, contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator. Volunteers are expected to be in their classrooms ready to serve 15 minutes before the service and will stay 20 minutes after the service or until all children are safely checked out.

SECURITY PROCEDURES

GABC Preschool/Nursery security is of utmost importance to us. Because this is so crucial to us, we will run a background check on ALL of our volunteers and will require all volunteers to attend the provided trainings.

Youth under the age of 16 who want to serve will need to be accompanied by one of their parents. Any exceptions to this will need to be approved by the Preschool/Nursery Ministry Coordinator.

Each child that comes to GABC Preschool/Nursery will need to be checked in at the check-in desk BEFORE they arrive in their classroom. At the desk they will receive a security tag with a three digit number on it. It is crucial that when the child is picked up you ask to see the parent portion of the security tag. Our children's security is our first priority so please be sure to only release the child AFTER you see the parent's security tag. If they have lost their tag please ask them to print another copy at the check-in desk. If there are discrepancies please keep the child in the classroom and contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator. **DO NOT RELEASE A CHILD WITHOUT MATCHING THE SECURITY NUMBERS ON THE CHILD AND PARENT'S SECURITY TAGS!**

DIAPER AND RESTROOM POLICIES

ONLY FEMALES can change diapers and take children to the restroom. Males will not change diapers or assist children in the restroom. This is to protect our children and our volunteers and to provide additional reassurance for our parents. When changing diapers PLEASE wear gloves to protect yourself as well as the child.

"NEVER ALONE" MENTALITY:

An adult should NEVER be alone with a child ANYWHERE! Regardless of what a volunteer might be doing, they should always have a "Never alone" mentality. If a child needs to use the restroom, please have a FEMALE volunteer take the child to the bathroom. Ask the child if they need assistance in the restroom. If they do, have another volunteer (from another classroom, the service coordinator or ANY adult) watch you in the restroom with the child. If they don't need help, stand outside of the door in the hallway and wait until they are finished. Another helpful tip is to take groups of children to the restroom so you aren't having to make trips every five minutes. **PLEASE TAKE CARE OF OUR CHILDREN AND EASE OUR PARENTS MINDS BY STRICTLY FOLLOWING THIS POLICY!**

FOOD POLICIES

Feeding children is a very serious responsibility therefore it is important to recognize any children that have food allergies. You can do this by looking for allergies listed on the bottom of the child's security tag located on their back. All volunteers should be extremely sensitive to the fact that some allergies can be FATAL! PLEASE BE ON THE ALERT FOR ANY ALLERGIES! This could potentially be a very serious situation very quickly so it is important to be AWARE!

At the beginning of each class, the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator will bring around a class roster to each class. This roster will have every child's name that has been checked in on it. It will also include any special notes and allergies on it. This roster will also be useful in the case of emergencies as well.

A snack will be offered to each child in every classroom except for the baby room. The snack that will be served every week will be water and goldfish or animal crackers. If the snack were to change because of the curriculum the volunteers at the check-in desk will be sure to inform the parents. If you have a child that is allergic to the snack that is being served in the classroom feel free to take him/her out into the hallway to have their own snack to get them away from the temptation of eating other children's snacks.

MEDICAL POLICIES

Although the GABC Preschool/Nursery ministry strives to provide every child a safe and clean environment, children are still children and can have accidents. There are first aid kits located in the cabinet with the rest of classroom supplies. Please contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator if you need access to a more equipped first-aid kit.

If there is an accident, GABC Preschool/nursery policies is to contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator. Once the situation is assessed, the parents will be summoned and child will be treated at her discretion. In the event the parents are not accessible, the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator will administer the appropriate treatment. If the Coordinator is not available the responsibility will fall to the lead teacher. Once the child is treated and their immediate needs are taken care of, the volunteer involved with the accident will fill out an accident report form that is located at the check-in desk. They will then sign the form and turn it into the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator.

If there is a life threatening situation, the lead teacher should call 911 IMMEDIATELY, summon the parents and contact the Preschool/Nursery Coordinator.