

Dear Children's & Youth Worker Applicant,

I appreciate your willingness and faithfulness to serve as a worker or leader in our children's or youth ministries. Your commitment enables us to offer a quality ministry for the children that have been entrusted to our care.

The safety of the children that we, as a church, are responsible for during church functions is of primary concern to our church. I am sure you agree we need to make the most of every opportunity to protect our children and provide them with a safe and nurturing environment. As part of our continuing effort to improve the quality of our childcare, we ask that you would please fill out the attached Application for Children/Youth Work.

We continue to investigate the church's quality of care in terms of our facilities and our procedures. We plan to make all appropriate changes to reduce risk to our children, and to create a safe and positive environment for them.

We also request that you carefully read the Safe and Secure Ministry Policy Sheet. This sheet contains some important guidelines to follow concerning appropriate and inappropriate behavior for those working with children. It is very important to follow these reasonable precautions for the safety of the children and for your own protection.

If you have any questions regarding this screening and assessment process, please call the Youth Pastor, Senior Pastor, or the Church Leader assigned to this responsibility and your questions will be sensitively listened to and answered as completely as possible. Thank you for supporting our efforts to continually improve our childcare and our church's ministry to our children.

Mark Massaro
Pastor of Children's & Student Ministries

P.S. Please keep this letter and the Child Safety Program Policy for reference. Fill out the Child Safety Application and return it to me as soon as possible.

Program Policy

INTRODUCTION:

First Baptist Church (FBC) is a ministry involved with children and youth. We consider this ministry a high calling and a sacred trust. Therefore, we are committed to doing everything within our power to protect young people from the possibility of abuse or neglect. It is our hope and prayer that in the midst of a troubled world, FBC will always be a place where kids can be safe.

It is recognized that it is relatively easy for an individual to make a report of abuse regardless of whether there has been actual abuse. The reputation of an individual or a Christian organization can be seriously harmed with a report of abuse, whether that report turns out to be factual or false.

It is the absolute policy and required conduct of FBC that any form of abuse or neglect is strictly forbidden. FBC seeks to protect the children entrusted to our care from people who may seek to harm, abuse or molest them. Below is an outline of what is in our Child Safety Program Information Packet.

I. Definitions:

- A. "Child abuse" means harm or threatened harm to the health or welfare of a child by a person responsible for the child's health and welfare, which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, or sexual abuse.
- B. "Child neglect" means harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health and welfare which occurs through negligent treatment including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

II. Objectives of Kids Safe Program:

- A. To prevent child abuse by the education of all who minister to children through FBC.
- B. To protect the children entrusted to our care from people who may seek to harm, abuse or molest the children.
- C. To insure proper reporting of suspected cases of child abuse.
- D. To protect our volunteers and our FBC ministries from the possibility of false accusations and litigation.

III. Child Abuse Awareness & Training:

- A. We will talk openly and honestly about the problem of child abuse with FBC staff and volunteers.
- B. We will provide helpful literature on child abuse prevention (our Safe and Secure Ministry Policy Sheets) for our staff and volunteers to read and follow carefully.

- C. We will require those who wish to become staff or volunteers in FBC ministries to read, accept and acknowledge the literature provided by FBC.

IV. Screening Process:

Those who wish to serve in FBC's ministries to children must meet the following requirements:

A. Personal Qualifications:

1. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and in agreement with the Constitution and Bylaws of FBC.
2. Gifts and abilities to work with children.
3. A love for children and a passion to minister to children.
4. Absence of criminal record or history of abusing children and/or youth.
5. A godly lifestyle and testimony in the community

B. Screening Process Details

1. It includes a personal, but confidential questionnaire for you to fill out (see attached).
2. It includes your signed permission for us to conduct a background check (Police Report) on yourself with the Gibson County Sheriff's Department.

a. What information in your background would be of concern to our church?

1. A record which indicates that you have a past or present problem with sexual or physical abuse against minors.
2. A record which indicates you have been guilty of sexual or abusive crimes.
3. We are not necessarily looking for other types of crimes, especially those committed as a young person or before you were saved.
4. We fully realize that salvation changes people's lives and will always take that into consideration.

- C. If I do not want to submit to this investigation, are there other areas of the church ministry that I can work in? Yes, but it will not be a ministry which permits you to work with minor children.

D. Eligibility for Service:

Upon successful completion of the regular application process and the screening procedures, individuals will be accepted as volunteers and will be eligible to serve in our children or youth ministries for which they are qualified as long as they have been a regular attendee of FBC for **at least 6 months**.

V. Reporting Child Abuse:

Reporting suspected cases of abuse is important to the programs and ministry of FBC. Therefore, the following things should be reported immediately to the Pastor of Student Ministries:

- A. If you witness someone abusing a child.
- B. If a child confesses to you that he or she has been abused.

VI. Safe and Secure Ministry Policy - The volunteer and the staff member should be aware of the fact that he or she is placed in a position of some vulnerability to false accusation of abuse. The following guidelines provide the volunteer and the staff member with reasonable precautions to avoid groundless accusations.

- A. Never, ever touch a child's private parts unless doing so discreetly while changing diapers. If possible, change diapers in full view of another adult.
- B. Never spank, hit, or shake a child for any reason. Never yell or scream at a child.
- C. Never be alone with a child in a room with the door closed.
- D. If a child, of any age, needs assistance in the rest room, make sure the rest room door is open so that you are not "behind closed doors."
- E. Take problem children to appropriate departmental authorities. They will take the child to a parent or take the child home.
- F. Never transport a minor alone for any reason, not even following the event or activity without parental permission (it is advised to have another adult present).
- G. Never release a child to anyone except parents, guardians, or parent approved designate.
- H. Never allow school-age children to sit on your lap when you are alone and always keep your hands VISIBLE at all times.
- I. Never tickle children.
- J. Never go out on visitation alone, always go in pairs.
- K. Teachers should be in class early to welcome children and to supervise their arrival.
- L. Teachers must remain with the students until they are picked up by a parent or authorized family member or other adult
- M. Never call kids bad names. (ex. brats, creeps, etc)
- N. Be obvious as well as discreet about any hugs given to children.
- O. All over-night activities must have the express approval of the Pastor of Student Ministries or Deacon Board. All minor attendees must have a signed parental permission slip and also an emergency medical treatment release.
- P. A child should never be forced to participate in a game or activity in which he or she does not feel comfortable. Allow the child to sit on the sidelines and watch. If and when the child is ready, allow the child to join in.

- Q. Extreme caution should be taken when playing games with children or youth. Be sure you are in a public area with other adults present. The giving of “wedgies,” “pink bellies,” or other activities that might be misconstrued as abuse and are strictly prohibited.

VII. Emergency Procedures – Should weather or other threats occur, the volunteer and the staff member are responsible for children’s safety.

A. If the fire alarm sounds:

1. Line up your children and exit the building through the nearest safe exit. A teacher/helper should lead and end the line. Count the children and refer to the sign-in sheet to make sure you have all of them before leaving the room.
2. Stay together in the parking lot at a safe distance from the building. Avoid standing near fire hydrants or emergency equipment.
3. Count the children again.
4. Wait for officials instructions

B. If the weather radios or tornado alarms sound:

(weather radios are located in the Ministry Annex lobby, Ministry Center sound booth, and the Loft (2nd floor)

1. Line up your children and move (if necessary) to the nearest room with a Tornado Shelter Sign (labeled outside each classroom). A teacher/helper should lead and end the line. Count the children and refer to the sign-in sheet to make sure you have all of them before leaving the room.
2. Count the children again.
3. Stay together in the room until the all clear signal has sounded or you are notified otherwise.
4. In the Ministry Center
 - a. Adults can meet in the first floor rooms without windows, stairways, bathrooms or hallways
 - b. Assign an adult to close the curtain to the large window.
5. In Ministry Annex keep the children in the 2 rooms under the mezzanine with ceilings. IF there is not adequate space, adult classes should go to the back corner rooms.

VIII. Children’s Ministries Sign-in Procedure

During each children’s program, you must have the parent or guardian sign in their child(ren) and assign a number and tag for each. Ask if this is their first time. If it is, they

must complete a registration form. We only need one per family. Copies must be made for additional classes.

If you need to contact a parent during a worship service, call the Video Room (ext. 117) with the child's check in number. If the parent is an Adult Bible Fellowship, or in the Ministry annex, call the classroom or call or text them via cell phone. The phone in the Annex Lobby has a speed button labeled for Video.

When your class is over, check the list to see if the child may leave alone or must wait to be picked up by a designated family member.

Please help parents and unattended children follow these guidelines:

- Use the Cry Room when necessary
- No running in the ministry center or hallways
- No one on the platform
- No playing in the parking lots or roads
- No one in the upstairs of the ministry center
- Children should not be left alone in any other area of the buildings