

Nursery Policies and Procedures Document for Oconee Presbyterian Church

At Oconee Presbyterian Church, we celebrate each child as a gift from God. We seek to come alongside parents and minister to children in order that they will come to know Jesus, love Jesus, serve Jesus, and share Jesus. The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe and loving environment where we meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the youngest in our congregation and those visiting Oconee in such a way that they will feel loved and valued. A child is never too young to learn about Jesus and His love. We are committed to effective ministry with children, nurturing them and serving their parents.

The purpose of our nursery ministry is two-fold:

1. It enables parents to participate in church services and Sunday School freely.
2. It exposes even the youngest babies to loving attitudes, actions, and a Christian atmosphere, which begins to form their spiritual development.

The nursery policies have been set for the following reasons:

1. Ensure the safety and well-being of children.
2. Provide consistent expectations for children, parents, and workers.
3. Promote clear communication that aids parents and nursery workers.

Check-In:

1. Greet the parents at the door. Parents are encouraged to stay outside the room. Be ready to assist the parents by settling the child in the room.
2. Have parents sign their child in at the check-in desk and attach their child's label to his or her back. If a child's diaper bag is not labeled, give the parent a luggage tag to complete and attach to the bag. Extra labels are provided to label cups if needed.
3. Have parents complete a Nursery Information Sheet if visiting the nursery for the first time. They should also let the volunteers know if the child has an allergy. Allergies should be noted in the computer system and on the child's name tag.
4. Give parents the parent label. This label needs to be presented to pick up the child.
5. Children who will be staying for multiple events (e.g. Sunday school and worship service) should check in for all events at the same time.
6. **Parents* must remain on the church property at all times while their child is in the nursery.**

Check Out:

1. When parents come, be ready to assist them by bringing their child and his/her belongings to the door.
2. Have the parents stay outside the room while checking out their child. Match the parent label to the child's label. If the parent does not have his/her label, please contact the

*For purposes of this document, "parent" or "parents" also encompasses other adult family member(s) or guardian(s) who bring the child to church.

Children's Ministry Director or another member of the children's ministry team so the parent's identification can be verified.

3. Children may be released to siblings or other family members, but ONLY high schoolers and older that have the parent's sticker.

Separation Anxiety:

We want to be mindful of children's personalities and that some children need to be played with and engaged in order to help distract from being separated from parents. If a child continues to be inconsolable (e.g., crying continuously for 10 minutes), text the parent or have another volunteer get the parent.

Food/Snack:

1. We provide animal crackers or goldfish crackers and water. These snacks should not be offered to children under 12 months unless specified by the parent.
2. Check labels for allergies before giving snacks.
3. Have children clean up the toys and sit down at the table for their snack. Snacks can also be served outside. Pray with the children before they begin eating.
4. Snack time is a wonderful time to sit and talk with the children, read a Bible story, or review catechism questions and memory verses. Check the worker board for suggested activities.
5. Due to safety concerns, we cannot spoon-feed infants.

Bathroom:

1. Parents are encouraged to take their child to the restroom before dropping him/her off in the nursery. They may use the nursery bathroom or the bathroom across the hall. Parents are also welcome to come back and take their child to the restroom between Sunday school and worship.
2. If a volunteer needs to assist in taking a child to the bathroom, use the toddler room bathroom. The door must remain partially open.
3. Keep children from playing in the bathroom or entering while another child is using the restroom.
4. Male workers may only assist their own children in the bathroom.

Diaper Changing:

1. Each child's diaper should be checked/changed during each service.
2. Use the diaper and wipes provided by the parent. If a diaper and wipes are not provided, we have some in our cabinet.
3. Gloves are available for changing diapers.
4. Never leave a child unattended on the changing table. To prevent falls, keep one hand on the child at all times.
5. If the changing table sheet is soiled, remove it and place it in the dirty laundry container. Replace it with a clean sheet.
6. Wash your hands when you have finished.

7. Male workers may only change diapers for their own children.

Discipline:

1. Make sure children know expectations for behaviors. Intervene when needed to prevent behavior from escalating.
2. Sharing is something that needs to be taught, particularly at the age of our nursery children. Stay engaged with the children and what they are doing so you can easily intervene when needed.
3. Provide immediate and consistent responses to negative behavior: Tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is (e.g., "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building.") If this is not effective, the child should be redirected to another activity.
4. NO PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT IS ALLOWED.
5. If disruptive behavior continues, the Children's Ministry Director should be notified. Anything beyond verbal correction must be handled by the Children's Ministry Director, who will discuss the incident with the parent(s) involved.

Injury Procedures:

1. In case of a minor injury, a first aid kit is available in the Toddler room in a cubby.
2. Always remember to tell the parent when they pick up their child if ANY injury occurs.
3. If medical assistance is needed, get the parent and the Children's Ministry Director.
4. If the situation is life-threatening, call 911 first and then get the parent and the Children's Ministry Director.

Toys:

1. Not all toys are geared for all the children. Do not let toys from the toddler room go to the infant room.
2. Please do not get out all the toys at one time.
3. Children need to be taught how to share. Workers need to be active participants in this process. Please help children ask to play with the toy that they want. Help facilitate the children taking turns.
4. If you find a broken toy, place it on the counter with a note to the Children's Ministry Director.
5. Have the children assist you in cleaning the room by placing toys in the correct bin.

Suggested discipleship activities:

Because we take the discipleship of our children seriously, we encourage volunteers to find opportunities to point our children to Jesus. The following are suggestions that volunteers can use in discipleship:

1. Pray audibly or silently for each child in your care.

2. The toddler room has a board that lists the Sunday school lesson of the day, the catechisms, memory verse, and song of the month. Teaching aids for these items will be placed on the toy cubby. A coloring sheet will be placed on the counter.
3. A CD player and Bluetooth speaker are on the toddler room counter. Play music that will point our children to Jesus.
4. Bible story books are in the infant and toddler rooms.

Cleaning:

1. Have the children help you collect the toys and place them in the proper bin when the service has ended.
2. Use the cleaning spray or wipes provided to wipe down the toys that the children were playing with.
3. Please be especially mindful of toys that children put in their mouths and make sure they are thoroughly cleaned. These items may need to be washed in the sink and set out to dry.
4. Wipe down the table and chairs.
5. Remove any crib sheets that were used and place in dirty laundry container. Replace them with clean sheets. Remove the changing table sheet if it is soiled and place in the dirty laundry container. Replace the changing table sheet with a clean one.
6. Use the vacuum in the infant room to vacuum up any snack items or trash on the floor.
7. Follow the posted instructions to empty the diaper pail and take the bagged diapers to the trash can outside the back kitchen door. Prepare the diaper pail so that it will be ready for the next use.

Health:

1. Please don't work if you are sick.
2. If a child in the nursery is exhibiting symptoms that could be contagious, please get the parents so they can either keep the sick child with them or take the child home.
3. In order to provide a safe, healthy nursery for all our children, children may not be in the nursery if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:
 - a fever currently or within the last 24 hours (must be 24 hr. fever free without medication)
 - an unidentified rash
 - an irritating cough that has persisted more than 48 hours
 - colored nasal discharge
 - any symptom that they usually stay home from school with
 - lethargic behavior (you know when the child isn't feeling well)
 - diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
 - head lice, pinkeye, ringworm, impetigo, or any other condition that is highly contagious

Workers:

1. Nursery workers must be at least 15 years old and either members at Oconee Presbyterian Church or in the process of becoming members. An exception is made for college students, who may serve in the nursery if they have regularly attended Oconee for at least three months and meet the other qualifications below.
2. All nursery workers have completed Oconee Presbyterian Church's children's ministry training and application process.
3. At least two workers are required to be in the nursery at all times. Volunteers in Training will not count toward the minimum number of nursery workers. See Volunteers in Training document for definition and application requirements.
4. Workers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the worship service and should communicate with the Children's Ministry Director if they will not make it on time.
5. If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, please find a substitute and communicate the change to the Children's Ministry Director (children@oconeepres.org) and the church Administrative Assistant (office@oconepres.org).
6. Refrain from using cell phones and other devices except when needed to contact parents or call 911. Phones should be on vibrate/silent.