

Child and Youth Safety Resources

Presbytery of Genesee Valley
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Much of the conceptual framework of PGV's Child and Youth Safety Policy is from the Bible and the Church's *Book of Confessions*, as well as the *Book of Order* and our Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy. All churches working on their own child and youth safety policies are strongly encouraged to consult these resources.

I. Childcare Guidelines for Presbytery-Sponsored Childcare

These guidelines are given to all Child Care Providers at Presbytery events. They are used for childcare at Presbytery-sponsored events.

All children are precious to God. As a body of Christ, the Presbytery of Genesee Valley has a moral responsibility to ensure the safety of every child within our care. The goals of these childcare guidelines include:

1. Protecting all children participating in activities, programs, and events sponsored by the Presbytery from all forms of abuse.
 2. To provide quality childcare at all Presbytery meetings and events.
 3. Protecting our Child Care Providers as well as all other volunteer staff from false allegations of child abuse.
- Per Presbytery regulations, two Child Care Providers are required. One shall be at least 23 years of age.
 - Ensure that completed Child Care Information Forms are accessible
 - Ensure that children are supervised at all times
 - Under no circumstances shall a child be alone with a caregiver
 - Provide children, ages infant to teen, with support and engaging activities
 - Supervise with available crafts, games or play
 - Supervise any meals or snacks (food provided) with attention to any food allergies
 - Keep the playroom and childcare areas clean and organized
 - Provide opportunities for rest time and attend to children's needs (restroom, potty training, diapering)
 - Promote and reinforce positive, healthy, non-violent behaviors, while implementing positive behavior management strategies
 - Clearly and effectively communicate in a manner that children understand
 - Document any significant behaviors or concerns for parents' attention
 - Child Care Providers shall be released after one hour if there are no pre-registered children needing care and shall be paid for time served.

Other notes – when possible, change in availability of either Child Care Provider or pre-registered children needing care needs to be communicated to the Event Organizer at least 48 hours in advance

A legal name and address of Child Care Providers is required for payment – payment will be submitted within one week of the event

Bathroom Policy:

No child, regardless of age, will be permitted to use a bathroom alone with an unrelated adult. ***Parents are expected to handle bathroom duties for their children. In the event***

that a child will need to use the bathroom, a parent will be contacted for assistance unless a waiver is signed by the parent. In the event that a parent is not available to assist, the following procedures will be applicable.

Procedures:

The “Rule of Three” will be practiced, requiring there to be at least **three** people present – i.e., one Child Care Provider and two or more children, or two Child Care Providers and one child. Three or more children unsupervised do **NOT** meet the “rule of three” criteria.

Child Care Providers will ensure the restroom is unoccupied and assess for safety before allowing children to use the bathroom, plus monitor the area while the child is using the bathroom. If the bathroom is occupied, Child Care Providers will maintain presence in the bathroom the entire time children are inside.

Child Care Providers take children to the bathroom in groups whenever possible, with the group being no larger than the number of stalls or urinals. If Child Care Providers are assisting young children in the toilet stalls, the doors to the stalls must remain open.

Toileting, diapering, and clothing changes are all private activities that must be supervised using the “Rule of Three.” This policy allows privacy for the children as well as and protection for the Child Care Providers.

Medication Policy:

Child Care Providers will not be responsible for administration of medication.

Parents are expected to administer any prescribed medication to their child as noted in the Child Care Information form.

Procedures:

Child Care Providers will contact the parent to administer medication to the child at the prescribed time required or any other time needed.

II. Childcare Registration Form for Presbytery-Sponsored Childcare

These forms are utilized by the Presbytery for events providing childcare for young children.

Please fill in this questionnaire so we may better understand your child.

Child's _____ Full _____ Name _____
 Nickname _____

Has your child been in daycare before? Yes _____ No _____

Eating Habits:

Does your child have a special diet? _____ Are there any foods that should not be served to your child?

If yes, please list the food and the reason

List your child's favorite and least favorite foods

Does your child require a bottle _____ sippy cup _____ high chair _____ booster seat

Sleeping Habits:

Does your child take naps? If yes, how long does your child usually nap?

Does your child have any problems getting to sleep or staying asleep? If yes, explain

Health Concerns:

Does your child have any known health concerns? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please describe:

Does your child take any medications on a regular basis? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, list the medications/dosage/and how often taken: _____

Does your child have any known allergies? Yes____ No____

If yes, list the allergy and how it is dealt with: _____

Behavior:

How do you “reward” or “discipline” your child? _____

Bathroom Habits:

Does your child use the bathroom alone at home? Yes____ No____

Does your child use diapers ____ “Pull up” pants ____

Is your child currently being potty trained? Yes____ No____

If yes, please list the training process and any communication/signal the child uses when needing to use the bathroom:

Bathroom Policy:

No child, regardless of age, will be permitted to use a bathroom alone with an unrelated adult. ***Parents are expected to handle bathroom duties for their children. In the event that a child will need to use the bathroom, a parent will be contacted for assistance unless a waiver is signed by the parent.***

Please sign below if you allow caregivers to accompany your child to the bathroom per the policy:

Medication Policy:

Child Care Providers will not be responsible for administration of medication. ***Parents are expected to administer any prescribed medication to their child and will be contacted to return for administration.***

Please note below any prescription medication and required administration times:

Anything else about your child you feel we should know?

Contact Information:

Please provide contact information – including cell phone number and your physical location (meeting rooms, etc), in case we need to contact you during the time your child is in our care:

III. Common Indicators of Child Abuse or Maltreatment

Taken from NY State's Child Protective Services website, <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/signs.asp>

This list is not all-inclusive, and some abused or maltreated children may not show any of these symptoms.

Indicators of Physical Abuse can include:

- Injuries to the eyes or both sides of the head or body (accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body);
- Frequently appearing injuries such as bruises, cuts and/or burns, especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause. These may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns or impressions of other instruments;
- Destructive, aggressive or disruptive behavior;
- Passive, withdrawn or emotionless behavior; and
- Fear of going home or fear of parent(s).

Indicators of Sexual Abuse can include:

- Symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases;
- Injury to genital area;
- Difficulty and/or pain when sitting or walking;
- Sexually suggestive, inappropriate or promiscuous behavior or verbalization;
- Expressing age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual relations; and
- Sexual victimization of other children.

Indicators of Maltreatment can include:

- Obvious malnourishment, listlessness or fatigue;
- Stealing or begging for food;
- Lack of personal care – poor personal hygiene, torn and/or dirty clothes;
- Untreated need for glasses, dental care or other medical attention;
- Frequent absence from or tardiness to school; and
- Child inappropriately left unattended or without supervision.

IV. Why The Presbytery's Policy Can't Be a Church's Policy

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley is not a church, and the policy writers do not know each church's specific families and safety needs. Every church and ministry is different from each other, and needs separate policies to keep their children safe.

A few quick examples:

- A three-story church may want to include rules about whether infants can play near stairs, or whether youth group activities need to be wheelchair accessible.
- Any upstate New York church may want to include rules about when it is too cold to take toddlers outside to play.
- Some churches have no doors with windows, while some churches have no doors to their nursery at all – write a policy which describes your church building.
- A rural church may want to require medical forms for all youth group activities, if the activity will take children beyond easy reach of their parents.
- A church with an older building may want to write specific instructions about which rooms are free of lead-based paint and safe for children to play in.
- A church which plans field trips may need to include car seat use in their policy.

The Presbytery's Child and Youth Safety Policy is intended to be practical for events with multiple churches, such as Triennium, all-church youth retreats, or childcare during Presbytery meetings. This policy will not fit what is needed during your church's activities to keep children safe. Write your own policy, make sure it is realistic and feasible for your congregation, and stick with it. You are always welcome and encouraged to call the Presbytery and ask for help writing your policy.

V. Persons Consulted While Writing Child and Youth Safety Policy

Please contact the Presbytery offices for contact information.

- Resource and Education Committee

ADOPTED by the Presbytery of Genesee Valley 5/23/17

- Youth Leaders of Genesee Valley Presbytery
- Christian Educators of Genesee Valley Presbytery
- Mel Olver, Presbytery Attorney
- Jim Evinger, Presbytery of Genesee Valley
- Christopher Williams, Presbytery insurance agent
- Parents currently utilizing child care at Presbytery events