

YOUNG CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS)



2808 WALDO AVE.
MIDLAND, MICHIGAN 48642
989.835.7101

Dear Friend,

We thank God for young children (birth – age 5) and the opportunity we have to teach them at church. We want them to feel loved, and have happy church experiences as they grow. We take seriously our privilege and responsibility to provide quality Bible-teaching and quality care in a clean and safe learning environment at church.

We have compiled this Policies and Procedures Manual to provide information and clarification concerning the programs and ministries for preschool age children. These guidelines are not intended to be restrictive but rather to enhance and improve our ministry.

Please read this manual carefully and join with us in this effort. If you have questions and suggestions, please feel free to call us.

Our prayer is that you and your family will have many happy and rewarding experiences through your involvement in the young children's ministry of Eagle Ridge Church of God.

Sincerely,

Christian Education Chair

~ Table of Contents ~

Mission Statement	1
Purpose of Our Young Children’s Ministry	1
Our Activity-based Teaching Approach, Curriculum for Preschoolers	2
Opportunities for Young Children (Worship Service, Sunday School, Parent/Child Dedication) ...	3
General Policies.....	4
Playground Policies	5
Health Policies	6
Food Policies	6
Infectious Disease Policies	7
Hygiene Policies	7
Diaper Changing Procedures	8
Body Fluids Spill Procedures	8
Room Cleaning Procedures	9
Washing and Disinfecting Toys	10
End of Session Clean-up	10
Safety	11
Handling Accidents/Injuries	11
Security	12
Security Tags	12
Why Do We Need Security Tags	12
Security Tag Procedure	12
Child Abuse Policy	13
Parent Responsibilities	14
Before Coming to Church	14
Arriving at Your Child’s Room	14
Calling for Your Child	15
Tips and Suggestions	15
Promotion	16
Teacher-Child Ratios	16
Guidelines for Discipline	17
Policies for Teachers	18
Volunteer Teachers	18
Employed Teachers	18
Training	18
Expectations of Teachers	19
Teacher Responsibilities	19
Youth Helpers	20
Youth Helpers for Child Care.....	20
Greeters and Policy for Young Children	21
Screening Procedures for Teachers	22
Accident/Injury Report Form	23
Child Information Form.....	24

Mission Statement

The Young Children's Ministry of Eagle Ridge Church of God exists to provide a secure, nurturing, Biblical environment for young children where biblical truths are taught as a foundation for salvation and Christian living.

Purpose of Our Young Children's Ministry

"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52, NIV)

Our goals for the growth of young children are based on the fact that they grow just as Jesus grew – mentally (in wisdom), physically (in stature), socially/emotionally (in favor with man), and spiritually (in favor with God).

Therefore we seek to:

- Lay a strong spiritual foundation in the life of each child we teach, with the hope that when older, each child will accept Christ as Savior.
- Help children begin to understand God is creator, giver of all good things; Jesus is God's Son and our best friend; and the Bible is the true, special book that tells about God and Jesus.
- Make church a happy, clean, and safe place to learn Bible truths.
- Provide activity-based teaching, which includes Bible-learning activities that allow children to make progress in problem solving, sharing, expressing themselves in appropriate ways, thinking of others with kindness, and learning to love others as themselves.
- Partner with the home in nurturing the spiritual growth of the young child.
- Encourage parents/guardians to actively participate in worship, Bible study, fellowship, and ministry opportunities.

Our Activity-Based Teaching Approach

Young children are children from birth to Kindergarten. They can be described in one word: ACTIVE! They are constantly exploring their environment and actively learning. Because preschoolers are always learning, we are always teaching. Young children need to be challenged with activities for which they are ready and which help them grow as Jesus grew – in body, mind, and spirit.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 instructs adults to teach children as they go about the everyday, familiar activities of life. This biblical principle is implemented at church as we utilize all or some of the following Bible teaching activities for all age levels of young children: Books, Puzzles, Art, Blocks, Crafts, Dramatic Play, Nature, and Music. Each activity is planned to help children learn a Bible truth. The active involvement of Christian teachers is essential; otherwise the children's play has no spiritual purpose. The teacher uses Bible phrases, verses, stories, pictures, songs, and Bible conversation at appropriate times so children can relate the Bible truth to what they are doing. In this way young children learn that the Bible has meaning for daily living.

God seeks to make Himself known to persons of all ages through whatever means they can become more aware of Him. God designed young children to learn through: Play, Imitation, Relationships, Curiosity, Senses, Satisfaction, Repetition, and Hands-On Experience.

Activity teaching, planned by intentional teachers, allows young children to learn in the ways God intended.

Curriculum for Preschoolers (3 ½ - 5)

Eagle Ridge Church of God uses the Hands-On Bible Curriculum® published by Group Publishing. The information that follows is directly from their website:

“Teach as Jesus taught. Use captivating gizmos to bring kids closer to God!

What if Jesus taught your kids? How would he do it? What tools would he use? What would he want them to learn and remember?

The Bible gives us lots of examples of how Jesus did it 2,000 years ago. He used everyday objects like coins, fish, and plants to help people remember the truths he shared with them.

Hands-On Bible Curriculum does the same thing. We call them "gizmos," and they serve the same purpose: to help kids understand important Bible truths. It worked for Jesus, and it still works today.

It's guaranteed to work. Time after time, kids are able to remember what they learned weeks, months, and even years later. Since they experience what they're learning, it sticks longer.”

Opportunities for Young Children

Worship Service

We encourage families to worship together through music at the beginning of our worship service. As school-aged children are dismissed, young children may be taken to the appropriate room. However, our young children's rooms are open and staffed ten minutes prior to the service if families wish to take advantage of this opportunity at that time.

Sunday School

Our young children's ministry offers children the opportunity to learn to love God, connect with their peers and caring adults, and learn how to serve others. Our young children's rooms are separated into three areas:

- Infants (birth through 18 months)
- Toddlers (18 months – 3 ½ years) 18 month olds must be stable walkers.
- Preschool (3 ½ years – Age 5) 3 ½ year olds must be potty-trained.

Parent/Child Dedication

The parent/child dedication ceremony takes place during the morning worship hour. This is a time for parents/guardians/grandparents to publicly express their commitment to raising their child in a Christ-centered home as they lay spiritual foundations that will one day make it possible for their child to accept Jesus as Savior. This ceremony also gives the church family the opportunity to show their support for the parents in this most important task. Arrangements for the ceremony are made through the church office.



General Policies

1. Young Children's Ministry facilities will open for receiving children 10 minutes prior to regular church-wide activities and services.
2. Young children must be brought to their rooms by a parent or adult guardian, and will only be released to the parent or adult guardian who presents the security tag.
3. A parent should come for his/her child immediately following the service or function. This prevents children from becoming upset when they have to wait too long and also shows respect for the child's teachers.
4. To avoid congestion in the Young Children's Ministry areas, it is recommended that only one parent deliver and pick up the child from his/her room.
5. For the safety of our children and to provide the best teaching environment, only age-appropriate children and approved teaching personnel are permitted beyond the gate in the young children's ministry rooms.
6. Under no circumstances are children to be left in the Young Children's Ministry areas unattended at any time.
7. In order to provide safety and enable teachers to provide activities that meet the needs of children, the use of the Young Children's Ministry area and equipment is limited to infants, toddlers and preschoolers. (Rooms and furnishings are not multi-age appropriate.)
8. Supplies and/or equipment may not be added or removed from the ministry rooms without consultation with the Young Children's Ministry Coordinator or Christian Education Chair.
9. For the safety of our children and the liability protection of our adults, at least 2 teachers should be in the room with our infants, toddlers and preschoolers during any given session. (The Two Adult Rule is a recommended safeguard from church insurance companies.)
10. A DVD surveillance camera is in use in the infant nursery.



Playground Policies

1. The playground is located adjacent to the building in the back. It is fenced in and accessible through gates located at the north and south ends. Access from inside the building is located in Rooms 107 and 108.
2. The playground is designed for children up to age 5.
3. Adult supervision is required for children using the playground at any time. (The Two Adult Rule applies for use during church activities.)
4. For the safety of children, broad age-groups of children may not use the playground at the same time during scheduled church activities. [Younger preschoolers (up to age 3) are allowed on the playground at times when older children (ages 4 to 5) are not present and only when accompanied by a teacher or authorized adult.]
5. Older children (ages 6 and up) and teens may not play on playground equipment.
6. No rough play or misuse of equipment will be permitted.
7. The playground may be used only during daylight hours.
8. A sign posted in plain view reads:
 - Equipment designed for children to age 5
 - Adult supervision required
 - Not responsible for injuries
9. Damaged equipment and other hazards should be reported immediately to the church office.



Health Policies

1. For the protection of all children and adults at church, parents are requested not to bring a child who appears to be ill. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a child should not be taken from home when any of the following exists:
 - Fever – currently or within the previous 24 hours (without medication)
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Any symptom of a childhood disease such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
 - Common cold – from the onset through one week
 - Sore throat
 - Croup
 - Any unexplained rash
 - Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo
 - Pink eye or other eye infection
2. A parent will be notified if a child develops illness during preschool activities. The child will be separated from other children and the parent/guardian called to care for the sick child.
3. No oral medication will be given to a preschool child except by a parent or guardian. (All medication should remain in the parent's possession.)
4. If a child contracts a childhood disease following a session in a preschool department, parents should notify the church office so that other parents and teachers can be informed.
5. Parents should report any allergies and special needs to the caregivers.
6. All toys used by young preschoolers are washed and sanitized after each teaching session.

Food Policies

Due to an increasing number of children with food allergies, we offer only goldfish and/or animal crackers with water during snack time in the toddler and preschool rooms. Please verify that there are no allergies to the snacks we provide. Please leave personal snacks at home. They make sharing too difficult and may actually be dangerous for those children with allergies. No snacks are provided in our infant rooms.

Infectious Disease Policy

Believing we have a biblical mandate to minister to all people, the occasion may arise when we are called to respond to the health care needs of children with serious diseases including, but not limited to, Hepatitis-B, HIV and Tuberculosis.

Parents or guardians of children with these types of health concerns are expected to inform the Chair of Christian Education. (All information and records, whether publicly or privately maintained, that identify a person with AIDS virus infection shall be strictly confidential.) At the discretion of the Christian Education Chair, a committee may be formed to review individual cases of infectious disease for the protection of all those involved. If the parent or guardian does not agree to disclosure as necessary, the Christian Education Chair may work with the family to see that home ministry is provided if possible.

After review and consultation with professional medical personnel (and legal, if deemed necessary), teachers and caregivers will be instructed in the universal precautions and procedures for hygiene (appropriate for the particular disease) and will be expected to follow them.

Hygiene Policies

Maintaining a germ-free environment is a top priority. Because hands are the main carriers of germs, we enforce a strict hand washing policy for all caregivers.

Teachers or Caregivers should wash hands* ...

1. Upon arrival into the preschool room or before beginning a teaching assignment outside the room.
2. Before preparing, serving, or eating food.
3. Before and after feeding infants or children.
4. After using or helping a child use the toilet.
5. After every diaper change.
6. After removal of disposable gloves.
7. After contact with body fluids (such as spit up, nasal discharge, tears, saliva, urine, stool, blood or vomitus).
8. After handling soiled items.

Infants and Children should wash hands* ...

1. Before preparing, handling, or eating food or snacks.
2. After every diaper change.
3. After using the toilet.
4. After contact with body fluids.

*According to the Center for Disease Control, the proper method to wash hands is to wet them, rub soap into lather and rub hands together for 15 seconds. Rinse. The faucet should be turned off with a paper towel after drying your hands.

Diaper Changing Procedures*

1. Gather all necessary items.
2. Lay child on a strip of changing paper.
3. Put on a new pair of disposable gloves for every diaper change.
4. Remove wet/soiled diaper and use wipes or damp paper towels to clean child. (Use only wipes provided by parent or wipes labeled hypoallergenic.)
5. Place wipes and diaper in plastic bag or lined trash receptacle with lid.
6. Remove gloves by pulling the glove inside out from the wrist so that all residue remains inside the glove.
7. Put on clean diaper.
8. Wash hands with soap and water after each diaper change.
9. Record the changing time and indicate "BM" or "WET" on the diaper bag tag.
10. Check children near the end of the session. SEND THEM HOME DRY!

*NOTE: The same procedure applies to children who are wearing "Pull-Ups".

Body Fluids Spill Procedures

1. Control bleeding by applying pressure with a clean towel or cloth and care for the injured appropriately depending on the severity of the situation.
2. First Aid supplies are located in each room in the cupboard above the sink and labeled with a red cross.
3. In order to protect everyone, disposable gloves are to be worn when handling any accident involving blood or body fluids. This includes:
 - Wiping a runny nose
 - Cleaning a cut or scrape
 - Checking a diaper
 - Assisting a child with toileting needs
 - Any time there is a risk of touching blood, vomitus, mucus, urine, or stool
4. If an emergency prevents the use of gloves, immediately clean the exposed skin with soap and water to reduce the possibility of infection.
5. Any teacher with an open wound or lesion will keep it covered until the area has healed.
6. Clean any affected surfaces with disinfectant. (Bleach Solution: ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon cool water OR 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart cool water.)
7. Wash hands, even after wearing gloves.

Room Cleaning Procedures

Eagle Ridge Church of God contracts with a third party to clean and sanitize our preschool rooms on a weekly basis. If done in-house, our procedures would be as follows:

The primary sanitizer used is a bleach solution, mixed fresh daily.

The Center for Disease Control recommends:

For bathrooms, diapering areas, etc.:

¼ cup bleach to 1-gallon cool water OR 1-tablespoon bleach to 1-quart cool water

For disinfecting toys, eating utensils, etc.:

1-tablespoon bleach to 1-gallon cool water OR 1-tsp bleach to 1-quart cool water

1. In rooms with cribs, beds must be stripped of used linens and other items as the children leave.
2. Linens, smocks, bibs, burping diapers, blankets, etc. should be laundered after each use.
3. Each bed (including mattresses, rails, and any items attached to the beds such as mobiles, mirrors, etc.) should be wiped thoroughly with bleach solution and left to air dry.
4. All equipment such as infant swings, walkers should be washed and sanitized after children leave.
5. Mats and vinyl-covered climbing equipment for babies/toddlers should be washed and sanitized after each session.
6. Diaper changing surfaces must be sanitized at the end of each session.
7. All toys used by infants or toddlers must be sanitized between uses by individual children (see Washing and Disinfecting Toys).
8. Furniture used by older preschoolers should be cleaned weekly or when soiled.
9. Tables and countertops used for food preparation and eating must be sanitized before and after using.
10. Toys and equipment used by older preschoolers and not put into their mouths should be cleaned at least weekly and when obviously soiled. A soap and water wash followed by clear water rinsing and air drying should be adequate. No disinfecting is required. (This includes toy dishes, dolls, transportation toys, etc.)

Washing and Disinfecting Toys

Toys mouthed by a child must be sanitized before another child plays with that toy. When a baby or toddler finishes playing with a toy, teachers should retrieve it from the play area and put it in a bin reserved for dirty toys. (This bin should be out of children's reach.) Toys can be washed at a convenient time and then transferred to a bin for clean toys and safely reused.

1. To wash and disinfect a hard plastic toy:
 - Scrub the toy in warm, soapy water. Use a brush to reach into the crevices.
 - Rinse the toy in clean water.
 - Immerse the toy in a mild bleach solution and allow it to soak for 10-20 minutes.
 - Remove the toy from the bleach solution and rinse in cool water.
 - Air dry.
2. Children in diapers should have only washable toys.
3. Stuffed toys and those not easily washed and sanitized should not be used for any session.
4. Toys too large to immerse in water must be washed and sanitized by wiping.
5. Toys used outside, on the playground, or inside with sand must be washed before they are returned to the classroom.

End of Session Clean-Up

1. Put away all items, art equipment, and supplies to their designated places.
2. Make sure all puzzles and items having more than one piece are complete before putting them away.
3. Clean, disinfect, and air dry the tables, chairs, toys, cabinets, sink, etc. (Refer to Room/Toy Cleaning procedures.)
4. Sweep or vacuum any debris.
5. Furniture and equipment should be arranged according to Sunday School placement.
6. Any furniture that was moved should be returned to its designated area at the conclusion of each program.

Safety

At Eagle Ridge Church of God, we believe a few simple procedures are a small price to pay for the safety and security of young children and for the peace of mind of teachers and parents.

1. Only persons 18 or older may teach in the Young Children's Ministry. (See "Youth Helpers" for information regarding teenage teachers).
2. All children's rooms should have at least 2 teachers present for any given session. If the teachers are related, it is recommended a third non-related teacher be enlisted. (The Two Adult Rule reduces the risk of child sexual abuse, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation. Two related individuals are considered as one person, therefore requiring a third, unrelated person in the room.)
3. Teacher-child ratios should be maintained according to current standards. (See Teacher- Child Ratios)
4. Because equipment and room furnishings are developmentally specific and age specific, only children may use the rooms as designated.
5. Entry into ministry rooms is limited to young children and their teachers during teaching sessions.
6. Each ministry door has a window for teachers to see who is at the door and parents to see inside the room. (However, peeking in the window should be done sparingly! Onlookers unnecessarily upset young children and distract teachers from their tasks.)
7. Names of children with food allergies will be posted in plain view.
8. Foods served for tasting activities will be posted to notify parents.
9. Bottles, sippy cups and pacifiers MUST be labeled with the child's name.
10. Running, shouting, etc. should be reserved for outside play.
11. Because of the potential danger for eye damage, GLITTER should not be used with young children.
12. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each room. Other emergency procedures will be made available to teachers.
 - In case of fire or other disaster, teachers in each room will take young children to the designated area.
 - In case of tornado or weather emergency, teachers in each room will take young children to the designated area.
13. Fire extinguishers are available in each Young Children's Ministry room.
14. First Aid Kits are located in each room in the cupboard above the sink and labeled with a red cross.
15. In case of an emergency where an ambulance is needed, a caregiver should press the emergency button located on the wall by the entry door in each ministry room.

Handling Accidents/Injuries:

1. In the unlikely event a child is injured seriously, parents will be notified immediately.
2. If a child sustains a minor injury (i.e. bump, bruise, scrape), parents will be notified when the child is picked up.
3. If the injury is life threatening and medical assistance is needed, the volunteer will press the emergency button located on the wall by the entry door in each preschool room.
4. If a child has been bitten, the wound will be washed with soap and water, and then a cold compress will be applied.
5. An Accident/Incident Form will be completed for every accident. These reports will be signed and dated by the teachers and parent/guardian, and kept on file. (See Accident/Injury Report Form)

Security

Security Tags

Security Tags* are our means of identifying the parents or guardians of children in Eagle Ridge Church of God's Young Children's Ministry. The Security Tag's purpose is: (1) to assure parents/guardians that their child will be released only to the appropriate adult holding the child's tag; and (2) to enable teachers to be confident they are releasing children to appropriate persons.

Why do we need Security Tags?

1. Teachers cannot know the parents/guardians of every child. Situations in which this is true include attendance by guests, infrequent attendees, new or substitute teachers and staff changes between Worship and Sunday School. The teacher who met the parent when the child arrived may not be in the room when the child leaves.
2. Non-custodial parent kidnapping and stranger abductions are no longer unheard of in churches.
3. Older siblings, relatives or friends may want to take a child from the room. Whether or not this is acceptable to the parent, the teacher should not be responsible for making the judgment on releasing the child.

Procedure:

1. Parents/guardians will complete the information requested on the sticker portion of the Security Tag upon arrival at the infants, toddlers, or preschool door. Once completed, the sticker should be placed on the child's back while the parent/guardian retains the other portion of the Security Tag. The additional sticker should be placed on a child's diaper bag.
2. When returning for the child, parents/guardians should enter the appropriate room but not past the gate and present the tag to the teacher.
3. The child will only be released to the adult bearer of the Security Tag.
4. Parents/guardians who misplace the Security Tag may be asked to present photo identification and signature.
5. New Security Tags will be used each week.
6. Parent Custody/legal guardianship changes must be reported to the Christian Education Chair. (Written legal documentation must be presented and kept on file.)

* Or current Security Method in use

Pagers

Pagers are also available as an added security. Parents and/or church volunteers may request the use of the pager.

Child Abuse Policy

According to Michigan law, all suspected incidents of child abuse must be reported to:

- The county Department of Children’s Services, or
- The local juvenile court, or
- The local Sheriff/ Police.

The Christian Education Chair or other ministerial staff should follow these procedures:

1. Document all efforts at handling the incident.
2. Report the incident as soon as possible to the church’s insurance company and attorney; then follow their professional guidance and recommendations.
3. Seek help for those involved through the guidance of a Christian Counselor.
4. Notify the child’s parents, guardians, or teachers if appropriate.



Parent Responsibilities

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Teachers at church count it a privilege to partner with parents in laying foundations for faith in young lives.

Parents can help teachers by observing the following guidelines:

- Become familiar with the Young Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures. These policies have been adopted by our church family and are enforced for the well-being of every child in our care.
- Remember that each policy and guideline is based on the desire to provide a safe, secure learning environment for your child. If you do not understand the reason for a policy or guideline, please ask the Christian Education Chair or children's ministry teacher to discuss it with you.

Before Coming to Church

1. Bring your child regularly to church. He/She will feel more secure and eager to enter the room when church becomes the established routine.
2. Talk to your child positively about going to church. Use names of your child's teachers and friends in his/her room when talking about happy times at church.
3. Remember to label all items (i.e. diaper bags, pacifiers, bottles, cups, infant seats, clothing) with your child's first and last name.
4. Children who are being toilet trained need to bring extra changes of clothing in a labeled bag. Clothes should be easy to take off and put on.
5. Leave personal toys* and snacks at home. They make sharing too difficult and, in the case of snacks, may actually be dangerous for those children with allergies. (*An infant's security toy or blanket would be an exception.)

Arriving at Your Child's Room

1. Please complete the information requested on the sticker portion of the Security Tag upon arrival at the preschool door. Once completed, the sticker should be placed on the child's back while you retain the other portion of the Security Tag. The additional sticker may be placed on a child's diaper bag.
2. When bringing your child to a young children's room, please knock at the door before entering to alert the teacher to your presence.
3. Alert teachers to any necessary information about your child (allergies, special physical needs, feeding and sleeping preferences, etc.) Update the Child Information Sheet as needed.

4. For the security of our children and their best teaching environment, parents and siblings should not enter the room beyond the gate. (Nursing mothers are an exception.) Traffic in and out of the room causes disruptions in teaching and unnecessarily upsets young children already in the room.
5. Tell your child you will be back for him/her, and then leave promptly. Prolonging the goodbye only makes separation more difficult for your child. Should your child experience prolonged anxiety, teachers will send for you.

Special note to parents of younger children: If you need to check on your child, ask a young children's ministry staff person to help you. They can check and give you a report. Your baby is smart and knows the sound of mother's voice! If you check on your child yourself after he has settled in and your child becomes upset because he sees or hears you, please be prepared at that time to take your child with you. It may be too difficult for your child to separate from you more than once.

Calling for Your Child

1. When returning for the child, parents/guardians should enter the room but not past the gate and present the tag to the teacher.
2. Your child will only be released to the parent/guardian who presents the Security Tag. (Your child will not be released to a sibling or another child.)
3. Explain to grandparents, other adult relatives and friends that your child will not be released to them unless they present your child's Security Tag.

Tips and Suggestions

1. If a child has a problem at church, it is better to discuss this with his teachers at a time other than Sunday morning. Never discuss a child's problem in his presence.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate in any Parenting Events that may be offered at church throughout the year. These may include Christian Education classes, play groups, workshops, and any training sessions held for preschool leadership.
3. Use the "take-home" literature provided by preschool programs. These will help you continue at home what your child learned at church!

Promotion

At Eagle Ridge Church of God, promotion of children to the next age level is based on the Sunday School year.

Our Sunday School year runs from September through July. Promotion will be on the first Sunday in September after Labor Day.

- Children who have turned 18 months of age and are stable walkers will be promoted to the next age level (Toddlers).
- Children who turn 3 ½ years of age by September 1 and are potty-trained will be promoted to the next age level (Preschool).
- Children who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall will be promoted to our Kids Zone / Journey to the Son program.

Teacher-Child Ratios

Proper teacher/child ratios in each department allow teachers to provide quality learning experiences and more adequately meet the needs of each individual child. The number of children in a department and the ratio of teachers to children are determined by the age of the children. (An additional teacher may be needed for each child with special needs.)

<i>AGE</i>	<i>RATIO</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED ENROLLMENT</i>	<i>TOTAL (including teachers)</i>
Infants – 18 mos.	1 teacher to 3 preschoolers	6	8
18 mos. – 3 ½ yrs.	1 teacher to 4 preschoolers	12	15
3 ½ yrs. – age 5	1 teacher to 5 preschoolers	10	12

Sometimes multi-age groupings of young children are needed.

- Babies – Twos in one room (Ratio—1 to 3; Total Enrollment—12)
- Threes – Kindergarten in one room (Ratio—1 to 4; Total Enrollment—15)
- Babies – Kindergarten in one room (Ratio—1 to 3; Total Enrollment—12)

(The Two Adult Rule: At least two adults must be in the room with children at all times.)

These standards for teacher/child ratios meet or exceed the recommendations of The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). Additionally, we strive to meet the minimum recommended space requirements in each preschool room of 30 square feet per child.

Guidelines for Discipline

Preventing Basic Discipline Problems

- Maintain the correct teacher-child ratio
- Do not exceed recommended enrollment of children for the room
- Plan, Prepare, and Be Ready To Teach
- Always be on time (The first one in the room is usually in charge!)
- Play quiet music in the room and use a quiet speaking voice
- Avoid “clutter build-up” in the room (too many scattered toys frustrate and over-excite)
- Be friendly-firm (Children need to know you love them and are in charge.)
- Consistently enforce Three Rules:
 - I (the teacher) will encourage you (the child) to...
 - Respect self
 - Respect others
 - Respect materials

General Guidelines

1. Give encouragement freely. It is inspiring. Use criticism sparingly. It is self-defeating.
2. Notice and acknowledge a child’s appropriate behavior.
3. Be consistent.
4. Accept a child’s feelings that he cannot control; but stop his disruptive or destructive behavior.
5. Correct a child’s behavior with love and respect.
6. Respect a child by correcting in private.
7. Do not force a child to say, “I’m sorry.” He may not be sorry. If you force him to say he is sorry when he is not, you may be teaching him to lie.
8. Empower rather than threaten. Give choices.
9. Do not force preschoolers to give up toys as a means of teaching sharing. Sharing is voluntarily giving something up to another. Require “taking turns” instead.
10. Provide interesting and challenging things to do and reduce the possibility of behavioral problems.
11. Give bountiful emotional support to the child who misbehaves. Misbehavior is often a plea for help.
12. Let the child learn from the natural or logical consequences of his actions. (If he misuses the blocks, he may not play with the blocks for a while.)
13. Help each child feel good about himself. A healthy self-concept is the right of every child made in God’s image.

Specific Guidelines

1. 1st Offense – Verbal correction
2. 2nd Offense – Thinking Chair (1 minute per year of age)
3. 3rd Offense – Thinking Chair (1 minute per year of age)
4. 4th Offense – Parents called

Policies for Teachers

Teachers in the young children's ministry of Eagle Ridge Church of God play a vital role in laying a spiritual foundation for young children. All teachers must be professing Christians, men and women who want to love and nurture preschoolers.

Volunteer Teachers

Volunteers provide the teaching staff for regular church programs. To be considered for a volunteer teacher position, an individual must:

1. Be a part of the fellowship of Eagle Ridge Church of God for at least 6 months. (Exceptions must be approved by the Christian Education Chair.)
2. Submit a Risk Management Application, receive training, and interview with the Pastor.
3. Be willing to follow all policies and procedures of the Preschool Ministry.

Employed Teachers

Employed teachers may be used at the discretion of the Christian Education Chair to supplement teaching staff needs. To be considered for employment, an individual must:

1. Be a part of the fellowship of Eagle Ridge Church of God for at least 6 months.
2. Submit an employment application and risk management application.
3. Successfully complete an interview with the appropriate supervisor.
4. Be willing to follow all policies and procedures of the Preschool Ministry.

Training

All young children's teachers (volunteer and employed) will be expected to undergo periodic training sessions each year. For employed teachers, this training is mandatory. Training opportunities will be offered in person as well as through video.

Training will help ensure all teachers are well prepared and informed about curriculum, teaching methods, safety and security procedures, and other important issues.

Expectations of Teachers

- Use and teach according to the literature/curriculum furnished by the church.
- Plan regularly with other teachers on your team.
- Prepare the room and have materials ready to teach BEFORE the first child arrives. Be in the preschool room a minimum of 10 minutes before the session begins.
- Be responsible for securing a substitute when absent and notify the Young Children's Ministry Coordinator in advance when possible.
- Assist in cleaning the room and putting away all materials at the end of the session.
- Cooperate with teachers in other church programs concerning room arrangement and storage/use of materials.
- Participate regularly in both corporate and personal worship and Bible study.
- Minister to young children and their families.
- Support the work of the church through prayer and faithful service.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Pray with other teachers before each session
- Greet preschoolers and their parents at the door as they arrive
- Maintain department Security System
- Lead group time (3 ½ - pre-k preschool)
- Use and follow the literature/curriculum provided by the church
- Gather teaching materials and supplies prior to a session
- Assist in straightening the room and putting away materials at the end of the session
- Visit with, make contact, and minister to children and their families

Youth Helpers

In order to train future teachers, youth (teens) may be enlisted to teach in the young children's ministry provided it is once per month during the worship service and not at all during the Sunday School hour so that they may attend their own classes.

Youth under the age of 18 (defined minors by law) may not serve as primary teachers for regular church programming.

Youth Helpers For Child Care

- Youth enlisted for child-care must be approved by the Christian Education Chair.
- Youth helpers age 15 and above may work in any of the young children's areas.
- Youth helpers must always be supervised by at least one adult who is present in the same room. Youth should never be left alone with the children.
- Youth helpers will be expected to follow the policies and procedures for all teachers.
- Youth (teens) should receive training prior to working with young children and periodic training as deemed necessary.



Greeters and Policy for Young Children

1. Assist with young children who are visiting and secure complete information from the parents.
2. Complete an Information/Registration card for them. (Parents will probably have their hands full with belongings and children in a strange place!)
 - Record each child's birth date, and then refer to the current Age/Room List for proper room assignment.
 - Prepare a Security Tag for parent and child. Briefly tell parent how Security Tag is used.
3. As you walk the family to the child's room (taking youngest child first) talk about our policy that parents are asked to remain outside the gated areas in the infant and toddler rooms when leaving or picking up their child. Help them understand this is for the safety and security of their child as well as others already in the room.
4. Knock at the appropriate classroom door and briefly introduce the child and his parents to the teacher. Help parents to make the break quickly from the child. Assure the parent that their child will be fine but if the child should be overly upset we will send for them.
5. Show parents to the Family Life Center or escort them to an adult Bible Study class.
6. Tell parents again how happy we are to have them with us today!



Screening Procedures for Teachers

In recent years, news stories of violence and abusive conduct toward children by adults have been shocking. Child sexual abuse seems to be increasingly in the headlines. It leads us to the obvious question, “Could something like that happen here at Eagle Ridge Church of God?”

We believe preventive measures help to avoid problems down the road. In addition to the simple, effective policies and procedures already in place, we recommend a screening process for all those who work with minors* (young children through senior high). The screening process includes an application form to be completed by all volunteers for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors and by all church employees who will have contact with minors in church facilities or on church sponsored activities.

The implementation of a screening process will help our church family provide a safe and secure environment for all boys and girls who participate in our ministries and use our facilities. The screening process will help our church work as a team toward a common goal of being proactive rather than reactive. We want to protect children from sexual abuse or child molestation by employees or volunteers in this church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations. We want our church to be the safest and most loving environment possible for every child and youth who enters our doors.

* A minor is defined as any child less than 18 years of age.



Accident/Injury Report Form

EAGLE RIDGE CHURCH OF GOD

Child Name			
Date of Injury:		Time of Injury:	

Brief Description of Accident/Injury

--

First Aid Administered

--

Parent Contacted:	Y	N	Time:	
-------------------	---	---	-------	--

Signature (Teacher)

Signature (Parent/Guardian)

Parent/Guardian Phone

Give completed form to Young Children's Ministry Coordinator or Christian Education Chair.
Copy to parent on request.

Child Information Form

EAGLE RIDGE CHURCH OF GOD

Child Name			
Date of Birth		Age (as of the fall)	

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian			
Street Address			
Phone/Email			

Child Information

Allergies	Circle Y or N	Outside Play OK	Circle Y or N
Allergy Types		Potty Trained	Circle Y or N
Preferred Method of Consoling			

Nursery Information

Feeding Instructions:	
Diaper Change Instructions:	

Additional Information

--

Volunteer Information

I would like to volunteer my time in the following areas: (Circle all that apply)
9:30 11:00 Infants Toddlers Preschool