

**HONORING CHRIST IN THE WAY WE MINISTER TO CHILDREN
AND YOUTH AT CHURCH**

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Wheelersburg Baptist Church

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(Adapted from "Reducing the Risk" by Christian Ministry Resources)

Introduction:

A School Administrator's Biggest Fear: Balancing the desire to serve children effectively and compassionately and yet professionally without the risk of being falsely accused or potentially accused of misconduct.

What should a child expect from the church?

Many things can happen to fracture a child's relationship with the church, but the most damaging is _____ abuse.

▪ **Where Church Workers Need to Start**

1. With Scriptural Support

- a.) Matthew 18:1-14 " the heavy millstone warning"
- b.) James 3:1 "the greater judgment"
- c.) Eph. 6:4 "do not provoke (children) to anger" See also Col. 3:21

2. Accept the Changing Times

- a.) Are government regulations really necessary?
- b.) Your attitude will breed confidence in the congregation.

3. Three Areas of Concern for "Persons of Trust"

- a.) Church staff with our kids (Safety precautions)
- b.) Church Kids with our kids (With-it-ness)
- c.) Non-Churched with our Kids (Sensitivity Radar)

4. The Need for a Prevention Program

- a.) The problem is real.
- b.) It can happen at WBC
- c.) If so, the impact will be major!
- d.) Good News: A Few Simply Steps will Reduce the Risk

REMEMBER OUR GOAL AT WBC: *To provide a Christ-honoring, safe and secure environment for the children who are entrusted to our care. In reaching this goal, we reduce the legal risk and liability exposure.*

▪ **What Ministry Workers Need to Know**

5. Let's take a Quiz (True or False)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.

- 6. The Facts about Child Abuse
- 7. Understanding Child Abuse

- a.) What is the Definition of Child Abuse?

Although legal definitions may vary from state to state, in general it is...

Any sexual activity with a child- whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim. (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse)

Remember...

- It may be violent or non-violent
- It is criminal behavior
- It may or may not involved touching

b.) What are the Symptoms of Molestation?

Physical Signs

- Lacerations or bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the private areas
- Difficulty in urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral Signs

- Anxiety when approaching the church
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Acting out sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs

- I don't like (church person)
- (Church person) does things to me when we're alone
- I don't like to be alone with (church person)
- (Church person) fooled around with me

c.) What are the Effects of Child Sexual Abuse?

1.) In a nutshell, the child experiences many losses...

- ✓ Childhood memories
- ✓ Healthy social contact
- ✓ Opportunities to learn
- ✓ Bodily integrity
- ✓ Identity and self-image

- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Sexual maturity
- ✓ Self-determination
- ✓ Right to a normal childhood

2.) The degree of damage depends on the intensity and duration of the abuse. (By God's grace the impact can be overcome!)

3.) The damage to one's spiritual life is often profound and long term.

8. The Church is Vulnerable

a.) Why the Church is Vulnerable

b.) Why Churches are Sued

KEY WORD: _____

9. Keys to Prevention

a.) Having a Plan and Policy in Place

(There is danger when the policy is neglected.)

b.) Properly Screening All Workers

c.) Understanding Supervisory Policies

These should include:

- ✓ The six-month rule
- ✓ The two-adult rule
- ✓ Guidelines for Higher Risk Settings
- ✓ Parental/Guardian Permission
- ✓ Sponsorship of Activities (approval)
- ✓ Appropriate/Inappropriate Touching

(Bathing Suit Rule; Side Hugs; Touch the Shoulder)

- ✓ Responding to Suspicious Behavior
- ✓ Use of photography
- ✓ Nursery Identification Procedures

▪ **Digging Deeper for Successful Ministry**

10. Risk Factors in Ministry

a.) Risk Factor 1: **ISOLATION**

Risk Increases as Isolation Increases

Always consider....

- ❖ The number of people present
- ❖ The time of the activity
- ❖ The location of the activity
- ❖ The physical arrangements

Key: *Treat any activity that is located off church property, or any activity that is located at the church but is in an isolated area with a higher degree of risk. Any high degree of risk should have 2 or more unrelated adults as supervisors.*

b.) Risk Factor 2: **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Risk increases as Accountability Decreases

Always consider...

- ❖ Personal character and integrity
- ❖ The number of people present
- ❖ The degree of openness and church approval

Key: *Remember that abuse always occurs in settings without proper accountability.*

c.) Risk Factor 3: **POWER AND CONTROL**

Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power, authority, influence, and control between a potential abuser and a potential victim.

Always consider...

- ❖ An imbalance of power is related to age, size, strength, control and authority.
- ❖ Most child victims know and trust their abuser.
- ❖ Spirituality/Popularity can be a form of power and control.

Key: Abuse is less likely to occur when a balance of power exists. This must come from other adults and from policies designed to reduce risk.

Pay careful attention to increase supervision for the following:

- Any activity that occurs in a home
- Any overnight activity (church, gym, campground, hotel)
- Any activity that involves changing clothes
- Any activity that involves difference aged children
- Any activity that occurs in a naturally isolated environment that is set off by itself (1986-89 The Dart War Era at CCBC)

11. Ways to Decrease Risk

a.) To Decrease the risk of isolation

- ✓ Increase the number of people present
- ✓ Examine the time and location of the activity
- ✓ Monitor and secure unoccupied space
- ✓ Control access to the church property
- ✓ Require advanced approval of all activities

b.) To Increase Accountability

- ✓ Screen all individuals
- ✓ Increase the number of adult workers
- ✓ Randomly observe activities

- ✓ Provide training and supervision
- ✓ Take into account the age, maturity and influence when pairing up children

12. Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse

People of Trust are Obligated to Report

State Compliance: A _____ Obligation

Mutual Accountability: A _____ Obligation

Personal Responsibility: A _____ Obligation

PROPER STEPS FOR RESPONDING AND REPORTING ALLEGED ABUSE

STEP ONE: Be prepared in Advance

- All allegations should be taken seriously
- Know who to report to
- Handle the situation forthrightly with respect of privacy
- Church representative should notify insurance company
- Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities
- Adequate care must be shown to victim and family

STEP TWO: Provide a Caring Response to Allegations

- Be prepared mentality
- Have an appropriate response
- Never downplay allegations; Studies prove majority are true
- Be prepared for intense emotions

STEP THREE: When dealing with a complaint or allegation remember these three simple points:

- a.) Reassure that the complaint is being taken seriously
- b.) Reassure that procedures exist and will be followed

- c.) Reassure that the church desires to support the victim and the family in whatever way possible

STEP FOUR: Document the Allegation

- Ask basis questions for clarification purposes
- Don't Investigate details but record general information
 - a.) the name, age, gender and address of victim
 - b.) the name, age, gender and address of alleged perpetrator (when possible)
 - c.) the nature of the alleged misconduct
 - d.) when, where and how many times it occurred
 - e.) the date(s) of the incident(s)
 - f.) the relationship between the victim and alleged perpetrator
 - g.) other evidence that supports the allegation

STEP FIVE: Seek Professional Assistance

Rest assured: There are no legal ramifications if the alleged complaint is proven to be false. Anonymity is secured.

STEP SIX: Provide Support for the Victim

Assure the victim:

- a.) the church takes this seriously
- b.) the church does not tolerate such misconduct
- c.) the complaint will be investigated immediately
- d.) the church will not tolerate retaliation

STEP SEVEN: Fulfill State Reporting Obligations

WBC has an acting representative who is responsible for reporting allegations. Most likely, this is not your job. The church will be pro-active in communicating concerns with the appropriate sources and with the church congregation.

B. Ministering Most Effectively

1. Your Ministry will be Most Effective when you follow these 5 B's:

Be Prepared

- Know your audience well (remember names)

(online articles from Christian publishing companies)

- Know your materials and double check supply list
- Understand your lesson and objectives
- Know what you will do before something happens

Be On Time; Start on Time

- Be early, set-up, ready to greet students
- Starting on time helps folks get their on time
- Avoid "down" time where kids are waiting to start

Be Creative

- Vary your teaching methods (materials are available)
- Avoid straight lecture; be dramatic
- Interact with kids and the lesson
- Use hands-on methods
- Get kids involved with the lesson

Be Inquisitive

- Ask God for Help and Wisdom James 1:5
- Ask Others with Experience
- Be a student yourself

Be Aware of Your Surroundings (With-it-ness)

- Avoid last minute surprises and changes
- Use preventative maintenance by properly arranging your classroom area

- ❑ Avoid distractions

JUST REMEMBER...

Never, ever make promises you can't keep! Like...

“If we all listen, I’ll take you to Disney World”

“By the time this quarter is over, you’ll know the entire Bible”

“If you interrupt again, I will _____”

2. Ministry is most effective if workers have a discipline plan

(See Handout on "How to Help Kids You Wish Wouldn't Show Up to Church")

3. Ministry is most effective in a safe environment.

E. Pastor Brad's Summary of Child Safety and Protection Guidelines