Child Safety Precautions

Keeping children safe during VBS is an important responsibility of all VBS workers that requires both prayerful and practical steps. Begin with prayer, praying before and during VBS for God's protection over each child, worker, and visitor. Pray for the smooth running of the facility as well. This is a critically important step in your safety plan which should not be taken for granted!

Next, take practical steps by checking your church's child safety policies and communicating them to your VBS staff. If your church does not have any policies in place, prayerfully consider adopting sensible, wise procedures for the children's sake. Use the following examples to spark your thinking on what precautions to take regarding children's safety.

- Before allowing anyone to work with children, make sure you know them well and trust them. Do not allow new church attendees or others you do not know well to work with children. Check with your church on its policy regarding background checks on children's ministry workers and make sure all VBS volunteers are screened and/or interviewed and have had reference checks before assigning them a job.
- In addition to filling out the Volunteer Registration Form, volunteers should also be required to sign a VBS Worker Pledge agreeing to abide by the policies and procedures of your church.
- Thoroughly check all areas daily for cleanliness and safety before VBS begins. Remove hazardous or toxic items, cover outlets, put away heavy or dangerous objects, tape down cords, and make sure everything is in good working order. Check both inside and outside the facility.
- Children should be signed in and out of VBS by their caregivers. Release the children only to authorized individuals.
- Always have at least two unrelated adults (18 and older) with the children, including trips to the bathroom. Children must be well supervised at all times and never be left alone with just one adult or teen.
- Always pair responsible teens with adults.
- Count children every time you move to a different station.
- Enlist qualified members of the church with medical experience to be at the facility during VBS hours. Outline a procedure to quickly find and alert them of any situation needing attention. Make sure an accident report is filled out after any incident.
- Be well aware of which children have which allergies and make sure precautions are taken to protect them.
- Keep adequate first aid kits in safe and handy spots around the facility and make sure the VBS staffers are aware of their locations. Post emergency numbers with the first aid kits.
- Church members can give out adhesive bandages or ice packs, but anything more major should be handled by trained personnel or 911 calls.
- Keep ice packs in the freezer for minor bumps.
- Enlist volunteers to form a security team to monitor the premises during VBS.
- Find out what precautions your church's insurance carrier recommends.
- Consider these additional precautions:
  - » Men should not change diapers.
  - » Do not allow children to sit in leaders' laps.
  - » Do not give piggyback rides.
  - » Do not give front hugs. Offer side hugs, high fives, and fist bumps instead.
  - » Do not take or post photos on social media of others' kids without written parental permission.
  - » Provide a police officer on-site during VBS hours.
- Continue to brainstorm and implement precautions for your situation, asking God to keep you alert, aware, and wise regarding these issues.

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