



FREEDOM Kids

Ministry Partner Handbook

Dear Children's Ministry Partner,

Thank you so much for choosing to make a difference in the lives of the children at Freedom Fellowship! Our goal is that every child would experience the love of Jesus through those they come in contact with.

The responsibility of Christian education belongs to the family; however, we as a church need to be a strong encouragement and support to families. The Children's Ministry at Freedom Fellowship is committed to providing Jesus Christ's example of love and acceptance to the children we minister to. Additionally, we are committed to Biblical teaching to help our children grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Finally, we are committed to evangelizing children giving them the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and to encourage them to share their faith with their family, friends, and neighbors.

We are so glad you have chosen to be a part of this exciting ministry! Please review and familiarize yourself with the information contained in this handbook as it will help you be effective in your ministry with the children. We look forward to serving alongside you in this exciting ministry! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Children's Ministry.

Blessings!

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General Ministry Guidelines

1. Your ministry time begins 15 minutes before the service starts. Please be in the room to assist the leadership person to prepare for receiving children.
2. If for some reason you cannot serve at your scheduled time, please call the Children's Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible.
3. Please make sure all items are marked with a name label when parents drop the child off.
4. Two ministry partners should greet parents at the door to the room. One to take the child and the other to greet parents, take information, and mark items. It is important to make the parents feel confident with leaving their most valuable possession in someone else's hands. Assure them that if their child needs them that they will be notified right away.
5. No siblings are allowed to come in the room while parents are picking up or dropping off their child.
6. Children with contagious symptoms are not allowed in the nurseries (fever, diarrhea, etc.)
7. Your number one job is to minister to the children. Do everything possible to minister to the needs of the child before calling the parents.
8. Children will be released to parents or the person with the ID number claim tag **ONLY!**
9. After children are all picked up, wipe down toys and begin packing up the room.
10. Please silence your cell phone and do not make phone calls or text during your ministry time unless absolutely necessary.
11. Always remember...**SAFETY FIRST!** There is a first aid kit available at the children's ministry check-in table.

Check-in Procedure

We utilize a secure, computerized check-in system at Freedom Fellowship. In order to attend Sunday classes, children (infants through 6th grade) must be checked-in at the computer kiosk located in the Children's Ministry hallway. The check-in system will allow parents to easily check their children into the appropriate class and print the security labels.

At check-in, two labels will be printed – one to be affixed to the child and one for the parent to keep for pick-up. For children in the nursery and toddler classes, an additional tag will be printed to affix to the child's diaper bag. Each child will have a computer-generated code assigned which we can display in Adult Worship when we need to have a parent come back to the classroom. Children beyond the 6th grade are not required to check-in using the computer system.

Check-out Procedure

A child may not be released unless a parent has the security tag that corresponds to the nametag on that child. If an adult attempts to pick up a child without the corresponding security tag, the ministry partner on duty must notify the Children's Pastor to make the decision to release a child.

Child-to-volunteer ratios

Freedom Fellowship will adhere to its established limits for child-to-volunteer ratios and room capacities in order to protect the safety of the children and ensure the best experience for both children and volunteers. Classrooms will be closed and additional families directed elsewhere when these limits are reached. Once all classrooms in a child's age group are closed, parents will need to keep their child with them as they attend the service. Exceptions to these limits can be made on behalf of first-time guests, as our heart is to never turn away a first-time guest from a classroom, but the exception should only be made by the Children's Pastor.

Diaper Change Guidelines

- Every child's diaper should be checked every hour and changed if needed.
- Bring everything you need to the changing pad.
- Never leave a baby unattended on the changing table, not even for a second.
- Every child should be changed once during the service. Do not allow a child to be picked up from the nursery without a diaper change.
- Wipe off the changing pad with disinfectant and wash hands after every diaper change.
- Diaper changing time is an excellent time to minister to the child. Speak or sing God's Word to them as you change their diaper.

Snack Time Guidelines

A tub with snacks is provided for the toddler and preschool rooms. Please be helpful and attentive to the children during this time. Have the children sit in their seats around the table. Use the small paper cups for water, filled only half full. Put a small amount of snack on a napkin in front of each child. Use the snack time to teach how to thank God for their food, teach manners, and tell stories. The children should not be allowed to talk or cry when they have food in their mouths as this could cause them to choke. Clean the children up after their snack time, and have them help you clean up their trash.

Crying

All children cry from time to time. We really need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in this area. Love on the child and offer comfort. Remind them that their parents will be back. If a child is crying at drop off, ask the parent how long we should wait before we call them if their child cannot be consoled.

Biting or Injuries

When biting or hitting takes place in your room, and a mark is left, it is important to call both sets of parents to the room. We must let the parent know when their child has been hurt and the child who did the "hurting" should be removed for the remainder of the service. If it is just a normal "hitting" situation, use your judgment about calling the parent. All injuries and accidents should be reported on an accident report form.

Discipline Guidelines

First and foremost you must understand that we may NEVER use any form of corporal punishment; no slapping, tugging, swatting, NOTHING! If you ever get angry with a child, it is very important that you remove yourself from the classroom immediately. Our best resource for discipline is Time Out. Depending on the age, this might mean in a highchair, pack-n-play, or on a bench or chair. Time out should never be in the bathroom. Always explain to the child, no matter what age, what they did wrong. Tell them they have to sit alone until they are ready to join the group and play nicely. The general rule of thumb should be one minute of time out per year of their age. You should pray with the child after a time out and allow them back into the group.

If a child is consistently misbehaving, you should let the Children's Pastor or Children's Ministry Coordinator know. They can speak to the parent for you if you don't want to do that.

Child Protection Guidelines

1. All adults and youth over 18 years old, both employed and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened and undergo a criminal background check prior to beginning work.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need and will receive the love and acceptance of our church family.
4. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy" at ALL times. The "two-person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employee or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner. The "open door policy" requires the door be open at all times. The "TWO-PERSON RULE" will be MANDATORY for all employees and volunteers with our nursery through preschool classes.
5. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior, which seems abusive or inappropriate, will follow the Colorado State Law which states that we must report if we have reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child is subject to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Ministry and Modeling

Much of what the disciples learned from Jesus probably came through their observations of what He said AND didn't say; what He did AND didn't do. Children are very observant, and much of our ministry is unspoken. We are role models for them, and they tend to believe that what we do and say is Biblical and Christ-like. We have an obligation as leaders to live godly lives and as far as we are able to live "above reproach". The following are standards to which we as a church expect children's ministry leaders to follow.

- Prepare for ministry by growing in your personal relationship with Christ.
- Support the leadership by praying for the church staff, children's ministry team, and children in the ministry.
- Support other children's ministry team leaders, helpers, and not cause division. If you have a problem with someone, follow the Matthew 18 principle (Matthew 18:15-16). Confront in private, if problems still exist, bring the Children's Pastor in on the situation.
- Personal growth and education within the church.

Volunteer Application Process

Freedom Fellowship requires all volunteers working with children to complete the following volunteer application steps.

- Application - All children's ministry volunteers must complete the online application.
- Reference Check - References will be contacted and asked to assess the applicant's suitability/capability for working with children.
- Policies & Procedures - Volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and indicate on the online application that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.
- Criminal History Check - We use a reputable screening firm in order to check the background of all volunteers and employees for possible criminal history and/or registered sex offender information.



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FREEDOMFELLOWSHIP

"Where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." 2 Corinthians 3:17

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