

BNK

BRANDNEWKIDS

**Nursery
Volunteer
Handbook**

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DEFINITION

Nursery consists of Infants (Birth – 12 months) and Toddlers (1 Year – 24 months). At some campuses, space and size requires that these two groups of children are combined into one space. This is not the best situation as toddlers are very mobile and may sometimes be difficult to keep from wandering near infants on the floor, etc.

Where it is possible that they be separated, infants are moved to toddlers when they reach age 1, are walking and can hold their bottle for themselves.

When combined, the desired ratio of adult to child is 1 – 3. If separated, the ratio of adult to child for infants is 1 – 2 and the ratio for toddlers is 1 – 4. See the Child Abuse Policies and Procedures for further information about requirements for volunteers in the classroom.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Nursery Volunteer

Qualifications

Loves God and loves babies and toddlers, nurturing, approved Background Check returned.

Time Commitment

- Be on-site 1 hour prior to service start time and until completion of after service check-list.

Role Responsibilities

- Commit and adhere to the items listed in the “Your Commitment” section of “Commitments and Benefits” of this document (BNK Volunteer Leader Handbook).
- Complete the before service check-list to prepare the nursery for parents and children.
- Greet parents and make babies feel comforted as they arrive.
- Provide for babies’ and toddlers’ physical and emotional needs while in your care.
- Verify matches of baby and/or toddler id number to parent tag as parents arrive to check-out children.
- Complete the after service check-list to clean up and reset the nursery.
- Notify the service captain of any items of concern or need.

Accountability

- The Nursery volunteers are accountable to the Children’s Pastor/Ministry Leader.

POLICIES

Prepare Yourself

Through the week, make sure to pray for the children you will be serving and for their families. Ask God to use you in their lives so they may grow in Him.

Prepare Your Team

Be in attendance at Huddle time at 50 minutes prior to the service you will be serving at. This helps you understand the vision of the children's ministry, get last minute information about anything going on, receive instructions and to build community with the volunteers you will be serving with through prayer and sharing.

Prepare the Room

If the room was left properly at the end of the last service, your job will be easy – but this is one of the most important things you can do to make a great first impression. First Impressions for the first time visitor may make the difference in whether they decide to return to the church. And the first impression at every return is just as important! The following preparation procedures should be complete prior to the arrival of the first child so you have nothing to do but invest in the children.

Welcome Times

This time needs to be very warm and welcoming. Make sure the parent/child greeting is a positive one. Think about the 4 minute parent perspective – the 2 minutes they are leaving the child and the 2 minutes to pick them up. What will the parents see the children engaged in in the room – this is a picture of what they will expect will be happening during the entire service.

Greet the baby in the same manner each week. Call the baby by name. Bend down and look a walker in the eye. Build a sense of atmosphere. Play the same music in the background. Let the babies make both a visual and auditory connection to the nursery. Use a signature scent such as soft powder air freshener. Be intentional about what you do.

What Parents are Expected to Provide

Parents are asked to provide a bag with 2 diapers, a change of clothes and a bottle if the child still takes one.

Sick Child

The goal in our sick policy is to encourage parents to keep their children away from others to ensure the wellness of all. We do not accept children with a fever of 101 degrees or higher. We do not accept a child who has thrown up in the past 24 hours or has had diarrhea more than once in the past 24 hours.

If a child has diarrhea more than once during the service, call the parent. If the child feels warm enough to indicate a fever, take the child's temperature. (Don't forget that you add 1 degree to a temperature taken under the arm). If they have a fever of 101 degrees or higher, call the parent.

The Crying Child

See *Shepherding the Child* under Additional Information to learn how to deal with a crying child during check-in and drop-off.

Whenever there is a crying baby, make sure all the baby's needs are being met. Is she hungry? Does she need a diaper change? Is she sleepy? Does she have a comfort item from home that might calm her? Try to sooth and distract a crying child by comfort and play.

If the child cries uncontrollably for more than 10 minutes, the child should be taken away from the room, preferably by an extra volunteer, so they will not upset the other children. Try to console the child a short time more. If the child continues to cry for some time after these alternatives have been tried, use the Parent Notification System.

Parent Notification

The current Parent Notification System is to walk to the Sound Booth from the closest phone and ask them to display the child's unique tag number. Wait at the back of the auditorium until the parent comes to meet you.

Establishing Peaceful Traditions

Routine helps babies feel comfortable. What may seem monotonous to some adults can help babies feel safe, secure and protected. Consider routines in areas such as changing times, welcoming times, snack and bottle times, etc.

Changing Times

Babies should be checked at specific intervals throughout the hour and diapers changed as needed. Consider changing time as individual attention time. Consider a special stash of specific changing time toys to keep babies' hands occupied.

A baby should be sent home dry and clean (including their face)! Roughly 15 minutes before the service is to be complete, change all children's diapers. Even if the parent has come to get the child and you have not yet checked and changed their diaper, do not let the child go until you do. Refer to the Child Abuse Policies and Procedures for other stipulations on changing diapers. Follow the Diaper Changing Procedures to especially keep sanitation procedures in mind.

Snacks and Bottle Times

Only the crawler-age rooms and older are allowed to have snacks provided by the church. Otherwise, we can only give snacks provided by parents in the baby's bag. Please read the labels on the snacks. Under no circumstances are we allowed to serve any kind of peanut products. Some babies are highly allergic and could have a devastating reaction to peanut products. Snacks provided to this age by the church will be primarily cheerios and water or apple juice which has been watered down (half water, half juice).

Keep food and drinks within a designated area. Is there a snack time prayer you'd like toddlers to become familiar with? Are there manners that are important to you? All volunteers should follow the same procedures each week.

Bottles will never be warmed in the microwave which could create hot spots. Warm the bottle by running under hot water or sitting the bottle in a container of hot water.

Babies should never be propped up to drink his/her bottle. If you need extra help with feeding, find another volunteer. Note the time a bottle was given on the roster.

Hand washing

Volunteer's hands should be washed at the start of service, before and after every diaper change as well as after each nose wipe. If there is not a sink in the room, you may use a product such as Germex to clean your hands until you can use a sink.

Play time

Besides taking care of the physical needs of the infant and toddler, the main goal of the volunteer is to engage the child in play .

Get down on the children's level and keep them engaged throughout the service. Infants and toddlers are very experiential learners. They learn through repetition and doing it themselves. Allow them opportunities to play with toys which will stimulate their learning through their senses. This should include a variety of textures, sounds and sights. Finger plays are a big hit with toddlers especially. Though infants and toddlers are not as advanced as preschoolers, for instance, they are still learning every single time they are at BNC. They are learning about God's love through the love you give them! Sing songs and read books to them about the love of Christ.

Nursing Mom

There is no designated room for a nursing mom.

Goodbye Times

Gather each child's personal items and prepare for parents. Close to the time for service to end, one caregiver should prepare to greet parents at the door. Hand off the child at the door.

Use songs or little games to make goodbye times more fun. Items back to bags before service end. How will you tell each baby goodbye. It is always a good idea to relay something the child seemed to enjoy during the time they spent with you. Be prepared to share with each parent about their baby.

Privacy Policy

The visitor bag contains a parent permission form for use of media involving their child(ren). If pictures are posted in the room, names should never be included.

PROCEDURES

Room Preparation Procedures

- Think about the 5 Senses and what you can do to improve them.
 - How does the room smell? Is there something offensive left in the room? Can you spray an air freshener?
 - What do you see out of place? Put up stray items.
 - What will the kids hear when they enter the room? Put on some soft soothing music.
 - What items can the children touch that can hurt them? Are the items within their reach that should be put up? What can they touch that will get them engaged and having fun? Put out just a select few toys to engage them as they arrive – what are their favorite toys – children this age like the familiar. Is there a favorite blanket you could lay out on the floor for the infants?
 - Are the sippy cups washed and ready for tasting something cool to drink? What snacks will they taste today? Attach masking tape to sippy cups for tagging with each child's name.
- If there is a connected bathroom, check that it is in order.
- Finally, wash or sanitize your hands well before beginning to greet children.

Child Check-In Procedure

- Have 1-3 consistent leaders who is the greeter at the door.
 - Be energetic but not so much to scare the child.
 - Use a gentle, welcoming voice to the child.
 - Smile.
 - Talk about the fun, positive things planned for the service – not about leaving mom or dad.
 - Take the child from the parent. If you put them down, squat down at their level and talk to them.
 - Techniques for upset children – go to your knees, talk to the child about something to get them looking at something other than their parents leaving – talk about their clothing, about what the other children are doing. Insure the parents you are ok with them leaving their child crying and nicely encourage them to leave and that you will notify them if you need to!
 - Never allow any past check-in with Campus Pastor/Children's Ministry Leader signed permission.
- Either the same or another leader should check the child into the room.
 - Make sure the child has a tag from registration.
 - Find the child's name on the roster at the door or write it in if they are visiting.
 - Record the tag number under the correct column for the service. Record the check-in time.
 - Ask the parent about special instructions for the day – anything we should know about their child that day and record it if there is anything.
 - Record allergies from their tag onto the roster.
 - Note if the child has brought any items with them on the roll sheet. Use a "Item Belongs To" sticker or masking tape and label the child's belongings if not already labeled by the parent.
 - Insure the roll sheet does not indicate missing information about the child.
- If there are multiple services and If it is the 11 a.m. service and there are babies remaining from the 9:30 service, mark the current service column with their tag number.
- Where will you put the diaper bags and car seats?
- There will be no parents or extra people in the classroom at any time without approval from the Children's Ministry Leader or the Nursery Volunteer Leader. Keep the door closed and locked if possible. Accept children over top of dutch door.

Child Check-Out Procedure

- Parents are encouraged to pick up their children within 10 minutes following the service. There may be exceptions based on volunteer responsibilities, etc. If a parent is consistently late picking up their child, ask them tactfully if they have volunteer responsibilities in or after the service that we need to work around. Try to resolve the situation with them and other volunteers – i.e. rotate with other volunteers to stay a few extra minutes each week, etc.
- Check the child security tag to the parent tag – EVERY time. This is more for the confidence of the visitors or those we do not know than for BNC families – but all children should be checked every time. If they match, you may release the baby to his/her parents. Babies may not be released to an older sibling unless they are 16 years of age and have a driver's license. If they do not match or the parents have lost their tag receipt, do not release the baby. Notify the children's pastor - it doesn't matter how many times you have had the baby in your room and feel like you know and recognize the parent(s), parents watch you to see if you check the tag receipt and let us know when you do not check it.
- Remove the sticker from the child and place it on the back of the roster. This will be a checkpoint and ensure that you remember to check tag numbers.
- Have parents sign their child out on the roster under the signature column. Record the time checked out.
- Verify all belongings are being returned with the child.
- Parents love to hear about their children -- share something nice with every parent about observations of their child during the hour – “Johnny was very energetic today!”, “Sara is really starting to pull up – you should have seen.....”
- Parents love to hear that their children have learned something – “We learned today about God making the rain as we watched out the window.”

Diapering Procedure

- Collect all items needed to change a diaper – first checking the child’s bag for items sent by the parent. (diaper or pullup, disposable wipes, plastic bag for tying up messy diaper, ointments or creams only if provided by the parent, disposable gloves
- Place a piece of wax paper or disposable pad on the table or mat if available.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 10 – 15 seconds. Dry your hands thoroughly.
- Put on the latex gloves if provided.
- Place the child on the mat. Be sure to keep a hand on the child at all times.
- Unfasten the wet or soiled diaper. Clean the child with disposable wipes, wiping from front to back.
- Roll wipes and soiled diaper in disposable cover or plastic bag and dispose in plastic-lined trash can.
- Apply any ointments or creams per parent/guardian written instructions.
- Fasten the clean diaper securely.
- Wipe the baby’s hands with a disposable wipe.
- After the diaper change, take gloves off wrong side out and dispose of properly. If not using gloves, use hand-washing procedure to wash up.
- Clean and disinfect changing surface. Allow surface to remain wet with bleach solution for 30 seconds before drying with a disposable paper towel.
- Wash hands again.
- For Infants and Toddlers, record the changing time and indicate “BM” or “WET” on the roster.
- NEVER CHANGE with only one volunteer in a room. All diapers be changed by female volunteers.

End of Shift Clean Up Procedure

- Complete the top information on the check-list in the room. Remember not to begin cleanup until you no longer have any babies, including volunteer or staff babies in the room. Until parents have picked up their baby, we are to play and interact with them..
- Use the supplied check-list for the latest tasks which include but are not limited to the following:
 - Wipe down tables, countertops, crawling mats and toys with disinfectant spray.
 - If there is a connect bathroom, make sure the toilet has been flushed.
 - Look for any personal items left behind. Mark with the child's name if you know who they belong to and leave on the counter.
 - Return items to shelves in the appropriate place in the cabinets according to labels.
 - Seal up all food items in plastic tub provided.
 - Wash sippy cups, rinse and leave in drainer in the room.
 - Disinfect Door Handles.
 - Wipe down toys, cribs and any equipment used by children during the service and leave to air dry.
 - Wipe down countertops, tables and sink and dry with paper towels.
 - Pick up trash that might be out of place. At the end of the day, bag up all trash, tie the bag and leave in the designated spot for the campus. Put a clean trash bag in the trash can.
 - Vacuum any obvious snack messes between and after services.
 - Scan the room for any other items out of place. Make sure no items are against the wall and causing damage.
 - Note any items to Restock on the Checklist.
 - Turn off cd player, swings, bouncy seats and any toys that have on/off switches and use batteries.
 - Pour out any water used for warming bottles.
 - Furniture and equipment should be arranged according to Sunday placement. Any furniture that was moved should be returned to its designated area at the conclusion of the program.

- Put all dirty laundry in the basket. Sit the basket by the registration desk.
- Let your head coach know before you leave and you have completed the tasks.
- Note any other additional things you want to communicate and your initials.
- Return roll sheets and check-off list to the Registration Desk only after the last service on Sunday.
- Leave things better than you found them!

Room Inventory

Diaper Bag Tags

“Item Belongs To” labels in room

Masking tape

Permanent marker

Thermometer

Band-aids/First Aid

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What Parents Need from Our Nursery

Parents these days are savvy and well-informed. There are all sorts of parenting magazines, web sites, and television programs which make them aware of everything a parent should know. They have high expectations in many cases for what they expect and need from our Nursery. We should always be aware of what the issues are that will concern parents and be proactive in planning to address them.

Staffing

They expect experienced, trained volunteers. They are aware of important adult to child ratios and take note – “will there be enough volunteers if more babies show?” They also want one familiar face to greet them each week so there would be consistency.

Age appropriate toys

Parents are aware of items to be checked for recall. They know what equipment is appropriate for their child – and they are concerned if we know that their child is too old for the swing but too young for the walker. Shouldn't the toddlers and infants be separated? Are the cabinets child proofed. Are toys disinfected appropriately? Are sick babies allowed?

Security

Will my baby kept in room at all times? Are they safe? My child won't be given to the wrong parent will they?

Separation anxiety

Will they find me if my baby needs me? Will she be scared? Will they let her cry the whole hour? Some volunteers are veteran parents who may not remember the jitters new parents experience leaving their baby in new hands.

Allow the parents to decide WHEN to hand the baby over. Do not take the baby away until they are ready. Remind the parent it's their choice to leave the baby. They are welcome to check back later on their child. Reassure the parent you will locate her if baby is still crying in 10 minutes. Constantly consider the parent's feelings – remember you are carrying for the most precious thing in their lives.

What You Can Do

Get to know parents

Start a conversation. Address concerns but don't belittle their fears. Introduce yourself and ask as many questions as you can. The stronger the relationship between parent and volunteer, the more confident parents are in your ability to take care of their angel. This makes visitors welcome – many parents try church for the first time or return to their faith because of their newborn child. What a great opportunity to make their visit one worth repeating.

Inform, Inform, Inform

Knowledge is power and informing parents of nursery policies and procedures will only give them more confidence and a greater sense of control. Let parents know what a great nursery your church offers!

Shepherding Young Children

Separation Anxiety

Children often cry when separated from their parents, especially infants, toddlers and preschoolers. It's a natural part of a child's growth and development to feel secure when their parent is with them and less secure when the parent leaves. Children adapt according to different personalities and ages as they become more secure with a parent leaving them. A normal part of growth is children overcoming their separation anxiety by learning that it is okay for a parent to leave them because the parent *does* return.

Unfamiliar Setting

A child will often cry when put in an unfamiliar setting. Some children, according to personality, adjust quicker to new environments than others. The environment for all children will make a difference on how quickly they feel secure.

Anxiety because others are crying

Children are learning how they are to respond when they encounter a new setting or learning how to let their parents leave them. One child crying in such a setting will often cause another child to cry in response to the anxiety in the room.

How to advise parents about leaving their child

1. Don't surprise the child with a new setting.
2. Instruct and encourage the parents to help their child become familiar with a new setting. It is helpful before the new situation begins to tell the child what to expect from the new activity or place. If possible, have the child visit the new setting for just a few minutes before actually attending.
3. If you are with the parents and child while they are visiting, tell the child that when he/she returns, there will be other children to play with and that this will become their room.

Don't downplay a child's unhappiness.

When a child is brought for the first time and is unhappy, acknowledge the child's sadness. Parents may want to say something like, "I know you are sad (or upset) right now. Look around at all the fun things there are to do. Let's try to find something you would like to do. I'll watch you for a minute or two before I go." It will be your responsibility as a shepherd to be affirming to both the parent and the child as they separate. Have toys, books or other items ready to share with the child, as children of this age are easily distracted.

Don't stay for more than a few minutes

Parents need to know that it will not help their child adjust by staying longer. It is easy for parents to feel frustrated, bewildered or embarrassed when their child continues to cry for long periods. Parents' first instinct is to stay with their child and comfort him/her. However, young children can pick up on their parent's emotions of bewilderment and this may make it more difficult for a young child to stop crying. Though the parent needs to be empathetic, the parent needs to keep as calm as possible, and leave after a quick moment of reassurance.

Communicate with the parent(s)

As a child is turned over to your charge, encourage the parent to hug the child and then leave. Find out where the parent will be and how long the child may remain upset before the parent is to be called. Each case is individual. By communicating well with parents, you relieve anxiety and, indirectly, the anxiety of the child.

If a child is still crying after seven to ten minutes, and will not seem to stop, this would be an appropriate time to call the parent.

Understand the effect of parents in the room

Parents are frequently asked to help in their child's classroom. They can support the staff by helping with various projects. However, most children are better adjusted in a classroom without their parents than when their parents are there. Many happy, well-adjusted children will become clingy or weepy when their parents are in the room with them.

If a child is experiencing lots of difficulty, recommend to the parent that they leave with the promise that you will call them, if needed, and will give them a full report about how the child did in their absence.

Babies and the Their Senses

Babies feel God's love as it flows from you.

Babies are built for learning. Every sensation—touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound—electrifies the infant brain and helps it establish sensory connections that'll last a lifetime.

Because babies build a sense of trust with caregivers as their needs are met, it's vital to respond to their needs in a loving and consistent manner. When adults interact lovingly with babies, their sense of self-worth grows. Babies develop trust in the people who meet their physical needs. You can surround an infant with a sense of acceptance, security, and love with the experiences you provide for babies in your nursery. Babies feel God's love as it flows from you.

Babies build their earliest foundation of God through their experiences at church. You can tap into their five senses and build a positive experience for babies in your nursery using the following tips.

- **Sound**—When you sing or talk to babies, use Bible truths such as “God made the birds,” “Jesus loves you,” and “God made you.” Pray aloud with babies.
- **Sight**—Infants are stimulated by contrasting colors because they're easier to distinguish than similar colors such as red and orange. Decorate your nursery with contrasting colors.
- **Smell**—Keep your nursery free of bad odors, but avoid using strongly perfumed air fresheners. A light deodorizer is fine, but a clean nursery makes a better-smelling nursery.
- **Taste**—Taste is a powerful sensation for babies, especially when it curbs hunger and brings comfort. Tend promptly to an infant's cries of hunger with milk or formula as instructed by parents.
- **Touch**—You've probably noticed that babies have incredibly strong grips when they grab your fingers. Holding babies or comforting them with a soothing touch also stimulates their brain development.