

BNK

BRANDNEWKIDS

**PreSchool
Volunteer
Handbook**

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DEFINITION

Preschool consists of Children ages 2 – 5 (PreK). At some campuses, space and size requires that these children are combined into one space. This is not the best situation as the developmental level of each age is so different.

Where it is possible that they be separated, toddlers are promoted to Preschool when they reach the age of 2. As of age 2, promotion occurs twice per year – September and after the first of the year. The goal is to keep developmental levels together and to eventually get the kids together by the group they will be attending school with.

The desired ratio of adult to child is 5. Sometimes space will not allow as many adults. This is not the best as the ratio helps ensure that each child is given the proper amount of attention and love. See the Child Abuse Policies and Procedures for further information about requirements for volunteers in the classroom.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Preschool Volunteer

Qualifications

Loves God and loves kids, willing to lead Preschoolers in lesson activities and love on them, 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 preschool room for parents and children.
- Greet children and make parents feel comfortable as you engage the children in opening activities.
- Lead children in the prepared lesson and activities along with other volunteers.
- Verify matches of preschool id number to parent tag as parents arrive to check-out children.
- Complete the after service check-list to clean up and reset the classroom.
- Notify the service captain of any items of concern or need.

Accountability

The Preschool volunteers are accountable to the Children’s Campus Pastor.

POLICIES

Prepare yourself.

Through the week, review the materials you will be teaching the next weekend. Ask God to open your heart and mind to the lesson you will be teaching the children that week. Pray for the families you will be serving this week and ask God to use you in their lives.

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 preparation procedures should be complete prior to the arrival of the first child so you have nothing to do but invest in the children. Have all lesson materials ready to use when it is time.

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 each child at the door by name and tell them you are happy they are there today. Bend down and look them in the eye. Guide them to the activities you have laid out on the tables for them to participate in until service time. Help them to hang up their coat and put away belongings. Build a sense of atmosphere. Be intentional about what you do.

What Parents are Expected to Provide

If a child is not yet potty trained, parents are asked to provide a bag with 2 diapers and a change of clothes.

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.

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.

Class Time

Preschoolers learn the best by routine and by experience. If you are unprepared for your lesson they can smell it from a mile away! In order to keep their attention and really reach them you **MUST** be prepared! You also must be excited about what you are teaching them. Your excitement will flow over into them and they will want to learn about the lesson that week.

Potty Times

Please refer to the red rules for policies regarding potty breaks. In the rare occasion you still have a Preschooler who is not potty trained and you must change a diaper or pull-up, refer to the Diaper Changing Procedures.

Snacks Times

Preschooler's are allowed to have snacks provided by the church. All children should be checked for allergies before giving a snack to any child. Under no circumstances are we allowed to serve any kind of peanut products. Some children are highly allergic and could have a devastating reaction to peanut products. Snacks provided to this age by the church will be primarily pretzel sticks, crackers, cheetos, animal crackers and water.

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

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.

Teachers or caregivers should wash hands:

- Upon arrival into the preschool room or before beginning a teaching assignment outside the room.

- Before preparing, serving or eating food.

- Before and after feeding infants or children.

- After using or helping a child use the toilet.

- After every diaper or pull-up change.

- After removal of disposable gloves.

- After contact with body fluids (such as spit up, nasal discharge,

 - Tears, saliva, urine, stool, blood or vomit)

- After handling soiled items

Children should wash their hands:

- Before preparing, handling, or eating food or snacks

- After every diaper change.

- After using the toilet.

- After contact with body fluids.

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.

Use songs or little games to make goodbye times more fun. Items back to bags before service end. 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 child.

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.
- Make sure chairs are set up as needed for the class.
- Finally, wash or sanitize your hands well before beginning to greet children.

Child Check-In Procedures

- Have 1 consistent leader 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!
- 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.
- 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 Procedures

- 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.
- Female volunteer only change diapers.

End of Shift Clean Up Procedures

- 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!

What Preschoolers Want Grown-Ups to Know

We like to imitate big people. If you play with the blocks to build a church (zoo, town, forest), we will play with the blocks. If you put actions to songs, we'll put actions to songs. If you remind us to talk softly in your soft voice, we'll talk softly too.

We learn through repetition. The first times we hear a song, we may just watch. If you repeat the song (verse, game, or story), we will begin to do it too.

We want to please grown-ups. So tell us when we're being good, and we'll try to be good again. (We also like to know when we're doing better than before. And sometimes we need encouragement just to keep trying.)

We need to be reminded of the rules. Every time we break a rule, please remind us of the rule. Remember to tell us what to do as well as what not to do.

We need to be both active and quiet. Sometimes we need to climb and slide. We like to tumble on a mat too. But, if we get too wound up or too tired, we need to sit and listen to music. Or you could read a book to us. Or we could play with play dough.

We like games. Can you make a game to teach a simple Bible verse? Can you make a game about cleaning the room? Can you make up a game using the play dough? We like games!

We learn by doing. The Bible says to teach us children while we walk, eat, sit and get up – on the go. (See Duet. 6:5-7) You can teach us about God and Jesus and about the Bible – you can teach us all this while we play! Whatever we are playing, you can relate to something God wants us to know. If we learn on the go, we will be doers of the Word, not just hearers.

We may forget to thank you. But Jesus said that whatever you do to the least in His kingdom, you do to him. Jesus promises to reward you – He will too!

Play – as the teacher: Be ready to play and be playful. You want to be the best “toy” or entertainment in the room. Smile, it's contagious! Exaggerate your movements.

Characteristics by Age

“Aren’t all two-year-olds alike?” And isn’t the same true for a four-year-old? The answer to that question is both yes and no! Every child develops in a unique way. At any given chronological age, children’s developmental differences will vary greatly. But some basic developmental guidelines can help you become both a better observer and a more effective helper.

TWOS

Physical

Twos are able to walk, climb, scribble on paper, build block towers, fill a container with small objects and turn pages in a book. Although large muscles are fairly well developed, twos often stumble and fall. They move all the time! Small muscles are not yet well developed. Twos are often in the process of being potty trained. They enjoy simple songs with movement and large-muscle activities and need room to roam as well as quiet-time activities.

Cognitive and Emotional

Twos have a short attention span, and they learn best through using all their senses. A two is often eager to do things without help and uses “no” frequently as a way to define his or her separate identity. Twos may say many words and some simple sentences and recognize their names in print. Twos enjoy retelling a story or activity, which increases their sense of mastery.

Social

Twos have very little concept about other people’s rights or feeling. “MINE!” is a favorite word. Using distraction and redirection works far better than reasoning when there are disputes. Twos play mainly by themselves or play next to but not with other children. Get on their eye level. Talk about what you see them doing to help them know you notice them and love them.

Spiritual

Twos can learn that God made everything, that God cares about them, that Jesus is God’s Son, that the Bible is God’s special book and that Bible stories are true. Talk and sing about God often.

THREES

Physical

Threes have increased small muscle ability, can unlace and remove shoes and unbutton clothing, draw pictures and name the people and items which they draw. They build more complicated block structures and are usually completely potty trained. Threes enjoy string big beads, putting together simple puzzles and playing with dough, as well as singing songs and hearing simple stories. They may begin to use scissors.

Cognitive and Emotional

Threes may be able to write part of their names and can usually identify colors and repeat simple rhymes and songs. Threes begin to imitate and pretend. They can wait for short periods of time and may show more sympathy for others.

Social

Threes may interact with other children more as they play, although sharing and taking turns are still not habitual. Give good eye contact at eye level and be sure to show you see, hear and love them.

Spiritual

Threes can understand that Jesus was born as a baby and grew up to do kind things, that God is good and that Jesus loves us, and that the Bible tells us right ways to act. Threes understand more about God's love and nature through loving actions than through spoken words.

FOURS

Physical

Fours begin a period of rapid growth. Coordination catches up in both small and large muscles. They still need a great deal of space and time to explore and enjoy the creative process.

Cognitive and Emotional

Fours begin to ask why and how. Their attention spans are still short, but they can concentrate for longer periods. Fours may often test the limits of what is acceptable behavior.

Social

Fours begin to enjoy being with other children in group activities. They want to please adults and usually love their teachers. Give each child a chance to feel successful by helping in some way. Provide ways they can sing, pray and talk together.

Spiritual

Fours begin to understand more about Jesus: that he is God's Son and that he made sick people well when He lived on Earth. Fours can also be taught that the Bible tells us ways to obey God and that we can talk to God in prayer.

Teaching a Group of Twos through Fives

There are times when one class of preschool-aged children may range from two years to five or six years of age. It's important for a teacher of any class containing such a large developmental span to be well prepared! Such varied levels of development require that a teacher tailor some activities so that each child learns best at his or her own level of development.

To a degree, younger children will enjoy being with the "big kids" and will be attracted to the activities in which older children are involved. Generally speaking, however, the younger the child, the more easily he or she will be distracted. Therefore, the younger child needs more direct, firsthand activity for effective learning. So that all activities need not be set at the level of the very youngest ones, divide the class into older and younger groups as time and helpers allow. If materials are used with older children that are not suitable for use by younger children, provide careful supervision at all times.

Use the activity center method. Keep at least one helper or teacher with each group to observe and talk with children. As you rotate these groups through the centers, let every child work at his or her own pace. Keep in mind that younger children have shorter attention spans and are likely to move between activities more frequently. Older children will be able to focus longer.

If some children don't stay in their age related groups, don't panic. Such a natural adjustment is probably best! As teachers and helpers get to know each child, they can be observant as children interact. They will then be better able to adjust members, times and activities for any group as needed.

Plan to use activities that are open-ended. When children are all expected to produce the same craft item, the activity will require a great deal of adult intervention (and result in a great deal of adult frustration!). Instead, give children creative materials and let each one work at an individual level. Engage children in conversation about the process of what they are doing. "Tell me about your picture." "I see lots of dots on your page. What color are you dots?" "Which kind of dough is softer? Which one do you like best?" Talk about colors and shapes you see, what the child seems to be enjoying, etc. Especially in a class of mixed ages, don't focus on activities where a finished product is the goal. This avoids comparison (older ones have already heard this kind of thing from even older children) and eliminates frustration.

Many early childhood activities can be stretched to fit different ability levels. For example, if making a collage of magazine pictures, a two-year-old may have finished after gluing two or three pictures, a three-year-old may want to cover the entire paper, a four-year-old may want to trim the pictures before gluing and a five-year-old may want to dictate captions for each picture. Wise teachers of mixed ages will choose activities that will provide each age level with successful participation.

During Bible story time, having at least one teacher and one helper for each group makes it possible to schedule two story times. Even better, keeping the story time as an activity center through which groups rotate makes it possible to tailor the story to each particular group. This way, all children are taught the Bible story on their own level. If this is not possible, involve older children in telling the story. Invite them to answer questions and tell details that they want to share from the story. This not only gives older ones a sense of helpfulness and importance, but it also gives the teacher a chance to gauge what children do or do not understand about the story.

As with any other adjustment, ask for God's wisdom in the situation. Look for creative ways to see the matter of age span as a benefit, instead of a problem. Your attitude of accepting things as they are and your relaxed calmness will help each child sense God's love for him or her. As each one works at his or her own level, all ears will be open to the words you say about God and His care.

Helping Children Fold, Tape, Cut and Glue

To help children successfully complete some of the activities suggested in your curriculum, a few basic skills are required. These skills – folding, taping, cutting and gluing – must be learned. And as you know, not all children learn at the same rate. Read these suggestions for a variety of ways to help children learn to succeed at these four tasks.

Folding

1. Before giving paper to a child, prefold paper as needed and then open it back up. Paper will then fold easily along the prefolded lines when the child refolds it.
2. Score the line to be folded by placing a ruler on the line. Then draw a used ballpoint pen with no ink in it along the ruler's edge. The line will fold easily into place.
3. Hold the corners of the paper in position to be folded. Tell the child to press and rub where he or she wants to fold the page.

Taping

1. An easy solution for the problem of taping is to use double-sided tape whenever appropriate. Lay the tape down on the paper where it is needed. The child attaches the item that needs to be taped.
2. If double-sided tape is not available or is not appropriate, place a small piece of tape on the edge of a table or shelf. The child removed tape and attaches it to the paper.

Cutting

1. Cutting with scissors is one of the most difficult tasks for any young child to master. Provide scissors that are the appropriate size for young children and designed for both right-handed and left-handed children. Purchase at educational supply stores. All scissors should be approximately 4 inches long and should have blunt ends.
2. Hold paper tightly at ends or sides while the child cuts.
3. Begin to cut paper for child to follow. Child follows cut you have begun.
4. Draw simple lines outside actual cut lines for the child to follow. This will help a child cut close to the desired shape – though it will not be exact.
5. Provide scrap paper for child to practice cutting.

Gluing

1. Have child use a glue bottle to apply a spot of glue to a large sheet of paper; then child presses a smaller piece of paper onto glued area.
2. Provide a glue stick for the child to use. Take off cap and roll up a short amount of the glue stick for the child. Child "colors" with glue stick over the desired area.
3. Pour glue into a shallow container. Thin slightly by adding a small amount of water. Child uses paintbrush to spread glue over desired area. This idea works well when a large surface needs to be glued.
4. To glue a smaller surface, pour a small amount of glue into a shallow container. Give each child a cotton swab. Child dips the swab into the glue and rubs on desired area.
5. When using glue bottles, buy the smallest bottles for children to use. Refill small bottles from a large bottle. Adjust top to limit amount of glue that comes out. Instruct child to put "tiny dots of glue" on paper. Clean off and tightly close top of bottle when finished. Have several paper towels ready to clean up any spills or excess glue.

Remember not to expect perfection. Accept all attempts at accomplishing the task. Specific and honest praise will encourage the child to attempt the task again!

Quick Ideas for Getting the Young Child's Attention

When it's time to give directions or get children's attention, children may be told "sit still until everyone is here" or "wait in line until we are ready." Such methods of gaining attention and control are self-defeating if we are trying to teach kindness and respect through our own behavior. They also create negative feelings and waste valuable teaching time. There are better ways!

When you want to start

It's easy to establish a simple attention-getting signal for the children in your class. Choose a signal to use and introduce the signal with spoken directions. It's a good idea to practice using the signal until the children are familiar with it. Once children know the routine, simply give the signal and allow children time to respond. Always acknowledge and thank children by name who respond quickly to the signal. Here are a few signal ideas:

- Flick lights on and off two or three times.
- Slowly count aloud to five to see if everyone can be quietly looking at you before you say "five."
- Hold up two fingers (or hold up a different number of fingers each time) and invite children whose attention you've gained to tell how many fingers you are holding up.
- Sing the same song or play the same music before the same activity at each session. "By the time the song is finished, you should all be sitting on the floor."
- Ring a bell. (Collect several different bells. Make a game of identifying which bell you rang.)
- Clap hands in a pattern. Children imitate pattern as you gain their attention.
- Say "One, two, three – all eyes on me." (Follow this with a question: "What color is my sweater?" or "What animal do you think is on the back of my shirt?")
- Use a finger-play poem or other chant for children to imitate. (Change finger plays to keep interest high, but do the same one consistently for a while, so children know what finger play is a signal.)
- As children gather, sing a song that includes each of their names. Others will hurry to join you to hear their names sung!

While children listen

There are times during a circle time or story time when some children lose interest. Plan ahead for these times! When restlessness runs high, try these ideas:

- Ask a question, using a child's name.
- Whisper your words, which often generates renewed interest from children.
- Change the pace of leading children in a finger play, an action song or a simple imitation game to recall attention.

What to avoid

Avoid sarcasm! Young children don't understand it but can feel belittled by a sarcastic tone of voice.

Don't over explain. Thirty seconds is about all you can expect for attention, so keep explanations short and on the point.

Don't exaggerate. Part of your job as an adult is to explain how the world works in clear terms. Don't confuse the child.

Don't label ("You're a lot of trouble!" "You're a handful"). Negative words shut down open communication. Correct behavior with positive directions and without calling the child's value into question.

Don't correct what you think a child is saying or finish the child's sentence or thought. Young children need your interest and attention as they process the ways to use words.

Don't use negative nonverbal signals. Sighing, looking away, glancing at your watch or making other impatient gestures tells the child clearly that you are not listening.

Remember that whenever you talk with a child, you can in some way communicate God's love to him or her. Use the opportunity!

Cleaning Up for Fun!

Taking care of materials and equipment is a basic part of life learning. When you have a positive attitude toward cleanup, you can make it interesting, giving clear expectations and generous encouragement and appreciation. When children enter a room that is reasonably neat and clean, children are more likely to respond to your guidance in keeping the room neat. Point out how there is room to play a game when the toys are put away, or comment on how everyone can easily find something to build with when the blocks are stacked on shelves. Take delight in pointing out the ways children are helping, showing love and obeying!

Cleaning up takes time

Be sure to give cleaning up enough time. It should not be an afterthought. Plan this time into your schedule to help children understand that cleaning up is a valuable activity. Five to ten minutes before cleanup time, move to each activity area to give the children advance notice. "Well be cleaning up soon."

When children are not ready to transition into cleaning up, let them work a little longer and tell them it is fine to do so. But if they have no choice be clear! Don't ask, "Would you like to clean up?" Say, "It's time to clean up now. We need to put away the blocks. The puzzles need to go back into the racks." If a child has a hard time making the transition, acknowledge his or her feelings. "I see you were having a lot of fun. It's time to put the puzzles away now. But we'll be sure to put them out again the next time we are together." (Be sure to keep your word!)

Remember that to most young children the concept of cleaning up may not be any more clear than the concept of paying bills or flying to Atlanta. They may have some experience of it but not much genuine understand! They need the tasks broken into manageable portions. Directions need to tell them what they can do, not what to avoid. Instead of saying, "Don't start playing with the blocks again!" try "Liam, you and Sean need to finish putting the blocks on the shelves. Would you like to stack the long blocks first or the short blocks?"

Give plenty of advance notice

Make your expectations clear

State your directions positively.

Give a choice to refocus resistant helpers.

Cleaning up can be fun

Make cleaning up an interesting experience and a way to have some fun!

Games

- Play I Spy. As children clean up, simply say, "I spy something orange on the floor." The challenge is to spot and put away the item you described. Acknowledge the child who puts away the item. "Robert, you spied the orange toy. You put it away. Thank You! You know your colors!"
- Play Freeze Cleanup. Play music while children work with the goal of the game to finish cleaning up by the time the music stops. To increase interest, stop and start the music periodically. Children freeze when the music stops. (Note: The faster the music, the more quickly children will move. However, if putting things in their proper places neatly is your goal, play music that is bright and energetic but not too fast.

- Challenge children to move in a different way as they clean up. “Let’s all walk on tiptoe (or stomp or slide or march) today while we clean up!” “Clap your hands every time you put a toy away!”
- Challenge children to find and count five things that need to be put away. For older children, repeat the challenge increasing the number by one or two each time.

Songs

Singing a simple song effectively signals cleanup time and acknowledges children as they work.

- Sing these words to the tune of “Farmer in the Dell”: “It’s time to clean our room, it’s time to clean our room, Hi-ho, the derry-oh, it’s time to clean our room.” Then as you see children work, sing: “Dayna’s picking up, Dayna’s picking up, She’s picking up the blocks and cars; Dayna’s picking up.” Or sing: “I see Eli work, I see Eli work. He’s cleaning up our living room; I see Eli work.” A song that includes a child’s name and how he or she is helping works wonders!
- Sing these words to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”: “Now we’re going to clean our room, clean our room, clean our room. Now we’re going to clean our room and then it’s time for (snack, naps, lunch, the yard, etc.)!” Acknowledge a child’s actions by singing “Shelby’s helping clean our room, clean our room, clean our room. Shelby’s helping clean our room and then she’ll have a snack!” This tells children what comes next and helps them see cleaning up as part of getting ready for the next activity.
- Sing the same song as a cleanup signal every time. This auditory cue helps children transition. When adequate time is scheduled, children need not hurry, running madly to throw things into boxes. Rather, they can move slowly enough to stop and appreciate the neat results of what they are doing!

Cleaning Up needs storage

When a room has low shelves for storage of toys, games, puzzles and blocks, children's eyes are drawn to the shapes and colors of equipment. Choosing a shape of block or finding a particular toy is less frustrating.

Use bins only for small toys. Have a separate bin for each kind of small toy, so children can sort toys as they put them into the bins. Mark the side of the bin with a picture of what belongs inside to help children sort items. (Cut pictures from the boxes the items came in!)

When children remove blocks from block shelves, it's best to keep free floor space, so others have access to blocks. Lay a masking tape line about three feet from the block shelves. Instruct children to build only on the side away from the shelves.

Encourage any child who uses a puzzle to put all the pieces back in place and set the puzzle back on the shelf. Mark the back of each puzzle piece with the same number or symbol or draw outlines of puzzle pieces on the puzzle boards, so you can quickly put puzzle pieces together if needed.)

Cleaning up is worth the time, worth the effort of making it fun and worth having appropriate places in which to store items. This makes cleaning up an enjoyable part of the routine, instead of a reason to whine.

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.

Make your Class Schedule Work

For maximum learning in early childhood classes, a schedule creates a few firm points that allow for a great deal of flexibility in between!

Preparation

We are far more successful in every aspect of teaching if we are well prepared. The teacher's early arrival allows time to lay out materials, plan for a variety of factors unique to that day.

Note: Don't forget to plan for time before the service and how the arrival and departure of children will be handled with a minimum of disruption in what is being done.

Bible Learning Activities

Learning begins when the first child arrives! Teachers should never be busy with preparation when even the earliest arrival comes to the classroom. One adult should be ready to greet each child and offer a choice of activities. Greet each child at his or her eye level; help the child become involved in an activity. Teacher and helpers should be ready at each activity to guide conversation that helps children understand the day's lesson focus as well as give children ideas of how to expand the activity.

Bible learning activities allow for starting when the first child arrives and makes it easy to integrate each child as they arrive with a minimum of distractions. Other type of activities might cause waiting to begin which wastes the best part of the schedule. Everyone is most alert at their arrival. Preschoolers are "her and now" people. While they are fresh and eager to learn, they need immediate involvement in activities that will connect God's Word to their lives. Shy or reluctant children find it easier to become involved in a fun and inviting learning activity.

Ideally, there should be two or more Bible learning activities ready as children arrive, so children are able to choose which activity they prefer to participate in first. A teacher or helper should be in each area, ready to involve children and engage them in conversation. To effectively involve a child in an activity, begin to do it yourself. As children become involved, remain nearby to observe, engage in conversation and relate the children's activities to the lesson focus and Bible verse for the session.

If one learning activity area overflows with children, teachers in the other areas should invite children to join them. If the overflow persists (some activities are just a big hit!), rotate children through that activity, so everyone has a turn; use colors of clothing, type of shoe, etc. as simple ways of dividing the group.

Near the end of the Bible Learning Activity time, it's important to let children know what is coming next. Go to each area and tell the children it will soon be time to clean up. Signal clean up time with a song or chant. One teacher should move to the next area according to the schedule so that the first children who arrive won't have to wait. This also encourages others to finish cleanup and move on.

Bible Story Time

During this time, teachers and children should all come together in a semi-circle on the floor. This time may consist of another activity, a song, a prayer or a interactive activity that involves repetition of the bible verse a bible story.

Variety in the Bible Story time helps children experience a needed change of pace. Children will tire less readily when they are given a balance of active and quiet things to do.

Telling the Bible story is a key component of the large group time. The objective in telling Bible stories to young children is not primarily so they will remember all the details; it is to allow the narrative to reveal God's involvement in everyday life. At the end of Bible Story time, briefly give directions for the next time segment. Dismiss children a few at a time (dismiss according to what color children are wearing, first letters of first names, with a song, etc.) to tables to complete their next activity. This way, there is not a stampede but an orderly movement to the next part of the schedule.

Near dismissal time, children may have free play time for a much needed change of pace. The use of another learning activity helps parents get a glimpse of the kind of learning in which children have participated.

At the end of the class, take a moment with co-teachers to review and develop strategies that work best for your class, encourage each other and share matters for prayer throughout the week.

How to Use Elevate Jr.

For a video overview on Elevate Jr., go to elevatekids.com.

Elevate Jr. includes the following elements:

Classroom lesson

Classroom DVD

Classroom Activity Training DVD

Materials you will use for the classroom format:

Classroom activities – Teaching time in the classroom

There are many classroom activities you can choose from.

Opening Activities get your kids moving and introduce the teaching of the day.

Bible Story Classroom Activities give the leader the opportunity to retell the Bible Story.

Main Point and Craft Classroom Activities reinforce the concept that the children are learning for that week. Closing Classroom Activities wrap up what the children have learned.

Family Devotionals – Handouts for the Family

This is a weekly activity sheet inviting the family to participate in what the children are learning.

Classroom DVD

An interactive video lesson teaches the Bible story in a fun and creative way using the 8 week theme.

Volunteer Training – Classroom Leader DVD

There are classroom activity demonstrations by other teachers to train you in how to lead the lesson for each week. There are also song-motion demonstrations for each song. These tools have been designed to enhance the quality of teaching that is done in the classroom.

