

**SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY FOR CHILDREN
at the UNITED CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE**

updated on July 21, 2009 by a sub committee of the Board of Children's Ministry

PROLOGUE:

The United Church of Gainesville has a long tradition of outstanding spiritual and moral education of its children. Over the years, countless volunteers have given generously, and with integrity, of their time, energy and creativity to provide both traditional and experiential learning opportunities for children. Now, at the urging of the United Church of Christ, UCG has developed this policy statement in order to be more intentional and specific in setting forth procedures to guide our paid staff and volunteers, as well as to educate the entire congregation about our mutual responsibility to assure a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for our children.

SECTION I: GUIDELINES FOR FULL OR PART-TIME PAID EMPLOYEES WHO WORK WITH UCG CHILDREN

A. All full or part-time paid employees who work with, or have contact with, UCG children must complete the final Child Worker Application Form (a copy is attached). The person who hires and supervises the paid employee is responsible for overseeing the completion of this form, maintaining those records and updating them as needed. All child care aides and substitutes must complete this form.

B.

1. When a new employee is being hired for the positions of Coordinator of Children's Programs, Coordinator of Nursery Child Care, Director of Childcare for 2 year olds and under, Director of Child Care for 3 year olds – 5th graders, and Children's Choir Director, the hiring supervisor or committee must complete an independent background check on this potential new employee.
2. In addition to completing the Worker Application form, child care aides and substitutes must provide two references and be screened by the supervisor on the regional sex offenders list. The supervisor may also, at his/her discretion, request a complete formal background check, contingent upon the employee signing a waiver agreeing to this background check.

C. The following employees who work with children must have current certification and/or training in CPR, AED, and First Aid: the Coordinator of Children's Programs, the Coordinator of Child Care, the Director of Childcare for 2 year olds and under, the Director of Child Care for 3 year olds – 5th graders and the Children's Choir director. Documentation of this certification must be kept on file with the employee's records. The church will pay for this training and certification.

D. Applicants with criminal and/or abuse records may not be hired by the United Church of Gainesville to work with UCG children.

SECTION II: GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK REGULARLY WITH UCG CHILDREN

A. As a pledge of our commitment to the safety of our children, all Children's Board members, preschool teachers, and elementary school guides will be asked to complete a Volunteer's Information Form (a copy is attached). The person who recruits and supervises these volunteers will oversee the completion of these forms as well as maintaining these records. Only appropriate staff members will have access to the information on these forms, which will be filed securely.

B. People who volunteer for occasional events or programs for children are exempt from the Application Form. A copy of this Safety and Protection Policy for Children will be provided to these volunteers.

SECTION III: OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

A. General

1. Parental permission is implied for any child attending regularly scheduled church activities or programs.
2. Medical emergency release forms shall be on file for every child in regular attendance at UCG activities or programs.
3. Two or more adults must be on duty during all church activities and programs involving children.
4. Adult leaders will stay with children at the conclusion of activities and programs until all children have been picked up. Under no circumstances shall a child be left alone to wait for a ride home.
5. The Coordinator of Children's Programs and the Coordinator of Nursery and Preschool Programs will oversee the Directors of Child Care in developing a sign-in and sign-out procedure for children in the nursery and at Activity Time. These procedures will include information about who checked the child in, at what time, and who picked up the child (and the relationship to the child if this is someone other than a parent) and the time the child was picked up.

In addition, these coordinators will oversee the written weekly attendance records for every church school class. All of these documents will be kept on file for at least six months.

6. The Church School Coordinator will oversee, using her/his discretion, situations which require the transporting of children.
7. An annual orientation and inservice workshop on the Safety and Protection Policy, and procedures to follow, will be provided to all child care staff. The church will pay the child care aides and their supervisors for the time they spend at this workshop.
8. Possession or use of illegal drugs by adults, youth, or children is prohibited at all church-sponsored activities and programs.
9. Persons in violation of the drug policy above will be asked to leave the event or program. All violations of the drug policy will be reported to the

ministers. Additional consequences will be determined by the ministers and the staff members responsible for the event or program where the violation(s) occurred.

10. These policies shall be reviewed annually with the Children's Board.

B. On-Campus Activities

1. Two or more adults or babysitters must be on duty during any official activities or programs for children.
2. The Coordinator of Children's Programs, the Coordinator of Nursery and Preschool Programs, the Director of Childcare for 2 year olds and under, the Director of Child Care for 3 year olds – 5th graders, and the minister who provides supervision for children's programming, along with designated members of the Children's Board will develop, publish, implement and review annually safety procedures for children including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) Identifying infants and toddlers and providing for their security;
 - b) Escorting children from the church service to church school;
 - c) Maintaining records of attendance;
 - d) Accounting for children in the transition from church school classes to Activity Time and to other organized programs;
 - e) Developing rules for safe use of the playground;
 - f) Providing supervised access to restroom. Only adults who have signed the Employee or Volunteer Information form may accompany children to the bathrooms: Coordinator of Children's Programs, Coordinator of Nursery and Preschool Programs, the Directors of Child Care, the Child Care Aides, preschool teachers, elementary school guides, and Children's Choir Director.
 - g) Releasing children to authorized adults at the end of activities.
3. Under no circumstances are children 5th grade and younger to roam church grounds unattended or to be released to find their parents.

C. Off-Campus Church-Chaperoned Activities

1. Permission forms, signed by parents, are required for trips off church premises, both during and outside of regular church school group hours.
2. For overnight events, when there are both female and male participants, there shall be both female and male chaperons. Chaperons for overnight events shall be approved by the Coordinator of Children's Programs and the minister who provides supervision for those programs. The recommended ratio is one adult for every 4–5 children.

SECTION IV: EDUCATION

- A. A copy of the Safety and Protection Policy for Children at the United Church of Gainesville will be given to all members of the congregation, to all paid staff, to all volunteers who work with children, to parents, and to each class of new members.

B. The United Church of Gainesville will endeavor to provide appropriate ongoing abuse prevention education to the congregation, staff, and all volunteers who work with children.

SECTION V: REPORTING

A. Parents or guardians will be notified immediately of an accident or injury to their child. If an accident or injury requires professional medical attention, a detailed report (with a copy for the parents, for the appropriate board, and for the minister who provides supervision for the Children's programs) must be written by the adult in charge of the activity where the accident or injury occurred within 10 days of the incident.

B. Any violation of the Safety and Protection Policy for Children at the United Church of Gainesville shall be reported immediately to the immediate supervisor and to the minister who provides supervision for the Children's programs.

C. By Florida law, anyone who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect is required to report it to Florida Protection System (1-800-962-2873).

**FINAL APPLICATION FOR UNITED CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE STAFF
to work with Children**

Full Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____

Social Security Number _____

1) I have never been found guilty, plead guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge or had criminal records sealed or expunged:

True Not True

If not true, give a short explanation of the charge. Indicate the date, nature and place of the incident leading to the charge, where the charge was filed, and the precise disposition of the charge:

2) No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, or physical abuse has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.

True Not True

If not true, give a short explanation of the lawsuit. Indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit, where the lawsuit was filed, and the precise disposition of the lawsuit:

3) I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position – or had my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position terminated – for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, physical abuse or child abuse.

True

Not True

If not true, give a short explanation. Indicate the date of termination, name, address and phone number of employer or volunteer supervisor, and the nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination:

4) Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

If yes, please list State and License Number:

With respect to your driving record, has your license been suspended or revoked within the last 5 years due to reckless driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance? Yes No

If no, why do you not have a valid driver's license?

5) Are there any situations or circumstances involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with responsibilities for and with children, teenagers, and parents? Yes No

If yes, please give a brief explanation.

6) Do you agree to an independent background check if one is deemed necessary by your immediate supervisor? Yes _____ No _____

The covenant between the United Church of Gainesville and the person providing care for the children of the church requires honesty, integrity and truthfulness for the health of the children, the parents, and the church. To that end, I attest that the information on this application is true and complete.

I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for the position or may be grounds for termination if I am employed in this position. I acknowledge that it is my duty to reasonably amend the responses and information I have provided as needed and report any allegations or arrests that occur after completing this application.

Beginning an employment relationship with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees and the church. To that end, I authorize the United Church of Gainesville and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding all the statements I have set forth above.

I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character. I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments, and statements made in good faith and without malice.

I authorize the United Church of Gainesville and its agents to circulate and share information gathered in connection with this application with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise the position I am seeking to fill. I understand that the United Church of Gainesville will share with me information it has gathered about me upon my request. I understand that the United Church of Gainesville employs me "at will" and may terminate my employment as specified in my job contract.

I have read, and I understand, the United Church of Gainesville's Safety and Protection Policy for Children and the United Church of Gainesville's Personnel Policy.

Applicant's name printed

Applicant's Signature

Date _____

**INFORMATION FORM
FOR UNITED CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE VOLUNTEERS
who work with Children**

Full Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Date of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____

Email address _____

How long have you been a UCG member? _____

1) I have never been found guilty, plead guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge or had criminal records sealed or expunged:

____ True ____ Not True

If not true, give a short explanation of the charge, indicating the date, place and nature of the incident, where the charge was filed, and the disposition of the charge:

2) No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, or physical abuse has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.

____ True ____ Not True

If not true, give a short explanation of the lawsuit, indicating the date, place, and nature of the incident leading to the lawsuit, where the lawsuit was filed, and the disposition of the lawsuit:

3) I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or volunteer service – or had my employment, professional credentials, or volunteer service terminated – for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, misconduct, physical abuse or child abuse.

True Not True

If not true, give a short explanation, indicating the date of termination, the name, address and phone number of employer or volunteer supervisor, and the nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination:

4) Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

If yes, please list State and License Number:

If no, why do you not have a valid driver's license?

With respect to your driving record, has your license been suspended or revoked within the last 5 years due to reckless driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance? Yes No

5) Are there any situations or circumstances involving you or your background that would call into question your ability to be trusted with responsibilities for and with children, teenagers, and parents? Yes No

If yes, please give a brief explanation.

I have read, and I understand, the United Church of Gainesville Child Safety and Protection Policy statement.

Volunteer's signature and date _____