



Keeping Kids Safe

Adapted from The Missionettes Leader Training Guide

Never in the history of the Church has there been such great concern about protecting children, lay workers, ministers, churches, and ministries from the blight of child abuse and its ramifications. Child abuse is a rude reality in today's society. A single incident of abuse or molestation—even if only alleged—can devastate a child, a family, a church, and a ministry. For this reason, every church should have an established, active child abuse prevention policy. ***Child abuse prevention is everyone's responsibility.***

The Church's Responsibility

According to law, the local church is not a guarantor of the safety and well-being of children, but is responsible for injuries that result because of negligence on the part of the church. To protect itself from concerns of liability, the local church should both screen and supervise its teachers.

Screen Your Workers

Every potential children's worker should complete an application form for church workers. The applicant should include any previous church activities, as well as personal references, and should include a signed statement. Each church or reference contacted should be listed on a record of contact form.

Establish Procedures and Policies

Set up procedures and policies for proper conduct. Make sure

they are understood and followed by all workers.

Establish Job Descriptions

Every worker should have defined responsibilities for which he or she is accountable.

Require at Least Two Adult Leaders for All Off-Site Activities

To protect the integrity and safety of your teachers, two or more responsible adults should be present at all special activities.



Avoid One-on-One Activity Between a Child and an Adult

If a teacher needs to counsel with a child, he/she should do so in a private area but in view of another adult or other individuals. This procedure is not to inhibit the teacher's relationship with the children, but rather to protect those relationships from being misunderstood by others.

Respect the Privacy of Others

Every person deserves to be

respected. Teachers must respect the dignity and sanctity of every child. Privacy requires space. Teachers should respect the space of every child, being careful to not intrude into a child's space without an invitation to do so. Teachers also need to be cautious of where and how they place their hands on children. Innocent signs of affection can be misinterpreted by others.

Keep a Record of Unusual Behavior and Occurrences

Always keep a written record of any unusual behavior and occurrences involving children, teachers, and helpers. Document the unusual behavior, the time and place it occurred, the circumstances in which it occurred, and what action was taken. A pattern of unusual behavior and occurrences should be reported to your pastor or church board.

Report Incidences of Child Abuse to Your Pastor or Church Board

If you suspect or are aware of child abuse, immediately report it to your pastor or church board. Any of these church leaders should take appropriate measures and action, reporting the incident when necessary. (Contact your state's agency for child protection or a local school counselor for more information.) Remember, child abuse prevention is every person's responsibility.

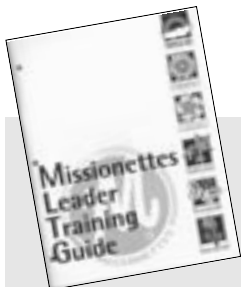
Questions For Further Study—

1. To protect itself from concerns of liability, the local church should both _____

and _____ its teachers.

2. What methods are in place in your church to screen and supervise workers?

3. What improvements can be made in your church to increase the safety and well-being of children?



This article is an excerpt from the *Missionettes Leader Training Guide*. The MLTG is a training workbook for Missionettes leaders. It relates the heart and purpose of Missionettes ministry and provides direction for establishing a Missionettes ministry in the local church. This resource is available from Gospel Publishing House, order number 02-1295. Call 1-800-641-4310 or click on www.gospelpublishing.com.