

St. Ann Catholic Parish Nursery

Parent Booklet

(A Guide to Policies and Procedures for Nursery Services)

Philosophy

As members of St. Ann Catholic Parish, we acknowledge that children are a sacred gift from God. It is our duty to uphold the rights of children and deliver the best care possible.

“...Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

-Mark 10:14

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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Child Abuse Hotline 800-252-4000
Website: txabusehotline.org

TX Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) 800-582-6036
Website: dfps.state.tx.us

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1. Nursery Program Mission Statement

The Mission of the Nursery Program at St. Ann Catholic Parish is to love God completely and love all unconditionally while providing a positive and meaningful experience to all children receiving care, as well as to offer parish families the opportunity to attend weekend Masses and participate in Parish Ministry/Organization hosted events while remaining on-site. These opportunities for spiritual growth will allow individuals to come together with Jesus and become intentional disciples, who will in turn transform others.

2. Purpose of Procedures

The purpose of the following Booklet is to ensure the upmost safety and well-being of every child and promote unity and understanding between Parents and all Nursery staff in the Nursery Program at St. Ann Catholic Parish. This Booklet will guide and explain all that needs to take place in order to receive childcare services at the Nursery Program. St. Ann Catholic Parish continues to strive to enhance its Nursery Program; thus reserves the right to add, amend, change, or eliminate any or all of this Booklet. This booklet has some procedures in accordance with St. Ann Catholic Parish requirements, based on guidelines required by the Texas State Regulations for Childcare. The St. Ann Nursery Program remains unlicensed due to its non-profit status.

3. Childcare Services

Childcare services during Saturday and Sunday Masses are provided for children from the age of six months to the age of four years, up to the day before their fifth birthday. Children five years and older should attend Mass or Sunday School. Childcare services for Ministries/Organizations are provided depending on their Event needs, while in accordance with the guidelines required by St. Ann Catholic Parish, based on guidelines required by the Texas State Regulations for Childcare. Requests for childcare from Ministries/Organizations are considered on a case-by-case situation, due to availability of Nursery and Caregivers.

The age standard for childcare services with the St. Ann Catholic Parish Nursery Program for all events except Masses is from six months to twelve years, up to the day before their thirteenth birthday. **Children 13 and over are not allowed to receive childcare services.** Since Nursery Events are scheduled by Ministries/Organizations in advance, a close watch to child/Caregiver ratios takes place during every Nursery Event. All parents must partake in a scheduled church Event and remain on St. Ann property while receiving childcare services. We do not operate as a drop-in Nursery Program.

The St. Ann Catholic Parish Nursery Program operates with part-time, fully trained Caregivers, and does not use volunteers. There will always be a minimum of two unrelated Caregivers per each scheduled Event at all times, in all separate rooms, and during transitioning periods if applicable.

The St. Ann Catholic Parish Nursery Program follows the ratios established in the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers of the State to Texas and the Fire Department.

All non-enrolled children are prohibited from entering the Nursery care areas during any scheduled Event, until properly registered by a parent belonging to a Ministry/Organization or attending Mass.

The Nursery Program focuses on children's developmental process through socialization and free-play. Through socialization, children learn the ability to communicate, become empathetic, collaborate, cooperate, negotiate, and ultimately understand and accept they are a part of a greater

community. The Nursery Program does not incorporate any academic teaching or tutoring processes while providing care. All Caregivers will make every possible effort to engage all children in a variety of free-play activities.

4. Special Needs:

The safety and welfare of all children receiving care services is our main priority. Our number one goal is to provide the best possible balanced care with the limited resources we have within our care rooms. Notwithstanding the nursery staff's limitations, some reasonable modifications are made on a case-by-case basis to accommodate some children with some special needs, unless to do so would be a fundamental alteration of services.

Please be advised that the nursery staff is unable to safely meet the needs of children with disabilities and or special needs, whose care calls for a one-to-one ratio (caregiver to child) type of setting or environment. Medical or special needs that require specialized training and or equipment, are beyond the scope of skills of the nursery staff and facilities, and therefore may prevent participation in the nursery for some children.

5. Nursery Locations & Maximum Capacities

Nursery Facility is in rooms 306, 305, 304 A, and 304 B, across from the east side entrance to the main church. Nursery events must be scheduled by ministries prior to the use of any of the care rooms, as it is not a drop-in nursery.

Maximum Capacities are posted as determined by the City of Coppel's Fire Department; thus, childcare services are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Maximum Capacity numbers indicate all persons allowed in any given room at the same time, which include Caregivers and children together: Nursery Room 306: 22 persons, Room 305: 18 persons, Room 304 B: 18 persons, Room 304 A: 22 persons, and Playground: 22 persons.

If a Ministry/Organization requests childcare and asks to split up a large group of children where a huge age disparity exists, an attempt to separate children according to age groups will be considered, as long as there is Caregiver availability and we remain within our ratio guidelines and Maximum Capacities.

6. Nursery Hours and Days of Operation

Nursery Events are contingent upon prescheduled Ministry/Organization Nursery Events. Each Nursery Event is scheduled by each Ministry/Organization's Nursery Contact Person in conjunction with the Nursery Coordinator, Nursery Scheduler and the Parish Building Scheduler. Nursery Events can be scheduled between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and no later than 9:00 P.M., to allow for parish clean-up. Scheduled weekday Events occur on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. All day Sundays and 5:00 P.M. Saturdays are dedicated to Mass Nursery Events on a regular on-going basis. Big Community events are scheduled on Saturdays as well. Yearly Closures are posted in the Nursery and on the parish website.

7. Communication

Good communication is of the utmost importance. It is imperative that all parents consistently communicate any issues, concerns, questions and feedback in a timely manner, to the Nursery Coordinator, to render a positive outcome, and to continue serving all parish children and their families in the best way possible. In case an important situation arises, it is vital to leave plenty of details in a message to ensure a prompt response.

A current cell phone number is required in order to communicate emergencies while children are receiving care. Please do not turn off your phones. Please leave on vibrate during Mass or while participating in an Event or meeting. This is our best mode of communication with you during an emergency.

8. Kid Check Accounts

Nursery services are provided to registered members at St. Ann Catholic Parish in compliance with all parish age requirements. Before a child can attend any Nursery Event requested by a Ministry/Organization or for Mass, all families must have a free KidCheck account through www.kickcheck.com. The Nursery Program subscribes to KidCheck to be able to use their electronic check-in system. A phone number is required to create such an account, not emails or special codes. This same phone number is required during check-in when being dropped off. If the system goes down, temporary registration paper forms for any event will be used and can be acquired through any Caregiver in the nursery while in operation. A KidCheck account will still be required thereafter. Services will not be rendered until an account with KidCheck has been created. Nursery staff are not allowed to create any KidCheck accounts for families due to confidentiality guidelines. Parents can update their accounts at any time, as they are the sole owners of their account. Parents should update their accounts on a regular basis.

Children are not allowed to receive more than 4.5 hours of maximum care per day, for 12 maximum hours of childcare services per week in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards and Childcare Licensing Guidelines. A week runs from Sunday thru Saturday. *Time for children attending Mass Nursery Events does not count toward the maximum twelve hours per week requirement.

9. Confidentiality

Due to Confidentiality Guidelines, if there is any information about children and their families attending the Nursery Program, it will be kept under lock and key and will be reviewed on a regular basis by designated Nursery staff only. If updates need to be made to accounts, they must be made by parents/families, through KidCheck.com. Staff is not allowed to update accounts.

All requests for release of information shall be directed to the Nursery Coordinator. Information will only be released with the express written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, or when required by law.

10. Drop Off/Pick Up of Children Procedures

Drop off:

Contingent on all registration procedures having been completed by parents/families, and all information required from Ministry/Organization hosting event having been submitted, there will be a minimum of two unrelated Caregivers present at all times to accept children from beginning to end of each Event. *Under no circumstance, will the Nursery remain open with just one Caregiver present. In the rare case of a second Caregiver running late, the remaining Caregiver will ask parents to remain in the Nursery until the second Caregiver can arrive or another one can be scheduled to come in. In the unforeseen situation a second Caregiver does not become available, parents will be asked to take their children home, and the Nursery Program will need to close during such event, as we must abide by ratio standards in accordance with state guidelines.

The following will take place at drop-off:

- Caregivers will begin accepting children fifteen minutes from the beginning of the Event, to allow them to set-up for the Event. **All care room doors will remain locked until then, no exceptions.**

- Caregivers will not accept any child into the Nursery while still in a car seat, carrier, stroller, or any other restraint device. All children must be removed from any restraint device by the parent/guardian and handed off into the Caregiver's arms fully awake.
- Restraint Devices that are not property of the Nursery Program will not be kept or stored in the Nurseries.
- Parent/guardian will need to provide the phone number used to create the KidCheck account during check-in. If KidCheck system is down, a paper-based form will be used to check-in children.
- **A current cell phone number will be required to be used as a means of communication in case of emergency. Leave your phone on vibrate. If you receive a call that shows it is from St. Ann Parish, while your child is receiving care in the nursery, DO NOT IGNORE the call.**
- **Make sure St. Ann Catholic Parish's phone number is saved as a contact in your cell phone: 972-393-5544.**
- ****Please, ensure that the same ADULT that dropped off the child and received the printed pick-up label is the same ADULT that picks up the child. This is for the safety of all children. Parents can update their accounts through KidCheck.com to add other adults. Adults not on an account will not be allowed to pick up children.***
- All children need a labelled backpack/bag to ensure essential items are within. Please, no plastic bags.

***Items needed to be packed for children should have their names written on them.** Things such as an allergy-free snack, a sippy-cup/bottle, baby-food with utensils, at least one disp. diaper/training pants (depending on the duration of the Event), a change of clothes. *In order to prevent the spread of germs, please do not send toys from home. **Only disposable diapers/training pants are accepted, NO CLOTH DIAPERS ACCEPTED!**

- **Caregivers will not change cloth diapers.**
- A snack should be packed for the child for every event. In case the snack is forgotten, Caregivers will offer nursery-stocked snacks. Please make sure you check if your child is allergic to these snacks. **Keep in mind the Nursery keeps a low stock of snacks for emergency needs only. Remember: if you bring a snack from home, make sure it has NO PEANUTS.**
- If no drink is provided by the parents, water will be served.
- Drinks will only be provided while children are sitting.
- Please dress children appropriately for the season, to include footwear, in case outdoor play is in effect. Outdoor play will be contingent on the weather and is at the discretion of the Caregivers. All walking children must wear shoes.
- Though there is no current mandated dress-code for children receiving services, children should always be dressed in a manner in which their attire doesn't become a negative distraction to anyone else in the Nursery Program; nor should it become a hindrance to the child while trying to participate in active social-play, and all clothes should be age appropriate. Young children should not wear clothing items with strings, as they pose a strangulation danger.
- Kids must not bring any toy or valuable things from home. Caregivers are not responsible for any loss of any personal item that the kids bring into the Nursery. Kids are not allowed to have cell phones, tablets or any other electronic device while in the nursery.

Pick up:

- As all parents/guardians are required to remain on site, only adults added by parents through their KidCheck account will be allowed to pick up children.
- The same parent/guardian who dropped off the child will need to be the one to pick up the child. Parents can update their KidCheck account to add more designated adults for pick up duty.
- The printed label given to parents at time of drop-off is required for pick-up. If the label is lost, photo identification will be required for pick up. See below for list of photo IDs.

- In the event of an emergency and someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up, Caregivers will verify and confirm the child's release by asking to provide a photo identification, to include one of the following: driver's license, state issued id., or an active military ID. The file will be noted.
- Parents, guardians, and all others will not be allowed to come into the caregiving area of the Nursery during operation, unless invited in to awake their sleeping child, regardless of Safe Environment Clearance.
- Ensure all backpacks/bags and belongings leave with the child at the end of the event.
- Caregivers will discretely share any issues or concerns with parent/guardian at pick up time if needed.
- Pick up time is immediately at the end of any Event, to allow preparation for the next Event. If no Event follows, the Nursery door locks automatically. ***Please adhere to this policy and be considerate of others and their time by being prompt to pick up your child. Ministries/Organizations are notified of those who do not adhere to policy.***

11. Separation Anxiety

It is common for young children to suffer from separation anxiety. It is not unusual for a child to cry when their loved one leaves. Normally, the child will calm down in just a few minutes. Please tell your child good-bye with confidence and give them a smile when leaving. Exit the Nursery without looking back, and do not linger at the door while trying to exit.

Children pick up on emotional cues during the drop-off process, so the more tense or emotional the parent becomes, the longer the child tends to stay upset. If the child continues to be upset for about ten or more minutes with no sign of calming down, a Nursery staff member will contact the parent/guardian by calling the cell number provided to come take the child. Getting a child used to a new environment with new people may take some time, but we will do our best to help with this process.

12. Wellness

Every possible effort is made to protect the health and safety of the children receiving childcare, as well as that of all the staff members and parents. Parent cooperation in helping prevent the spread of communicable disease is of great importance. For the protection of everyone involved, parents should keep sick children at home. A child who is ill upon arrival to the Nursery will not be admitted. If a child starts exhibiting any signs of illness after being dropped off, the child will be separated from the other children, and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately, who will in turn need to take the child home. Nursery staff will never administer medications. There should not be any type of medication in a child's backpack/ bag or sippy cup. *Caregivers will not administer any kind of medication to any child including vitamins, prescribed and non-prescribed, except for medications prescribed to an individual child for emergency care by a physician, associated with a life-saving situation (See EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers).

Caregivers will have access to a temporal thermometer to take children's temperature. Children that have had the following symptoms within the last twenty-four hours will not be accepted into the Nursery:

- Noticeably sick
- Fever
 - Temporal temperature above 100.3 degrees (used at school)
 - Armpit temperature of above 100 degrees
- Symptoms and Signs of possible severe illness (others may apply) -

- Earache, lethargy, abnormal breathing, laryngitis, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in twenty-four hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, yeast infection, thrush, impetigo, infected wounds, boils, bloody stools, ringworms, runny nose with mucus discharge other than clear, common cold, sore throat, strep throat, communicable eye infection, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), cough, croup, any symptom of infectious disease such as mumps, measles, chicken pox, or use of antibiotics for twenty-four hours or less
- Behavior changes, irritability, or continuous cries that require more attention than the Caregivers can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in their care, and all other signs that the child may be severely ill
- Lice or other parasites
- Any medical conditions that may introduce the risk of infection, exacerbate an already delicate recuperation stage, or hinder recuperation

*If a child has developed an infectious disease or has contracted a contagious agent after he/she has been in the nursery, please contact the Nursery Coordinator in order to notify other parents of their child's exposure.

**A formal doctor's release will be required for all children recovering from any serious illness or medical condition seeking childcare services.

13. Children Becoming Ill or Critically Injured During Care:

- If ill, parent/guardian will be immediately called-in to pick up the child.
- If mildly injured, parents will be notified.
- First-aid treatment will be provided as needed.
- **If requiring medical services, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be contacted immediately and parent/guardian notified.**
- **Parents are responsible for all costs involved in any medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.**
- Parents will need to sign off on any accident report originated, regarding their child, and will receive a copy if requested.

14. EPI Pens & Rescue Inhalers

Though EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers are prescription medications, they each are split-second, life-saving medications that will be the exception, and thus will be allowed for administration by Nursery staff, only during an emergency.

The Nursery Program requires written authorization from the child's physician, to include the reason for the medication, the specific dose, and any other special instructions to be followed during emergency administration of the medication. The Nursery Program will also require written parent consent. Nursery Program staff is not authorized to determine when an "as needed" medication is to be given; therefore, during a non-emergency situation, the parent/guardian will be the one to administer such medications on an "as needed" basis. All medications need to be in their original labeled container. All EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers will be kept in the child's backpack/bag, to ensure they leave with the child at the end of the Event. Parents are responsible for properly disposing of used-up EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers.

EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers will only be administered to those children for whom they have been prescribed. Caregivers are trained on the "general instructions" for use and administration of EPI Pens and Rescue Inhalers but will follow doctor's recommendations for administration of medication during an emergency.

Please be aware that allergy reactions and asthma attacks or severe flare-ups are unpredictable and may require emergency medical attention.

15. Snacks and Nut Allergies

Even though the Nursery Program at St. Ann Catholic Parish is not a Nut-Free Zone, it strongly encourages everyone to minimize the exposure to all nuts, by not bringing any items that may contain nuts, and recommends washing hands regularly. If children bring a snack from home, which clearly contains nuts, that snack will not be served to the child; instead, an alternative snack from the list below will be provided.

*The Nursery Program does not implement the use of hand-sanitizers for washing/cleaning hands on children, as it has been linked to the injury of children.

- The Nursery Program stocks snacks to be used only during emergencies or when parents occasionally forget to pack a snack. The Nursery Program will only stock and serve the following snacks: Cheerios, fish crackers, pretzels, and water (*only offered if approved by the parent in writing during drop-off time).
- The Nursery Program will make every attempt to provide a comfortable place for mothers to breastfeed their children if needed.

16. Safety and Security Procedures

The Nursery Program at St. Ann Catholic Parish consists of highly, well-trained Caregivers who provide a safe, positive, high quality, fun experience for all children. In order to keep the Nursery Program in compliance with St. Ann Catholic Parish guidelines required by Texas state regulations for childcare and highest standards, all Caregivers are required to complete a job application, receive a Safe Environment Clearance, go through a criminal background check, a reference check process, partake in detailed interviews, and receive yearly mandatory Child-Care Training as stipulated by St. Ann Catholic Parish needs.

- The Nursery is outfitted with basic first aid supplies; yet, a parent will immediately be contacted for any kind of head injury, or any incident requiring more treatment than a Band-Aid and a hug.
- There are Automated External Defibrillator (AED) units available throughout the parish grounds.
- ***Entry to Nursery is restricted and only accessible with a secured badge issued only to staff members.***
- ***All children needing to nap are placed on their back only, not on their stomach, no exceptions!***
- All Nursery staff wear a parish issued identification badge and any special clothing item indicative of the parish, if applicable, as always required while in operation.
- Surveillance Safety Cameras are in operation in the child-care areas of the Nursery.
- Only scheduled Caregivers and invited parents are allowed within the actual caregiving areas. All other individuals must remain on the opposite side of the counter, regardless of Safe Environment clearance.
- There will always be at least two unrelated Caregivers in the Nursery during all hours of operation.

17. Emergency Closings

Due to severe weather conditions or other emergencies, there may be times when the Nursery may be closed. Emergency closings are at the discretion of St. Ann Catholic Parish Administration. We follow the Coppell ISD closure calendar.

18. Evacuation Emergencies

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the Nursery will follow the specific evacuation procedures while escorting or transporting children to a designated alternate safe location within parish grounds. Should such an emergency arise, parents should not attempt to be with their children. These efforts may hinder the Nursery staff's ability to get all children safely out and to the designated alternate safe location. Once evacuated and with the emergency no longer in effect, Nursery staff will properly release all children to their respective families.

19. All Other Emergencies

Other situations, including but not limited to: fire, flood, electrical power failure, lack of water, lack of plumbing, lack of heat or air conditioning, or other situations which may endanger the safety or health of children and employees, may result in the Nursery being closed at the discretion of St. Ann Catholic Parish Administration. Every effort will be made to notify Parents/guardians of the situation.

20. Discipline and Guidance Procedures

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching child acceptable behavior and self-control

A Caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior,
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements,
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements, and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child, at any time.
- To not talk down to children, Caregivers always address children at eye-level.

The following types of discipline and guidance are **PROHIBITED**:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, drinks, naps or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand, instrument, or anything else
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language
- Placing a child in a dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed or locked
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods for the child's age

***Parents are encouraged to speak with their children regarding acceptable behavior. Nursery Program rules are posted in the nursery.**

21. Gifts or Gratuities

Nursery staff is not to accept gratuities, gifts, favors or entertainment, from any person, Ministry/Organization, or entity, when such could affect the performance of the employee's duties in an objective manner. These items should be directed to the Nursery Coordinator for distribution. Questions or concerns should be discussed with the Nursery Coordinator.