

NRCOC Parent Handbook for the Nursery/Toddler Ministry

Philosophy of Nursery Ministry:

The nursery ministry has two purposes:

To serve the church body by enabling parents of young children to be fed by the Word of God and to minister to others, and Minister to young children by providing a Christ-centered, safe, nurturing, and loving environment.

We hope that the nursery ministry will encourage the active participation of parents in worship. It is our desire that the children be cared for physically in the nursery by providing a safe, clean and nurturing environment.

We also hope that each child will grow spiritually as they learn to feel secure with adults who share the love of God with them and pray for them.

Basic Nursery Operations

Who is the nursery for? The nursery is available for children from infancy until they reach four years of age. Nursery is available during Sunday morning services, Wednesday evening services, and sometimes during specially scheduled events. Children are always welcome to participate in worship services, and parents should not hesitate to have children under the age of four participate in the worship service with them. We also have a nursing moms' room inside the nursery one classroom.

Who works in the nursery? Caregivers working in Nursery Ministry have been members at North River for longer than six months (unless coming from a sister congregation), have been trained in nursery duties, have complied with our North River Children's Ministry Policy Sheet, have undergone a criminal background check and sex offenders' registry search, submitted references, and occasionally been screened in a private interview.

How is the nursery kept safe? Nursery procedures have been designed to keep the health and well-being of children a top priority. When both volunteers and parents follow nursery procedures correctly, we can assure the safest possible environment for the children. By following the guidelines in this handbook, you are partnering with the nursery in creating the safest possible arrangements for your child, so read closely!

If there is a question... If you have any questions while at church please see the nursery supervisor on duty, or the director Melissa Tulloch anytime at melissatulloch@nrcoc.com

Checking In and Out

Before arriving: Parents are responsible for all of the following prior to arriving at the nursery:

1. Label children's items (diaper bag, coats, cups, bottles, pacifiers, special snacks)
2. Preparing formula or bottle if needed
3. Determining that child is healthy (see "Healthy Children" section)
4. Prepare a diaper bag or small tote with the following: diapers, wipes, a sippy cup or bottle, and a change of clothes.
- 5.

Sunday drop-off procedure Parents are to wait in line at the nursery check-in door with their child. PARENTS ARE NOT TO OPEN THE NURSERY DOOR. The nursery class teacher or registration coordinator will check children into the nursery by writing any special notes, writing a name tag for each child, and providing a cubby for children's belongings. Parents are asked to fill in any missing information and sign in their child.

Please check your children's diapers or take them to the restroom prior to sending them to the nursery. If a child is potty training- please send them in a pull up.

Parents should not enter the nursery: *The less traffic that comes into the nursery, the easier it is to calm anxious children and prevent children from sneaking out of the nursery. We greatly appreciate your assistance in trying to minimize traffic in the nursery for the safety of the children.*

Before leaving parents should make sure that they have notified the teacher of any special needs, and make sure that they have verified their cell phone number. Please be sure to keep your cell phone on and nearby as we will (and do!) use cell phones to contact you via text during service in case of difficulties or emergencies.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents are not to leave the church at anytime after dropping off a child in the nursery.

Sunday pick-up procedure To pick up a child, parents must sign their child out, and provide the claim card they were given upon drop off. If anyone besides the parents is checking out the child...If the claim card is lost the presenting adult will be asked to present an ID and parents will be contacted to verify pick up. This ensures that children are only removed from the nursery by their caretakers. If there are any adults who are never allowed to sign a child in or out, parents must provide the nursery coordinator of this in writing to enable our protection of the child. Parents should wait in line at the nursery door to pick up a child. The nursery coordinator will gather the child's belongings and bring the child to the door. Parents are encouraged to make sure they have all belongings before leaving the nursery, and to be sure to pick up children ***promptly/immediately*** after the service is over.

Wednesday Evening check-in and check-out On Wednesday evenings parents are to place a name tag on their child and sign-in on the sign in sheet by the door. Notify nursery workers of any special concerns. Please be sure to pick up children promptly after the service is over.

Special Concerns in the Nursery

Food and Drink Infants will be fed formula, milk, juice or water as provided by parents in plastic bottles. Only plastic bottles clearly labeled with the child's name are to be brought to the nursery. Please indicate the time the bottle is to be given when the child is signed in.

The nursery will provide a cup of water for children anytime that snacks are served. Children will be fed a snack if they are able to pull up to standing. If your child is able to pull to standing but you would not like them to have a snack, please remind the door coordinator when dropping off your child.

Snacks provided are usually goldfish, or puffs. Snacks are typically served during Sunday school and on Wednesday nights. ALWAYS REMIND THE TEACHER/ COORDINATOR OF FOOD ALLERGIES (both mild and severe) when dropping off your child. If the parent would like the child to refrain from snack time, please indicate that under special instructions on the sign-in sheet.

If you need to bring a special snack in the nursery for your child due to an allergy, please have it labeled and give instructions when dropping off the child. There are numerous kids to watch who would also like to partake of other children's snacks, we ask that you only bring special snacks for your child if absolutely necessary. Feeding all of the children the same snacks during the designated snack time increases the efficiency and safety of the snack environment.

Medications cannot be given by nursery personnel. Medications are not to be put in the child's bottle.

* Mothers who wish to bottle feed their child may do so in the nursing moms room or may request nursery workers to feed the child.

* Mothers who are nursing may do so in the nursing moms room anytime, but must remove shoes upon entering nursery one.

Potty Training Potty training children should be taken to the restroom located in the church hallways- not the classroom. Please take your child to the restroom prior to leaving them in the nursery. Also, please remind workers at drop-off if your child is potty training and needs to be reminded to use the restroom. Any child potty training must be in a pull up, and must have a change of clothes in their bag. If the child is potty trained- underwear is allowed. We define "potty trained" as the child hasn't had any accidents that week.

Healthy Children It is very important for the children and the workers in the nursery to keep the threat of illness/disease to a minimum. Parents should observe the following policies when dropping off children in the nursery. These guidelines were created from the counsel of the CDC, and our medically trained church members. Please do not bring sick children or children who appear to be sick to the nursery. If your child has abstained from any vaccines, please do not bring them to the nursery during an outbreak of that illness. If any of the following symptoms exist, children should not attend the nursery:

- Flu
- Any unexplained rash
- Common Cold
- Chest Congestion
- Persistent Cough
- Sore Throat
- Head Lice
- Any skin infections
- Pink eye or other eye infections
- Fever within the last 24 hours

If the child is taking antibiotics, they should have received treatment for at least 48 hours before coming to the nursery, even if the symptoms are no longer present. Our nursery policy prohibits caregivers from administering any medication.

If the child develops an infectious disease (chicken pox, rash, rotavirus, etc.) after they have been in the nursery, please contact the Nursery Director so that we may notify other parents of their children's exposure.

Contacting a Parent During Service Parents are to be called to the nursery in the following events:

1. If the child continues to cry and efforts to comfort them fail beyond fifteen minutes, or if the child is crying inconsolably. *(Some children left in our care may tend to cry, but then are easily distracted within a few minutes. Nursery workers will attempt to distract the child with a toy or allow them to be by themselves as they examine their new surroundings.)*
2. In the rare case of an accident or injury.
3. If the child becomes ill while in the nursery, or it is determined by teachers that they seem ill.
4. If a behavior problem develops that requires the parent's attention or immediate action.
5. If the parent has indicated that they would like to be contacted for feeding purposes.

Behavioral Expectations There are two expectations for children in the nursery: They must behave in a way that does not harm themselves and others, and they must obey the directives of the nursery workers.

FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWO: Children under the age of two will be redirected from disobedient or destructive behavior. If a child persists, the parent will be texted and retrieved.

FOR CHILDREN OVER THE AGE OF TWO: If a child is disobedient or hurting other children, nursery workers may ask the child to sit quietly for a short amount of time in a chair that is in site of the nursery worker to regain control. Nursery workers may also speak with the child about his behavior and show him the proper way to respond or treat others. Parents are expected to encourage their children to follow directions given by the caregiver. The parent will be contacted if a child refuses to comply with the caregiver's direction or is continually putting other children in danger. If a child is repeatedly removed from class or hurts another child, an alternate plan may be put into place to help the child be successful in class.

On-Campus Emergencies: In the event of an emergency on campus, please do not attempt to remove your child from the class. The teachers will protect your child and follow the church risk management procedures.

Summary for Parents:

- Always notify the nursery worker about any important information or changes in information regarding your child. (Potty training, diaper rash, food allergies, etc.)
- Refrain from bringing ill children to the nursery. If in doubt, apply the Golden Rule. Wait at the door to check children in and out of the nursery and take them to the bathroom before class.