

I. Welcome

Welcome to our Childcare Ministries at Saint John's United Methodist Church. We seek to provide a caring, Christian atmosphere for the youngest members of our church family. We hope that this booklet will convey our commitment to provide a safe and loving environment for your child so that you may participate in the multitude of opportunities available here at Saint John's.

Please assist us in providing this quality care by taking the time to review and understand our policies. We are excited that you are here and are looking forward to meeting the needs of your family!

II. Purpose of Childcare Ministries

- To help each child develop positive feelings about coming to church
- To help each child feel comfortable, secure and special while in our care
- To help each child learn to share and play with other children
- To encourage the active participation of parents in worship and church activities available at Saint John's

III. General Policies

Sunday Worship:

Childcare is provided every Sunday from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. for children ranging from newborn through kindergarten*. Childcare space is divided by age groups into three classrooms:

- Room 105 for one and two year olds (walkers)
- Room 106 for newborn to 12 months (non-walkers)
- Room 107 for 3 and 4 year olds

During the 9:00 service, only one or two rooms are used depending on the number of children in the nursery.

Caregivers are assigned to rooms by ratio based on children's age.

*Once a child enters kindergarten, we encourage parents to take their children into the church service.

Parent Volunteer Requirement

Parents who utilize the childcare on Sunday mornings for either church service or Sunday school hour are asked to volunteer their time assisting the childcare staff in the nursery during the 11:00 service once a quarter. This allows us to use all three nursery rooms during that service. It is a great opportunity for parents to get to know the childcare staff, see their children interacting in a group setting, and see what goes on during childcare. A volunteer sign up sheet is located outside room 106 next to the child sign-in sheet.

Other Church Activities:

Childcare is available for children up to age 12 for other church activities, but a **reservation must be made** by contacting the Early Childhood Coordinator at least **one week prior to the scheduled event**. This allows us time to schedule Childcare Staff. Without prior notice, we cannot guarantee that a childcare request will be fulfilled. Carrie Cravens, Early Childhood Coordinator may be contacted at 452-5737 ext. 230 or ca_cravens@yahoo.com to reserve childcare.

Please provide the following information to ensure your reservation:

- event date and time
- number of children attending
- ages of children attending
- your name
- phone number

(See Check-in Procedure for Off-Site Events on Page 6)

Check-In Procedure for Childcare:

1. The nursery opens 15 minutes prior to all church services and other scheduled events.
2. **All children, regardless of age should be dropped off at Room 106 for childcare on Sunday mornings.** This is to avoid congestion by the back door. Your child will then be led to the appropriate room by the Childcare Staff. **On weekdays only, children can be dropped off at room 107**, as room 106 will be occupied by Grace Garden Child Development Center.
3. Fill out a Child Information Form (if you have not already done so) and update them periodically as needed. This information will be kept on file so that the Childcare Workers can better meet the needs of your child when in our care.
4. Please complete the sign – in sheet each time you bring your child to the nursery. Also, sign out when you pick them up. (Please note if someone other than yourself will be picking your child up).
5. For your child's safety, we use a label security system. When you drop off your child you will be asked to complete and place a numbered label on your child's back. You will be given the parent's portion of the label with the corresponding number on it. **The child can only be released to a parent or designated individual with the corresponding number.** This procedure is necessary to ensure the safety of your child in our growing church environment.
6. We ask that only one parent drop off and pick up your child. To reduce the amount of congestion in the nursery, if possible, try to remain near the entrance and say goodbye quickly. This will alleviate confusion as most children calm down within a few minutes of your departure. **Children will not be released to siblings or others not authorized to pick them up.**

7. Pagers are also available for your peace of mind. If your child cries inconsolably for more than 15 minutes we will notify you or follow any requests that you have made concerning this issue.
8. **Please have your child's belongings properly labeled.**

This includes:

- Diaper bag (please include diapers)
- Plastic Bottles
- Pacifiers
- Coats
- Cups
- Blankets
- Change of Clothes (important for those potty-training)

9. It is recommended that children do not bring personal toys into the nursery to avoid getting lost, damaged or fought over.

Check-In Procedure for Off-Site Events:

There are times when church events are scheduled that are at a location other than the church and childcare is still needed. We are happy to provide the same services we do for on-site events; however, for safety purposes, our drop-off and pick-up procedures are slightly different:

Please note: For social events that take place on weekends, there is a charge for childcare, due at drop off. The charges are as follows: \$10/1 child, \$15/2 children, \$25/3 or more children. This is a onetime charge for the entire childcare session.

1. When dropping off your child for an off-site event, please enter the nursery through the playground/porch entrance. **(Enter through the iron gate on the west side of the church(Wynona Street))** and you will see the fifth set of double glass doors to your right.
2. The nursery doors will remain locked during off-site events except for child drop-off and pick-up. The **other church entrances will be locked** at all times during these events.
3. Please provide the Childcare Worker with a phone number (or cell number) where you can be reached if needed.

Please follow other Check-In Procedures as outlined on Page 3.

IV. Health Policies:

Only children who are free of communicable symptoms and illnesses may attend the nursery. Our nursery policy follows the recommendation of the Texas Department of Health for prevention of illness in the childcare setting. **Please do not bring your child to the nursery when he or she has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:**

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
 - Diarrhea
 - Vomiting
 - Rash with discharge
 - Green nasal drainage
 - Sore throat
 - Pink or red eyes with discharge
1. You will be notified if your child becomes ill while in our care so that you may pick him/her up.
 2. Medications will not be given by Childcare personnel. Please do not put any type of medication in your child's bottle or bag.
 3. Nursery furniture and toys are washed and sanitized after each session. We strive to maintain a clean and germ free nursery environment.
 4. In order to remain conducive to a sanitary environment, we require frequent hand-washing of employees and children as well as the use of plastic gloves by the Childcare Staff during diaper changes.

V. **Food Policies:**

1. Infants will be fed formula, milk, juice or water as provided by parents in plastic bottles. Bottles should be pre-mixed and poured by the parent. A refrigerator is provided to keep the bottles fresh. If warming is needed please instruct the Childcare Worker to do so. **Please label bottles.**
2. During Sunday services, toddlers will be offered a snack in a group setting once during each service (9:30a.m., 10:15 a.m., 11:30 a.m.). Snacks consist of plain cheerios, crackers or goldfish and water. On Sundays we ask that toddlers do not bring personal snacks due to the large number of children present. **Please notify us if you do not wish for your child to have a snack or if your child has any food allergies.**
3. Parents may provide snacks or food for their child during church activities scheduled during the week. Please communicate this to the Childcare Worker if doing so. All snacks provided for any child in the nursery must be peanut-free in order to avoid allergic reactions of other children.

VI. **Safety Policies:**

1. A label security system is in place on Sundays to ensure your child's safe return to you (see Check-in Procedure on Page 3)
2. The exterior doors to the nursery remain locked unless children are playing outside while supervised by Childcare Workers.
3. All rooms have emergency fire and severe weather plans posted. Should an emergency occur while your child is in our care, rest assured that we are equipped to handle these emergencies.

4. Emergency information and phone numbers are posted in each room for the Childcare Worker's immediate use.
5. Health policies are provided to parents and posted in the Nursery to prevent spread of communicable diseases.
6. All Childcare Workers will be CPR certified and will complete a First Aid/Safety Training course.
7. A criminal background investigation is conducted on each Childcare employee when hired and must be cleared through the United Methodist Church Conference.

VII. Classroom Management:

Children's Guidelines While In the Nursery:

1. No running in the nursery is allowed. Outside play time will be provided. (good weather permitting)
2. No hitting, kicking or biting.
3. Children are required to wash hands before eating, after using restroom, and after outside play to prevent spread of germs.
4. Children should have fun!

Childcare workers will redirect child's activity when inappropriate behavior is observed. Children are expected to follow the directions given by their caregiver. Any correction needed will be done in a positive manner (redirecting activity, positive reinforcement). Parents will be contacted if the child refuses to comply with the Nursery Guidelines.

Again, we are excited that your child is a part of the church family here at Saint John's. We hope that they will look forward to coming to the nursery and feel comfortable and secure. We always appreciate any feedback or suggestions from the parents. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions!

In God's Love,

**The Childcare Staff
Saint John's United Methodist Church**