

EDEN CHURCH Child Protection Plan

We believe it is our responsibility to protect the children in our care. Children (and parents) need to know that we have taken every reasonable step to ensure children's safety in our ministry.

We believe it is our responsibility to protect staff and volunteer workers in our ministry from being exposed to false accusations of sexual misconduct. To this end, we have screening and supervision policies in place to protect our ministry workers.

We believe it is our responsibility to protect our ministry. By requiring child protection training, as well as implementing screening and supervision policies, we are modeling good safety procedures to others who look to our ministry as an example of a well-run ministry to children and youth.

What We Require

1. The six-month rule. The purpose of this rule is to prevent predators from gaining quick access to potential victims. A predator will not want to spend an extended period of time waiting to gain access to children, especially when he can go elsewhere and have almost immediate access. Six months provides a threshold of time for individuals to become better known, and gives an opportunity to evaluate their suitability for volunteer service. In some cases, this length of time is reduced based on a person's ability to provide positive character references from other youth-serving organizations and from our ministry leaders, and a person's prior history working with children in a previous faith community.
2. A written application. We require a written volunteer application before approving individual for service in our children's/youth ministry. We want to be sure we are selecting the best candidates possible for our ministry programs.
3. Reference checks. Once the written application is complete, we conduct reference checks. Applicants should indicate that they have been a member of or attending Eden Church for a minimum length of time, such as six months, and should list two or more prior service references, preferably from a youth organization, plus personal references from two or more church members.
4. A personal interview. We use the interview time to explore more fully why a candidate wants to work with children or youth. We also review our ministry's policies and procedures regarding the supervision of children.
5. Additional background checks. We conduct a criminal record check for all paid staff and clergy who will have access to children. We also conduct criminal records checks on volunteers who serve with minors. If you will be driving as part of your ministry service with minors, we will require you to complete a driving information form.

What We Expect

- Training - We expect all staff and volunteers to successfully complete our Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training program. This includes becoming familiar with our Eden Kids Ministry Handbook and our Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Training. All staff and volunteers will then complete an assessment, which must be passed with at least a 70% in order to be cleared for ministry participation.
- Appropriate physical contact - No one should ever feel uncomfortable in the way they are being touched. Appropriate touching means offering a gentle touch on the shoulders, hands, arms, head, or back. Inappropriate touching would include kissing, demanding kissing or hugs, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom, or private areas, or any physical contact that feels uncomfortable or violating. Toddlers and older children should never be allowed to sit in your lap, covering your private area. Instead, have a child sit beside you.
- Responding to inappropriate or suspicious behavior - All staff and volunteers should report any inappropriate or suspicious behavior to a ministry leader or staff leader immediately. The leader will then report to the Ministry Coordinator, who will in turn report to the Lead Pastor. This includes reporting any suspected abuse being committed by another worker, as well as any child who presents signs of abuse. No one will ever be in trouble for reporting suspected abuse.
- Follow supervision policies outlined below - Our policies are designed to reduce isolation, increase accountability, and reduce the disparity of power between a volunteer and a child in our program. We expect all volunteers to follow the supervision policies we have in place to accomplish these goals. These policies are to be practiced any and all times that staff and/or volunteers are with children fulfilling a function of children's and youth ministries.
 - Supervision policy:
 1. There must be two or more adults present at all times.
 2. Bathroom usage.
 - a. Bathroom breaks should be built into ministry programming. For example, encourage children to use the bathroom before they come, but have a bathroom break built into your time together. This ensures that both adults are able to follow policy item 1.
 - b. When using the restrooms by the Celebration Hall, the door must remain open while the restroom is in use. For any other restroom in the building, the adults should accompany the children to the bathroom, but must remain outside the restroom.
 3. At no time should children be unsupervised. If activities are being played throughout the campus, adults must either be participating in the activity or at least walking through the play area.