



**Children's Ministry  
Policies & Procedures Manual**

Grace Toronto Church

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**Children's Ministry Cell Phone – for use on Sunday mornings only**

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# Section I - Philosophy of Children's Ministry

## Vision & Mission

The Children's Ministry at Grace Toronto Church seeks to help children know Jesus personally and to encourage them to live gospel-centered lives at home and in the city.

*'And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.'* (Mark 10:13-16, ESV)

## Core Values and Beliefs

**Children are a gift from God.** They are precious and need protection, love, and guidance. We want children to learn and play in a safe environment, which is clean and adequately staffed with qualified volunteers, many of them parents themselves and educators.

**Children need the gospel.** Children, like all of humanity, are weak and flawed and are in need of a loving Savior. We believe that children are unable to do good to please God and avoid wrongdoing, but Jesus lived and died for them so that they may become children of God. We want to articulate this gospel in ways children can understand, so that they can receive it and have faith in what Jesus has done, and live as becoming of God's children. We believe Jesus welcomes children to his Kingdom.

**Children can grow in grace and live a life that is pleasing to God.** We believe that spiritual growth happens as children understand the implications of the gospel for them more and more. We believe that children are called to obedience to their parents and to honor them because parental love and authority is the context through which the gospel is often first realized. We believe that the church exists to support parents in the nurturing of their children.

**Children and their families can serve and engage the city.** We want to encourage parents to raise their children in the city by engaging their neighbors and schools.

# Section II - Policies

## Wellness

Children must be symptom free from the following illnesses without medication for 24 hours before entering the classroom:

1. Fever of 100° or higher
2. Vomiting or diarrhea
3. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye or other eye infection)
4. Rash
5. Nasal drainage, which is green or yellow
6. Sore throat
7. Open sores
8. Cold
9. Excessive coughing
10. Lice

Please note: We do not recognize teething as being a cause of fever or diarrhea.

If a nursery age child develops any of these symptoms while in class, ***the parent will be texted to get the child.*** For an older child, if the parent cannot be reached via cell phone, the child will stay outside the class with the supervisor.

A bright colored dots will be placed on any child's label who has allergies.

## Injury & First Aid

We can administer ONLY Band-Aids.

For any children with severe allergies requiring an EpiPen, please be sure to supply this to the supervisor and fill in an GT Allergy Care Plan Form (at the Welcome Desk)

If there is any injury in a classroom, the teachers and/or volunteers will immediately tell the supervisor.

*Any injury* will be reported to the parent since trivial injuries can turn out to be serious. The volunteer must complete an **Incident Form** (*found with your classroom clipboard*) as soon as possible and turn in the top portion of the form to the supervisor.

## Safety & Security

We believe that it is of utmost importance that our children be nurtured in a responsible and safe environment. We also desire that our volunteers be protected from any false allegations of misconduct.

1. Each volunteer in our ministry is **required to complete an application process**, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. Each volunteer in our ministry is **required to read and agree to follow the stipulations in this comprehensive manual regarding Children's Ministry policies and procedures.**
3. We hold comprehensive volunteer/teacher trainings to ensure our volunteers

- understand and follow our policies and to enable them to nurture our children.
4. We have a detailed procedure for picking up a child, detailed in the Parent Responsibility section of this manual.
  5. There is a **“Two-Adult”** rule that is in place for all classrooms. There will always be two adults, (one of whom must be a woman.) present while children are there. This is to protect the children from possible abuse as well as the adults from false accusations. In the rare event in which there is only one adult because the other had to step out, the door to the room will remain open.
  6. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by a supervisor and placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.

### **Restroom & Diapering**

1. Parents are encouraged to take their toilet-trained child to the restroom before dropping him/her off in class.
2. Only women should take children to the restrooms.
3. Diapers are to be changed by parents only.
4. Volunteers are to wash the children’s hands (either at a sink or with hand sanitizer) after going to the restroom.

### **Evacuation**

1. If the fire alarm sounds while parents are in the service, they are requested to follow the evacuation directions out of the auditorium. Parents flooding the childcare area would cause congestion and prevent the children from being safely evacuated from the building.
2. All Volunteers/Supervisors have been made aware of the plan to follow in case of an emergency. The Supervisors will be responsible for getting everyone out of the building and helping people to follow through with the plan according to their particular areas.
3. In the event of an emergency, the Children’s Ministry’ evacuation plan is as follows:

#### **Jarvis Collegiate Institute Fire Evacuation Procedures**

All volunteers/supervisor should have **attendance sheets** and begin to line up each class to exit the building in an orderly fashion. Younger children will either grab a rope or be carried by staff and volunteers.

Exit from the children's rooms: Take Exit #2 found on the north end of the hallway. The exit numbers are located above doors.

Once you have exited the building via Exit #2, take a right on Wellesley and walk to the field which will be on your right. Enter the field and walk to the Southeast corner of the field. Wait there until parents arrive. One volunteer from each class checks attendance to make sure that everyone is present and accounted for.

***Children should only be dismissed to their parents.***

# Section III - Classrooms & Ratios

## Classrooms

The Children's Ministry has rooms and/or classes available for the following ages on Sunday mornings

1. **Newborns:** 0-6 months (non-staffed room)
2. **Nursery:** 6-24 months: staffed childcare for entire service
3. **Toddlers:** 2 yrs through 3 yrs: staffed for entire service; program begins during sermon
4. **Children's Church:** 4 yrs through 7 yrs: program begins during sermon.

## Class Ratios

<b>Class</b>	<b>Promotional marker:</b>	<b>Ratio (adult-child)</b>
Infants/ Crawlers	(developmental)	1:3
Walkers	(developmental)	1:5
Toddlers	upon turning 2 years	1:5
Toddlers	when 3 years by Dec 31	1:6
Children's Church	when 4 years by Dec 31	1:7

Because we want to provide the best care possible for your child, we closely monitor the adult-child ratio in each classroom. Should a classroom go over the appropriate ratio, the greeter will ask parents to volunteer. On occasion, a classroom may be closed.

As a general rule, we promote children the first Sunday in September.

## Classroom Times

Newborn, Nursery and Toddler rooms open **15 minutes** before each service. Parents are asked to pick up their children *promptly* after service.

## Section IV - Curriculum

**“From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” -- 2 Timothy 3:15**

### Curriculum Philosophy

Young children learn best by doing! It is our desire to incorporate God’s Word into every avenue of learning. It is also our desire to stay gospel-centered in our care for our children and in what we teach.

#### ***What does gospel-centered curriculum look like?***

‘Gospel-centered curriculum is material which demonstrates how the entire Scripture ultimately highlights the beauty, worth, centrality and supremacy of God’s saving action in Jesus’ Person and Work. It reveals how Jesus is the ultimate end of every story, every book and every letter of Scripture. Gospel-centered curriculum takes seriously the approach Jesus took in the Bible when he demonstrated to his disciples in Luke 24:14, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Gospel-centered curriculum capitalizes on this idea by responsibly demonstrating how everything points to Jesus, promises Jesus, parallels Jesus, prefigures Jesus, proclaims Jesus, etc. Hopefully, as the listener/learner witnesses the glory of the gospel, his affections will be deeply and profoundly moved from Christ. Put another way, the individual’s heart will grow for Jesus! - Excerpt from Yancy C. Arrington Article - Gospel-Centered Curriculum.

#### **How does Gospel-Centered Curriculum differ from other ways of teaching the Bible?**

‘Often teaching materials are only organized by the moral application (e.g Obedience, Work, Honesty) instead of the story’s connection to the larger redemptive narrative, resulting in a steady diet of scattered, disconnected Bible Stories lacking the powerful attachment to the bigger (and more foundational) gospel picture. “ -- Excerpt from Yancy C. Arrington Article - Gospel-Centered Curriculum.

<b>Morality-Based</b>	<b>Gospel-Based</b>
You must try for Jesus	You must trust in Jesus
What you do	What Christ has done for you
Obedience from obligation/duty	Obedience from gratitude/love
You are the hero of the story	God is the hero of the story
The story is basically about me	The story is basically about Jesus

Morality-Based	Gospel-Based
Aims primarily at action	Aims primarily at the heart
Stays small with the story	Appeals to the Big Story of Redemption

To ready Yancy C. Arrington complete article, visit <http://sojournkids.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Gospelcntrcurrarticle.pdf>

### **What curriculum do we use?**

#### **Toddlers:**

Our toddler curriculum has been developed here at Grace Toronto Church. It is based on the *First Catechism* (Great Commission Publishers) and the Bible. Each month, your child will learn one catechism question and answer. They will read Bible stories and do activities that reinforce these truths.

Our goal is to help toddlers ***begin to identify the pieces of the gospel puzzle*** by understanding the basic truths about God, themselves and the world they live in.

#### **Children’s Church:**

We use the ***Show Me Jesus*** Preschool Curriculum for our Children’s Church Classrooms. To learn more about the Curriculum visit the Great Commission Publications website (<http://www.gcp.org/Pages/Show-Me-Jesus/Default.aspx>).

This is an excellent gospel-centered curriculum. It is a two-year curriculum that has a scope and sequence. To see a detail description of what each child will be learning in the course of their time in Children’s Church, visit [http://www.gcp.org/Content/Site109/Basics/823MPpreschoolp\\_0000004609.pdf](http://www.gcp.org/Content/Site109/Basics/823MPpreschoolp_0000004609.pdf)

Our goal is for our preschool and elementary aged kids to continue ***to identify the pieces and to understand how the puzzle pieces fit into the whole gospel picture.***

***If you have more questions, please feel free to contact our Children’s Ministry Director.***

# Section V - Nursery & Classroom Volunteers

## Requirements to Serve

1. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by the supervisor and be placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.
3. We hold comprehensive trainings to ensure they understand and follow our policies and to enable them to nurture our children.
4. Youth must be at least 12 years old to work in the nursery.
5. Volunteers are entrusted to teach the children of Grace Toronto Church about the Gospel. We ask that volunteers commit themselves to the responsibility of building a strong, spiritual foundation in the hearts of the children.

## Scheduling

1. Volunteers will communicate with the ministry volunteer coordinator concerning the schedule.
2. Once the schedule is set by the volunteer coordinator, **any changes should be made by switching with a team member**. It is the volunteer's responsibility to be sure they are replaced with another team member and **to notify the volunteer coordinator** as soon as possible. Team members' contact information will be provided by the ministry coordinator.
3. In case of an emergency causing the volunteer to be late or unable to serve on Sunday morning, it is imperative that the volunteer **call** (not email) the Children's Church Cell Phone - 647-975-KIDS (647-975-5437). This phone will be switched on by 9:30am on Sunday Mornings.
4. When a volunteer can no longer serve with the Children's Ministry, **a notice of four weeks** is needed to find a replacement.

## General

1. Volunteers must be knowledgeable about and adhere to all the applicable policies and procedures in this manual.
2. Volunteers are not to have any personal drink (other than water) or food during class.
3. Personal belongings should remain off the floor and out of reach of the children.
4. Please keep your phone on vibrate. We would request that you refrain from using your cell phone except in an emergency.
5. Any special treats or activities involving food outside the scheduled curriculum must be approved by the ministry coordinator.
6. NO snacks or food of any kind may be brought into the classroom without prior approval from the ministry coordinator or supervisor.

## **Arrival and set-up**

1. Arrive a minimum of 45 minutes before the service begins, or sooner if you need more preparation time. **Please be on time!** Arriving on time is necessary to ensure quality spiritual education. Please keep in mind that tardiness is like a domino effect, affecting supervisors, fellow team members, children, and families.
2. Sign in upon arrival at the welcome desk and pick up your nametag. Wash your hands before beginning to set up.
3. Post the Classroom Rules and the Evacuation Route. If these are missing, request a copy from the supervisor. They should be in your classroom clipboard.
4. Set-up your classrooms.
  - a. Move tables and chairs to create enough space for your specific program. See *classroom set-up procedures* found with your clipboard.
  - b. Collect your classroom items from the hallway. All boxes are clearly marked. If you have any questions, please ask the supervisor for help.
  - c. Nursery: Roll out carpets and put out toys.
  - d. Toddler's & Children's Church: Set-up children table(s) and chairs, and foam boards. Collect any materials needed for class from the curriculum box and craft supplies found in the hallway.
  - e. Set-up child-gate at the entrance of the room. Keep the door to your room open at all times.
5. Instructions on how to open and close a class are found with your clipboard.

## **Class Time**

1. If someone is not wearing an approved nametag, ***they are not allowed to enter the room***. If there is a problem or you feel uncomfortable about asking people, please get the Supervisor.
2. One volunteer should welcome children and take attendance while the other volunteer engages the other children.
3. Be very aware of children with allergies and check the special needs and conditions on the child's label. Any allergies will be listed on the label and marked with a bright color sticker. In cases of severe allergy, you will be given a GT Allergy Care Plan Form for the child by the Supervisor. Please be familiar with information given.
4. Review the classroom rules with the children every week. Repetition and consistency are very important, especially since the children only come to church once a week. (*Refer to the classroom management section for enforcement of the rules.*)
5. Volunteers are encouraged to sit on the floor with the children when interacting with them. Being on their eye level helps gain and maintain their attention.
6. Caregivers and children will only leave the classroom to use the restroom. Otherwise everyone must remain in the room at all times.
7. Be sure to follow the policies about Restroom & Diapering under Section II.
8. Enjoy being with the kids! Remember that this is not babysitting...but ministering to each child and guiding them closer to the Lord.

## **Departure Procedures**

1. Please make sure all the children's belongings are back in their backs and ready for parents to pick up their children.
2. When a parent arrives, ask for the parent's security stub and match it to the child's label before releasing the child. This is imperative; you cannot release a child without having seen the security stub first. Collect the stub and release the child.
3. Indicate on the attendance sheet that the child has been check-out.

### **After the children are dismissed**

1. Clean and dismantle the room. Sanitize the toys if needed – especially in the nursery. Return all items to appropriate boxes provided.
2. Collapse and stack GT children's tables and chairs by the elevator. Notify the supervisor of any broken toys.
3. Put all items outside the door by the elevator for movers to pick-up.
4. Fill out the Inventory Sheet (found on the clipboard) if items are running low.
5. Reset the classroom tables and chairs to their original location.
6. Leave your rooms neater and cleaner than you found them.
7. Return your nametag to the Nametag box – filed by last names.
8. Return classroom clipboard to the Supervisor.

# Section VI - Welcome Desk Volunteers

## Requirements to Serve

1. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by the supervisor and be placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.
3. We hold comprehensive trainings to ensure they understand and follow our policies and to enable them to nurture our children.
4. A volunteer must be at least 18 years old to work at the Welcome Desk.

## Scheduling

1. Volunteers will communicate with the ministry volunteer coordinator concerning the schedule.
2. Once the schedule is set by the volunteer coordinator, **any changes should be made by switching with a team member**. It is the volunteer's responsibility to be sure they are replaced with another team member and **to notify the volunteer coordinator** as soon as possible. Team members' contact information will be provided by the ministry coordinator.
3. In case of an emergency causing the volunteer to be late or unable to serve, it is imperative that the volunteer **call** (not email) the supervisor on call. After 9:30am on Sunday mornings, the Supervisor can be reached at 647-975-5436.
4. When a volunteer can no longer serve with the Children's Ministry, **a notice of four weeks** is needed to find a replacement.

## General

1. Volunteers must be knowledgeable about and adhere to all the applicable policies and procedures in this manual.
2. Personal belongings should remain out of reach of the children.
3. Please keep your phone on vibrate. We would request that you refrain from using your cell phone except in an emergency.

## Arrival and Setup

1. Arrive a minimum of 45 minutes before the service begins, or sooner if you need more preparation time. **Please be on time!** Arriving on time is necessary to ensure quality of the programs. Please keep in mind that tardiness is like a domino effect, affecting supervisors, team members, volunteers, children, and families.
2. Set-up Welcome Desk.
3. Sign in on the Master Volunteer Form and pick up your nametag.
4. Set-up Check-In Forms and Labels.
5. Adhere GTKids banner to the front of the table.
6. Set-up welcome table with balloons.
7. Check to make sure all forms are readily available.
8. Assist supervisor with the set-up of the Newborns Room.

9. Open doors to children's area 15 minutes before service.
10. Please make sure there are no children or unauthorized personnel in the children's area.
11. Ensure all volunteers are checked-in and have received a nametag.

## **Welcome Procedures**

1. If someone is not wearing an approved nametag, ***they are not allowed to enter the Children's Area***. If there is a problem or you feel uncomfortable about asking people, please get the Supervisor.
2. The Welcome Desk will be open 15 minutes prior to the service.
3. Check-in Parents and Children using the Check-in Labels provided. Children and parents are not allowed in the Children's Area unless they have been checked-in and have their security labels.
4. If the child is a regular attendee, have the parent fill out a GT Child Registration Form. Visitors are not required to fill out this form. See Master Attendance Sheet for those who have and have not filled out a form.
5. Be very aware of children with allergies and make sure parents indicate allergies on their child's label. If their child has an allergy, place a colored dot on their label to alert classroom volunteers. If the child has a severe allergy, requiring medication, parents are encouraged to fill out a **GT Allergy Care Plan Form** (found in the GTKids File Box). This form then accompanies the child to their class. This form can be reused if the child is a regular attendee.
6. Inform the parent of the following:
  - a. Age appropriate snacks provided – Goldfish, Nilla Wafers or Teddy Grahams and a juice box.
  - b. Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately following the service.
7. Fill in all columns of the Master Attendance Sheet before parents accompany their children to their classrooms.
8. Have the Supervisor on call walk the parent and child to their appropriate classrooms if necessary.
9. Smile and welcome each child and parent. Make them feel welcome. Ask if they have any questions or concern.
10. If you need help, do not hesitate to ask your supervisor.
11. Enjoy welcoming and making kids feel safe and loved.
12. Remember you are the first touch-point that parents and children have to our GTKids Programs.
13. Room and Programs available:
  - a. **Newborn Room (0-6mths – Rm#316): Not staffed**. Can be used by a parent to take care of their newborns.
  - b. **Nursery (6-24mths – Rm#308): Staffed for the entire service**. Parents are welcome to drop their children off with qualified volunteers and enjoy the service. The Nursery will be open 15 minutes before the service.
  - c. **Toddlers (2 and 3 year olds – Rm#302): Staffed for the entire service**. Parents are welcome to leave their toddlers for the whole service or if they would like they can bring them when children are dismissed for Children's Church. The Toddler Program begins at that time. The Toddler Room will be open 15 minutes before the service.
  - d. **Children's Church (4 – 7 year olds – Rm#309): Staffed during Children's Church only**. The Children's Church program begins during the sermon. Parents can check-in their children for Children's Church at that time.

## **Notifying Parents**

It is the Welcome Desk Volunteer's responsibility to text parents if they are needed. Grace Toronto Church has a designated cell phone for Children's Ministry (*located in the GTKids File Box*). ***Make sure the phone is turned on as soon as you arrive.***

## **Departure Procedures**

1. Check-out will happen at the classrooms. Parents are allowed in the children's area as long as they have a security stub.
2. Make sure only authorized personnel are in the children's area at any given time.
3. Do not allow individuals who do not have clearance or a security label into the children's area. Ask the Supervisor for assistance if needed.

## **Immediately after all the children are dismissed**

1. Pack-up the Welcome Table
2. Return everything to appropriate boxes.
3. Ensure all Volunteers and Supervisor Nametags are returned to the nametag box.
4. Put all Welcome Table boxes and items by the elevator.
5. Assist Supervisor in boxing up the Newborn's Room and resetting the tables and chairs.
6. Debrief with Supervisor on call.

# Section VII - Supervisors

## Requirements for Supervisors

1. Each supervisor in our ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. Supervisors are to be on-site 45 minutes before the service to ensure that all items are placed in the appropriate places.
3. Supervisors are entrusted to oversee the GTKids programs on the Sunday that they are schedule to be on duty.

## Scheduling

1. A supervisor will be on duty one Sunday a month.
2. In the case of an emergency or if another supervisor cannot be reached as a replacement, the scheduled supervisors responsibility to notify the Director of Children's Ministry as soon as possible. You must call your director's cell phone, which is listed on page 1 of this handbook.

## General

1. Supervisors must be knowledgeable about and adhere to all the applicable policies and procedures in this manual.
2. Supervisors must be available to answer volunteers' questions and to assist as necessary.
3. Supervisors are to make sure all procedure and policies are followed.
4. Supervisors are responsible to ensure that no one can come or leave the Children's area without coming through the Welcome Desk.
5. Please always be aware of safety and security.
6. In case of emergencies, the supervisor will be the lead and will determine the steps needed to deal with the situation.
7. Supervisors are to be encouraging and welcoming to the volunteers, children and parents.

## Arrival and Setup

1. Supervisors must arrive 45 minutes prior to the service or sooner if you need more preparation time. **Please be on time!**
2. Pick-up your nametag from the Children's Ministry Box at the Welcome Desk.
3. Place classroom signage on the appropriate class doors.
4. Ensure that the classroom specific clipboards contain the following:
  - a. Attendance/Inventory Sheet
  - b. Incident Report
  - c. Classroom Rules
  - d. Evacuation Route & Procedures
  - e. Set-up procedures
  - f. Volunteer Service Guide
5. Place clipboards in each classroom – Clipboards are classroom specific. Please check the back of the clipboards.
6. Set-up Newborn Room for Nursing Moms
7. Ensure volunteers are present and accounted for. In the case that a volunteer does not

- show up, call an alternate to step in and inform the director of the volunteer who has not shown up.
8. Drop off snack boxes to classrooms.
  9. Pull all volunteers together to set perspective, review evacuation procedures and pray for the day before the children arrive.
  10. Assist the Welcome Desk volunteer with Check-in procedures.

### **Class Time**

1. Oversee the children's area to ensure they are safe and nurtured.
2. Monitor each classroom to make sure volunteer to child ratios are maintained.
3. Be available for volunteers' questions or concerns.
4. Assist volunteers as necessary.
5. Welcome children and help answer questions of parents that volunteers are unable to answer.
6. Pray for the volunteers serving and the children attending.

### **Departure Procedures**

1. Oversee departure procedures.
2. Ensure only individuals with a security stub are allowed into the children's area passed the Welcome Desk.
3. Ensure classroom volunteers follow check-out procedures.
4. Assist in finding parents of children who are not picked-up in a timely manner.
5. Thank parents for bringing their children and thank the children for coming.

### **After the children are dismissed**

1. Collect all clipboards and place in Supervisor's Box at Welcome Desk.
2. Pull out completed attendance and inventory sheet and email them during the week to the director.
3. Box-up the Newborn Room and reset room.
4. Collect all classroom signs and return to Supervisor Box.
5. Return Nametag to the Nametag Box.
6. Ensure the welcome desk and all rooms are packed for the movers and placed at the elevators.
7. Walk through each room to ensure nothing has been left behind and everything has been returned to its place.

## Section VIII - Parent Responsibility

For the safety and well-being of your child, please adhere to the policies and procedures that are outlined in this entire manual.

### **Alerts and requests**

1. If your child has any allergies or any other special needs or conditions, please notate this on his/her label. To help ensure that one of the classroom volunteers is aware, please alert one of them about your notation and place a bright colored dot on his/her label.
2. If your child has a severe allergy, please fill out a *GT Allergy Care Plan Form*. You only need to fill it out once. This form will accompany your child to the classroom.
3. Alert the greeter as well as the classroom volunteer, if your child is potty-training. Notate it on your child's label. Please take your child to the restroom before you drop your child off in the Nursery.
4. Volunteers are not allowed to change diapers.
5. We welcome parents to spend a few weeks acclimating their child to class. Once your child feels comfortable in the nursery or classroom, we encourage you to leave your child so that you can enjoy the service.
6. It is often most beneficial to all the children for each parent to quickly drop off his or her child. This lessens the separation anxiety and helps the child to quickly adjust to the classroom.
7. To cut down on confusion and crowding in the classroom and hall, we request that you drop off your child at the door instead of entering the classroom.
8. In order to cut down on crowds in the childcare area, we would encourage only one parent to drop off or pick up your child.

### **Items you bring**

1. Please make sure all of your child's belongings are labeled, including the diaper bag, cups, bottles, pacifiers, coats, etc.
2. We would recommend that you leave toys and dolls at home, as they can become lost or cause other children to become upset.

### **Tags**

Every parent is required to have a security stub in order to enter the children's area. This is a security measure so that people who are not authorized do not come into the rooms and play with or hold the children.

Here at **Grace Toronto** we use *a three-part label system* for our check-in check out process.

1. As a parent you will be required to fill out your child's information on the labels provided at the Welcome Desk. One portion goes on your child's back with his/her information, one portion adheres to his/her diaper bag and one portion remains with you. Your portion corresponds to the child's label. You will need this portion to pick-up your child at the end of the service.
2. To protect your child, we will not let anyone without a security label enter the children's area.
3. Children are only released to parents or guardians who have the security tag. If someone

other than a parent or guardian is allowed to pick-up your child, please inform our Welcome Desk Volunteer and a note will be made on your child's label. Note: Anyone picking up the child must still have the security tag that matches the child's label.

### **Regular attenders**

1. If your child is a regular attendee, you will be asked to fill out a *GT Child Registration Form*. This will help us know your child better and help us better serve you and him/her.
2. Visitors will not be required to fill out this form.

### **Parent volunteers**

1. We encourage parents to volunteer in our classes. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator.
2. If you are volunteering while your child is in a class, we ask for you to sign in on the volunteer sign in sheet located at the check-in table.

*Our Children's Ministry volunteers are a valuable part of this ministry. Volunteers are always needed. If you are not currently involved with the Children's Ministry and would like to be, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.*

*The information in this manual should help you understand our role in ministering to your child and what you can do to best transition your child to a children's ministry on Sunday mornings. If you have any questions, please call the Director of Children's Ministry. Again, welcome to the Children's Ministry at Grace Toronto Church.*

# Section IX - Miscellaneous

## Snacks

1. A light snack is provided for children who are old enough to eat. The usual snack is one juice or water only and one serving of Goldfish, Nilla Wafers or Teddy Grahams per child.
2. For infants in the nursery, parents are asked to provide their drinks.
3. All bottles should be premixed. Nursery workers are NOT allowed to mix formula for sanitation and health reasons.
4. If your child has any allergies, please notate this on your child's tag. To help ensure that the caregivers are aware, please alert one of them about the allergy. An allergy sticker must be placed on your child at the Check-in table.
5. All children's hands must be cleaned before eating a snack. Use the cleaning solution provided.
6. Children are to have snack and cups only when they are seated. Children are not allowed to walk around with snacks or cups for allergy and sanitation reasons.
7. Cups should be promptly removed when the child is done.

## Medications

1. For any children with severe allergies requiring an EpiPen, please be sure to supply this to the supervisor and fill out a Allergy Care Plan Form.
2. We are unable to administer any other medication to your child. If your child requires medication, please make arrangements so that you can personally administer what is required.
3. There is a basic First Aid Kit available, if needed.

## Classroom Management

God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11. It is not punishment, but guidance, training, and molding of character. We do not seek to merely control behavior, but to partner with parents to help shape a child's character to be more and more like that of Christ.

### ***Classroom rules***

1. Obey the teacher.
2. Listen.
3. Be kind; be safe.
4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.

### ***Preventative Actions***

1. Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
2. Classroom rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children.
3. Focus on positive actions.
4. Be fair and consistent with children.

### ***Corrective Actions***

1. Try to handle any issues individually.

2. Give a warning when a child does not follow the rules.
3. Remind the child of the rules.
4. Explain to children why the behavior is unacceptable.
5. Redirect the child to something positive.
6. Explain the consequences of unacceptable behavior by telling children the correct way to behave.
7. If the child again repeats the action, guide him or her to a quiet place separate from the others for a short but designated time.
8. After a third time, fill out the "Sunday Morning Incident Report" form. Give the bottom portion to the parent(s) and the top portion to the supervisor.
9. Ministry personnel are **never** to spank, hit, grab, slap, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.

### ***Aggressive behavior***

1. Biting, hitting, pushing, scratching, or pulling are considered aggressive behavior and will be addressed.
2. If a child is displaying any of these behaviors, he or she will be removed from the class and the parent will be notified immediately.

## **Displaying Affection**

### ***Appropriate Touch***

1. Children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love. Appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage ministry volunteers to:
  - a. Hold a preschool child who is crying,
  - b. Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears,
  - c. Hold a child's hands when speaking, listening or walking him or her to an activity,
  - d. Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior,
  - e. Put an arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed,
  - f. Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
2. All touch should be done in view of others.

### ***Inappropriate Touch***

1. In an effort to protect children, ministry leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:
  - a. Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you,
  - b. Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling,
  - c. Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child,
  - d. Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in case of assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom policies),
  - e. Do not carry older children or allow them to sit on your lap,
  - f. Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or youth.

# Section X - Accusation Of Misconduct

## **Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect**

### ***Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse***

1. No allegation and/or suspicion of abuse against children will be treated frivolously. Any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well being of a child under the care or supervision of our Church will be taken seriously and must be investigated.
2. Ministry personnel who become aware of any injury, abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form. The accused should not be contacted at this point.
3. The ministry personnel should inform the Director of the alleged injury, abuse, or molestation. The Director will immediately inform the Elders.
4. Any allegations of abuse if a child or youth must be reported to the proper authorities.

### ***Reporting an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse***

1. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to the Department of Social Services or the police. Reporting should be done over the telephone or in person.
2. The senior pastor or his designate will seek a written opinion from legal counsel within 24 hours of becoming aware of a suspected abuse case. The attorney's advice will be followed.
3. The senior pastor or his designate will contact the ministry's insurance carrier (general or professional liability) promptly as well as any organizational entity (i.e. Presbytery) to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations. The church will work with denominational leadership in all cases of suspected child abuse that has happened in the context of church ministry.
4. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the senior pastor or his designate will ensure that the victim's parents or guardians are immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred.
5. The above process will be carefully documented, including dates, times, and content of all conversations pertaining to the alleged abuse. Abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

## **Internal Investigation**

No persons, including church leadership shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported, or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity. All employees and volunteers of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

## **Confidentiality**

1. During the process of reporting and response, all ministry personnel will be committed to prayer.
2. All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure on need-to-know basis if necessary to protect other children from harm. As much as possible, confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected.

## **Ministerial Care**

1. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect. All persons shall act towards the child, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.
2. The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and parents in securing appropriate counseling, care and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the staff shall encourage the individual to secure appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest.

## **Biblical Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted**

1. The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. Any employee of the ministry who is subject of an investigation will be temporarily removed from their position and all church related duties involving children, with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend his or her income, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with the church's employment practices)
2. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position and all church related activities involving children pending completion of the investigation.
3. In an instance where child abuse is confirmed, the church will immediately dismiss the worker from their position. Termination will be considered appropriate in the circumstances.
4. In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the church should take action with the advice of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available after consideration of the victim and the victim's family's requests.
5. Anyone accused of abuse to children or youth will be prohibited from having access to children or youth until they are cleared of any and all charges. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the church that they are not permitted to use.
6. Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Church leadership may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities and to accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual listing restricted areas and access points on the church property.
7. The pastor, in consultation with legal counsel, will determine the amount of information he believes is appropriate to relate to the congregation. Usually commenting in detail on an

ongoing investigation is not wise.

### **Liaison with the Community and Media**

1. The senior pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. All enquiries should be directed to this person and comments should not be made by other individuals unless given permission to do so.
2. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.
3. Public statements should be well prepared and should be presented only after consultation with legal counsel.

### **Violation of Policy or Procedures**

1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry volunteer who becomes aware of violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

# Appendix 1 - Incident Report

Please give the bottom portion of the form to the parent when they come to pick-up their child. The top portion is to be given to the supervisor on duty.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain in detail the incident and response:

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**Parent's response:**

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Name of person filling out form: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Above portion for supervisor – tear along dotted line*

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## **GTKIDS INCIDENT REPORT** **FOR THE PARENT OF CHILD**

**Name of Child:** \_\_\_\_\_

Explain in detail the incident:

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Name of person filling out form: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 2 - Children's Ministry Application Form<sup>1</sup>

*The completion of this application is requested of individuals involved in the supervision of minors at Grace Toronto Church. We recognize this form is extensive. We believe this information is necessary to protect our children, to protect for our volunteers, and to effectively place our volunteers in ministry positions. Thank you, in advance, for your partnership.*

## **Personal Information (PLEASE PRINT)**

Male  Female

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status (Please check)  Married  Single

Name of Spouse (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Name and ages of children (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

In what area (s) of children's ministry are you interested? (Please check)

Nursery

Toddler

Children's Church

**Please submit a recent photo of yourself along with your completed application.**

## **Personal History**

Occupation and/Or Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies, Interests or Skills \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Spiritual History**

How long have you attended Grace Toronto Church Church? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you regularly attend (2 or more services a month)?  Yes  No

Are you a member of Grace Toronto Church?  Yes  No

When did you accept Christ as your Savior? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not a member of Grace Toronto Church, briefly outline in the space provided your personal testimony, spiritual journey, and present relationship with Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Copied with permission from The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. Plan to Protect, App 3

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What abilities and experience do you bring/offer to this ministry, if any? (i.e. Gifts, skills, training, education or other qualifications)

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List the churches you have attended regularly during the last five years:

1. Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Member? Yes No

2. Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Member? Yes No

My present and previous ministry experience is as follows:

1. Name of Church/Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates and Descriptions of Ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Name of Church/Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates and Descriptions of Ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to attend training/meeting/workshops to prepare and equip you for this ministry? (Please check) Yes No

If No, explain briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Confidential Information**

*In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and youth, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of the application process. All information will be kept confidential by the church leadership. (Police may access this record under warrant), Answering yes to any of the following questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.*

1. Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or background that would call into question your ability to work with children or youth? (ie. Pornography, use of illegal substances, etc.) Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused or convicted of impropriety with children? Yes No
3. Have you ever been convicted for the use or sale of illegal drugs? Yes No
4. Have you ever been through treatment for alcohol or substance abuse? Yes No
5. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (excluding minor Traffic violations)? Yes No
6. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any abuse related crimes? Yes No
7. Have you ever been investigated by the Child Welfare Agency for suspected child abuse? Yes No
8. Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behavior or conduct involving children, youth or adults? Yes No
9. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit as a result of an accident or mishap involving children or youth? Yes No
10. Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination, or other religious organization? Yes No
11. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action (including discharge) or investigation by a church, religious or other organization or by an employer? Yes No
12. Do you have any health concerns of which we should be aware? (ie. Medical, psychiatric) Yes No

**References**

*Please provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of TWO individuals not related to you who could provide a reference for you (pastor, council member, friend). At least one should be from outside Grace Toronto Church.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nature of relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nature of Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Statement**

I authorize any references or churches listed in the application to give you any information regarding my character and fitness for children's and/or youth work. I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such an evaluation to you. I waive any right to confidentiality and of any right to pursue damages against the church caused by the reference's response. I also give my permission for Grace Toronto Church to perform a personal criminal record check as perceived necessary for purposes of my protection against any false allegations and the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be kept in strict confidence. I agree to adhere to the protection policies as adopted by this church.

I understand that if my character or morals are, at any time, deemed inappropriate and/or criminal during my volunteer service, Grace Toronto Church will be entitled to terminate my assistance without expressed cause or prior notice regardless of any other oral or written statement by Grace Toronto Church prior to, at or following the date of volunteer service.

I understand that Grace Toronto Church is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care. I will cooperate fully with the staff and Elders in the fulfillment of my duties and will keep all information I encounter in my role as volunteer confidential. If at any time I find that for any reason I am unable to support the policies, procedures or doctrine of Grace Toronto Church, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position. If my supervisors find that I am in conflict with any of the policies, procedures, or doctrines and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position.

I acknowledge receipt of Grace Toronto Church Plan of Protection.

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteer Children's ministry is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

**Applicant's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Witness** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

***Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of screening ministry personnel and placing them into ministry with children or youth. The information gathered here will be used for the purposes of supporting the ministries of Grace Toronto Church.***

# Appendix 3a - Suspected Abuse Report Form<sup>2</sup>

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Name or Person Filing Report \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Pastor Filing Report \_\_\_\_\_

Name or Social Worker (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Ph. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Alleged Perpetrator \_\_\_\_\_  M  F

Relationship between suspected victim and alleged perpetrator \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of suspected abuse:  physical  sexual  emotional  neglect

Indications or suspected abuse (include facts, physical signs and/or course of events)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken (include time and date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the child is reporting, what did the child say? (Give quotes if possible).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was your response?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> Copied with Permission. Plan to Protect, Appendices 24 & 25

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

***The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.***

## Appendix 3b: Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person who Filed Initial Report \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Pastor Receiving Report \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusions

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Action Taken (include dates and times)

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Pastor's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

***The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.***



**Grace Toronto Church  
Children's Ministry**

**41 Britain Street, Toronto M5A 1R7**

**[gracetoronto.ca](http://gracetoronto.ca)**