

There are numerous occasions in the ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church when minor children are under the supervision and care of church employees or volunteers (workers) other than their parents, either on church property or at church-sponsored functions. The purpose of C.A.R.E., is to maximize the safety and protection of these children that God has entrusted to our care and minimize any potential for their abuse. We will attempt to do that through the following measures:

- **Selection and screening** - CPC employees and volunteers who will have contact with minor children should undergo at a minimum, background checks and application screening.
- **C.A.R.E. Training** - Workers will be trained in C.A.R.E. policies and protocols.
- **Supervision and Monitoring** – Appropriate levels of supervision will be afforded both children and adults and the C.A.R.E. program will be monitored for compliance.
- **Response and Reporting** - A Response Team will evaluate any allegation or claim of child abuse and determine reporting requirements.

C.A.R.E. Operating Standards

Six Month Rule – All workers shall follow the Six Month Rule. The Six Month Rule is that no one shall work with children until he or she has been a member or associate member of Covenant Presbyterian Church for six months. Exceptions to this rule require Session approval.

Two Adult Rule - All employees and volunteers shall follow the **Two Adult Rule** when working with or transporting children. The Two Adult Rule is that two unrelated adults shall be present with children at all times and that one adult shall never be alone with one child. Exceptions may be made during official on-site church functions when four or more children are present with an approved adult worker. Every attempt should be made to ensure the two-adult rule is maintained through the use of temporary assistance by other adults when one worker needs to leave the area. In rare circumstances where the Two Adult Rule cannot be followed, the facility in use must be open and accessible, i.e., have a visible window in it or the door must be left open.

Children needing to use restroom facilities will be escorted by a same-gender, similarly aged child whenever possible. In all other cases the two adult rule will be adhered to and if necessary, the entire class will take a restroom break together. In the nursery, a parent will be paged to assist their toddler with this task.

Access - Access to the Christian Education facilities and spaces is limited to workers, the children, their families, and/or their responsible

parent. These facilities should be locked when not in use. Preteen children will normally be escorted to and from their Sunday school classes by their teacher or other responsible adult. In all other cases, children should be dropped off and picked up at their classroom by a responsible parent or other prior approved/designated adult. In the Nursery, children will be exchanged by a responsible parent for a beeper, which must be returned by that same parent in order to pick up the child.

Adult/Child ratios - Adult/Child ratios should be adjusted as the hazard/risk level and/or isolation of the activity increase, from a baseline of 1:10. Restrooms have been modified to make them public rather than locking facilities.

Teens (aged 14-18) may assist an approved pastor, employee, or volunteer in their work with younger children, but only under that adult's immediate supervision.

Physical contact - Physical contact with children by workers will be kept to the minimum required to carry out normal duties associated with the position held.

Violations of these protocols should be reported immediately to any church officer who in turn will notify the Response Team if necessary, so that proper supervisory and Session action may be taken.

Online support – additional information and training is available at:

www.reducingtherisk.com

Username: _____

Password: _____

Understanding Risk

The aim of the C.A.R.E. program at CPC is to reduce the risk involved in the care of minor children. As a worker overseeing the health, welfare and safety of our children, it is important to understand the many risk factors involved. Generally speaking, the following principle is true:

*“As risk increases,
Supervision should increase”*

Because of the fluid nature of risk, it is critical to be able to identify when it is increasing and then make appropriate adjustments to the supervisory environment of the children under your care. The following risk factors can be used to help assess risk:

Isolation – As isolation between a worker and minor children increases, so does risk. Therefore workers are to ensure open environments are maintained and/or an adequate number of monitors are present, to avoid situations where any child is alone with any other person, whether an adult or another child.

Accountability – As accountability of workers increases, risk decreases. Therefore all workers will be screened and trained; the two-adult rule will be followed to the maximum extent possible; and all activities that involve children of CPC will be reviewed by an appropriate approving authority before that activity occurs.

Power and Control – As power and/or control over a child increases, so does risk. Therefore workers will strive to ensure a balance of power and control is maintained. Examples of an out of balance situation would be where there is a large age differential between children performing a task together.

Selected sections of the Revised Code of Washington State:

RCW 26.44.020 - Definitions.

"Child" or "children" means any person under the age of eighteen years of age.

"Abuse or neglect" means the injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child (any person under the age of eighteen years of age) by any person under circumstances, which indicate that the child's health, welfare, and safety is harmed.

RCW 9.69.100 - Duty of witness of offense against child or any violent offense --

1. A person who witnesses the actual commission of:
 - (a) A violent offense or preparations for the commission of such an offense;
 - (b) A sexual offense against a child or an attempt to commit such a sexual offense; or
 - (c) An assault of a child that appears reasonably likely to cause substantial bodily harm to the child,shall as soon as reasonably possible notify the prosecuting attorney, law enforcement, medical assistance, or other public officials.
2. This section shall not be construed to affect privileged relationships as provided by law.
3. The duty to notify a person or agency under this section is met if a person notifies or attempts to provide such notice by telephone or any other means as soon as reasonably possible.
4. Failure to report as required by subsection (1) of this section is a gross misdemeanor. However, a person is not required to report under this section where that person has a reasonable belief that making such a report would place that person or another family or household member in danger of immediate physical harm.



CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

“We wait for the Lord;
He is our help and shield.
Our hearts shall rejoice in Him,
because we have trusted
in His holy name.
Let Your mercy, O Lord,
be upon us, as we hope in You.”

Psalm 33:20-22