

Philosophy and Procedures Manual for the Nursery



*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb
is a reward." ~Psalm 127:3*

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Hickman Community Church Nursery Summary Sheet

Providing a Lavish Care Environment for Little Ones (0-3 year old)

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belong to such as these”* (Matthew 19:14)

The HCC Nursery exists to serve Christ by ministering to the Body, His Church.

I. We serve the parents by:

1. Enabling them to participate in corporate worship services on Sunday; to take part in events during the week and to attend many other special events during the calendar year.
2. Taking care of their little ones so they can give their whole-hearted, undistracted attention to the ministry of the Word, with the reassuring knowledge that their precious children are cared for and loved by people who desire to lavish Christ’s love and compassion to them. (Hebrews 10:24, 25)
3. Coming alongside them to be a source of help and encouragement.

II. We serve the children by:

1. **Providing a safe, loving, and God honoring environment** for children to enjoy while their parents worship and serve.
2. **Teaching and training** the little ones about their sin, their need for a Savior and His love for them. This we do through Bible lessons, music, singing and puppets, led by the loving example of the nursery staff.
3. **Praying for them.** We at the Nursery are committed to pray for your child every time they are in the Nursery. It is an immense privilege for us and one we intend to perform with diligence.
4. **Enabling them to enjoy their time with us.** There will be friends to play with; toys to share; bubbles to blow; music to dance to; and many more wonderful activities for them to partake in or to explore.

We are available Sundays:

- 9:00am Equipping Hour (0-3yr)
- 10:15am Worship Service (0-3yr)
- 5:30pm Evening Service (0-5yr)

Wednesday: Women's Ministry 10.00 a.m.

The Nursery is also available at special events as needed or requested by the Elders/Deacons.

Nursery Philosophy of Ministry

Philosophy

"A Christ-centered Lavish Care Environment for Little Ones"

Nursery Mission Statement for Nursery Caregivers and Volunteer Servers

Our Goal in the nursery is to provide a Christ-centered loving environment (L.C.E) of service, care and fun for the children so that parents can enjoy undistracted worship.

I. The Attitudes of the Nursery Caregivers (and volunteer Junior Servers):

Our attitudes in the nursery will leave a lasting impression on the families who attend this church. We are the first impression for any new family with little ones. We must remember that our interaction on a personal level may be the only interaction the parents have on a given Sunday. Reflecting Christ's attitude of humble service to others will leave the impression that could potentially change a life for eternity. A nursery caregiver or junior server has a unique opportunity! We may draw them into the body or repel them from us by the way we interact with them.

1. Service. We are here to provide a service of care for the parents and families of Hickman Community Church. We will do this best by being sacrificial and accommodating to the parents. Romans 15:1-3 *"Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself..."*

2. Humility. We are to view others as more important than ourselves and put their needs above our own. Christ is our supreme example. Being Lord of the universe, He lowered Himself to serve the needs of others. Philippians 2:3, 4 *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."*

3. **Joy.** Our life should reflect the joy of the Lord because of all that He has done! Psalm 5:11 *“But let all who take refuge in you be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You.”* Psalm 16:11 *“You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”* Psalm 32:11 *“Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.”*

4. **Unity.** We must work together with our leaders and fellow workers, not complaining, but supporting and upholding one another. Colossians 3:12-14 *“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”*

5. **Graciousness.** With all of the grace that we have been shown by our Lord, we ought to extend this to the body of Christ and to others who have not yet experienced His grace. Colossians 4:6 *“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”*

6. **Patience.** We should reflect the same patience that Christ had and still has with us when dealing with parents and children. Ephesians 4:1, 2 *“...walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”*

7. **Gentleness.** We must be gentle as Christ was gentle. He did not lash out, nor did He respond harshly when not respected or obeyed. Proverbs 15:1 *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

II. Your Interaction with Parents:

Your interaction with parents will be very brief in most circumstances, yet very important. Here is where we ask ourselves the question, "How do I come across to the parent of the children being entrusted to my care?" How you communicate with parents and families will reflect on all of the nursery staff, and on our church body, and on Christ Himself. Therefore, be careful and calculated in your interactions with parents, reflecting the Christ-like attitudes discussed in the former section. Here are some practical suggestions.

1. **Greet parents with a warm smile**, and try to get to know their names. When you have the opportunity, get to know them a bit better than by name only. Ask about other kids in the family, where they live, how their week was, or what home group they are in. They will appreciate your care and interest. Be careful not to do this when there is a line waiting to drop-off or pick-up.

2. **Be accommodating.** Try to say "YES" as much as possible. If a visiting parent wants to put their two children together, or their child with a friend, even if it is a bit of an inconvenience to you, accommodate them. Remember, we are here to serve them and not just be rule enforcers. Let the grace of God be evident in your decision making.

3. If a regular attending family wants to move their child to another class (the other end of the alphabet, or the next age up, etc.) permanently, graciously ask them to speak to the Nursery Director to work that out. You can shift that decision into the hands of the Nursery Director/s who has/have the authority to make that kind of change. ("Would you mind talking to _____ about that? She/He is the one who works out all of the numbers with the classrooms. I can help you find her/him later."). **Accommodate the change for that day** then work it out with the parent.

4. **If a child has a comfort item** (blanket, silky, pacifier, etc.) allow them to carry it around with them. We want to serve them as best we can, and often this will help a crying child who is not yet comfortable in the environment.

5. **Reassure parents** (especially new ones) that their child will be loved and well taken care of. Show them that by taking a genuine interest in their child during drop-off.

6. **Be positive in your comments** when a parent comes to pick-up their child. Start out by saying something positive or even neutral (like what you did in class that day) even if the child was disruptive the whole time. Be eager to report the positive things a child did, not eager to list their wrongs.

7. **Avoid making blanket statements** about a child's behavior such as, "_____ had a very hard morning." Or "_____ didn't have self-control today." Or "_____ was acting out this morning." This will give an impression to the parent that may leave them uneasy and uncomfortable when next week comes.

8. If it is necessary, make a strategy with a volunteer, and give them a little training so you can privately talk to the parent about a severe situation that needs to be addressed. Always address the matter as discreetly as possible with the parent, and involve the Nursery Director in these types of matters. They are there to back you up, and also to take some of the brunt, if you do run into a "situation".

9. When talking to a parent about a behavioral issue, **keep in mind that all of the kids are little sinners!** Don't treat an issue as a "big deal". Unsaved little children will do things that reflect their unsaved little natures. Don't be surprised, and don't reflect an attitude of shock to the parent.

10. **Remember**, your brief interactions with parents during drop-off and pick-up are generally the sole interactions you will have with them. Therefore, they will evaluate the nursery based on those short interactions! **We want to leave a sweet savor of Christ with them. Be gracious and smile a lot.** They are trusting you to care for their most precious possessions, so show them that you are worthy of that trust by loving, showing interest, and providing a L.C.E.!!

11. **If you see that a family is new, or just visiting**, go out of your way to welcome them as visitors. Treat them as honored guests, with special care, as this may be their only interaction with a Christian. YOU will be their first impression of Hickman Community Church, of Christians, and even of Christ Himself. You have the opportunity to grace them or to turn them away. **Leave them with the sweet savor of Christ!**

III. Your Interaction with Kids

We want to leave all of the children who participate in our ministry with a sweet savor of Christ and a desire to come back next week! We want to provide a fun, loving, exciting atmosphere that makes them excited to come to church. In order to do this effectively, we must work at it!

1. Warmly greet each child by name. Get down to eye-level with them, and give them a hug, a high-five, or an excited, “I’m so glad to see you!!!” Not only will this provide the child with an inviting environment, but it will also give the parents confidence that you will really care for their child while they are gone.

2. Bring each child to an activity that is being supervised by a caregiver (so that they can greet the new child) or to a fun toy table. Make sure the child is comfortable before you leave them, or bring them to a caregiver to give them a little extra welcome and comfort.

3. Remind yourself that you are there to serve the child’s needs. Work with them to get them comfortable and happy.

4. Keep things moving in the classroom. Have a plan! Play-time, story-time, or song-time that lasts too long makes an opportunity for the children to become rowdy or out of control, which leads to discipline issues.

5. Be careful not to expect certain behaviors from certain children or stereotyping a child as naughty. Children tend to live up to the expectations that are set for them.

6. Expect expressions of sinful natures, and don’t be surprised at them! These are young sinners that will take years to mold into godly adults!

7. **Don't keep a record of wrongs committed** each session. Expect them to behave as they are: adorable reprobates!!

8. **Be gentle in all of your interactions with children.** There is no clause in the Bible that allows for harsh words or an angry tone! Gently correct them, and quickly lead them to something productive. Don't wait for them to do it again, or they likely will! And this spiral downward will make it difficult for you to retain a forbearing and gentle spirit with them!

9. **When dealing with a child that is not cooperating,** first assign a volunteer to sit with them and help them through the activities. Usually the one-on-one attention will alleviate the problem. Never sit a child in the corner of the room by himself. Never put a child in a room by themselves and close the door. You may move him or her to another seat, but not into an isolated corner or room. This is embarrassing to the child and parent (if they were to come in), and it does not achieve the goal of providing a L.C.E. (Lavish Care Environment)

10. **When dealing with a crying toddler** (who seems to be determined to keep on crying), always do what you can to comfort them. Welcome them with exuberant joy, tell them how glad you are that they have come, take them to all of the different stations- books, toys, activities etc. Hold them, sing to them, sit with them, read with them, bring them a toy, a blanket, etc. Choose another worker to help the child if you need to manage the room as a whole. Smile at them as you work, remind them that you are so glad that they are here, and do all that you can to comfort them. Be sure to show the parents that you care for their child. You may ask a question about what they like, suggest that they bring a blanket or some comfort item, or offer that the parent come in and stay for five-ten minutes.

11. **When dealing with either a crying or an uncooperative toddler,** you also may try asking the child to be another nursery caregiver's helper. Make up a task for the morning. Tell them they can hold the book for you as you read. Make them a song helper. Children love to participate and help! If the child remains in a distressed state for ten minutes and there seems to be no abatement of the situation then go ahead and "page" the parent. Explain the situation and ask what they would like to do. They could join in and help the child or they might want to remove the child altogether.

IV. Appeals Process:

The Nursery Director oversees the daily function of the ministry. She or he are accountable to the deacons should there need to be an appeal beyond the Nursery Director. The Nursery Director will help you in dealing with issues that arise in the nursery room, or with particular needs you may have in the rooms. He/she will also be available to answer any questions that come up. He/she will also serve as a support for you in situations that may require more attention.

Issues that should be brought to the attention of the Nursery Director include malicious biting that leaves a mark, (remember that some kids- especially the younger ones- are just testing their teeth! Give a gentle warning and expect them to heed. If it happens again, warn them again and use your judgment as to whether to involve the Nursery Director, or just remove and refocus the child), punching angrily, hitting repeatedly, scratching severely can all be issues and you will need to use your judgment on these. Again the parents are only a page away so if you are feeling overwhelmed by an escalating situation then don't hesitate to get the parent to come in and assist for a short period of time.

V. Nursery Directors:

- **Forry and Nicole Woodman - (209) 815-2843 email: nicolewoodman@rocketmail.com**

Nursery Procedures

General Guidelines

1. The Nursery is available for children 0-3 years of age during the 9:00 a.m. Equipping Hour and 10:15 a.m. Worship Service. During the 5:30 p.m. evening service children 0-5 years are welcome.
2. Our Nursery is staffed by volunteers who are members of HCC. If your child uses our/the Nursery, both attending parents (who are members) will be called on to serve on a rotational basis as needed.
3. Nursery volunteers are required to be members of the church.
4. We will not allow sick children in the nursery. This is a healthy child nursery. (See Nursery Health Care Procedures on pg. 3 for more information).
5. Remove child's shoes and place all personal items in a cubby with a name tag.
6. If possible, have parent/volunteer lift child over the front door when being dropped off and picked up.
7. Check the white board in the Nursery entry way for any updates, needed supplies, etc.
8. Without exception, children are to be released ONLY to their parent or guardian.

Sign in Guidelines

1. Parents to sign in on name list and pick up pager.
2. Pager number is recorded next to each child's name.
3. New Parents to fill our Information sheet; name, address, phone and email and **waiver form**.
4. Special instructions requested and recorded for the child at sign in.



Caregiver Procedures Before, During and After Services

Before Your Shift:

1. Please be on time, at least 15 minutes before your scheduled shift starts.
2. Remove your shoes. Aprons are provided by the church should you choose to use them.
3. Designate one caregiver to greet each child by name. And ask the parent if there are any special instructions and/or needs for the day.

During Your Shift:

1. If a child places a toy in their mouth, place that toy in the "dirty bucket", in the kitchen, to be cleaned at the end of your shift to avoid the spreading of germs.
2. All children should be checked for necessary diaper changes, but do not disturb a sleeping baby. Please note that some 2 yr. olds will be potty training. Workers may assist them as needed. (See Nursery Bathroom Usage on pg. 5)
3. Throughout the service interact with the children. There are plenty of books, puzzles, crafts, and toys to play with. Remember, this is a time to minister to the infants and toddlers not a time to visit with one another.

After Your Shift:

1. Clean everything that has been used with "Clorox Anywhere" spray (toys, cubbies, tables, changing table etc). Spray all toys that have been played with.
2. Spray counters, door knobs, doors and bathroom areas including toilet with "Lysol"
3. Clear all cubbies and counters of trash. Remove bathroom and kitchen trash after each session and place in outside garbage bins.
4. Turn off the lights and lock the door.
5. DO NOT TOUCH THE THERMOSTAT!! (It is on an automatic schedule)
6. Please leave the nursery in the same or better condition than you found it. The next set of workers will benefit from your cooperation.

Nursery Health Care Procedures

1. ONLY healthy children will be admitted to the Nursery.
2. Any skin rashes or blotches are to be reported to the parents immediately.
3. Health Guidelines:
We want to provide a healthy environment for all the children in the nursery. We ask parents to keep your child/children home for at least 48 hours after all symptoms have cleared before returning them to the nursery.

ABSOLUTELY NONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Fever
 - Vomiting
 - Discharge from the eyes
 - Diarrhea
 - Questionable Rash
 - Excessive Coughing
 - Runny Nose (Unless this is the result of allergies which are non-contagious. In such a case discretion is necessary).
4. Should a child become ill or show any of the previous symptoms during a service, his/her parents will be notified immediately by pager. The parent will then take the child from the nursery area.
 5. For the protection of the Nursery staff and children all caregivers are asked to follow these guidelines.
 6. If possible, provide a doctor's note, if your child has allergies. Also, list all known food allergies.
 7. REMEMBER to wash your hands after wiping ANY runny noses! (See Cleaning and Sanitizing on pg.6)

Diaper Changing Procedure

1. Check child's cubby for a diaper prior to using a church supplied diaper.
2. Place a cloth diaper located next to the changing table under the child. This will serve as a changing pad. When finished with the "diaper change" cloth place in the dirty hamper in the bathroom.
3. Place the soiled diaper and wipes in plastic bag and put in bathroom garbage bin.
4. Indicate the time the child was changed on the "thought you'd like to know..." tag located on the pager countertop. Place with child's belongings for the parent.
5. If a 2 yr. old is potty training and has an accident, but does not want the caregiver to change the soiled clothes then page the parent. Do not force the child.
6. Reminder:
 - *Never leave a child unattended on the changing table.
 - *Always wash your hands after changing a diaper or assisting a child in the bathroom.

Nursery Bathroom Usage Procedures

NOTE: **ONLY** children may use the Nursery bathroom!

1. Never take a boy and a girl to the bathroom at the same time.
2. Always allow the child to wipe him/herself. (This should be taught at home). However, if assistance is needed you may put on a pair of latex gloves.
3. Assist the child with washing their hands with soap and water.
4. Wash your hands thoroughly after you assist each child.
5. Male nursery workers are only allowed to escort boys to the bathroom and female nursery workers to escort girls or boys to the bathroom.

Nursery Feeding Procedures

NOTE: If you have a child in the nursery please bring a marked sippy cup every Sunday, or a disposable cup will be provided during snack time.

1. Don't allow the children to walk around with a sippy cup or bottle. After they finish with their drink, return it to their cubby.
2. Age appropriate children (i.e. Can sit in the little chairs unassisted) need to be fed a snack in the kitchen.
3. If a baby is bottle fed, have the parent prepare bottle before leaving the child.
4. Cheerios, graham crackers, gold fish crackers etc. are the types of snacks offered in the nursery.
5. Do not bring snacks from home for your child. An exception to this will be made if your child has food allergies.

Nursery Cleaning & Sanitizing Procedures

1. Wash your hands and disinfect toys continuously.
2. When should you wash your hands? Use your discretion. Some general guidelines:
 - *Before & after each diaper change or assisting a child to the bathroom.
 - *After coming in contact with any bodily fluid.
 - *Before handling any food, bottle, pacifier etc.
 - *After handling a toy that has been in a child's mouth.
 - *After cleaning up, before leaving.
3. If a child's bottle or cup is dropped on the carpet, the nipple should be rinsed with hot water before it is returned to the child.
4. All children using a bottle or sippy cup must be seated with a caregiver nearby and not allowed to walk around the nursery. Then place the bottle/cup back in their cubby.
5. If a child's bottle or cup is somehow picked up by another child who then drinks from it or plays with the nipple, then the cup/bottle should be washed.
6. If a pacifier is dropped on the carpet, or picked up by another child who plays with it or puts it in his mouth, it must first be washed in hot soapy water and then rinsed well by a caregiver before returning it to the child to whom it belongs.
7. DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO SHARE PACIFIERS, BOTTLES OR CUPS AT ANY TIME.

Personal Review of Nursery Manual Procedures

ALL volunteer nursery caregivers must be well versed with the nursery procedures and philosophy of Hickman Community Church. Each member of the volunteer staff is given a personal copy of the Nursery manual to be read and understood.

A binder with a copy of the procedures manual and personal information sheet for each regularly attending child will be placed at the front counter of the nursery for reference.

- I have read the Nursery Manual
- I understand that a copy of the manual is available for my reference whenever I serve in the nursery.
- I understand the outlined procedures and will direct any questions regarding the manual to the Nursery Director.

Nursery Volunteer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please sign, date and return this form to the church office or the Nursery Director. Thank you!!