

Welcome to the Nursery

Southminster Presbyterian Church

(Updated 2011)

This manual is provided to introduce parents and Nursery caregivers to the highlights of our Nursery ministry. Whether you are a parent, a nursery caregiver, or a volunteer; please familiarize yourself with the contents of this manual so we can work together to provide the best possible ministry for the young children of Southminster.

Our Nursery is staffed with paid caregivers, and volunteer caregivers. Caregivers are identified with a Nursery tee. The Nursery operates under the direction of the Young Children's Committee of the Learning Council.

We welcome children from newborn up to 4 years old. It is our sincere desire to fulfill the following goals:

- To nurture your child in building positive feelings about being in church or church setting.
- To provide a clean, safe and loving environment where your child can have fun and begin to learn about the love of God.
- To provide a learning environment with opportunities for creativity and exploration.
- To allow parents freedom from childcare responsibilities so they may have time for ministries of the church including fellowship, study, service, and worship

Once a year, parents who use the Nursery will be given an updated packet which includes: a Nursery Manual, a Child Registration Form, and a Volunteer Form. New families to the Nursery will be given the packet at their first visit. New babies of members will receive a packet shortly following their birth. Please note that parents will also have access to this information on the Southminster website (www.sminster/nursery.com).

Please contact the Pastor for Learning and Community if you have any questions about our Nursery

The Rev. Dr Jacqueline Nowak Jackie@sminster.com or 433.1810

Guidelines for Parents

Thank you for bringing your child to the Southminster Presbyterian Church Nursery. The following guidelines will help us provide the best possible ministry to your child while in our care.

Safety Check-In Procedures

Sign-in Registration – For the child’s safety, we require that each time a parent or caregiver drops off a child at the Nursery, that they complete the sign-in/registration sheet with required information. They are also required to indicate on the sheet who is responsible for picking up the child from the Nursery; as well as alerting identifying any change in the time that the child will be picked up. (i.e., Grandparent will pick up the child approx. 15 minutes before the end of the Sunday services.)

Take a pager – Indicate your pager number on the sign-in/registration sheet, and set the pager on “silent/vibrate”.

Child’s belongings – Be sure to label all bottles, cups, snacks, diaper bag, and/or backpack with the child’s name (use pre-made labels or masking tape labels) to avoid any confusion or misplaced items.

Notify us of any special instructions – If your child has new food allergies, different feeding times, specific potty-training instructions; please make us aware. The original registration form has basic information about your child, but we want to be sure to accommodate the child’s needs and specific changes.

Picking up the child – Parents are to sign-out the child. During this transition, the Nursery caregiver will return the child’s belongings to the parent, update the parent regarding the child’s activities while in the Nursery, and release the child to the parent. Parents are asked to remain in the greeting area and not come into the children’s space.

Drinks, Snacks, Diapers

Drinks – During the time the child is in the Nursery, we will take time for a drink and a snack. Any child who does not bring a cup/drink will be given a drink with the snack. If the child brings a drink, it should be left in the bag or given to the worker. We provide drinks for the children as needed & then put them out of sight to prevent drink-sharing.

Snacks – We will provide snacks (PEANUT-FREE) along with their drinks; however, if you prefer, you may also send your child with their own snack. Our snacks may include fish/cheese crackers, cheerios, pretzels, cookies, etc.

Diapers – Please provide enough diapers for the child’s stay. (In case of an emergency, we do have a small supply of diapers on hand, but we may not have your child’s exact brand or size.)

Volunteers

We ask that, if at all possible, one parent sign up to be a Nursery volunteer. The volunteers are asked to work one church service each quarter of a year (4X). You can request the service which is most convenient for you. Southminster teenagers (grades 6-12) are also encouraged to volunteer.

Nursery ~ Toddler Program

Each week, a special program is prepared for the “age appropriate” children--- (children who are walking and up to 4 years old). This program includes four segments:

- Play - Open play time encourages children's adjustment to surroundings & interaction with Nursery friends. The play area is full of stimulating toys and books where little ones are encouraged to develop motor skills at their own pace...also a time for a “sharing experience” with one another.
- Praise – From our curriculum, a Bible story book is selected and read to the children. Interaction, language skills, and social growth are strengthened through discussions of the selection. This is also a time when the children enjoy their prayer and a drink/snack.
- Program – The fun continues with a hands-on simple creative-art or “craft”. In conjunction with developing fine motor skills through crayon and marker use for age appropriate children, the craft is usually a physical expression of the lesson of today’s Praise segment. Note that the sources of our program are available for parent’s review and have been approved by the Session of the church.
- Pickup - Before parents pick up the children, we will all spend the last few minutes together picking up and putting away toys and books...practicing their self-help skills.

Nursery Facility ~ Infant and Toddler

The Nursery acknowledges that there is a wide range between infants and children up to 4 years of age. Therefore, for the safety and stimulated growth of the children, the facility has been divided into two (2) areas.

Infants - The right side/section of the room is set up for NEWBORNS/INFANTS ONLY. We have age appropriate safety crib, swing, bounce seat, soft-sided play pen, and stimulating toys...all providing a safe, healthy, learning environment. Our caregivers spend lots of time cuddling, talking, and playing with the babies, along with changing diapers, and feeding the little ones. The facility is also equipped with a microwave, refrigerator, sinks/running water, restroom, & changing diaper area. The children will remain in this section until they are walking with security at which time the child will be transitioned over to the toddler section. If you have any questions as to when/if the child should be moved, please feel free to discuss with the Childcare Coordinator.

Toddlers – The left side/section of the room is set up for TODDLERS. We have age appropriate safety play area with stimulating toys and books...all providing a safe, healthy, learning environment. Our caregivers emphasize social growth and encourage developmental age appropriate behavior for the safety of all children. The facility is also equipped with a microwave, refrigerator, sinks/running water, restroom, and a changing diaper area. Once the child approaches age 4, you will want to consider moving the child to the next age level. Some children are ready to move sooner than others, depending on their ability to handle a more structured learning environment. If you feel your child is ready to move, or if you have any questions about when your child should be moved, please feel free to discuss with the Childcare Coordinator.

Healthcare

The health and well-being of your child is of vital importance to us. Our Nursery is thoroughly cleaned each week by the same service that cleans the church. All linens and cloth toys are washed after use. We try to select and keep toys in the Nursery that are safe for children ages 0-4 years of age –AND- those that can also be easily cleaned/disinfected. During diaper changes, disposable gloves are worn. After each diaper change or potty visit, hands are washed and areas are disinfected.

To protect the health of all of the children, we CANNOT accept a child who...

- Has run a fever in the last 24 hours (This means the child should be fever-free WITHOUT fever reducing medication.)
- Has vomited or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- Has a skin rash of undetermined nature which may be contagious.
- Has persistent coughing, or has yellow or green nose drainage.
- Has conjunctivitis (pink eye).

If you are unsure as to whether your child is healthy enough to be in the Nursery, please err on the side of caution and keep the child at home.

If your child is discovered to be ill after you have dropped him/her off in the Nursery, you will be paged immediately.

Nursery Donations

If you wish to donate items to the Nursery, please contact the staff person in charge of the nursery or the chair of the Young Children's Committee to see if the items are needed and or suitable/safe for use in the Nursery. Parents may donate a box of an approved snack. All donations are very much appreciated. Thank you.

Guidelines for Volunteer Caregivers

Thank you for your desire and commitment to minister to the children and their parents. You are a significant part of this ministry and your faithfulness is greatly appreciated. These guidelines are to protect the health and safety of the children and the caregivers. Following these policies will ensure consistent care for the children.

1. New volunteers will be scheduled with a paid caregiver or an experienced volunteer.
2. Southminster Nursery tee shirts should be worn while working in the nursery.
3. Caregivers are asked to wear only socks (no shoes) while in the Nursery area.
4. Arrive 15 minutes early so you can help welcome children into the Nursery; and so you can be given specific instructions for the care of the children.

5. Wash your hands upon arrival. This is an important step in preventing the spread of germs. Also wash hands before preparing/serving snacks, after diapering, after wiping a nose, and after using (or helping a child use) the bathroom. Proper hand-washing procedures are posted at each sink.
6. Help greet parents and children. Have parents sign in, take a pager, and assist in labeling belongings.
7. Make sure we have an updated Registration Form on each child. Write any special instructions on the white board (such as allergies, specific feeding times, etc.)
8. Leave snacks/drinks in the diaper bags/backpacks until needed. Children can have drinks upon request, but place them out of reach when not in use. (This helps prevent messes, drink sharing, and lost cups.) **All snacks must be peanut free.**
9. Some children are hesitant about being dropped off. Take cues from parents (or ask them) on how best to deal with the situation. Some children respond to caregivers getting them involved in playing while others can be put off by it. Be sensitive to needs of each individual. Remember, the children “usually” get over any initial reluctance very quickly.
10. Due to different personalities, some children are more interested in interaction than others. However, try to spread your attention equally so all the children feel loved and nurtured.
11. **Safety is the most important concern.** Remember to keep your attention focused on the children rather than interacting with other caregivers.
12. Do not eat in front of the children unless it is snack time and you are eating the same thing the children are having. Keep your drink out of reach of the children. The entryway counter or the sink areas (which are out of the reach of children) are good places to sit your drink.
13. The paid caregiver will normally do the diaper changes; however, sometimes your help may be needed.
14. We are required by our insurance carrier to have at least two (2) workers in the nursery. This is to protect the children and the caregivers. So even if there are only one or two children, you may be asked to stay for your entire shift.

Thank you!!!