

Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church Nursery Policies & Guidelines

For the parents and childcare volunteers or staff of the Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church Nursery

Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church
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Welcome to the Palo Alto Christian Reformed Church (PACRC)!

We are excited to have the opportunity to share in the care and growth of your child. We realize that our role is an important one to parents and the children in our care. We will strive to fulfill our role with integrity and regularly seek feedback for areas where we can make improvements.

The PACRC nursery is a cooperative childcare program. We hope these policies and guidelines will be helpful and informative for both the childcare volunteers and the parents of the children who visit our nursery.

Note that all references to parents include guardians or relatives of the children visiting the nursery as designated by the parent or guardian.

We at the PACRC believe that childcare volunteers should provide safe, loving, responsible, and developmentally appropriate care for all children visiting the nursery. Our church council, in collaboration with our pastor, is responsible for determining the suitability of our policies, guidelines, and childcare volunteers and staff.

Childcare Volunteer/Staff Requirements

Childcare volunteers must meet the PACRC Nursery Volunteer Certification Requirements, and will be assigned to activities involving children after being certified in accordance with the policies & procedures outlined and referenced in this handbook. The key elements of the PACRC Nursery Volunteer Certification Requirements include:

- A background check completed by a third party on an annual basis
- A PACRC Child Abuse Prevention Policy Code of Ethics form completed on an annual basis
- A PACRC Childcare Volunteer Agreement form completed on an annual basis

Nursery Hours & Volunteer Staffing

The nursery is staffed during our morning worship service for infants and young children (i.e., newborn to 3 years of age), which currently starts at 10:30am every Sunday. The nursery will open 15 minutes before the church service starts and will close 10 minutes after the service ends. One adult childcare volunteer and one childcare volunteer helper will be assigned to the nursery each week. Every effort will be made to

maintain a ratio of one adult to every four children. Parents are welcome in the nursery should they want to comfort or care for their child of any age during the worship service.

Safe Church Ministry

The PACRC follows our stated Child Abuse Prevention Policy. The policy is aligned with the Christian Reformed Church of North America's Safe Church Ministry (<https://www.crcna.org/SafeChurch>), and was initially implemented with approval from the PACRC church council in 2004. A copy of the current version of the approved policy is available upon request from the PACRC council, who owns the document. This policy was adopted as a way to safeguard our children, their parents, and our childcare volunteers and staff. We ask that each childcare volunteer and staff member provide written confirmation that they understand, and will comply with the PACRC Child Abuse Prevention Policy.

Key components of the 'Nursery Programs' section of the PACRC Child Abuse Prevention Policy include:

- Any significant medical problem should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s).
- Attendants may not take children from the nursery or outdoor play area, except for cases of emergency
- The door to the outdoor play area must remain open and children must be observed at all times by a nursery attendant.
- For children who do not require assistance in the bathroom, the adult attendant must remain outside the bathroom. For children who require assistance, the adult attendant must assist the child with the bathroom door ajar.
- The diapering of an infant or toddler must take place in the nursery room under the observation of another attendant.
- Only one adult member of a family should serve in the nursery at a given time. A husband and wife should not serve in the nursery at the same time unless a third adult is also present.
- With the exception of the parent of a child in the nursery, any person who is not scheduled as a nursery attendant for that particular service may not spend time in the nursery room(s) during the service.
- Parents are responsible for their children before and after their attendance in the nursery.

Primary Childcare Volunteers

Our primary childcare volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, meet the PACRC requirements for certification, and abide by the following:

- Stay home if unwell and contact the church administrative assistant to find a qualified substitute
- Arrive 15 minutes prior to opening the nursery to wash hands, prepare room, and stock supplies
- Wear a name tag
- Ensure that each child and their parent is greeted warmly and welcomed
- Ensure that each child is signed in by their parent
- Provide and oversee the care given to the children including feeding, diaper changing, playing, and comforting
- Follow hygiene protocols posted, including diaper changing and hand-washing procedures
- Contact a child's parent if their child is inconsolable (e.g., text or call the mobile number provided by the parent after 10 minutes of non-stop crying)
- Leave toys that have been used on a table in the nursery so they can be sanitized before the next Sunday or special event.

- Find someone on the premises that is listed as having current First Aid and CPR Training.
- Complete an incident report if a child is hurt.
- Report any significant nursery issues to the PACRC council
- Adhere to the PACRC Nursery Policies & Guidelines
- Adhere to the PACRC Child Abuse Prevention Policy
- Adhere to the PACRC COVID-19 prevention guidelines

Childcare Volunteer Helpers

Childcare volunteer helpers may consist of parents, youth, and other members of our church family who assist primary childcare volunteers during Sunday worship services. The minimum age for nursery volunteers is 18 years of age. Childcare volunteer helpers must abide by the same PACRC Nursery Policies & Guidelines and, with the exception of an annual background check, must complete the same PACRC Nursery Volunteer Certification Requirements as primary childcare volunteers.

Discipline Policy

Childcare volunteers will not discipline children in the nursery. Instead, we will:

- Use praise
- Give positive reinforcement
- Encourage sharing
- Redirect and distract to prevent and discourage inappropriate behavior

If a child becomes too disruptive or frequently injures other children, the parents will be asked to pick up the child from the nursery. The childcare volunteer will offer to meet with the parents to discuss possible ways to resolve these behaviors while in the nursery.

Parental Responsibilities

Checking in to the Nursery

Upon arrival, parents must sign their child in on the nursery sign-in sheet. Parents should always accompany their children to the nursery to ensure that childcare volunteers are present. Please do not leave children in the nursery unattended.

Children's Supplies

Parents should provide the following supplies for their children, if appropriate:

- Emergency medications with instructions for use
- Labeled bottles or cups
- Diapers and baby wipes
- Change of clothes

Parents should label their child's bag or supplies. If your child is in the process of potty training, inform the childcare volunteers so that they may assist your child.

Transitions

We want your child to feel comfortable in the nursery. If your child is having difficulty transitioning, we may ask you to assist with your child. As previously stated, childcare volunteers will ensure that parents are contacted during the service if they are needed, and parents are welcome in the nursery should they want to comfort or care for their child during the worship service.

Pick up

When the service has concluded, please arrive promptly to pick up your child. To sign out your child, please write your name or initials next to their name on the sign-in sheet.

Children will be released to parents only. Please do not send siblings to pick up children from the nursery. The parent may designate another adult to pick up their child at the time of drop off by writing that person's name on the sign-in sheet. That person should be prepared to provide ID.

General Nursery Policies & Procedures

Health Policy

Illness

In the best interest of everyone, if your child has any of the following symptoms, please do not bring them into the nursery until they are symptom-free or have been on antibiotics for over 24 hours:

- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Ear ache
- Unexplained rash
- Drainage from eyes or ears

If your child develops any of these symptoms while in the nursery, we will notify you immediately. We will not administer medications without expressed permission and written instructions from parents.

Hygiene

We strive to maintain a healthy environment in our nursery. Volunteers must wash their hands prior to beginning childcare. Non-latex, non-powdered gloves are used while changing diapers and hands are washed each time a diaper is changed. In addition, hands are washed when a child's nose or eyes are wiped or a bottle is fed.

Individual toys are hand-washed and larger toys are sanitized with a child safe sanitizing spray at least weekly or as needed. The room is vacuumed and the trash weekly or as needed.

COVID-19

We adhere to the current PACRC COVID-19 prevention guidelines which are primarily based on [Santa Clara County guidelines for COVID-19](#)

Safety

We strive to maintain a safe environment in our nursery room and nursery playground area. In the event of an incident (e.g., a child is hit or bitten) or an accident, such as a fall or injury, the childcare staff member will contact the parent immediately.

CPR and First Aid

A list of congregants who are CPR and First Aid certified will be available in the nursery in case of emergencies.

Childproofed Room

Within our nursery room, unused outlets are capped. Doors to the nursery are kept closed. Child safe toys are kept at the child's level. Cleaning materials are stored in a location that is not accessible to children in the nursery. Toys are developmentally appropriate and meet safe size guidelines.

Snacks

Snacks are not provided by childcare volunteers in the nursery during the worship service. If your child wants something to drink other than water, please provide a beverage in a labeled bottle or cup for them.

Handbook Agreement

Each time you sign your child into the nursery, you are agreeing to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. If you have questions or concerns about anything included in the handbook, please provide us with your feedback so we can consider your views when reviewing our policies and guidelines for future revision.

The handbook will be revised periodically to reflect the needs of the childcare at our church. New copies will be made available after each revision.

Thank You!

By working together, we will make our nursery a fun and safe experience for our children.