

## Best Practices for Childcare Givers

### Bathroom Procedures

Caregivers should never enter a private restroom with a child. If a child requires an escort to the restroom, the caregiver may walk them to it and remain outside. If help is needed, the caregiver should get one of the child's parents to assist. If a caregiver is over 18, diapering a child is permitted. However, caregivers under 18 should alert the parents if a diaper needs to be changed.

### Discipline

The number one rule in caring for children is that *each of us is created in God's image* and should be treated with respect, love, and support. Clear rules, expectations, consistent messages about behavior are the key to effective discipline procedures. Occasionally, children have trouble following the rules or display disruptive behavior. In these cases, the following steps will be taken.

1. Attempt to redirect young children to another activity.
2. Talk with the child and state clearly what the problem behavior is and what the child should do instead with children old enough to understand.
3. If the child continues to exhibit problem behavior, the childcare worker should discuss the behavior with the child's parent. They will determine the next step.

### Physical Contact

Respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between childcare workers and children. The guidelines below are intended to avoid contact that is or may appear threatening or inappropriate or emotionally damaging. Love and affection are part of life. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children. Examples that South Ridge considers *positive* and *appropriate* expressions of affection include:

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder, back or head
- Handshakes
- High-fives, hand slapping and fist taps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth • Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during group prayer

South Ridge considers the following expressions of affection *inappropriate* with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are either behaviors that child molesters use to groom children and their parents for later molestation or they are, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms

- Touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- Private meals with individual children or youth

**Communication Outside of Usual Ministry Functions**

Any communication with childcare age children should be through the parents. Additionally, childcare givers should refrain from posting pictures of any child in their care unless they have first received permission from a parent.