



The materials contained in this binder consist of a:

- Cover Letter introducing the materials.
- Resolution passed by the Presbytery of East Iowa in its meeting on October 9, 2007
- “Child Protection Policy and Procedures Model”
- PowerPoint Presentation Script and Slides describing the need for, and content of, the “Child Protection Policy and Procedures Model.”
- A compact disc (CD) containing all of the above materials in electronic form.

These materials were written, and otherwise prepared, by Harry G. Hoyt, Jr, Consultant to Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of East Iowa, for the expressed use of the Presbytery of East Iowa and its churches and was published in October 2007.

The materials are copyrighted © by Harry G. Hoyt, Jr. and the Presbytery of East Iowa, October 2007.

All rights are reserved including the right to reproduce in whole or in part. This material may be reproduced and used by others with the written permission of the Presbytery of East Iowa.  
Printed in the U.S.A.

Contact Information:  
Presbytery of East Iowa  
1700 S. First Avenue, Suite 23  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240  
319-354-9220  
[www.peia.org](http://www.peia.org)



October 9, 2007

To Members of Session:

In its meeting on October 9, 2007 the presbytery approved a child protection resolution as recommended by the Committee on Ministry. The resolution is important to the future of our churches and is printed on the reversed side of this letter. It was passed because there is a real and present risk of abuse to our children in today's society. That risk extends to our churches. It is the responsibility of the session to ensure the safety and security the children as best it can. A sound child protection policy can substantially reduce the risk.

A model child protection policy and other materials have been prepared to help you develop a child protection program customized for your church. The three ring binder accompanying this letter contains that model policy, along with a CD in the pocket on the rear cover of the binder. The CD contains:

- A Child Protection Policy folder containing: the Model Child Protection Policy and Procedures, a copy of this letter, and attachments to the Policy consisting mainly of forms that may be used as is or adapted for administration of the policy.
- A Child Protection Presentation folder containing: a script that may be used to present the Policy to the session, congregation and any other committees or groups of the church, and a set of PowerPoint slides that may be used in conjunction with the above presentation script.

These materials are offered on the CD in electronic form so that any of them may easily be adjusted to adapt to the needs of your church. These materials are also available, and can be downloaded, from the presbytery web site, [www.peia.org](http://www.peia.org). As indicated in the resolution, this model policy is meant as a tool for your use as you develop the best policy to meet the needs of your church. Development of a policy should be done only after a full discernment of the issues and the different options available to the church to address those issues. Only then can the model be properly evaluated and adapted for adoption by a particular church.

As Moderators of the presbytery for 2007 and 2008, we urge the session to seriously review these materials, adjust them to meet the needs of the church as stated in the resolution, and implement and consistently administer the resulting child protection policy.

In Christ,

*Rev. Heather Hayes*

Rev. Heather L. Hayes  
Moderator, of Presbytery 2007

*Harry Hoyt*

Elder Harry G. Hoyt  
Moderator of Presbytery 2008

**Presbytery Meeting  
9 October 2007**

**Resolution for Child Protection**

**Whereas**, we recognize that abuse of children and youth occurs often in our society and can occur in our churches, and;

**Whereas**, we are aware that allegations and incidents of abuse can be devastating to the accuser, accused, their families and the congregation, and;

**Whereas**, we affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them, and;

**Whereas**, we further affirm that it is our obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

**Therefore**, it is resolved that the presbytery hereby encourages the sessions of churches in this presbytery to seriously consider the development and adoption of a child protection program designed to lessen the chance that abuse to a child or youth, including physical, emotional, verbal, spiritual and sexual abuse, will occur on church property or in connection with any event sponsored by the church. It is understood in this resolution that each church is different than each other church and may require somewhat different elements within any child protection program it may choose to develop and adopt.

It is further resolved that the presbytery shall make available tools to the sessions of each church to aid in such development, including a model child protection policy and the procedures to accompany it, with the understanding that this model may require alterations by a particular church prior to adoption in order to more clearly fit the needs of that church. It is understood that this model is meant as a tool and not as a document that can be adopted without full discernment of the issues and the different options available to the church to address those issues. Only then can the model be properly evaluated and adapted for adoption by a particular church.

P R E S B Y T E R Y  
OF EAST IOWA



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES



A MODEL PROGRAM

## Table of Contents

<b>Section Titles</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Table of Contents	1
Purpose	2
Statement of Prohibition	2
Definitions	3
Responsibility for Administration of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures	4
Screening Process for Paid Staff and Volunteer Positions	4
Selection and Placement of Volunteers	8
Confidentiality and Access to Documents Pertaining to Volunteers	8
Lead-time Required for Recruiting and Screening Volunteers	8
Supervision	8
Providing Transportation	10
Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse	11
Training and Education	13
Administration of Policy	14

<b>Attachment Titles</b>	<b>Attachment Letters</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Summary of Child Protection Policy	A, Page 1	15
Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Paid Staff Working with Children and Youth	A, Page 2	16
Application for Volunteers Working with Children and Youth	A, Page 3	17
Vehicle Operators Application for Volunteers	A, Page 4	18 and 19
Application for Employment	B	20 and 21
Documentation for Reference Checks	C	22 - 23
Non-Law Enforcement FBI Record Check Request	D	24
Background Investigation Consent	E	25
Vehicle Operators Application for Employees	F	26
Allegation of Abuse Report	G	27
Allegation of Abuse Investigative Checklist	H	28 and 29
Sample Initial Statement to Media	I	30
Presentation to Sessions		31 - 39

MY Church  
ANYTOWN, Iowa

**Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**Jesus clearly affirmed the great importance of children when he took a little child in his arms and said in Mark 9:37, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” And again when He said in Mark 10:14, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”**

**Purpose**

We recognize that abuse of children and youth occurs often in our society and can occur in our church. We are also aware that allegations and incidents of abuse can be devastating to the accuser, accused, their families and the congregation.

We affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them. We further affirm that it is our obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

The objectives of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures are to:

- Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children and youth,
- Protect volunteers and paid staff from false allegations of abuse,
- Provide prompt and compassionate response to allegations of abuse,
- Protect the church from unfavorable publicity and legal action.

**Statement of Prohibition**

The abuse of children or youth will not be tolerated in any form from any individual(s). Instances of abuse will be reported and dealt with in accordance with this policy. If the instance of abuse is in violation of state or federal law the incident will be reported to law enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution. When appropriate, sexual and physical abuse will be reported to the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Individuals who have been convicted of, or plead guilty to or no contest to sexual, mental or physical abuse to children or adults shall not be accepted to work with children or youth in any capacity. No unscreened volunteers will be permitted to work with children or youth after \_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in the appropriate date).

## **Definitions**

### **Adult**

A person must be at least age 19, be at least five years older than the children or youth he or she is working with and have met the screening and other requirements of this policy to qualify as one of the two adults under the two-adult rule or in any other function involving the supervision of, or working with, children or youth.

### **Child Abuse**

Child abuse as used in this policy means abuse of any child or youth to include the following: Physical Abuse, including any physical contact intended to coerce or do harm, any hitting, spanking, or shaking. Emotional/Verbal Abuse, including insults, name calling, belittling remarks, unfavorable comparisons with other children or youth, shaming, deliberately causing fear, or using speech to hurt. Spiritual Abuse, including using Scripture or church authority to coerce, control or shame; using threats about condemnation from God or making threats about God withholding love to control behavior. Sexual Abuse, which is defined as any sexual contact with children or youth, including fondling private parts, oral, genital, or anal penetration, sexual intercourse, rape, suggestive sexual comments, showing pornography (sexually explicit material), exposing sexual organs, allowing children or youth to witness sexual activity.

### **Child and Youth**

A child is defined as any person from birth through completion of the fifth grade. A youth is defined as any person from immediately following completion of the fifth grade (usually beginning with the summer following the fifth grade) through completion of the twelfth grade or age 18 which ever comes later. During summer fellowship programs a person who has just completed fifth or twelfth grade is considered a youth.

### **Children and Youth Program Committees**

“Children and Youth Program Committee(s)” refers to committees that are responsible for programs and/or events utilizing volunteers who work with children and/or youth.

### **Pastor**

“Pastor” refers to the pastor, senior pastor, solo pastor, commission lay pastor, student pastor, or other individual who is serving in the capacity of the pastoral leader of the church.

### **Paid Staff**

“Paid Staff” refers to anyone who is paid by the church, or through a contract employment agency, for specific work (i.e. administrative assistants, custodians, music staff, youth worker staff, Christian educators.).

### **Volunteer(s)**

The use of the word “volunteer(s)” in this document refers only to volunteers who would be working with children and/or youth and require screening as stipulated in this Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## **Responsibility for Administration of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

### **Summary of Responsibilities**

The Session is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including screening of applicants, the training and education required by the policy, reporting of allegations or incidents of abuse and responding to such reports. When practical, all or part of these responsibilities may be delegated along with the authority to accept or decline any volunteer for any program or area of the church's life concerned with children and/or youth. *(There are three options suggested for this delegation: the clerk of session or the clerk of session working as part of a Child Protection Committee or a Child Protection Committee without participation of the clerk of session. The remainder of this document assumes that the responsibility for the Child Protection Policy and Procedures has been delegated in accordance with one of the three options listed above. The person and/or committee delegated the responsibility will be referred to in the remainder of this document as the Child Protection Committee.)* This Committee shall report to the session.

### **Composition and Selection of Child Protection Committee Members**

*(This paragraph assumes a Child Protection Committee, with or without participation of the clerk of session, has been delegated responsibility for the administration of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.)* The Child Protection Committee is composed of three to five individuals selected to represent a cross section of the congregation and appointed by the session. The members may be members of the congregational, not serving on the session, and/or session members. Members not on session are appointed annually and may be reappointed each year to an unlimited number of terms. This allows members of the Child Protection Committee to build up substantial experience and expertise in the content of the volunteer jobs, the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the screening process. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Child Protection Committee.

## **Screening Process for Paid Staff and Volunteer Positions**

The act of screening greatly reduces the risk that child abuse will occur and increases the probability that the objectives of the Policy, as defined on page 2 above will be achieved.

### **Screening Process for Volunteers Who Work With Children or Youth**

The Children and Youth Program Committees or individuals responsible for children and youth programs will recruit volunteers. The Child Protection Committee is responsible for screening volunteers. This screening process shall include the following:

- The committee recruiting the volunteers will supply each volunteer with the “Application for Volunteers Working with Children or Youth” (hereinafter referred to as the “Application” and found as Attachment A, Page 1- 5), along with any other appropriate forms, and request they complete them and return them to the Child Protection Committee. The Application consists of:
  - Page 1 is a summary of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
  - Page 2 is the Code of Conduct.
  - Page 3 is the Application to work with children and youth as a volunteer.



- Page 4 and 5 contain the Vehicle Operator Application for those who may be driving children and/or youth to and from church events.
- The volunteer will complete the Application and any other forms requested and return them to the Child Protection Committee in a self-addressed envelope marked “Confidential, to be opened only by the Child Protection Committee” or a similar message.
- The church will contact any organization(s) where the volunteer has worked with children and/or youth to determine suitability.
- The volunteer will be requested to sign a release for the church to perform a criminal background check with state and federal authorities (See Attachment E for release).
- The Child Protection Committee will conduct the screening of volunteers itself, and determine if any volunteer would not be suitable to work with children or youth as a result of information gathered through the screening process. The screening will include a criminal background check and check of the appropriate state sex offender registries for every prospective volunteer going back seven (7) years. If the applicant will be driving children or youth it will also include a review of the applicants driving record as detailed below.
- Alternatively the Committee may elect to acquire this and other background information through a search vendor. The Presbytery office can provide information on contacting such vendors.
- Prior to making a final determination on suitability the Child Protection Committee will review all applicants with the Pastor to determine if he or she has information that would pertain to the suitability of the volunteer that the Child Protection Committee might not have.
- The Child Protection Committee will also review the volunteers for the various programs with the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank with the appropriate person such as Associate Pastor or the Minister of Music*) in charge of that program. If the Pastor or \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank with the same individuals listed in the blank above*) knows of any reason why any of the volunteers would not be suitable for the position being sought he or she will communicate to the Child Protection Committee that such volunteer should not be considered. If the reason for this judgment is felt to be a confidential matter the reason need not be disclosed to the Child Protection Committee.
- The Child Protection Committee will provide the Pastor with a list of any volunteers who are deemed not suitable for working with children and/or youth and the reasons for this conclusion. The Pastor, or an Associate Pastor designated by him or her, and the chair(s) of the Child Protection Committee will privately discuss this conclusion with the individual. This interview will give the individual an opportunity to provide

additional information he or she feels would mitigate the decision of the Child Protection Committee. If appropriate the Pastor may suggest that the individual volunteer for a different position for which he or she is qualified and/or withdraw his or her application to work with children and/or youth. The Pastor may disclose the names of individuals who have been rejected to the chairperson of the appropriate children and youth program committee(s) (usually the one recruiting the individual). In most cases this disclosure would be made so that the committee does not ask the individual to volunteer for a position working with children and/or youth in the future or as a substitute.

- The Child Protection Committee will maintain a written record of all volunteers who are not selected as volunteers due to the screening results. This list will be maintained in a locked file on the church premises and will be available only to the Child Protection Committee. The list will not be circulated to any other individuals or committees except as designated by this policy.
- In addition, the Child Protection Committee will keep on file all completed paperwork used in the screening process. Records will be retained indefinitely, since minors typically may bring charges years after the alleged incident took place. These files can be scanned into computer records.

### **Screening Process for Paid Staff Positions**

The Child Protection Committee may retain responsibility for screening paid staff or may direct that applications and related documents for paid staff be directed to the

\_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank with appropriate individuals such as Church Administrator or the Pastor depending on the staff position for which the individual is applying.*) Typically this responsibility for the recruiting and screening of paid staff would be delegated.) Screening of all applicants for paid staff positions shall include the following:

- Each applicant will complete an application form supplied by the church (See Attachment B).
- The application will include the listing of at least three personal references. Each reference will be contacted by the church to determine the suitability of the applicant for the position being sought (See Attachment C to document of reference check).
- Each applicant will be interviewed by the appropriate individual(s) and/or committee(s).
- The applicant's previous employer(s) covering the preceding seven years will be contacted to determine suitability for the position being sought.
- The church will contact any organization(s) where the applicant has worked with children and/or youth, also to determine suitability.

- The applicant will be requested to sign a release for the church to perform a criminal background check with state and federal authorities (See Attachment D for an FBI check; Attachment E for release for all other checks).
- The church will request a criminal background check be conducted by state and federal authorities.
- The church will check the state Sex Offender Registry for each state where the applicant has lived in the past seven years.
- Paid Staff who will be working with children and/or youth will also be asked to read and sign the “Code of Conduct.” (See Attachment A, Page 2)

Normally the information contained in the documents resulting from the process described above will be seen only by those who are charged with the responsibility for the hiring decision or making recommendations to the person or group with the final hiring authority. For example, in the case of secretaries and custodians those individuals would be the \_\_\_\_\_ . *(Insert the appropriate person or committee. Examples are Church Administrator, the Pastor and the Personnel Committee. In the case of pastors that would be the Pastor Nominating Committee.)*

The objective of this screening process is to determine the suitability of the applicant for the position being sought and to be able to make a realistic comparison among the several candidates that may apply and thereby select the one best suited for the position. For those positions whose incumbents work with children and/or youth there is the additional objective of protecting our children and youth.

### **Drivers Who Provide Transportation to Children and Youth**

Any paid staff or volunteer who provides automobile transportation as a part of an event or program sponsored by the church must:

- Be an adult as defined above.
- Have completed the “Vehicle Operators Application” (For volunteers see Attachment A, Page 4; for employees see Attachment F).
- Have a valid driver’s license.
- Have automobile liability insurance (the church’s liability insurance does not cover liability when paid staff or a volunteer is the driver).
- Have a satisfactory driving record as verified by a review by the church of a Motor Vehicle Records check on any paid staff or volunteer who will provide transportation for children or youth

### **Six Month Rule**

Volunteers must be members or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being allowed to work with children and/or youth. This rule does not apply to Pastors and paid staff who are hired to work with children or youth.

### **Occasional Volunteers**

There will always be the need for occasional volunteers. This would normally be as a substitute for another volunteer. To maintain the integrity of the two-person rule any such volunteer must work with at least one other adult volunteer who has completed the screening process for the position in question.

### **Current Paid Staff and Volunteers**

All volunteers in positions working with children and/or youth on the date this policy is adopted, and paid staff who are employed on the date this policy is adopted shall undergo screening required by this policy to the extent such screening has not been previously performed.

### **Selection and Placement of Volunteers**

At the conclusion of the screening process the Child Protection Committee will forward to the appropriate Children and Youth Program Committee a list of all volunteers found suitable to work with children and/or youth under the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **Confidentiality of, and Access to, Documents Pertaining to Volunteers**

The information provided by volunteers and supplied by references, previous churches and previous organizations, and information gathered during the investigation of an allegation of abuse will be seen on a need-to-know basis as stated in this policy. All who have access to any such information shall hold it in strict confidence. Only the members of the Child Protection Committee, the Pastor and the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank as appropriate such as the Church Administrator*) (for performing the administrative function delegated by the Child Protection Committee) will have access to documents related to screening volunteers, and will use them only to determine the suitability under the policy of each volunteer for the position being sought.

### **Lead-time Required for Recruiting and Screening Volunteers**

The Child Protection Committee and the Children and Youth Program Committees having responsibility for programs utilizing volunteers will coordinate and cooperate to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the recruiting performed by the Child and Youth Program Committees, the completion and submission of forms by volunteers, and the screening performed by the Child Protection Committee to be completed well before the volunteers are needed.

### **Supervision**

#### **Two-Adult Rule**

A minimum of two adults (paid or unpaid), as defined by this policy, must be present to supervise at each activity involving children and/or youth. Exceptions may be made during an event only in extreme circumstances where the safety and/or security of the children or

youth would be compromised. Such a circumstance might be the need for one adult to tend to a sick or injured child. It is the intent of this policy that an event will be cancelled if it is known prior to the beginning of the event that at least two adults will not be present to supervise. The reason for this level of emphasis being placed on the two-adult rule is because it is seen as one of the most effective deterrents to abuse.

Recognizing the necessity and benefit of pastoral counseling, these one-on-one sessions are to be permitted, but only if the room or office door is kept open, or a glass or clear panel is installed into the door that allows the pastor to be visible at all times. The same rule applies to music or voice lessons. In these cases written parental consent is required.

The Two-Adult Rule applies both on-site at the church as well as away from the church property. An exception will apply in those cases where a pastor, staff person, or volunteer met the child or youth at a public event and remained visible at all times. For example, eating lunch at school with a child or youth would not be a violation of the Rule. Watching a sporting event or concert from the seating area or bleachers is permissible. In no case should the adult leave the event and be alone with the child or youth.

In cases of retreats and overnight activities involving both male and female children and/or youth, there must be at least two male and two female adults supervising the event(s). In the case of retreats and overnight activities involving only one gender of children and/or youth there must be at least two adults of the same gender as the children and/or youth supervising the event(s).

In providing transportation for church sponsored events or programs there may be times when it is not practical to have more than one adult present in the vehicle, the one adult being the driver. In these instances the two-adult rule may be suspended as long as two children or youth are present at all times. An exception to this rule may be made for a volunteer to transport one child or youth alone to and/or from a church sponsored activity or event if the volunteer has written permission from one of the child's parents.

### **Younger Helpers**

There may be cases where it is advantageous to provide leadership training for someone who is younger than 19 and to do so by allowing that person to work with children or youth. In such cases that person must be closely supervised by a qualified adult and there must be at least two adults supervising the activity as defined above. That individual should receive training similar to that received by adult leaders. These children and youth helpers are not subject to screening and do not have to complete a volunteer application.

### **Supervision Before, During and After Events**

Supervision will be maintained before, during and after any event involving children until the child is in the custody of his or her parent, legal guardian or a person designated to church personnel in writing by the parent or legal guardian as being authorized to accept custody of the child or youth. Older youth may be allowed to leave after an event on his or her own with written permission from his or her parent or legal guardian. Children and youth participating in activities sponsored by the church will not be left unsupervised.

**Activities in View**

All activities involving children and/or youth shall be conducted in areas where the activity can be easily viewed by parents and supervisors from outside the space. This will usually be through a window in the door to the space or having the door open.

**Parents Visit Activities**

Parents are to be encouraged to visit any activity unannounced.

**Children Remain in Area of Activity**

Children and youth involved in programs should remain within the area designated for the program and not wander to other parts of the church without adult supervision. This will help prevent abuse by other children/youth and adults.

**Physical Force**

The only physical force that may be used by an adult on a child or youth only to the extent necessary to restrain the individual under the following circumstances: (1) To quell a disturbance or prevent an act that threatens to harm another person; (2) To obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object in the possession of the child or youth; (3) For purposes of self-defense or defense of the safety of others; (4) To protect a child or youth from self-inflicted harm.

**Accompanying a Child to the Restroom**

Adults who accompany a child to the restroom should position themselves such that the child has a sense of privacy but where the adults are able to recognize if the child requires assistance. If assistance is needed, the stall door must stay open to remain visible for supervision. In most cases the adults will be the same gender as the child, although this may not always be practical. It is advisable to take more than one child to the rest room at a time.

**Providing Transportation****Permission to Ride**

Written permission must be given by the parent or legal guardian for his or her child or youth to ride in any vehicle provided for transportation to any event sponsored by the church. Such permission may be included in approval given by the parent or legal guardian for the child or youth to participate in the event itself.

**Seat Belts**

All occupants of the vehicle must be wearing seat belts at all times the vehicle is moving.

**Route To and From an Activity**

In cases where two or more vehicles begin the journey at the same place and have the same destination, all vehicles will follow the same route.

## **Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse**

### **Training for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse**

The Child Protection Committee will coordinate with Children and Youth Program Committees that have responsibility for children and youth programs to ensure effective training is conducted on proper procedures for reporting an incident, or alleged incident, of abuse and responding to such a report.

### **Reporting Allegations and Instances of Abuse**

#### **Preliminary Steps**

The person reporting an incident of abuse on church property or in conjunction with a church sponsored program or event (normally an eye-witness, or the first adult informed of the abuse, usually by the alleged victim, or the victim's parents) should first:

- Secure the safety of the victim. This may include an immediate call to emergency services as deemed necessary.
- Secure the safety of others and stabilize the environment in which the incident occurred. The area should not be left unsupervised by an adult in order to report the incident. The reporting adult may have to employ the help of another adult to inform the appropriate pastor or volunteer of the incident.

#### **Initial Reporting**

- The reporting adult should report the incident to the staff or volunteer person in charge of the event or program where the incident took place. The person in charge of the event should inform the pastor and the Child Protection Committee.
- The reporting adult should complete the "Allegation of Abuse Report." (See Attachment G)
- The church would not normally have a legal obligation to report an allegation or instance of abuse to civil authorities but the church recognizes a moral obligation to make a voluntary report. Also, the Book of Order requires that if a minister of word and sacrament, an elder or a deacon becomes aware of child abuse he or she must report it to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities with very few exceptions (G-6.0204b, G6-0304b and G-6.0402b). Therefore, when an investigation of an incident or allegation confirms that the incident or allegation is consistent with requirements for mandatory reporting, such reports will be made. This will normally be to the local police department and/or the Iowa Department of Human Services.

- If the incident is reportable to civil authorities or if the incident otherwise appears to be substantive it should be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall determine if the situation is such that a special committee of the presbytery consisting of elders and pastors from outside the church where the incident took place should be formed. If so, the Stated Clerk shall form such a committee and oversee its work. Normally this committee would enter the process under the section titled, “Further Response” and work in conjunction with the church to the conclusion of the response.

## **Responding to Reports of Abuse**

### **Initial Response**

If the accused is a staff member the initial response should be made by the Pastor in conjunction with the Child Protection Committee. If the accused is the Pastor the initial response should be made by the Child Protection Committee. Otherwise, the first pastor or responsible adult supervisor on the scene should make the initial response. He or she should:

- Gather pertinent information from the victim, accused and witnesses. Information gathered immediately after an incident or allegation can many times be the most helpful in arriving at what actually happened. Treat all involved with respect. An allegation is not a presumption of guilt,
- Preserve whatever evidence is available.
- Ensure the continued stability of the environment.
- If the accused is an adult supervisor or paid staff member, relieve that person of duties relating to children and/or youth. The individual shall remain relieved until the investigation is completed and further disposition is made by the Child Protection Committee. If the individual is a paid staff member and the relief of duties amounts to a suspension from all work the suspension shall be with pay.
- If the Associate Pastor or Minister of Music is the one on the scene, he or she should inform the Pastor.
- Inform the parents or legal guardian of the victim, and of the accused if a minor.

### **Further Response**

Primary responsibility for further response is with the Pastor and the Child Protection Committee. The Pastor may delegate responsibility for working with the Child Protection Committee on the investigation to the appropriate senior staff member (*Fill in the title of this position if appropriate. If there is no other appropriate person to whom this investigation should be delegated delete the preceding sentence.*) It is anticipated that the Pastor, or his designee, one or more members of the Child Protection Committee, and one or more members of the committee designated by the Stated Clerk if such a



committee is formed for the purpose, will work closely together on the further investigation of the allegation or incident to ensure all aspects are covered completely, accurately and with fairness and compassion shown to all parties as follows:

- Pastoral care should be extended to the victim(s) and family(ies), if appropriate.
- Pastoral care should be extended to the accused, and family, if appropriate.
- Seek legal advice and counsel.
- Avoid prejudging a situation. The accused shall be afforded full due process in handling the complaint. The accused should be supported and treated with dignity.
- Continue the investigation to conclusion with recommendations to the session for action.
- Cooperate with any investigations being conducted by law enforcement and/or the Iowa Department of Human Services.
- Document results of the investigation and file as confidential (See “Allegation of Abuse Investigative Checklist” in Attachment H). If law enforcement authorities or the Iowa Department of Human Services have been notified and are, or will be, investigating the allegations, some of the steps suggested in the “Investigative Checklist may not be necessary or appropriate for the church to take.
- Inform appropriate individuals of results of the investigation and action taken. Such individuals may be the victim, accused and parents.
- Keep the church’s insurance agent informed of the incident or allegation, investigation progress, conclusions and actions taken, if any.

## **Training and Education**

### **Training and Education of Volunteers and Staff**

The Child Protection Committee may delegate responsibility for training and educating required by the policy to the Child and Youth Program Committees responsible for children and youth programs and retain oversight. It may delegate such responsibility to the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank as appropriate, such as Church Administrator*) for paid staff, except for pastors and \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank as appropriate such as management positions*). It may delegate such responsibility to the Pastor in the case of new \_\_\_\_\_ (*Fill in the blank as appropriate such as Associate Pastors, Minister of Music and management positions*), and retain the responsibility in the case a new Pastor.

### **All Other Training and Education**

The Child Protection Committee will be responsible for on-going training and education of children, parents and the congregation in general on the provisions of the policy and the nature of child abuse, but may coordinate the actual training and education sessions with appropriate Child and Youth Program Committees.

### **New Church Members Orientation**

New church members will receive orientation of the church's Child Protection Policy and Procedures including requirements for volunteers and staff who work with children or youth.

## **Administration of the Policy**

### **Updating Records**

Records of staff and volunteers will be updated annually or more often if needed for changes in address, phone and other pertinent information. Once background checks have been made, volunteers and staff members will to be re-checked periodically. *(The frequency of re-checking should be set by the session.)*

### **Response to the Media**

One person will be appointed to represent the church to respond to the media in all cases of reported child abuse. This person will normally be the Pastor. There may be occasions, however, when that person should be the staff or volunteer person in charge of the event where the alleged abuse took place or a member of the Child Protection Committee. That person will utilize a prepared statement in his or her initial report to the media which will state the church's policy on child abuse and that the allegation is being thoroughly investigated. (See Attachment I for a sample statement.)

### **Maintenance of Screening Documents**

The screening documents will be maintained by the \_\_\_\_\_ *(Fill in the blank with the appropriate person such as the Church Administrator)* in a secure, locked cabinet on behalf of the Child Protection Committee.

### **Monitoring and Follow-up**

The Child Protection Committee will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy, evaluating its effectiveness and recommending amendments to the session.

### **Enforcement**

If a violation of the Child Protection Policy occurs, the Child Protection Committee should contact the Committee involved privately. If violations persist, or the committee involved proves unresponsive, the Child Protection Committee should pursue the resolution of the violation through the *(Fill in the blank with the appropriate committee such as the Personnel Committee)* and the Pastor.

# **My Church Anytown, Iowa Child Protection Policy**

At its *(fill in the date of the meeting)* meetings, the session approved a church Child Protection Policy which includes the statement:

*“We affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them. We further affirm that it is the church’s obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being. The abuse of children will not be tolerated in any form by the action of any individual. The abuse may be defined as physical, emotional, spiritual, or sexual. All are prohibited.”*

## **THE SCREENING PROCESS**

All those who volunteer to work with children and/or youth must complete the Volunteer Application and give permission to the Child Protection Committee to do a background check. The background check will include a check of the appropriate state sex offender registries. The screening process is the responsibility of the Child Protection Committee.

As part of the screening process, any volunteer who provides automobile transportation as part of an event must be an adult and must have completed the Volunteer and Vehicle Operator Application. Drivers must have a valid driver’s license and automobile liability insurance.

Drivers need not follow the Two-Adult-Rule (see below) if there are always at least two children in the car and the car is proceeding either directly to a church event or directly back to the church from an event. All occupants of the vehicle must wear a seatbelt.

## **TWO-ADULT RULE**

A minimum of two adults must be present to supervise each church activity involving children and/or youth. It is the intent of this policy that an event will be cancelled if it is known prior to an event that two adults will not be present to supervise. An exception will be made if the illness of a child or teacher occurs during an event and makes following the Two-Adult-Rule impossible.

Exceptions will also be made during pastoral counseling and/or individual music lessons. During these sessions, either the room door must be kept open or a glass panel in the door must allow the pastor or staff member to be visible at all times.

## **SIX-MONTH RULE**

Volunteers must be members or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being permitted to work with children and/or youth.

## **YOUNGER HELPERS**

Children and youth are permitted to help with children/or youth activities, but the Two-Adult-Rule still applies. Children and youth do not have to go through the same clearance procedure as adults.

## **REPORTING ABUSE**

All volunteers are to report any incident of apparent or suspected child abuse that they observe to the Associate Pastor in charge of the event or program where the incident took place, or to the Pastor or Head of Staff. When an investigation of an incident confirms that the incident is consistent with requirements for mandatory reporting, the church will make such a report. This will normally be to the local police department and/or the Iowa Department of Human Services.

## **FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION**

The forgoing is a summary. The complete Child Protection Policy is available to any church member or volunteer who requests it. Questions about the Child Protection Policy should be directed to the Child Protection Committee.

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF

### Working with Children or Youth

I consider this a vow before God, and a covenant between me and *(fill in the name of the church)* the children and youth with whom I will be working, and their families.

- While working with children and youth, I will conduct myself as a Christian called to service in God’s Kingdom.
- I understand that I have been entrusted with the safety and welfare of all children and youth assigned to me. At all times, I will guard their physical safety and mental, emotional, and bodily health.
- I understand that I have been entrusted with the spiritual health of all the children and youth assigned to me.
- I will take care of my own physical and spiritual health.
- I understand that I must be careful of questionable or “suggestive” situations. I will abide by the two-adult rule. If a child or youth requests time alone with me, I will inform the other adult supervisor and will meet with the child or youth in sight of others, but not necessarily where others can hear us.
- I will never touch a child or youth in anger.
- I will use appropriate signs of affection and Christian caring. I will respect the feelings of those who do not enjoy even the slightest casual touch.
- I will guard my language. I will not swear or use inappropriate language in the presence of children and youth.
- I will set a good example by respecting the property of the church, any off-site location of a church event, and of others and will be a good steward of God’s earth.
- I will immediately report any behavior toward a child or youth that seems to be abusive or otherwise inappropriate.

I have read and understand the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its provisions.

---

Signature

Date

**APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH**

Note: Volunteers must complete this application before engaging in a church activity.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Maiden Name if name changed in prior 7 years)

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City State Zip

**Contact** Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Info:** Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous Addresses (Last 7 years):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City State Zip

**Date You Became a Member (MM YY):** \_\_\_\_\_

**If Not Member, Date You Began Attending (MMYY):** \_\_\_\_\_

**References:**

**Please provide contact information on places you have worked with children and/or youth as an employee or volunteer:**

From	Organization or Person's Name/ Contact Person/ Address/Telephone	Job Title or Volunteer Position
To		Reason for Leaving
From	Organization or Person's Name/ Contact Person/ Address/Telephone	Job Title or Volunteer Position
To		Reason for Leaving
From	Organization or Person's Name/ Contact Person/ Address/Telephone	Job Title or Volunteer Position
To		Reason for Leaving
From	Organization or Person's Name/ Contact Person/ Address/Telephone	Job Title or Volunteer Position
To		Reason for Leaving

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, a crime, including but not limited to, an offense against a person such as child abuse, substance abuse, related charges other crimes of violence, or theft? **YES NO**

**If Yes, please explain:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If you have been a victim of physical or sexual abuse or molestation, and you feel this experience could affect your ability to work with children or youth, you are encouraged to confidentially discuss your interest in volunteering with a pastor before accepting this assignment.

I authorize the church to thoroughly investigate my experience in working with children and/or youth either as a staff member or volunteer and any other matters related to my suitability for working with children and/or youth. I further authorize former institutions, organizations or individuals where I worked as a staff member or volunteer to disclose to the church all information they may have concerning my suitability to work with children and/or youth. In addition, I hereby release the church, my former employers, and all other organizations and persons from any and all claims, demands, or liabilities arising out of, or in any way related to, such disclosure.

I give *(fill in the name of the church)* permission to conduct a background check on me. Upon my acceptance as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I agree to be bound by the provisions of the Child Protection Policy of this church. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know and understand its contents. I sign this release of my own free will, and I understand that it is a legally binding agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Vehicle Operator Application (Please complete this section if you will, or possibly will, be operating a motor vehicle as a volunteer, transporting children or youth to and/or from an activity.)**

Do you have a valid driver's license? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Has your license ever been suspended or revoked in the last 10 years? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, or no contest to operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol or moving violations or at-fault traffic accidents in the last 10 years? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe and provide date(s) (MM/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you carry automobile insurance that would cover you when driving youth or children to church-sponsored events? (The church's liability insurance does not cover staff or volunteer drivers.)      YES \_\_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any physical or mental disability or other limitation that would hinder your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle?      YES \_\_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All passengers in any vehicle operated by me shall wear seat belts while the vehicle is moving, and I will not allow more passengers to ride in the vehicle than the capacity specified by the vehicle's manufacturer.

I hereby authorize the church to run a Motor Vehicle Records check on me. I also authorize the organization responsible for maintaining such records to release them to the church.

---

Signature

Date

# Application For Employment

Please Print		<i>We Are An Equal Opportunity Employer</i>		
Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	Social Security Number	
Address	City	State	Zip Code	Phone Number
Position or Type of Work Applied For				Rate of Pay Expected \$ _____ per

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Are you applying for Full Time , Part Time , or Temporary  work?

What days and hours are you available to work? \_\_\_\_\_

On what date are you available to start work? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you willing to work overtime? Yes  No

Are you at least 18 years old? Yes  No

If not, can you provide a valid Work Permit, high school diploma, or equivalent? Yes  No

What languages do you speak, read, or write fluently? \_\_\_\_\_

If hired, can you verify that you have the legal right to work in the United States? Yes  No

How long have you lived at your current address? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you presently on layoff from another job and subject to recall? Yes  No

If so, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever served in the Armed Forces? Yes  No  If so, what branch? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special skills, training, or experience which may help you qualify for employment? Yes  No

If so, please list \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any certificates or licenses which may help you qualify for employment? Yes  No

If so, please list \_\_\_\_\_

Do any of your relatives work for this church? Yes  No  If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you applied for work at this church before? Yes  No  If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime, excluding misdemeanors and summary offenses? Yes  No

If so, please explain (NOTE: Conviction will not necessarily disqualify applicant.) \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about this employment opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Type of School	Name and Address	How Many Years Attended	Graduated	Course or Major
High School			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
College			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Post Graduate			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Business or Seminary			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	



## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Please start with your most recent job and include all periods of employment, self-employment, job-related military service, and volunteer work.

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

From	Employer's Name/Address/Telephone	Start Pay	Job Title
To		Last Pay	Reason for Leaving

Describe the Work You Did

May we contact the employers listed above? Yes  No  If not, please indicate which ones you do not wish us to contact.

## PERSONAL REFERENCES

Please do not list relatives or former employers.

Name and Occupation	Address	Phone Number
1. _____ _____	_____	_____
2. _____ _____	_____	_____
3. _____ _____	_____	_____

## CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I certify that the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if employed, falsified statements on this Application of Employment form will be considered grounds for termination.

I authorize the church to thoroughly investigate my work experience and any other matters related to my suitability for employment. I further authorize my former employers to disclose to the church any and all information they may have concerning my previous employment. In addition, I hereby release the church, my former employers, and all other persons from any and all claims, demands, or liabilities arising out of, or in any way related to, such disclosure.

I acknowledge that, prior to or during my employment, the church may require any legal testing and/or examination, including but not limited to, medical, physical, drug and/or alcohol, psychological, and skill and aptitude.

I also acknowledge that, if employed, both the church and I have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice. This employment at will relationship will remain in effect throughout my employment with the church and may not be modified by any oral or implied agreement.

Applicant's Signature	Date
-----------------------	------

# DOCUMENTATION OF REFERENCE CHECK

Attachment C

Youth/Children's Worker or Volunteer

---

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Contact (check one):       Telephone       E-mail       Letter

Reference's Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
(phone number or e-mail or street address)

Reference Type (check one):       Former Employer       Former Volunteer  
    Personal  
    Other Organization (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

---

- ❖ How long have you known the applicant? Under what circumstances?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What is your knowledge of this person's work with children/youth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ How would you describe this person's manner of interacting with children/youth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Based on your observation, is this person reliable and dependable? Please expand on your response.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Would you feel comfortable with this person being alone with a small group of children/youth for a period of time? Why or why not?

# DOCUMENTATION OF REFERENCE CHECK

## Youth/Children's Worker or Volunteer

---

- ❖ Do you have any concerns we should know about regarding this person's ability to work with children/youth?
  
- ❖ Were you ever made aware of circumstances in which this person's care of children/youth was called into question or criticized? If yes, please describe the circumstances.
  
- ❖ Were you ever made aware of any criminal or civil investigations or actions taken against this person? If yes, please describe the circumstances.
  
- ❖ Do you recommend this person to work with children/youth? Why or why not?
  
- ❖ Is this person eligible to work with your organization's children again in the future? If no, why not?
  
- ❖ Additional notes or comments:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person Checking Reference)

Date: 10/23/2007



(Organization Name)

### BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (*Applicant's Complete Name*) hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_, (*Organization Named in Header*) and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal, or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information, which may be material to my qualifications as a volunteer or for employment now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteering or employment with \_\_\_\_\_, (*Organization Named in Header*).

I release \_\_\_\_\_, (*Organization Named in Header*) and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

The following is my true and complete legal name, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Full Name Printed*) and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Maiden name or other names used \_\_\_\_\_.

Present street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

How long at this address? \_\_\_\_\_

Former street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

How long at this address? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

State of License: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

MY Church  
Anytown, Iowa

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Vehicle Operator Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be at least age 19)

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid driver's license?  No  Yes

Do you have a valid chauffeur's license?  No  Yes

Has your driver's license or chauffeur's license been suspended or revoked in the past ten years?  
 No  Yes If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you had a valid driver's license? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you carry automobile liability insurance that would cover you when driving children or youth for church sponsored events or programs? (The church's liability insurance may not cover paid staff or volunteer drivers)  No  Yes

Insurance Company name \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have experience driving a bus?  No  Yes Or a van?  No  Yes

Have you ever been convicted of, or plead guilty to, or no contest to operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the past ten years?  No  Yes If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you comfortable operating a vehicle at night or in low light conditions?  No  Yes

Do you have any physical or mental handicap or other limitation that would hinder your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle? If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All passengers in any vehicle operated by me shall wear seat belts while the vehicle is moving and I will not allow more passengers to ride in the vehicle than the capacity specified by vehicle's manufacturer. I hereby authorize the church to run a Motor Vehicle Records check on me.

The information I have provided in this Application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MY Church  
ANYTOWN, Iowa**

**Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**Allegation of Abuse Report**

Name of Person(s) filing Report \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Group \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_

Alleged Victim(s) Name and age(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Alleged Perpetrator(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Event/Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Witness(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Date, Time and Location of Incident \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the alleged victim's demeanor and appearance \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action did you take, if any \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the incident been resolved?  No  Yes Explain the resolution if any. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What persons or organizations have been informed of this alleged incident? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Incident**

- I choose to remain anonymous except to those authorized to investigate this incident.
- I have or intend to report this incident to law enforcement authorities.

The above information is freely provided and is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) receiving this report \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MY Church  
ANYTOWN, Iowa**

**Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**Allegation of Abuse Investigative Checklist**

This checklist is to be used by the Pastor, or designee, and the Child Protection Committee to guide the investigation into the facts of the allegations of abuse of a child or youth and to document the findings. If law enforcement authorities or the Iowa Department of Human Services have been notified and are or will be investigating the allegation, some of the steps below may not be necessary or appropriate for the church to take.

Name of Child or Youth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Person Reporting \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Victim \_\_\_\_\_

Person who committed the alleged misconduct \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Title/position \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to victim \_\_\_\_\_

What law enforcement or social service authorities have been notified, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification \_\_\_\_\_

What other organizations have been notified, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification \_\_\_\_\_

Has any professional examined the child or youth because of the incident?  No  Yes

If yes, provide details of who, when, where, treatment, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions of relevant information to obtain from the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, reporter, witnesses, parents and others who may have pertinent information:

- Description of the abusive event.
- Date, time and location of the abuse.
- List of witnesses and observations of each.
- Is this the first time that an incident like this has occurred to the victim?
- Is this the first time such an allegation has been made against the perpetrator?

Record information obtained on the following page. Use extra pages as necessary.



**Information from the alleged victim**

**Information from the alleged perpetrator**

**Information from witnesses**

Information from parents

**Information from the reporter other than the initial report**

Information from others

Signature of person(s) making this report \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MY Church**  
**ANYTOWN, Iowa**

**Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**Sample Initial Statement to the Media**

The following is a sample of an initial statement to be made by the church's representative immediately following an incident or allegation of abuse to a child or youth.

We are aware of the alleged incident of abuse involving a child (or youth) of Fill in name of church. The appropriate authorities have been contacted and are investigating the allegation. The church has a Child Protection Policy in place to screen all people working with children and youth in our programming. This policy was implemented in January 2001. Pastoral care is being extended to those in need. For the protection of all involved, I cannot disclose any further information at this time. Thank you.

## Presentation to Sessions July 2007

### Model Child Protection Policy and Procedures

**(Slide 1)** Blank

**(Slide 2)** Title Slide

#### **What Jesus Said About Children (Slide 3)**

As we begin our discussion on child protection it may be helpful to see the great importance Jesus put on children. We can learn that from passages that are found in three of the gospels: Mathew, Mark and Luke.

*Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." And again when He said, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."*

These are two very powerful statements affirming how vital children are.

There is nothing so precious as our children and youth. But they are clearly at risk. We have been hearing for some years in all the news media, magazines, radio, newspapers and TV, about one atrocity happening to a child after another; that our children are at risk for sexual abuse, and that a significant segment of that risk emanates from our churches.

**(Slide 4)** The Roman Catholic Church has been getting most of the mention in the press. In a recent Associated Press release the Catholic Church revealed there have been 13,000 credible accusations against Catholic clerics since 1950. Most of these have come to light in the past 5 years.

Does that mean that Protestant children are not at risk in our churches? The answer came in April 2007, when ABC News aired a 20/20 expose on child sexual abuse in the Protestant churches called "Preacher Predators." Their conclusion was that child sexual abuse was occurring as much in Protestant churches as in Catholic churches, with the added challenge that many Protestant denominations are not hierarchical in nature and, thus, have less control over the selection/placement of clergy than the Catholic Church.

The answer also came in the form of an article from the Associate Press that appeared in the Quad City Times on June 15, 2007. They reported statistics from the three major companies that insure about three quarters of the Protestant churches in the United States. They stated they each receive approximately 260 reports of sexual abuse each year to people under age 18 perpetrated by clergy, church staff, volunteers and

congregation member. If these figures are extended to all protestant churches in the U.S. the number is well over 1,000. The article indicated that this represented less than half the total number of abuses in Protestant churches. It also indicated that churches are particularly susceptible to abuse, because they tend to be much more trusting and welcoming than other organizations.

**(Slide 5)** Let's bring this a little closer to home. GuideOne is one of the three insurers quoted in the AP article and they are the company that insures most of our churches. GuideOne provided some very troubling statistics. I'll share them with you:

- GuideOne sees approximately 15-20 new claims of sexual misconduct monthly.
- Claims are overwhelmingly from Protestant churches which is the vast majority of their business.
- They have 200 such claims pending at any one time.
- 80% of the victims are minors while 20% of the victims are adults.
- Incidents take place at churches of all sizes and all denominations.
- The perpetrator in 20% of incidents is another minor. Thus, supervision of minors is critical.

GuideOne strongly urges churches to take precautions to prevent child sexual abuse. Indeed, like other church insurance companies, GuideOne requires churches to take certain steps, such as screening of those working with children, in order to obtain the higher limits of sexual misconduct liability insurance.

The two statements of Jesus, quoted at the beginning of this presentation, are very powerful affirmations of how vital children are. Unfortunately there are those in the world who don't place the same value on children. We hear that in the media and it rings clear in the statistics from GuideOne. It is too easy to say, "Well, that can't happen in our church." But we know perfectly well that it can.

When it occurs it represents an enormous emotional and physical cost to the children and families involved. There is also a huge financial cost. The average cost of litigation in a child abuse case is over \$1,000,000. I suspect the insurance coverage in nearly all of our churches is not that high, especially if they don't have a Child Protection Policy in place. You may wish to review your liability insurance policy to make sure it covers your church adequately.

**(Slide 6)** It is a serious problem and we need to take action to decrease that risk to our children. That is why we at the Committee on Ministry have developed a Model Child Protection Policy and Procedures for use by the churches in our presbytery. We have drawn on research from many sources to develop this program, such as state and federal law, insurance companies, criminal background checks, state sex offender registries, policies of our presbytery and synod, policies implemented by other churches, and school systems. Also, the Iowa Department of Criminal Investigation and the Iowa Department of Human Services were contacted for information

**(Slide 7)** The Committee on Ministry has developed several tools that churches can adapt to their individual congregations and then adopt. I would like to review what we have developed and commend these tools to you for utilization in your church. The point is to reduce the risk of abuse to our children. The materials we have developed are designed so that you should be able to implement them with minimum modification. Here is what we can offer:

- A Child Protection Policy and Procedures you can use as a model in developing a policy for your church. The model policy was developed specifically for churches in our presbytery and is in this three-ring binder. (*Hold up the three-ring binder*)
- A set of forms that can be used to implement the process. Among the forms are an application for employment, an application for volunteers to work with children and youth, a release to do a background check for staff and volunteers, an application for those who will be driving children and/or youth, and a Code of Conduct. In adopting the policy you may wish to do no more than place the name of your church at the top of each form.
- This PowerPoint presentation including both slides and complete script. You can easily adapt it to use in presenting the provisions of the policy and the procedures to any committees involved with implementation, volunteers, the congregation and staff.
- A CD containing all of these documents (*Show the CD*). It is in this pocket in the back of the three ring binder. I will leave all of this with you. These documents are also on the presbytery web site and can be downloaded or viewed online.

It is up to us to take steps to reduce the likelihood of abuse occurring in our churches as much as we can. Even if the probability of abuse occurring to one of the children or youth in our church is small the devastation to the victim, the perpetrator, the families, and the congregation is so great that we can't afford to take the chance.

The objectives as expressed in the Policy reflect this. I'll quote from that section.

### **Purpose**

We recognize that abuse of children and youth occurs often in our society and can occur in our church. We are also aware that allegations and incidents of abuse can be devastating to the accuser, accused and their families, and the congregation.

We affirm that children and youth are a gift from God and that the future of the church rests with them. We further affirm that it is our obligation to protect their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being.

**(Slide 8)** The purposes of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures are to:

- Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children and youth, (This is an obvious objective)
- Protect volunteers and paid staff from false allegations of abuse, (Even if an accusation is false the results can be devastating to the person accused and follow that person for the rest of his or her life.)
- Provide prompt and compassionate response to allegations of abuse,
- Protect the church from unfavorable publicity and legal action.

The Policy also has a very clear statement of its position. Again, I'll quote from the Policy.

### **Statement of Prohibition**

The abuse of children or youth will not be tolerated in any form from any individual(s). Instances of abuse will be reported and dealt with in accordance with this policy. If the instance of abuse is in violation of state or federal law the incident will be reported to law enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution. When appropriate, sexual and physical abuse will be reported to the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Individuals who have been convicted of, or plead guilty to or no contest to sexual, mental or physical abuse to children or adults shall not be accepted to work with children or youth in any capacity.

There are many very sensitive issues and a myriad of details to address in considering this type of program for your church. We have tried to address as many as possible in this Policy and Procedures document. After reviewing the policy you may wish to implement the it with very little change. Alternatively you may wish to make some adaptations to make it better fit your particular church. In either case, you must wrestle with what seem to be the conflicting issues of protecting our children and youth from abuse, the volunteers from false accusations, and guarding the reputation and integrity of the church on the one hand, and respecting the privacy and good will of our many talented volunteers on the other. The Child Protection Policy and its procedures are the result of the challenge to find the right balance for our congregations.

### **Tools for Achieving Purposes (Slide 9)**

The Policy provides four primary tools for achieving its purposes:

- Rules related to supervision such as the 2-Adult Rule, 6-Month Rule, “Code of Conduct,”
- Screening of paid staff and volunteers,
- Reporting and responding to allegations of abuse,
- Education of paid staff, volunteers and our children and youth

We will review each of these areas in turn.

## **Rules (Slide 10)**

Several rules have been developed that should go a long way in lowering the risk that abuse will happen in our church. I would like to call two primary ones to your attention.

### **Six-Month Rule**

Volunteers must be a member or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being allowed to work with children or youth. The reason is to discourage any would-be predator from volunteering in order to have access to children to satisfy their own needs. Would-be predators will not want to wait that long so will find some other means and other organizations to have access to children.

The six-month rule would not apply to pastors and paid staff who are hired to work with children and youth, for obvious reasons. These people would have gone through the church's screening process before beginning to work for the church.

### **Two-Adult Rule**

A minimum of two adults (paid or unpaid) must be present to supervise at each activity involving children and/or youth. Exceptions may be made during an event only in extreme circumstances where the safety and/or security of the children or youth would be compromised. Such a circumstance might be the need for one adult to tend to a sick or injured child. It is the intent of this policy that an event will be cancelled if it is known prior to the beginning of the event that at least two adults will not be present to supervise. The reason for this level of emphasis being placed on the two-adult rule is because it is seen as one of the most effective deterrents to abuse.

## **Responsibility for Administration of the Policy (Slide 11)**

Now let's talk about who has responsibility for administering the Policy and who is covered. The Policy will be administered by the Session or a committee appointed by the session. For our purposes here we will assume the Session has appointed such a committee and named it the Child Protection Committee. It will be composed of 3 to 5 members with the Pastor as an ex-officio member. The Child Protection Committee will be responsible for all administration, including screening of applicants, the training and education required by the policy, reporting of allegations or incidents of abuse and responding to such reports.

### **Responsibility for Recruiting Volunteers**

The Standing Committees of the Session, or individuals, who now have responsibility for recruiting volunteers for programs and/or church events they develop and run will retain that responsibility. Examples of those committees would be Youth Fellowship and Children's Christian Education.

There will be forms that volunteers will be asked to complete and return to the Child Protection Committee. The Policy envisions that the Standing Committees will give

these forms to volunteers as they recruit them, along with an explanation of what they are and why the volunteer is being asked to complete them.

### **Screening Process**

That brings us to the screening process. The act of screening greatly reduces the risk that child abuse will occur and increases the probability that the objectives of the Policy will be achieved.

### **Screening Paid Staff (Slide 12)**

All paid staff will complete a screening process whether they will be working with children or not. The church is interested in determining if any potential new hire has a background that would suggest the risk of child abuse, but also, a wider range of risks such as embezzlement and theft. Screening of paid staff would include:

- The applicant completing an application and a questionnaire to provide information to the church to help determine the suitability of the applicant for the position being sought.
- Checking references supplied by the applicant.
- Checking previous employers and other organizations where the applicant worked with children or youth.
- A personal interview.
- A criminal background check with state and national law enforcement agencies. In Iowa that would be the Iowa Department of Criminal Investigation and on the national level, the FBI. The applicant's fingerprints are required for these checks. The cost of these background checks is \$23.
- Reviewing the Sex Offender Registries in states where the applicant has resided in the preceding seven years.
- Each person hired who will be working with children or youth will be asked to read and sign the "Code of Conduct" that describes the conduct expected of anyone in a position of trust with our young people.

### **Screening Volunteers (Slide 13)**

Although the screening process envisioned by the Policy is more systematic and thorough than what most churches without a Child Protection Policy utilize, screening paid staff is not a new concept. However, screening volunteers will constitute a change from the current practice of many churches, especially ones that don't have a Child Protection Policy. The process will require both time and energy to be expended by the volunteers and those doing the screening. This time and energy should be very positive for any church that adopts such a policy by reducing the risk that abuse will occur to one of its children.



The screening process for volunteers consists of the following steps:

- Recruit the volunteer and ask him or her to complete a five page multi function application:
  - Page 1 is a summary of the child protection policy.
  - Page 2 is the Code of Conduct.
  - Page 3 is the Application to work with children and youth as a volunteer
  - Page 4 is the Vehicle Operator Application for those who may be driving children and/or youth to and from church events.
- Conduct a criminal background check.
- Check to see if the applicant is on the State Sex Offender Registry.

#### **Drivers Who Provide Transportation to Children and Youth (Slide 14)**

Any paid staff or volunteer who provides automobile transportation as a part of an event or program sponsored by the church must:

- Be an adult as defined above.
- Have completed the “Vehicle Operators Application”
- Have read and signed the “Code of Conduct,”
- Have a valid driver’s license.
- Have automobile liability insurance (the church’s liability insurance does not cover paid staff or volunteer drivers).
- Have a satisfactory driving record as verified by a review by the church of a Motor Vehicle Records check on any paid staff or volunteer who will provide transportation for children or youth.

#### **Occasional Volunteers (Slide 15)**

There will always be the need for occasional volunteers. This would normally be as a substitute for another volunteer. To maintain the integrity of the two-adult rule, any substitute volunteer must work with at least one other adult volunteer who has completed the screening process.

#### **Current paid staff and volunteers (Slide 16)**

The question will be asked, what about current staff and volunteers? Current paid staff and volunteers should be asked to undergo the same screening as we have just discussed. This will demonstrate that the church is really serious about protecting its children and youth. Our experience has been that this is not an issue in reality when explained properly to those working in the church now.

### **Flow of Screening Documents (Slide 17)**

The Standing Committees or individuals responsible for programs and/or events for children and youth will recruit the needed volunteers and provide each with an Application to complete. To maintain confidentiality, the volunteers will send their completed forms directly to the Child Protection Committee. The Committee will conduct the screening. Here the Committee is primarily interested in screening for risk of child abuse and not whether the volunteer would be otherwise qualified for the proposed job to be performed. That is the responsibility of the Standing Committees.

At the completion of the screening the applicants will be reviewed with the pastor in case the pastor has pertinent information that is not readily available to the Committee. The Committee will then provide the Standing Committees with a list of volunteers found suitable to work with children or youth. It is then the responsibility of the Standing Committees to place those volunteers in positions where their individual skill and experience can be used to the greatest benefit to the children and youth they will serve.

### **Confidentiality of and Access to Documents Pertaining to Volunteers (Slide 18)**

The information provided by volunteers and supplied by outside sources, and information gathered during the investigation of an allegation of abuse will be seen on a need-to-know basis only. All who have access to any such information shall hold it in strict confidence and will use it only to determine the suitability under the policy of each volunteer to work with children and/or youth.

### **Reporting and Responding to Reports of Abuse**

The Policy provides details for reporting an allegation of abuse and what the church's response to such an allegation will be. This process should be included in the training of volunteers.

### **Training and Education (Slide 19)**

The Child Protection Committee and the Standing Committees will need to coordinate to ensure that the training and education that will be needed to make this policy a success are conducted.

- After you adopt a Child Protection Policy, or in the process of considering adopting, you can use this presentation, or one like it, to present the policy and its procedures to any groups and committees concerned with children and youth and to the congregation. This presentation can be a first step in that process of communication, training and education.
- There must be a well thought out communication with the entire congregation after adoption of the Policy and prior to implementation. This policy is a very positive step for a church to be taking and it is up to church leadership to communicate that effectively.

- Volunteers must be educated in the content and need for the policy, the emotional and physical development of children and youth, and trained in how to spot, report and respond to instances or allegations of child abuse.
- The children and youth of the church must be educated on the nature of child abuse...how to identify it and action to take if confronted by a predator. There may be an outside agency in your area that is capable of conducting this kind of training for the school system and could do the same for your church.

### **Expected Results of Screening**

At this point it would be fair to ask if we expect to discover very many would-be predators. The answer is, "No." We anticipate that there will be very few cases where this screening will turn up anything of a questionable nature. The reason is that people who have a background that would be unacceptable to the church will not apply for a volunteer position working with our young people if they know the church requires thorough screening. Increasingly more churches and other organizations are implementing policies such as this. As more institutions do this the predators will migrate to the easier targets that have no such policy.

As you may know, we have been screening new pastors entering our presbytery before churches call them since 1 January 2007. We have had at least one instance when a pastor declined to give us a release to conduct a background check. We suspect the reason was that the person had something of concern in his or her background. We think the church could have had problems with that pastor.

### **Conclusion (Slide 20)**

Churches in our presbytery have a long and distinguished reputation in their communities. Establishment of this policy will enhance that reputation. This policy will substantially increase the level of safety and security provided by the church and protect volunteers and staff from false allegations. Each church that implements a Child Protection Policy will be known as a church that cares deeply for its children and youth and takes positive action to ensure their protection.

Developing a Child Protection Policy from scratch takes a great deal of time and energy. We have developed this model Child Protection Policy to give you a substantial start in thinking through the issues and on developing a policy and the forms to implement it. Our purpose is to strongly encourage all of our churches to adopt a Child Protection Policy and to follow its provisions carefully and consistently.

Are there any questions?