

## Form #6

### Guidelines for Nursery Workers

Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. Living Word United Methodist Church has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone who has custody or supervision of nursery age children. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

#### Before You Begin

**Six-Month Rule** -- All workers must be members or regular attendees of Living Word United Methodist Church for at least six months before working in the nursery. This guideline may be waived for employees.

**Completion of Application** -- All nursery workers must complete and sign an application form.

**Release Authorization Form** -- All nursery workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

**References** -- Applicants will be asked to provide three references not in the applicant's immediate family. The church may also contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

**Interview** -- All nursery workers must be interviewed by a nursery coordinator or church leader to determine their suitability for nursery work. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

**Background Check and Social Services Registry** -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a Missouri family registry check for applicants: this is mandatory for primary positions and optional for secondary positions.

**Auto Safety Form** -- All nursery workers who will be driving children or youth conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

**Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines** -- All nursery workers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

#### Guidelines

**Two-Person Rule** -- Two workers must be present in each nursery room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Teams of workers cannot be of the same family unless a third un-related person is a visible and unpredictable presence such as hallway helpers who continually stop in to various rooms.

**Only assigned workers may be in the nursery.** There are two exceptions to this rule: nursing mothers and parents called to the nursery to calm an upset child.

**Only parents can receive their child from the nursery.** Nursery workers should release children only to their parents (not to older siblings).

**Corporal Punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in Living Word United Methodist Church activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. In addition, yelling at a child or intentionally belittling the child are inappropriate responses by our workers. Nursery workers must consult a nursery leader or other church leader if they need help with discipline techniques.

**Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse** to the nursery leader or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

**Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.** This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

**Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved** from nursery duty at the sole discretion of the Childcare Coordinator, Director of Children's Ministries, or a Pastor.

**I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:**

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