

COVID-19:

Setting Up Temporary Day Care Guidelines - Ministry Information

As local day care centers and schools close, many working adults, especially healthcare workers, first responders, or other essential personnel, are left without reliable child care. Christian ministries are stepping forward to fill this gap during the coronavirus pandemic. If your ministry has the desire and capability to help in this unique way, you should consider the following points to protect your people and the children in your care.

Staffing

- Ideally, churches will be able to rely on volunteers and staff who have already gone through recommended screening procedures (i.e., application form, reference checks, background check, and interview). At a minimum, churches should consider screening volunteers with a background check if feasible, and an application form that asks about criminal history and any prior incidents of abuse or misconduct.
- Churches should implement safety and supervision policies that both follow the church's established procedures and state and local requirements for child care operations. Churches should ensure that at least two screened adults are always present when supervising children or youth.
- Volunteers who have been sick with any illness within the past 14 days or live with someone who is ill during the same time period should not be permitted to volunteer.
- Churches that do not currently operate a day care but wish to operate a temporary one during the crisis period should consider working with a volunteer coordinator that has experience managing a child care operation.

Indemnification

If other entities that are requesting this service from the church (i.e. healthcare organizations that need child care for children of workers), it is recommended that any contract executed between those parties include an indemnification and hold harmless clause in favor of the church, as well as obtaining a certificate of insurance.

Sanitation

- Sanitization procedures, serving of food, and dispensing of medication should follow guidelines as developed by a local department of health for child care operations.

Child Care Operations

- Parents or guardians should complete a brief written application for child care services, with acknowledgment of their child meeting the appropriate health and illness criteria as mentioned within this document.
- Child care operations should follow established social distancing policies.
- Churches should implement a protocol of isolating a child when any symptoms of illness appear and develop a process to notify all workers and parents that their child was potentially exposed.
- Should the church open their child care operation to members of the general community, information regarding the church's policies and procedures should be provided to the parent or guardian of those children under care.

The information provided in this article is intended to be helpful, but it does not constitute legal advice and is not a substitute for the advice from a licensed attorney in your area. We strongly encourage you to regularly consult with a local attorney as a part of your risk management program.