



Adventist Risk  
Management, Inc.

# STARTING YOUR CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Create a proactive Child Protection Plan to prevent child abuse and to protect children and teenagers from inappropriate conduct by adults or other children. Here are four “P’s” of child abuse prevention your plan should include.

## #1 Premises Review

**Access to premises** – Carefully monitor the arrival and departure of children at your facilities. Keep all ministry activities within a specified area and do not allow children unrestricted access throughout the building or property.

**Interior & exterior lighting** – Ensure your facilities are well lit, both indoors and outdoors, during all children and youth programs to help facilitate appropriate security and supervision.

**Visual panels** – Be sure all areas have either windows or vision panels in doors to allow easy monitoring of the activities taking place in these rooms. Ensure that the vision panels with paper, curtains, or other materials.

**Restrooms** – Limit the number of children allowed to use restrooms at

the same time. Monitor these areas in order to minimize one-on-one situations, which can lead to foul play, inappropriate behavior or accusations and misunderstandings.

## #2 Personnel Administration

**Staff selection** – Carefully interview and select all adult staff members (employees and volunteers) after a six-month waiting period during which they are known to you or are members of your church. This time period allows you to become acquainted with the individual’s talents, personality and temperament. Conduct background screenings in accordance with denominational policies, which include background and reference checks.

**Staff training** – All staff members who work with children and teenagers should be appropriately trained in

child abuse awareness, prevention and the reporting laws of the local jurisdiction. Training should also include the expected code of conduct used in keeping with the Christ-centered mission of the ministry.

**Supervision** – Appropriate adult supervision is required at all times, including the two-adult rule, meaning more than one adult should be present at all times. If this is not possible, an adult should never be alone with one child. All staff should make this a high priority and know what is expected of them as they interact with children and teenagers.

**Dismissal of staff** – Any adult who fails to abide by the outlined code of conduct could be subject to dismissal from further participation in the ministry. This policy is to protect children and teenagers from harm, and protect staff from accusations and misunderstandings.



## #3 Protecting Children

**Discipline and touching** – Carefully monitor staff member interaction with children and teenagers for appropriate behavior in keeping with the ministry’s code of conduct.

**Out-of-program contact** – Carefully monitor any staff member who has frequent out-of-program contact with a child or teenager especially on a one-to-one basis or without the knowledge of the child’s parent or guardian.

**Sign in / sign out controls** – Maintain a record of all children who are participating in the activity and be sure they are picked up and released only to their parent or other authorized adult as designated in a parental permission slip.

**Reporting incidents** – Be observant of any signs of child abuse or incidents of inappropriate conduct by adults or other children. Promptly report all incidents of suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities and to the local denominational administration.

**Stranger awareness** – Always be alert and observant of any strangers or unknown individuals who may be watching or lurking around the premises during children and youth ministry activities.

**Bullying awareness** – Be observant for signs of bullying or incidents of inappropriate hazing activity among children or teenagers. Adopt a zero tolerance policy and teach them to respect each other by living the Golden Rule and developing strong Christian friendships.

## #4 Program Review

**Evaluate** – Evaluate your Child Protection Program twice a year. Ask your team:

- What concerns or issues arose and how were they handled?

- Was the way the incidents were handled effective? Are there further steps that need to be taken?
- Are there any concerns or issues that the program does not cover?
- How should the program be modified to address these new concerns?

**Implement** – Modify your program to accommodate the improvements from your program evaluation. Present the changes to the church board at the next board meeting to have the changes approved. Send out a notice to all staff members and parents introducing the changes to your Child Protection Program. Incorporate the changes into your program and continue to affirm and encourage all staff in their mission to keep all children safe.

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Find more information on child abuse prevention and developing a Child Protection Program for your ministry at [AdventistRisk.org](http://AdventistRisk.org)



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