



*For every family and every child to know they  
are "So Loved."*

## Vision:

We have chosen the phrase "So Loved" as our vision statement for the nursery ministry at First. This idea of "So Loved" is born out of a theological conviction that, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," a quote from John that is so familiar we do not need to list the chapter or verse. We believe God loves the world, and even more, God loves children. This love has been made known in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Because Christ loved the world, and that included the little ones in his midst, it is our calling to continue the incarnation of that love in the nursery ministry. In many church nurseries, the mantra is "babysitting." When we babysit, or provide "childcare," we are not necessarily displaying the love of Christ. We are simply corralling children until their parents return from other obligations.

The vision that every child and family who encounters the nursery ministry at First would feel, "so loved" offers a new orientation. It means that staff and volunteers are no longer "workers," but instead are "ministers of the gospel." It means that we are creating a ministry that is no longer church-focused, but family and child-focused. In a church-focused nursery, decisions are made based on the benefits to the staff and the workers. In a family and child-focused ministry, *we do whatever it takes for children and families to walk away feeling, "so loved."*

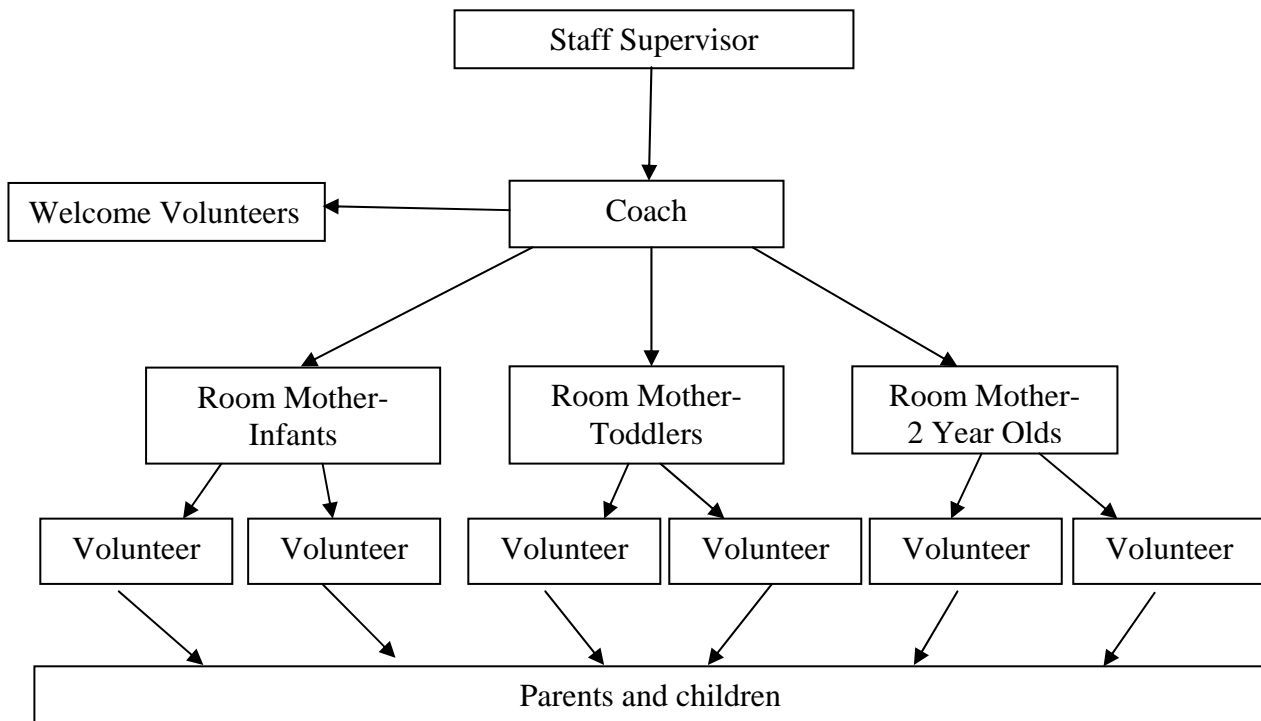
Although we can write job descriptions and offer detailed training for all involved in the ministry, we can never exhaust

the limits of love. That is the power that lies in the tiny phrase, "so loved." In the nursery ministry, we will do whatever it takes to make a family and a child feel loved by Jesus. Let me repeat that, we will do whatever it takes to make parents and children feel so loved.

This does not mean that no child will ever cry in our nursery. It does not mean that leaving a child will not be difficult at times. It means that every parent and child will walk away knowing they are deeply loved by Christ and his church.

"So Loved" - it is the reason for our existence and the impetus for our actions.

**FPC Nursery Ministry Structure:**



## Volunteer Job Description

Our goal is for every family and child to feel "so loved" by our church and by God through their experience in Kingdom Kritters. In order to achieve this goal, we will need a minimum of one volunteer to every four children that join our nursery. We will strive to find volunteers called by God to serve our children and families. These volunteers will be asked to commit to serve 1-2 times per month (at a minimum of one service time). This means 20-40 volunteers are needed. The following are guidelines to ensure this ministry is a witness to our church and to the world.

1. First and foremost, we want our volunteers to be in pursuit of an intimate relationship with Jesus, which includes being a regular worship attendee.
2. Convey to everyone entering your environment that the children of this environment are, "so loved" by Christ and his church (us). We want this message communicated to parents, volunteers, staff, custodians, and most importantly, to the children themselves. Communication does not necessary mean "speaking." We communicate through actions, body language, appearance, etc.
3. Look to the Room Mothers for guidance and leadership. Room Mothers will be asked to be equippers, leaving the volunteers to do the main work of being with and loving the children. When in doubt, turn to the Room Mother for support. This includes issues of child illness, behavior, crying, etc.
4. Create an environment where children feel "so loved." This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. **Hands-on engagement** with children at all times. Volunteers will not sit by idly and "watch." This is a babysitting mentality. In order to communicate that children are, "so loved," we need to be playing, rocking, walking, holding, and generally engaging every child.

- b. Rooms are "clean" and excellent looking at all times. If you notice there is a spill, accident, broken toy, etc. please report it to the RM.
- c. Receive babies in a loving manner from the RMs. Smile at children, **make them feel so loved**, and find out any specific needs that child may have.
- d. Each child will be **called by name**. Although you are not there every week, make an attempt to learn every child's name as quickly as possible.
- e. Diapers will be changed frequently. No child should sit in a dirty or wet diaper for long. **All diapers** will be changed before the end of nursery time, even if they are clean.
- f. Volunteers should manage their appearance This includes wearing child-appropriate, but still professional clothing (no shorts, sweat pants, flip-flops, etc). This also includes wearing FPC smocks and/or t-shirts. Excellence in appearance conveys competence and love to parents. Below the knee pants or skirts are strongly advised. (Lots of bending over and/or sitting on the floor)
- g. Volunteers will make sure that nothing negative is ever said about a child. Love seeks to honor children and parents. Volunteers will make sure something positive is said to the parents about the children.

## **Child Sickness Policy**

Children who show any visible signs of illness should not be allowed into the classroom. When addressing this issue with parents, assure them that we want their child in the nursery ministry as soon as they are feeling better. If you continually have a problem with a sick child, enlist the help of your Coach. If an illness is discovered after a child is in the classroom, remove the child from the other children and ask your Coach to locate the parents.

Upon the recommendations of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be taken from the home when any of the following conditions exist:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea (even associated with teething and medication).
- Any symptoms of childhood diseases, such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, cough, strep throat, flu, etc. or any other infectious or contagious disease.
- Common cold from onset through one week.
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Fifth disease
- Any unexplained rash
- Pinkeye or other eye infections (All eye infections are contagious. The child must be on medication for 24 hours and not exhibiting any symptoms before entering nursery)
- Cloudy or green runny noses or persistent cough.
- Any communicable disease

We require that a child be free of fever for 24 hours before entering First Nursery Ministry. When in doubt, please apply the "Golden Rule." Adherence to this policy is important to protect the health of all children in our department.

## Keeping It Clean.....

One of the best ways to prevent the passage of germs is by washing hands. It's important to teach children and model for them frequent hand washing especially at this age because many of them are still putting hands, finger, and sometimes toys in their mouths. Please remind the children continuously and assign a volunteer to help them wash their hands.

Hands should be washed:

1. Upon entering the classroom.
2. Before and after eating.
3. Before handling food for snack or center time.
4. Before and after changing diapers.
5. After helping a child in the bathroom.
6. After wiping and blowing noses.

Please make sure all snacks are eaten in a contained area. Do not allow children to walk around the room or playground with food. Snacks should be administered and eaten at table in classrooms.

## Diapers Changing Procedures:

**Please make sure that every child goes home with a dry and clean diaper.** This communicates to every parent our care for the welfare of his or her child. It is important to follow these procedures to eliminate the spread of infectious diseases. Each child's health and safety is our ultimate priority.

We will assemble all of your supplies for you and have them together in a tub/container. These supplies include diapers, wipes, paper towels, rubber gloves, wax paper, cleaning spray (Basic G), and a changing pad.

1. Wash hands
2. Use wipes, if there are none in the child's bag, then use wipes provided by the church.
3. After changing, return the child to the play area.
4. Spray the area, let the cleaning solution sit on the mat for a minute and then wipe thoroughly.
5. Place soiled diapers in an individual plastic bag and dispose of in the diaper trashcan.
6. Wash your hands
7. There is one designated area for changing diapers. Please do not change diapers anywhere else in the room.

## Potty Breaks....

For the protection of our children and our volunteers, it is important to follow procedures when taking children to the restroom. The following guidelines are the rules for the bathroom, please don't overlook them.

1. You must do your best to make sure the bathroom is clear of any other people.
2. A volunteer is **never** allowed in a bathroom stall alone with a child.
3. All boys **must** use a stall (this is for their protection).
4. Assist children with their clothing in the open doorway **before** they go into the bathroom.
5. Encourage children to do as much of this for themselves as possible.
6. Please stand **outside** of the stall to monitor the needs of the child.
7. If you have an emergency situation where a child becomes ill or needs your assistance, open the stall door and provide what assistance the child may need. **Under no circumstances** will a volunteer be inside a stall with a child with the stall door closed.

## Safety is our Goal...

There is nothing more important in the nursery ministry than the safety of our children. We will do everything to the best of our ability to keep them safe and secure while in our care. This speaks volumes to the families that we serve. Please **immediately** report **any** suspicion of child abuse or neglect of which you have knowledge or observe within the scope of your duties to The Room Mother and/or Coach.

Additional safeguards are as follows:

- There must be at least two volunteers in a classroom before children are received. **No one** may be alone in a classroom with a child.
- **No one** is to be alone in a bathroom at any time with a child. (See bathroom policy)
- All staff and responsible leadership have frequent access to all classrooms where children are being cared for.
- Any toy or piece of equipment that is broken or poses a hazard of any kind should be removed and/or reported to the coach immediately.
- During playground time, any balls or toys going over the fence must be retrieved by an adult only.
- Older siblings and/or children should not be present in the classroom. Their size, enthusiasm, and lack of judgment can cause unintentional injury.
- Security tags are **required** when releasing a child from a classroom to the parent.

## **Facilities...**

Please alert the coach if any toys, beds, etc. need replacing or replenishing. Clean, safe and "desirable" toys and equipment should be available at all times.

Toys should be sprayed with disinfectant before and after Sunday services. If a child puts a toy in his/her mouth, then moves on to another, that toy should be disinfected and allowed to dry before making it available to other children.

Any major spills, vomit, or other messes that may require the custodial staff should be reported to the coach immediately.

## **Snacks**

**Infants** – Parents must supply all bottles, sippee cups, etc. for children in our infant nursery on Sunday mornings. The nursery staff may offer plain Cheerios only in the infant room. Food, whether sent by parents or offered from staff, can only be administered in a high chair or at a table. Children may not eat while sitting or crawling on the floor.

**Toddlers – Pre K** – In the rooms of our toddlers – Preschool, we offer only peanut-free snacks and cool water. Snacks must be administered with children seated at a table. Children may not have snacks while walking around a classroom or on the playground.

Tables should be wiped down with disinfectant wipes before and after snacks are given.

## **Discipline Policy**

Discipline provides a set of guidelines for behavior of children and adults.

"Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Discipline is necessary:

1. To prevent bodily harm
2. To protect the child's health
3. To increase the child's social awareness and encourage the child to develop
4. To provide the child with emotional security

Discipline and punishment are not the same. Discipline should show the children how to behave in a social environment. It should be a process by which children are learning to control their own actions. The ultimate goal is to build up the child's self control. Discipline redirects behavior in a positive way.

Because we provide low ratios of adults/children in our classroom, adults should usually be able to head off most situations before they occur. In the rare event that action is needed for our wee ones, like toddlers and two's, loving correction and redirection should usually be sufficient. When possible, adults should practice the desired behavior with the child before moving on to another activity. When redirection does not produce the desired results, our older toddlers and two's may require some "time out" or cool down time away from the group and beside an adult. A child should NEVER be placed in a room by himself or alone with one adult.

Time Out should never exceed 2 minutes for toddlers and 2 year olds or 3 minutes for 3 year olds.

This time-out is not to punish but rather to redirect the child. NO corporal punishment will be used at our facility. Often, a reminder is all that it takes to change a child's behavior. The Room Mom will speak calmly to the child about how the behavior was inappropriate. If a child becomes uncontrollably distracting to the other children, a

parent will be contacted. If the Coach and Room Mom should determine that a child's continuous undesirable behavior is detrimental to the other children in the group, the Coach will request a conference with the parents to discuss strategies for helping that child on a more individual basis.

Any behaviors that require further action, should be brought to the Coach and dealt with along with the parents of that child.

### **Biting Policy**

Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. This means that is a particular concern for the staff in the Toddler/Young 2's Room.

**For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.**

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not immediately allowed to return

to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, then redirected.

- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- We make special efforts to protect potential victims.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking a family to keep the child out of our nursery for an agreed upon amount of time in order to break the pattern.