

Safe Training Manual

Safety & Security Policies and Procedures

**For Those Working with Children & Youth
In the Ministries of
Eternal Church
Fort Mill, SC**

Revised 1/23/09

As leaders, we should be aware that child abuse is a big problem in our society. Consider these facts: 1) In America, every 11 seconds a child is reported abused or neglected (Children's Defense Fund, *State of Children in America's Union 2002*); 2) A child in South Carolina is abused or neglected every 47 minutes (Children's Defense Fund, January 2003); and 3) The first child abuse lawsuit was filed against a church in 1984. Since then hundreds of claims have been filed resulting in millions of dollars of expenses.

Eternal Church places a high priority on the safety and care of the children and youth God has entrusted to us.

Churches are particularly susceptible to child abuse and legal litigation for these reasons:

1. Churches are a community of trust.
2. Many lack a screening process for workers.
3. Many programs/ministries translate into many opportunities for abuse and injury.
4. The need for volunteer workers is high.
5. Many churches lack safeguards on security, safety, and supervision.
6. Perpetrators find easy access to church facilities.

In this booklet, you will find...

1. Policies and procedures in four major risk areas for safeguarding our children against injury and abuse.
2. Indicators that may signal that a child in our care has been abused or neglected.
3. Facts and figures to heighten our understanding of child sexual abuse.
4. How to respond to *suspected* or *alleged* child abuse.

All of our paid and volunteer workers are expected to be aware of the policies and safety procedures given in this booklet.

Policies and Procedures

We believe that as the risk of abuse increases, then “safeguards” to reduce that risk should also increase. We have identified the following major “risk factors”: 1) Lack of screening for leaders, 2) Adults being alone with children/youth, 3) Inadequate supervision, and 4) On-site safety and security.

Ministry leaders at Eternal should abide by the following safeguards for our children's safety and protection.

Risk Factor #1 – Lack of Screening for leaders

Safeguards:

1) Screening – All ministry leaders (paid or volunteer) in Children/Youth Ministry will be screened. We seek to provide a safe, fun, and nurturing environment for children/youth where we can give them quality care and instruction. This is why we require that everyone serving in our ministries involving supervision and custody of minors be screened and approved. Screening involves the following: complete a Ministry Application Form (MAF), agree to adhere to the policies in our *Safe Training Manual*, and be approved as a ministry leader. This protects us from being negligent in the selection of our leaders, and most importantly protects the children/youth God has entrusted to our care. Once approval for ministry involvement has been given, the ministry leader is considered a part of our Ministry Team and becomes an integral part of our intentional effort in providing a safe environment for our children/youth.

2) Church Membership – Leaders working with children/youth should be members of Eternal Church or, for non-members, should have been actively attending for six months.

3) Activity Approval – All leaders who wish to have an activity which would in any way be sponsored by Eternal should have the activity approved by the appropriate Eternal staff before the activity is publicized and definitely before it occurs.

Risk Factor #2 – Adults being alone with children/youth

Safeguards:

1) Two Adult Rule – At least two leaders should be present in classrooms or on activities with children/youth.

2) Never Alone Rule – Leaders should not be in situations where they are one-on-one with a child or youth for any length of time unless they have been given permission to do so by the parent. If a leader finds himself in a class with one student, join another class for that day. Leaders should not go into the home of a child/youth unless the parent(s) is home. When a ministry leader has to drive a child home without another responsible person in the car, then a call to the home should be made for approval.

3) Open Environments – For example, rooms in the Nursery Wing have lots of windows. Rooms with children and youth also have windows, where parents and others in the hallways can easily see in.

4) Open Door Policy – When a leader takes a toddler/preschooler to the restroom, the door should remain open. If and when a preschool leader takes a child to the restroom...leaving the other leader alone in the room with children, the classroom door should also remain open until that leader returns.

5) Monitor by Walking Around – Eternal Staff and those who have oversight to particular ministry areas also ensure that kids are being protected and that leaders are not in “isolated” situations by walking around to monitor rooms, etc. on a regular basis.

Policies and Procedures (cont'd)

Risk Factor #3 – Inadequate Supervision

Safeguards:

- 1) Adult to child ratios for adequate supervision** – Nursery and Toddlers 1:4
Preschool 1:7
Elementary/Youth 1:10

2) Two Adult Rule – At least two leaders should be present in classrooms or on activities with children/youth.

3) Inappropriate Leader Behavior – such as losing self-control in dealing with a child/youth is prohibited. Other examples of inappropriate behavior include: yelling, losing one's temper, throwing a child to the floor, hitting a child, or any form of corporal punishment.

Risk Factor #4 – On-site Safety and Security

Safeguards:

1) Child Escort – Parents (or other designated and responsible person i.e. grandparent, etc.) of children 3rd grade and below are expected to escort their child to and from class/club.

2) Child Sign-In – Parents (or other designated and responsible person i.e. grandparent, etc.) of children four years old or younger are expected to sign in their child upon arrival to their class/club.

3) Child Pick Up – To simplify pick up, parents (or other designated and responsible person i.e. grandparent, etc.) of children infant to fourth grade will pick up at the child's designated class area. **There will be no child pick up in the parking lot.**

4) Roaming – Children should not be allowed in the hallways or roaming the facility without adult supervision.

Child Abuse and Neglect: What You Should Know

- What are the types of child abuse and neglect?
Definitions of abuse **include physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect** (known also as emotional abuse).
- Harm to children can result from:
 - Physical injury, such as beatings, burnings and bites.
 - Constant criticism, insults, the withholding of love.
 - Rape, fondling of the genitals, incest.
 - The failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- Who abuses children and where?
Most child abuse occurs in the family home. Parents, siblings and visitors can all inflict abuse.
- How can you tell if a child is being abused?

Children who are physically abused may:

- Be nervous around adults
- Have difficulty playing
- Act aggressively towards adults and other children
- Find it difficult to trust other people and make friends
- Be watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Be unable to concentrate
- Suddenly underachieve, or overachieve
- Arrive too early, or leave after the other children

Children who are sexually abused may:

- Behave differently when the abuse starts
- Talk or act sexually at too early of an age
- Start soiling themselves
- Be unable to sleep
- Run away from home
- Care less about their appearance
- Be secretive and stop talking about home life
- Suddenly find physical contact frightening

Children who are neglected or emotionally abused may:

- Have difficulty learning to talk
- Find it hard to develop close relationships
- Underachieve
- Be over-friendly with strangers
- Be unable to play imaginatively
- Think badly of themselves

- Remember: None of these signs prove that child abuse is present, since any of them may be noticeable at some time or another. But when they occur repeatedly or in combination with one another, the child may be suffering abuse.

Facts & Figures on Child Sexual Abuse

- According to *National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse*, child sexual abuse is:

"Any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim."

- Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent.
- Child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.
- Child sexual abuse is *criminal* behavior.
- Most child molesters are male.
- One out of five molesters begins their activity before age 18.
- Child sexual abuse behaviors involve *touching* and *non-touching* aspects.
- Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:
 - verbal comments
 - pornographic videos
 - obscene phone calls
 - exhibitionism
 - allowing children to witness sexual activity
- Contrary to popular belief, perpetrators of sexual abuse are well-known to the child in 85% of reported cases. This statistic dispels the myth that only strangers molest children.
- Child sexual abuse is a criminal offense in all 50 states.
- Current estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year. Over 25% of those who experienced some form of child sexual abuse victimization indicated that this occurred before the age of nine.
- A child molester who has experienced a religious conversion can still present a threat to children.
- Child molesters can be classified as either preferential or situational. (*Breach of Trust, D-2*)
 - *Preferential molesters* have a preference for sexual activity with children and will seek them out.
 - *Situational molesters* take advantage of a situation to sexually abuse children if it occurs.
 - Most offenders are situational and that number is increasing faster than those of preferential child molesters.
- "The personal violation of child sexual abuse causes the victim to experience many losses... including loss of childhood memories, loss of healthy social contact, loss of the opportunity to learn, loss of bodily integrity, loss of identity and self-esteem, loss of trust, loss of sexual maturity, and loss of self-determination. all of these personal violations mean that victims of child sexual abuse lose the child's right to a normal childhood. In adulthood it may also mean the loss of the capacity to appreciate sexual intimacy as nurturing, holy, and loving." (*The Report of the Winter Commission, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 118*)

*These facts and figures were obtained from the *National Resource Center of Child Sexual Abuse*.