

# Recommended Protocols to Protect Children

Ensuring the safety of children within religious institutions and faith based communities is paramount. Here are practical vetting methods, recommendations, and ideas that churches and faith based communities can implement:

- 1. Comprehensive Background Checks:** These should be national, not just limited to contiguous counties or the state.
- 2. Personal Reference Checks:** At least two that aren't immediate family members.
- 3. Probation Period:** A minimum six-week observation period for newcomers.
- 4. Leadership Interview:** Face-to-face discussion with at least three church leaders.
- 5. Vetting Questionnaire:** Comprehensive questions about their past, motivations for joining, etc.
- 6. Behavioral Training:** Equip the congregation with training to detect signs of inappropriate behavior or grooming.
- 7. Social Media Evaluation:** Examine their online presence, interactions, and posts for any red flags.
- 8. Group Affiliations:** Research any groups or social circles they're part of.
- 9. No One-on-One Protocol:** Always ensure that no adult is left alone with a child. A two-adult rule is a good standard.
- 10. Wellness Checks:** Regular, unannounced check-ins when children are in church-run programs.
- 11. Peer-led Awareness:** Work with youth groups to create peer-led awareness and safety programs.
- 12. Community Watch:** Encourage church members to join or form community watchdog groups.
- 13. Safe Environment Training:** Mandatory courses for all staff and volunteers.



- 14. Regularly Update Policies:** Continually review and adapt child safety policies to address new challenges and ensure best practices.
- 15. Open-Door Policy:** Activities involving children should be in rooms where doors remain open, or have windows for visibility.
- 16. Secure Check-In/Out Systems:** Parents or guardians sign children in/out of programs, ensuring kids leave with the right person.
- 17. Anonymous Reporting System:** A method for individuals to report suspicious behavior without fear of backlash.
- 18. Monthly Safety Drills:** Regular drills to teach children how to respond to emergencies.
- 19. Annual Safety Audits:** Hire external professionals to assess the effectiveness of child safety protocols.
- 20. Collaboration with Experts:** Partner with local law enforcement and/or child protection agencies for advice and training sessions.
- 21. Limited Access:** Restrict areas of the church to authorized personnel only, ensuring children can't be taken to isolated areas.
- 22. Regular Refreshers:** Annual (or more frequent) refreshers on all safety protocols for staff and volunteers.

The goal is to create an environment where safety is a top priority and all members are vigilant and proactive in protecting the vulnerable.

**Please visit [Vets4ChildRescue.org \(V4CR.org\)](https://Vets4ChildRescue.org) for more free resources, tools, and education** to help you identify, report, and prevent child harm and empower communities to safeguard children.

