

# Prevent Child Sexual Abuse in the Church

## Reduce risks by improving selection, supervision, and education

No church is immune to the problem of child sexual assault, regardless of size, location, or denomination. Child sexual predators exist, and they're always looking for opportunities to interact with children. They may volunteer to work with children in your nursery, Sunday school, or youth program. How are you going to manage this risk? [Strengthen these areas](#) within your ministry.

## Use the Six-Month Rule

Don't give any volunteer worker the opportunity to be involved in a nursery or children's or youth work until he or she has been associated with your church for at least six months.

## Screen All Workers

- Investigating prior church membership and volunteer work.
- [Check references.](#)
- Develop [an application form](#) and have your attorney review and modify it.

## Use the Two-Adult Rule

On or off premises, always have at least two, unrelated adults supervising each room, vehicle, or other enclosed space—even if only one or two children need care.

## Other Preventive Measures

- Discourage the use of teenagers as nursery workers.
- Increase supervisors for large groups.
- Prohibit situations in which one adult is alone with children in changing areas or restrooms.
- Develop a “claim check” procedure so that children are released only to a parent, guardian, or other authorized person.

- Don't permit participation in off-premise events, especially when they involve overnight stays, unless an adequate number of adult workers will be present.

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## Educate Your Workers

A good way to educate your church employees and volunteer children or youth workers is to use the [Reducing the Risk Kit, 3rd Edition](#). The kit is a turnkey training and implementation solution for a child sex abuse prevention program. You'll learn how to:

- Become familiar with state and federal laws dealing with child abuse so you know how to comply with them.
- Train your staff to watch for and identify inappropriate behavior, grooming behavior, and to report such conduct.
- Prevent situations in which an individual attempts to isolate one or more youths.

Representatives from various state and federal agencies are available to provide information and may be willing to assist you in your worker education program. A good place to start may be the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Administration for Children & Families](#).