

Huddle Home Guidelines

These “General Practices” are how we do ministry with children at BCC.

They help us keep kids safe, secure and well managed to provide the best opportunity to do spiritual work in the lives of children and their families.

Our Mission: To partner with parents as they raise their kids to know Christ and make Him known.



Safety/Security Practices

We have the same responsibility to keep kids safe during Backyard BOLT.

1. There must be at least two adults at all times. Families may serve together as long as there is an additional non-family volunteer present.
2. Check-in: As children are welcomed to the huddle, please be sure the parent fills out the child registration card (provided in your kit).
3. We ask that you host the huddle outside when possible. If weather prohibits this, please keep kids and adults together in the same space throughout event. When a child needs to use the bathroom, please follow the practices below.
4. Bathroom Practices:
 - a. Kids use the rest room alone. Never send two children into your bathroom at the same time.
 - b. If a child needs assistance while potty-ing, keep the bathroom door propped open while assisting the child.
5. Allergies: We will not be providing snacks. If you choose to participate in snack time, please notify all parents at drop-off and ask them specifically about allergies.
6. Pick up: Be sure that you've asked parents ahead of time, who will be picking up their child. Do not allow children to walk home alone, unless parents have previously worked that out with you.

Appropriate Touch Practices

We want to take steps to protect the children in our care. These are guidelines to observe while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry.

1. As ministry workers our behavior should be appropriate. Touching behavior should never give the appearance of wrongdoing.
2. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
3. Touching initiated by the child can be appropriate. It should be a response to the child's need for comfort, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need. If a child approaches or touches a leader in a way that is inappropriate, or makes the leader feel uncomfortable, the leader should redirect the child's attention to something else. If a child repeatedly does this, the leader must explain to the child that there are ways we can touch that are ok, and others that are not appropriate. If the behavior concerns you, please work with Tammy Hasset (Director of Children's Ministry) to contact parents.
4. Appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting, but must be age appropriate. For example:
 - Children may give you a surprise kiss, but please, do not return the favor.

- Hugs often abound in ministry with kids and this is ok. It is best with middle and upper elementary students that people use a side hug instead of full frontal hug. Being a little awkward makes it obvious no ill-intentions exist.
 - Children pre-school and younger may want to sit in the lap of volunteers. Do not allow this. Instead, leaders should encourage children to sit beside him or her.
5. Leaders may touch children appropriately on the head, shoulders, back, arm, hand, knee, feet, or may shake hands or give “fives” plenty. Leaders should not massage children’s shoulders/back for any length of time or squeeze arms, shoulders, legs, necks to cause pain.
 6. Touching and affection should only be done **in the presence** of other children's ministry workers, parents, or in full view of other people. It **must** be in public spaces—**never when you are alone or in a secluded place**. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers, a parent, or lots of other people can see. This rule is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom.
 7. If a volunteer is uncomfortable or suspects inappropriate touching by another volunteer, please discuss with Director of Children’s Ministry.

Identifying Abuse

As Children’s Ministry workers, we have a responsibility to watch for and protect against child abuse of any nature. If you are ever concerned about a child’s safety, please bring it to the attention of the Children’s Ministry Staff.

Discipline Practices

1. A well prepared leader and a clear and consistent plan for class time will often eliminate the need for disciplining children.
2. Teachers can develop their own style for how they manage their classroom and can expect levels of energy and activity that differ from other classrooms.
3. At BCC we NEVER strike, shake, spank, belittle, demean, or call names in order to discipline children.
4. At BCC we view kids’ inappropriate behavior, disobedience or purposeful distractions as **opportunities for discipleship**. We believe God can use difficult situations to grow Christ-like character.
5. Process for discipline:
 - a. Be prepared as well as possible before class. Pray for students, especially challenging ones during the week.
 - b. Establish clear rules and expectations for the class/ministry time.
 - c. Remind child of rules/expectations when they are misbehaving.
 - d. Deal privately with the individual who is acting poorly rather than in front of the group.
 - e. Remove a defiant or disobedient child from activities and set him or her to the side for an appropriate “time out.” Then take the opportunity to discuss the disruption and welcome him or her back to the group
 - i. Inform Tammy Hassett (Director of Children’s Ministry)
 - ii. Involve parents in solutions—speak to them that day or call them during the week for insight and ideas on creating a successful environment.
 - iii. Use an incident report to note the behavior if you feel it is significant or dangerous to others. Incident reports should be sent to the Children’s Ministry team that day..
 - f. In the case of severe behavioral issues, additional actions will be considered by the Children’s Ministry team, staff and elders.