

**SYDENSTRICKER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**Child Care Policy**

The mission of the Child Care at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church is to create a loving, clean, enjoyable and safe place for children while their parents participate in church services and scheduled church activities, such as adult Bible study classes, Vacation Bible School and Sweetheart Dinner, provided the activity is designated for Child Care service or following the approved request policy.

Parents are required to remain on the church campus while their children are in the child care. Circumstances which require the parents to be off-campus will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and would require the signing of a liability waiver.

**AGES OF CHILDREN**

Nursery

The Nursery is available during Sunday worship services for children up through 3 years old and will serve pre-school children during other designated or approved church activities. Other children will be reviewed for accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

School-Age Child Care

Child care for school-age children through age 13 years old will be provided in a room separate from that of the Nursery.

**CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY**

Child care outside of the Nursery for Sunday worship services is not guaranteed and is predicated on the need of 4 or more children for either the Nursery or School-Age group. Activities for which child care is anticipated are noted on the monthly church calendar with a distinct code (NC=Nursery Care; SCC = School-age Child Care).

Nursery

The Nursery will be available to parents during scheduled worship services and concurrent with designated church activities as noted in the introductory paragraph. Availability at other times is not guaranteed.

School-Age Child Care

Child care for school-age children will be provided by volunteers from the church congregation who are 18 years or older, have received Child Protection training from the church Child & Youth Protection Coordinator and are registered as trained with the church office.

**CHILD CARE REQUESTS**

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Nursery

Requests for unscheduled Nursery services are to be made by the Program or Event Coordinator to the Nursery Coordinator or the SPRC Advocate. The church office can provide contact information for the Nursery Coordinator. **Requests must be made at least 2 weeks in advance and availability is not guaranteed. Estimated child count is required at the time of the initial request and an updated number at least 24 hours in advance of the activity to ensure the proper adult/child ration is maintained.**

School-Age

School-age child care requests are to be made to the Program or Event Coordinator. Activity participants are responsible for notifying the leader of their need as the Program or Event Coordinator is then responsible for scheduling volunteers and reserving an appropriate room within the church for the child-care group.

**ILLNESS**

For everyone's protection, children who are ill will not be allowed to stay in child care. Children who have obvious signs of illness, such as fever, cough, or a runny nose will not be admitted. If a child becomes ill during his/her stay, the parents will be notified to pick the child up. This determination will be at the discretion of those providing child care. Any chronic illness should be brought to the attention of the Nursery staff.

**Medication will not be administered by those providing child care. Medications should not be left in diaper bags, backpacks or other personal containers.**

**BEHAVIOR**

All children are expected to behave appropriately, within the limits of their understanding. Hitting, pushing, grabbing, biting, and the like will not be permitted. If any child's behavior becomes problematic and cannot be corrected by a firm tone of voice or a "time out", that child's parents will be notified. This determination will be at the discretion of those providing child care.

**Physical punishment of any child is never permitted.**

**SNACKS**

Hand washing or use of hand sanitizing lotion are encouraged both before and after snacks.

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Children will be allowed to bring water or clear juice in a spill-proof cup to the Nursery. Finger snacks such as animal crackers or Cheerios are also permissible.

The nursery usually has crackers (graham, Ritz, animal) on hand for the children. Please let the staff know if your child is not permitted these kinds of snacks and also of any food allergies that your child may have.

Any foods that could be choking hazards (carrots, nuts, popcorn) or foods that are inordinately messy will not be allowed. In order to avoid allergic reactions or the spread of any illness, children will not be permitted to share their snacks.

School-Age Children

Children will be allowed to bring water or clear liquids in closed containers into the child care room(s). Finger snacks such as crackers or cookies are also permissible. Messy foods are not appropriate.

**PERSONAL ITEMS**

Label all personal items with name of the child.

Nursery

If a bag contains diapers for two children, label which goes to which child.

**SAFETY**

A child's parents will be contacted immediately for any incident or accident involving a child in being cared for on the church property. Such incidents are to be reported to the Pastor, Associate Pastor or SPRC Nursery Advocate as soon as possible. Care providers are empowered to call for emergency medical services if deemed appropriate.

**ADULT/CHILD RATIOS**

Nursery

The Nursery will use a combination of staff and volunteers to provide care for our youngest children. At least one staff member and one volunteer are to be working in the Nursery whenever the Nursery is supervising children. The following adult/child ratios will ensure adequate supervision:

- Age 0 – 12 months – one adult / 3 children
- Age 12 – 24 months – one adult / 4 children

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- Age 24 – 36 months – one adult / 6 children
- Age 36 months – pre-K – one adult / 8 children

School-Age Children

School-age children will be cared for by congregation members who are 18 years or older. A minimum of two volunteers are required to provide care, as stipulated by the church Child Protection Policy. The following adult/child ratio ensures adequate supervision at all times:

- K – Grade 3 – one adult / 6 children
- Grade 4 – Grade 8 – one adult / 6 children

**VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers must be 18 years or older who have received Child Protection training from our church Child & Youth Protection Coordinator within the last two years.

**TRAINING**

Nursery

Nursery staff have current CPR certification and, as such, are qualified to provide immediate assessment and intervention when needed, while calling for medical services if deemed appropriate.