

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church (SOTHUMC)

Child Care Policy

“Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes such a child in my name welcomes me.” Matthew 18:4-5 (NRSV)

Preamble

SOTHUMC has been actively growing small groups, Bible studies, and Church sponsored events to reach those already part of our community, and those in the mission field. With the increase of these gatherings, childcare has become a critical component of our ministry structure. In order to abide by the terms of the Child Safety Policy, it is essential to create this Child Care Policy, which will set forth the terms by which childcare will be offered for Church sponsored events. Our children must be provided with a safe and fun environment while their parents are attending these events. The guidelines are set forth below and incorporated herein.

Specific Guidelines in Childcare

Childcare for SOTHUMC is overseen by the Children’s Ministry Director and the Childcare Coordinator through the policies set below. Childcare is funded by and paid for under the auspices of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

Financial

Childcare will be offered for all ministry events/activities lasting 4 hours at a time or less for Church sponsored events. If event is scheduled to last longer than 4 hours, then the group holding the event must provide some type of content or curriculum, which may include: a lesson, program, or organized activity.

- a. Childcare workers under the age of 18 are paid at the rate of \$8/hr
- b. Childcare workers over the age of 18 are paid at the rate of \$10/hr
- c. Childcare coordinators are paid at the rate of \$12/hr

Clarification regarding payment:

In general the Church does not solicit donations from participant parents to offset the cost of childcare. This is an intentional decision based on the fact that soliciting funds is viewed unfavorably by our parishioners and yields a relatively small amount of income. Simply stated, it is the desire of the Church for parents to attend ministry team meetings, classes, groups, etc. without the burden of worrying about childcare finances. Therefore:

- a. All Church sponsored events shall offer free childcare in accordance with the time guidelines set forth above. Payment for childcare will come from the Staff Parish (SPRC) Childcare Budget, and not from the budget of any individual ministry team. Example: if the Women’s Retreat requires childcare, the funds will be drawn from the SPRC Budget, not from the Women’s Ministry budget.

- b. An exception to this free childcare policy will be when a Church ministry or group utilizes Church provided childcare resources for a Strictly Social Event. Strictly Social Event shall be defined as a gathering where the exclusive focus is fellowship AND there is no community building or intentional ministry component built into the time together. An example of a Strictly Social Event would be an adults only pool party at a private residence where the sole purpose is fun and recreation. In the case of a Strictly Social Event, the parents would be asked to pay for the cost of childcare once that amount has been computed. Whether or not an event shall be considered a Strictly Social Event shall ultimately be at the discretion of the Director of Children's Ministries in collaboration with the Associate Pastor. Payment to the Childcare workers must be provided upon ending of the childcare hours expressed of that particular event.

Operations

Childcare will be supervised at the following ratios

- a. Under 1 years of age 2:1
- b. 1 to 10 years of age 4 to 1
- c. No children over the age of 10 will supervised by childcare workers. Instead, children over the age of 10 will be expected to help childcare workers watch the younger children.
- d. Any child that is sick will be asked to be picked up and sent home from the childcare supervision

Logistics

Notification of the event requiring childcare is required to be coordinated with either the Children's Ministry Director or Childcare Coordinator 7 days prior to the event. Less than 7 days notice will be attempted to be arranged, but may not necessarily be able to be fulfilled. Please find the Childcare Request Form on the Church website or in hardcopy at the Church Office

- a. Coordination includes: The number of Children and ages, time, date and length required.
- b. Childcare coordinator, at their discretion, may refuse events for those activities who constantly exceed the anticipated hours communicated. This puts a hardship on the childcare workers if the hours are being constantly exceeded and thus the professional childcare is being compromised.
- c. All events will be staffed at the level communicated by the event leader, if additional children not on roster attend; they may be turned away based on the safety ratio above.

Please direct any inquires to the Director of Children Ministry or the Associate Pastor