



NURSERY CARE

SANTA BARBARA COMMUNITY CHURCH



The main goal of the Nursery and Toddler areas can be summed up in one word: TRUST. We want children in our care to feel safe and secure at church and to know they can trust the people who care for them. We take this responsibility seriously, as we hope it will aid them in eventually trusting in God. We also work hard to ensure parents can trust us to care for their children well.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD ADJUST?

Over the years, we've found a few things that work in helping children struggling with separation anxiety. If you are called back to the Nursery, we encourage you to come in and stay for awhile with your child. It can be easier for children to adjust to the Nursery if their parent is present. If you stay with your child for 15 minutes or so, this allows them to calm down and get used to their surroundings while still being comforted by your presence. After 15 minutes we encourage you to return to church. If your child continues to cry we will gladly call you again. We have found that in a very short time most children adjust and enjoy their time in the Nursery.

You can also help your child adjust by leaving a comfort item with them (blankie, pacifier, toy, etc.). If they are old enough, you can leave a favorite snack, as food can be a great distraction. Your child can pick up on your anxiety, so a confident, quick departure is helpful as well.

To help us find these and other needed items, we ask that you please label everything that you send with your child. Our church also provides diaper bag tags for your use. Please let the Supervisor know any helpful information such as if they need to sleep or if there are snacks or a pacifier in their bag.

WHAT ABOUT GERMS?

While germs are a natural part of our

world, we do everything we can to keep our children safe and healthy. To minimize the spread of illness, we will not provide care for any child who has had a fever within the last 48 hours, a rash, colored mucus or a wet cough. Any toy that goes in a child's mouth is washed with soap and water before it is returned to the shelves. When changing diapers we use changing table liners and gloves, as well as wash our hands afterwards.

WHEN IS MY CHILD PROMOTED TO "TODDLERS"?

We offer promotions three times a year – February, June and October. The cutoff age for promotion varies based on several factors including how full the Nursery and Toddler rooms are, the numbers of children we need to accommodate, and natural breaks in birth dates. We usually wait to promote children until they're around 16-18 months since we've found that children much younger than that can get overwhelmed by the older Toddlers and their activity. We will notify you by email when your child is going to be promoted. We strive to meet the individual needs of our children, so please contact us if you have any concerns or questions about the best placement for your child.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Since we have a familial church model, our entire church is involved in the care of our children. As a parent, we know you're naturally invested in your child's spiritual nurture on Sundays and we depend on your participation, as well. One option is to serve as a Nursery Supervisor or Substitute Supervisor. If you are in a Homegroup you will be scheduled to serve in childcare 3-4 times a year. If you are not in a Homegroup, we may ask you to help as childcare substitute in the Nursery or with another preferred age group.

HOW OLD DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BE?

There is no minimum age, but most parents opt to wait until their baby is about 3 months old. We encourage parents to have their child in the Nursery before 6 months of age since we've found that separation anxiety can sometimes make this transition more difficult later. If you choose not to leave your child in the Nursery, we encourage you to use the Cry Room simply because babies so naturally draw attention even if they're not crying. This can be distracting to those nearby as they enjoy watching your adorable baby and listening to cute little baby sounds instead of participating in worship.

WHO WILL CARE FOR MY CHILD?

We have a very qualified and experienced team who work one Sunday a month as Nursery Supervisors. They have each been through an application and training process which includes recommendations and background checks. We also have Homegroup Childcare Helpers each Sunday whom the Supervisor oversees in their care for the children. Our church has a strict policy of never having an adult alone with a child and we do not allow childcare workers to leave the Nursery/Toddler area with a child.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CRIES?

Children in the Nursery are often going through the natural developmental stage of separation anxiety. Our Supervisors are very familiar with this and have lots of experience in comforting and engaging children. We ask parents to tell us what amount of crying they feel comfortable with and we will call you after that specified amount of time. We will never allow a child to cry consistently for more than 15 minutes without calling their parent. Contact **Donna Sugano** (donna@sbcommunity.org) if you have questions.