

TODDLERS

SANTA BARBARA COMMUNITY CHURCH



The main goal of the Nursery and Toddler areas can be summed up in one word: TRUST. We want children 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 desire for parents to trust us to care for their child well.

HOW OLD ARE THE CHILDREN IN THE TODDLER ROOM?

The ages for the Toddler room vary since we promote children from the Nursery into the Toddler room three times a year (in February, June and October). Depending on the numbers of children in each group, we offer these promotions to children in the Nursery who are around 16–18 months or older at the time of promotion. We only promote children from the Toddler room into our Preschool Sunday School program once a year (in June). We always want to meet the individual needs of our children, so please contact Donna Sugano if you have any concerns or questions about the best placement for your child.

WHO WILL BE CARING FOR MY CHILD?

We have a very qualified and experienced team of 4 people at each service who work one Sunday a month as our Toddler Supervisor. 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 oversee in their care for the children. Our church has a strict policy that we never have an adult alone with a child and we do not allow childcare workers to leave the Nursery/Toddler area with a child.

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, has a rash, has 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.

WHAT ABOUT SNACKS?

We do give out snack (usually Cheerios), so please let us know if your child has any food allergies.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CRIES?

Children in the Toddler room are often going through the very 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 with which they feel comfortable 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.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD ADJUST?

Over the years, we've found a few things to be helpful for children struggling with separation anxiety. If you are called, we encourage you to come into the Toddler room and stay for awhile with your child. Sometimes it is easier for children to adjust with their parent present and get used to their surroundings within the safety of their presence. After 15 minutes, we encourage you to return to church. If your child continues to cry we will gladly call you again. We've found that in a very short time most children adjust and enjoy their time in the Toddler room. You can also help your child adjust by leaving a comfort item with them (blankie, pacifier, toy, etc.). Your child can pick up on your anxiety so a confident quick departure is helpful, too.

Please label everything that you send

with your child. Our church provides diaper bag tags for your use. Please let the Supervisor know any helpful information.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS POTTY-TRAINING?

Please make sure the Supervisor knows. We have a bathroom with a toddler size toilet for them to use. We also ask that you consider putting them in a pull-up or diaper just for church to minimize the need to clean up accidents. Please, always send a change of clothes.

HOW ARE BEHAVIORAL ISSUES HANDLED?

At this age, we find it most effective to distract and redirect children. If your child is consistently having difficulty with appropriate behaviors, we will contact you and ask you to come stay with them for a Sunday to give us insight as to how we can best care for your child and ways to effectively address their behavior. It is common for Toddlers to occasionally exhibit aggressive behaviors (hitting, throwing, biting, etc.). If your child bites someone or is consistently hitting, we will call you out of the service immediately and ask you to stay with your child that day and the following Sunday to be nearby if quick intervention is needed.

HOW CAN I HELP?

We have a familial church model so 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. We encourage you to serve as a Toddler 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, we may contact you about helping as a childcare substitute. You are also welcome to serve with another age group. Contact **Donna Sugano (donna@sbcommunity.org)** if you have questions.