



Jefferson
Unitarian
Church



CHILDCARE HANDBOOK

2019-2020

Children and Youth Religious Education

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Table of Contents

Mission	4
Covenant of Respectful Relationships	4
Introduction	5
Jefferson UU's Philosophy of Childcare	5
Safety First	5
Quality Care	6
Education	6
Attitude	6
Schedules	6
Screening and Selection of Workers With Children and Youth	7
Supervision	7
Reporting and Response	8
Greeting Children and Families	9
Outdoor Procedures	10
Discipline	11
When stopping or redirecting behavior	11
Use positive direction – “do” instead of “don’t”	11
Use words and a tone of voice that reassures the child	11
Use few words rather than a long sermon	11
Language	12
Supervised Separation	12
Give time warnings in terms the child can understand	12
Baby & Infant Room	12
Room Preparation	12
During Session	12
When Feeding Infants & Toddlers	13
Diapering Procedure	13
General Information	14
Room Cleaning Procedures	14
End of Session	14
Disinfection of Hard Surfaces, Toys, Beds, Etc.	15
Older Children	15



In Between Service	16
Child Disruptive Behavior Policy	16
Universal Precautions	17
Universal Precautions	17
To Avoid Contact with Bodily Fluid	17
If Direct Skin Contact Occurs	17
Hand Washing Procedures	18



Mission

Guided by Unitarian Universalist principles and powered by the energy and resources of its members, the mission of Jefferson Unitarian Church is to nurture our spiritual community, grow Unitarian Universalism, and transform the world outside our church walls.

Covenant of Respectful Relationships

As a member of Jefferson Unitarian Church, I covenant to do the following: I will speak truthfully with care and compassion. I will seek first to understand, then to be understood. I will speak directly to any person(s) with whom I have a concern rather than complain to others. I expect that there will be differences among us, and I will accept and care for others despite those differences. I will not disparage people with whom I disagree. I will refrain from judging other people's motives. I will test my assumptions and examine my own motives. I will honor my responsibility for upholding the spiritual principles and traditions of our community. In all things, I will cherish the health of the congregation above individual agendas. I will remain engaged with compassion and respect when conflict occurs and participate in the process, knowing that truth emerges from a free and open exchange of ideas.



Introduction

Jefferson Unitarian Church's childcare program is more than "babysitting". Our goal is to provide a friendly, nurturing, and loving atmosphere which is safe and secure. We strive to meet the basic physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional needs of all children left in our care. We believe that the Unitarian Universalist value of loving children should be reflected in every employee that works in our program.

Jefferson UU's Philosophy of Childcare

Adults who work with children and youth at Jefferson Unitarian Church are expected to always have the best interests of children and youth at heart. They are expected to nurture their physical, emotional, and spiritual growth by fostering an environment of kindness, trust, respectfulness, and fun. No one's enjoyment should ever be at the expense of another person's health or self-esteem. Their charge is to encourage kindness and genuineness among the children and youth and to discourage unkindness and falseness. In this manner, we hope to create an environment in which children and youth will be able to explore the spiritual and religious nature of their lives, both as individuals and as a community. To accomplish this, there are specific expectations that Jefferson Unitarian Church has for employees and volunteer.

Safety First

You have a very serious responsibility. The parents and staff trust you with the safety of their children while they are at the church or at a church function. Always keep your eyes and ears open for safety hazards and potential accidents. Report any safety hazards to the Childcare Coordinator in a timely manner.



Quality Care

Always provide prompt and efficient care for our children's basic physical, mental, emotional, and social needs. Be sensitive to needs according to the developmental levels of the children.

Education

We will create a positive learning environment so that you can interact with the children in play, craft, music, and story time. Each childcare worker is expected to actively work with the children. You are expected to dedicate all your time and attention to the children and youth and keep conversation among yourselves to a minimum. Cell phone use while working is not permitted.

Attitude

Each childcare worker is expected to exhibit a positive, friendly, and encouraging attitude toward the children, parents, co-workers, and other church staff; creating a warm and welcoming learning environment. Children learn a great deal by example.

Schedules

Childcare workers are required to arrive thirty (30) minutes prior to a scheduled event start time. They are expected to stay past the time the last child has been picked up to clean and to sterilize the equipment and toys. Spray bottles with sanitation solution can be found in the nursery cabinet.

You must sign-up for you schedule on a monthly basis or you will not get shifts. The schedules are in the nursery, preschool, and on SignUp Genius.



Screening and Selection of Workers With Children and Youth

Workers who are employed by Jefferson Unitarian to provide direct care or supervision to children at events and/or programs must meet the criteria outlined in the Personnel Policy.

Individuals who have been convicted of, are under current indictment for, or self-disclose any act of sexual misconduct involving a child or of child abuse are precluded from participation in the religious education program and other child or youth service activities.

All employees of Jefferson Unitarian Church must submit a background check form when they are employed by the church. All employees agree to follow the church's Child and Youth Safety policy. A copy of the policy is available in the Nursery.

Supervision

There Rule of Three when scheduled to supervise each group at all times: minimum of one Childcare worker to two children or two Childcare workers to one child.

Corporal punishment or abusive language will not be used any circumstances.

If behavior concerns occur during class, please discuss with DRE first and parents will be included. If a more formal meeting is necessary, the parents will be notified by DRE and the content of the purpose of the meeting will be discussed with them as soon as possible.



Reporting and Response

If any adult becomes aware or suspects that a child is or has been the victim of abuse, the adult will immediately report this abuse to the DRE and the Senior Minister. After the DRE and the Senior Minister have been notified, the reporting adult(s) and the aforementioned staff will determine the next steps. If necessary, the DRE and the Senior Minister will assist the adult(s) in reporting the abuse to Child Protective Services.

Adults in leadership will report any signs of:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Threatened or attempted suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as cutting, drug abuse, or signs of an eating disorder

All adults will act in accordance with the reporting laws of the state of Colorado. The DRE and the Senior Minister are mandated to report any information they have about the abuse of a child to Child Protective Services.

The definitions of abuse that Jefferson Unitarian Church will use are those created by the state of Colorado.

In the event that a child/youth discloses abuse to an adult, that adult to whom the child/youth has disclosed abuse will:

- Remain calm and not show strong reaction.
- Request the presence of the DRE or the Senior Minister as a second adult during the conversation.
- Put the child at ease by listening and seeking to understand.
- Ask permission before touching the child, including reassuring pats. Any touch may be associated with physical or emotional pain.



- Reassure the child/youth that he/she is not in trouble.
- Use the child/youth's vocabulary.
- Let the child/youth know what you will do: “We are going to tell the Director of Religious Education/Senior Minister, and then they will decide what to do from there.”
- Support the child: “I am very sorry that has happened to you. Do you need anything right now?”
- Do what you can to make certain the child is safe from further abuse.

The adult to whom the child/youth has disclosed the abuse will NOT:

- Press the child/youth for details. It is not the adult's responsibility to prove abuse has occurred.
- Ask “why” questions. These questions require children/youth to explain actions they may not understand.
- Promise that you will not tell anyone else about the disclosure.
- Ask leading or suggesting questions.
- Make angry or critical remarks or comments about the alleged perpetrator. The child/youth often knows, loves, or likes this person.
- Disclose information indiscriminately, keeping in mind the rules of confidentiality in this policy.
- Make the child feel different or singled out.
- Investigate a case him/herself. That is the job of the police and Child Protective Services.

Greeting Children and Families

1. Always greet children cheerfully at the door.
2. Accept any child brought to your room. If there is a question as to them being in the correct room, check with the RE Coordinator. Only accept children from an adult.



3. Never refuse to accept a child unless they are ill. If you have any reason to suspect the child is ill, you need to refer the parent/guardian to the RE Coordinator.
4. Accept children at the door:
 - a. Greet toddlers and older children at their level.
 - b. Allow children who can walk- to walk into the room.
5. Encourage the children to put things they bring from home in a safe place to avoid getting items lost or broken.
6. If a child is eating when they arrive, invite them to sit at the table to finish eating.
7. Be sure that parents/guardians sign-in or follow the check-in procedure. Each Childcare worker is responsible for reading the sign-in sheet.
8. Never discuss problems concerning children or Childcare worker policies with parents/guardians. Any problem with a child that needs to be discussed with the parent/guardian must be handled by the LEAD Childcare staff, RE Coordinator or the Director of Religious Education.
9. Never discuss a child's problem(s) in front of the child.

Outdoor Procedures

1. When taking children outdoors, the *Rule of 3* must be in place at all times.
2. If you go to the playground, please post appropriate signs.
3. If you take out children that are not yet walking, use the double stroller.
4. Do not use the playground(s) if there is not adequate light.



Discipline

When stopping or redirecting behavior

Redirection should help a child face their problems by helping them see how it can be done. We will be more successful if we suggest another behavior that has equal value. (Ex: if the child is climbing on the bookshelves, take them to the steps so they can climb.) Try to suggest something which meets the needs they are expressing in their behavior. To do this wisely, you must have some understanding of why the child is acting the way they do.

Use positive direction – “do” instead of “don’t”

A child needs to be redirected. A statement like, “be careful, don’t fall,” has little meaning to a child.

“Hold on with both hands,” helps them know what to do. Instead of always telling the child what they can’t do, tell them what they can do.

Use words and a tone of voice that reassures the child

Never raise your voice when talking with children. Directions should be given firmly but calmly and quietly. When you raise your voice, children often feel afraid, ashamed, or guilty. These feelings are damaging, often prevent learning, and create other problems.

Use few words rather than a long sermon

For example, a child is standing up in a rocking boat. Instead of saying, “Johnny, I have told you several times that you will fall and get hurt if you stand in that rocking boat,” just tell the child, “sit in the rocking boat.”



Language

Children and Childcare workers may not use inappropriate language in the Nursery area. Personal conversations with co-workers should be appropriate for children to hear.

Supervised Separation

The Childcare worker must ensure that guidance is consistent, based on an understanding of individual needs and development, and promote self-discipline and acceptable behavior. Cruel, harsh, or unusual punishment or treatment is not permitted.

Give time warnings in terms the child can understand

Ex: "When you have finished the puzzle, it will be time to go outside."

Baby & Infant Room

Room Preparation

1. Make sure you have a sign-in sheet
2. If the child is new or unknown to you, write the child's name on a nametag and place it on the child's back. This way the child should not be able to remove the nametag.
3. If infants are expected, make beds in the infant room. Put a blanket on the floor with a few small toys for infants.
4. Prepare a tape/CD player with soft music provided by the church.

During Session

1. Make sure the parent/guardian signs in.
2. Make sure that pacifiers, bottles, diaper bags, and toys are labeled.



When Feeding Infants & Toddlers

1. Only use food or formula provided by the parent/guardian.
2. Hold all babies to feed them and assist if they cannot hold their own bottle. Never prop a bottle for a baby.
3. Record the time they were fed.
4. Babies wearing a tied bib should not be placed on the floor or in a bed wearing the bib.
5. Children should eat in a designated area, not all over the room.
 - a. Children should wash their hands after eating.
 - b. Only give snack provided by parents.
 - c. Snacks should be served at a disinfected table served on a napkin.
 - d. Never embarrass a child who spills their drink. Let them help you clean it up.
 - e. Children should remain seated when eating.
 - f. Children should be closely monitored while they are eating.

Diapering Procedure

1. Check each child often to see that their diaper is neither wet nor soiled.
2. When changing diapers, make sure all supplies needed for diaper changing are in the diaper changing area. Check the child's diaper bag for necessary supplies.
3. Use diapers provided by parents- if none are available use supplies in diaper changing station.
4. When changing diapers, **always** use disposable gloves.
5. Use a new pair of gloves for each diaper change.
6. Place a diaper and disposable gloves in the soiled diaper container. Remove disposable gloves last.
7. Clean with disinfecting solution after **each** diaper change.



8. After removing gloves, wash hands with soap and water after each diaper change.
9. Children should be checked prior to the arrival time of the parent/guardian to see if they need to be changed.

General Information

1. Never cover babies' heads with blankets at any time.
2. Give each child a change of "place" so they do not stay on the floor, or in a swing the whole time.
3. Do try to keep pacifiers off the floor. If one falls to the floor, wash it in warm, soapy water.
4. Never let a child down on the floor with a bottle.
5. In the toddler and infant rooms, attendants are to **sit on the floor** interacting with the children.
6. Resources will be provided which will include ideas and suggestions for use with the children. Childcare workers should read or study these and be prepared to use them.

Room Cleaning Procedures

1. Each bed should be cleaned thoroughly with the disinfecting solution. This includes mattresses and all bed rails. Put all blankets and sheets in the laundry hamper.
2. Nursery toys, swings, high chairs, diaper changing areas, and other equipment should be cleaned with the disinfecting solution and left to air dry.

End of Session

1. Follow the Room Cleaning Procedures.
2. Place dirty linens in laundry hamper.



3. Place items that are left behind in the “Lost and Found” bin.

Disinfection of Hard Surfaces, Toys, Beds, Etc.

In order to provide a safe environment, hard surfaces should be cleaned/disinfected at the conclusion of each session. This includes table tops used for eating. If an incident occurs where bodily fluids have contaminated a surface, cleaning and disinfecting should take place before allowing activity to continue.

Soiled surfaces should be cleaned promptly with disinfectant, such as household bleach or Lysol (diluted one-part bleach to nine parts water); disposable towels or tissues should be used whenever possible. Be sure to date and label disinfectant when you mix it. It is good up to 31 days, then it must be replaced.

Older Children

Your time with older children will include introducing them to rituals of Unitarian Universalism to have them become familiar with the next steps in their faith development. This will include listening to music, singing simple songs, circle time, reading meaningful books together, age appropriate games and crafts. Please check with the coordinator for activities.

1. Childcare workers should interact with the children, keeping visiting with each other to a minimum.
2. Children should eat in a designated area, not all over the room.
 - a. Children should wash hands.
 - b. Snacks will be served with water.
 - c. Snacks should be served at a disinfected table served on a napkin.
 - d. Never embarrass a child who spills their drink. Let them help you clean it up.
 - e. Children should remain seated while eating.



- f. Children should be closely monitored while they are eating.
3. Straighten up and disinfect the room at the end of the session.

In Between Service

Please use this time to get rooms ready for the next class, cleanup toys, straighten playground equipment, and prep lessons. If you do not have tasks to do, check in with RE Coordinator or DRE for instructions.

Child Disruptive Behavior Policy

If a child has difficulty with the Four Agreements and/or their classroom covenant, the following steps will be taken:

1. A responsible adult will offer a firm reminder with direct eye contact that the behavior is not appropriate at Sunday School. If inappropriate behavior continues, the adult will have a private conversation with the child to determine how the situation can be improved.
2. If the child is upset or unable to cooperate, they will spend time with the RE Coordinator or Director of Religious Education for quiet time and conversation to work toward a solution.
3. If a satisfactory solution is not found, the DRE will speak with the child's parents/guardians. The parents/guardians, child, and DRE will work together to find ways to redirect the child's energy so that they can be a contributing member of the class.
4. In the case of extreme and repeated difficulties or when the safety of the other children is at stake; a child may need additional support that JUC cannot provide to families. Additional resources may need to be called in and the child may be asked to not attend RE until support can be put into place.



Universal Precautions

Because infections may be present in the blood or bodily fluids and children may be unknowingly infected with any infectious disease such as Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) or Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV), all Childcare workers should utilize “Universal Precautions” for handling blood and bodily fluids.

Universal Precautions

The term “Universal Precautions” refers to the handling of bodily fluids from all children and not just precautions recommended for those known to be infected with a blood-borne pathogen. Universal Precautions were written for staff in health care settings and public safety workers. However, Child Care Workers may come in contact with blood and other bodily fluid and should exercise the same precautions.

“Bodily fluids” include blood, feces, urine, respiratory secretions, vomitus, vaginal secretions, and semen. Blood is the single most important source of HIV, HBV, and other blood-borne pathogens in the occupational setting.

To Avoid Contact with Bodily Fluid

When possible, direct skin contact with bodily fluids should be avoided. However, first aid for a bleeding child must not be unreasonably delayed while one tries to secure gloves. Disposable gloves should be worn when direct hand contact with bodily fluids is anticipated (ex: treating bloody noses, handling clothes soiled by incontinence, cleaning small spills by hand). Even though gloves are worn, hands must be washed afterward.

If Direct Skin Contact Occurs

When unanticipated skin contact with bodily fluids occurs, hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons should be washed with antibacterial soap and water after direct contact has ceased.



Clothing and other non-disposable items (ex: towels used to wipe up bodily fluid) that are soaked through with bodily fluids should be rinsed and placed in plastic trash bags. If pre-soaking is required to remove stains, gloves should be used to rinse or soak the item in cold water before bagging. Clothing should then be sent home for washing by the parent/guardian.

Hand Washing Procedures

Proper hand washing requires the use of antibacterial soap and water with vigorous washing under a stream of warm water for approximately ten (10) seconds. Soap suspends easily removable soil and microorganisms and allows them to be washed off. Rinse under running water and use paper towels to thoroughly dry hands. Paper towels should be properly disposed of after use.

