



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Thank you so much for your interest in serving in Kids Cove. At CEFC, we are passionate about the next generation. We want to make Kids Cove the best hour of every kid's week as they connect to Christ through worship, large group experiences, and small group relationship building activities.

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MISSION:

“Connect Kids to Christ by partnering with parents to nurture a desire and ability to live all of life for Christ.”

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY:

Connect kids to Christ

Kids Cove is focused on the CEFC value of **growing in Christ**. *We do this by providing a ministry that enables children to grow as Jesus grew: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52)*

- **Grow in wisdom**

As children grow, from birth and onward, their understanding of the world and how it works increases. From the moment children enter into our ministry, we provide opportunities for them to grow in wisdom with a biblical worldview. Children will take their first steps toward Him with Bible stories with Christ Connections. We provide hands-on activities to teach the children how to apply the scriptures so they can learn to live all of life for Christ.

- **Grow in stature**

The ministry space needs to meet the growing physical and emotional needs of children. The space we provide is safe and inviting with size-appropriate furniture and materials. The curriculum is age-graded and with age-appropriate activities.

- **Grow in favor with God**

Our ultimate desire is to guide the children to an understanding of who God is and his plan for redemption through his son, Jesus. With this understanding, our prayer is the children will submit their lives in relationship to Christ as Savior and then learn what it means to “Live All of Life for Christ.”

- **Grow in favor with others**

God created us to live in community and in relationship with those close to us. We provide opportunities for children to grow in relationships with one another as well as with their teachers. Through the life application activities, we teach them how to apply God’s word to their relationships and interactions with others.

Partner with Parents

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children...” – Deuteronomy 6:4-9

In this passage, we see the responsibility to raise children to know God and live a life of loving him with all heart, soul, and might belongs to the parents. This passage, though, is not given to a set of individual parents—it is given within the context of a community of faith. We have the privilege of coming along side of parents as they learn to **live all of life for Christ**. Our hope is that as families **grow** and are **built up in Christ**, they will begin to **serve** their church and community.

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS:

Large Group Leader

- Engages the Large group energetically and creatively
- Teaches the weekly Bible story
- Interacts with media components

Small Group Leaders

- Leads small group discussion
- Builds relationships with children in their group
- Leads small group activities at the beginning and/or end of the session

QUALIFICATIONS:

To serve in Kids Cove, you need to:

- Have a growing relationship with Christ
- Care about kids
- Complete all necessary onboarding procedures including: application, background check, safety and security videos, and interview
- Have been involved with CEFC for a minimum of six (6) months (military families are exceptions to this qualification)

ADDITIONAL YOUTH QUALIFICATIONS:

- Youth volunteers must be in at least 6th grade
- If younger than middle school aged, youth may serve only if accompanied by parent/guardian, and with an age group younger than them
- As a part of the onboarding process, youth will go through a 3-month trial period to assess communication, dependability, responsibility and if the role is a good fit
- Involvement in YTH ministries is expected

EXPECTATIONS:

- Read through lessons in advance so you are prepared to guide children. All Sunday lessons and slides are available in the Services app
- Follow all safety and security policies
- Arrive 20 minutes before service starts to sign in and join the pre-service huddle with co-leaders
- Use the Services app to schedule and indicate availability (there is a guide on how to add blackout dates in Services in the classroom folders)

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES:

Check-in and Dismissal

- Check in each child on the iPad as they arrive and make sure they have the appropriate name tag before joining your group.
- At pick-up, make sure to match the identification code on the security tag with the code on the child's name tag. Children can only be released after confirmation of matching tags. Please remove the child's sticker and check them out on the iPad once the child has been picked up.
- If the security tag is lost, please send the parent to the Kid's Cove Check-In desk to receive a replacement tag.
- If a child loses or damages their nametag, you may alert Kids Cove check in via walkie talkie and a replacement tag will be delivered.
- If a child wants to switch grades to be with a friend or sibling, we age down instead of up. (E.g. A second grader can join first grade but not the other way around).
- Complete weekly report (green sheet) at end of service.

Restroom Breaks

- Never go into the bathroom alone with a child.
- If a child needs help while in the restroom, bring another volunteer with you to adhere to the Two Person Rule.
- Make sure you are never alone with a child and that you can be seen at all times by another Kids Cove volunteer.
- If a child is old enough to go by themselves, please wait outside the restroom for them to come out.
- All restroom doors must remain open when in use.
- All Kids Cove restrooms are for children only.

Diaper Changing

- Wear gloves while changing a diaper.
- After changing each diaper, sanitize the diaper changing area with provided wipes or spray.
- Make sure other adults are around during this process. Make sure you can be seen by another Kids Cove volunteer at all times.
- Let parents know the diaper has been changed.

Toy Cleaning

- To avoid the spread of infectious disease, if a toy has been "mouthed" by an infant/toddler, place toy in "dirty toy bin" so another child does not have access to the toy. These toys are cleaned by Kids Cove staff.
- All toys are individually cleaned on a weekly basis.

Allergies

- Known allergies are printed on each child's tag, as needed. There is also a list of children with allergies in each classroom folder.
- Please check a child's tag for an allergy before presenting any allergens.
- If an activity has a known allergy associated with it (snack, nature items, etc.), we must have an allergy alert posted on the door prior to drop-off. We are a peanut/nut free program.
- For best safety practice, all snacks and supplies are provided by Kids Cove staff. Please do not bring food for the kids.

Contacting Parents

- Should a child in our care experience sickness, have a medical emergency, become non-compliant, or be a danger to himself or others, please contact a member of Kids Cove staff (use walkie talkie provided in each space).
- Parents may be contacted to retrieve their child only by the present adult volunteer or a member of Kids Cove staff using the tablet provided in each space.

Photos/Videos

Kids Cove Volunteers are NOT permitted to take photos or videos of kids while serving in Kids Cove. There may be times for promotion purposes where Kids Cove staff (or an identified and approved vendor) will take photos and videos of the kids. This is done with great care as there are some parents who have NOT given permission to have photos taken.

Illness

Children and/or volunteers that experience the following symptoms within the past 24 hours will not be permitted to participate in any Kids Cove environment:

- Coughing, Sneezing, or Runny Nose (other than allergy related)
- Fever
- Diarrhea or Vomiting
- Unidentified or Contagious Rash
- Pink Eye
- Lice
- Any contagious childhood illness (within past week)

Injury

- Persons who have received a minor injury (minor scrapes, bruises, lost tooth, etc.) should be given first aid (cleaning area with soap and water, ice pack, or appropriate bandages) as needed at the time of injury.
- The person's parent/guardian should be notified of the injury when they pick up their child.
- An incident report (located in each classroom folder) must be filled out, signed by all witnesses as well as a Kids Cove Staff member.
- The incident report must be given to a Kids Cove Staff member before you leave.

Medical Emergency

- In case of a medical emergency, a person's parent/guardian will be notified immediately as well as emergency health professionals (i.e. 911).
- Appropriate medical attention will be given only by trained professionals unless in emergency life support situation (i.e. C.P.R., A.E.D., Heimlich Maneuver)
- In case of medical emergency, use walkie talkie (located by door of each space) to summon security team and Kids Cove staff. Say "code blue" for a medical emergency.
- To ensure safety, any and all Epi-Pens left with a child during service must be stored in a Kids Cove provided medical case. Any and all Epi-Pens must be returned to parents when the child is picked up.

Lost Child

- Should a child get lost or become unaccounted for while in our care, please contact Kids Cove staff immediately. Use the walkie talkie (located by door of each space) and state "code yellow."
- Give them the child's name, age/grade, and inform them of what the child is wearing so that the security team can search the premises.
- Complete an incident form (located in classroom folder) and give it to Kids Cove staff before you leave.

SAFETY AND SECURITY:

Two Person Rule

Kids Cove workers must strictly adhere to the “two-person rule”. While on our campus(es), no child is ever to be alone with one adult or teenager to whom he/she is not related. At least 2 leaders (one must be over the age of 18) of no relation with each other should be present in each room/area when a child is in our care.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Be aware of the emergency evacuation map at the door of each room. In the event of an emergency evacuation, please count the kids in your care and compare with your roster to ensure every child is accounted for. Line up all children at the door in a single file line. Make your way out of the building following the route described by the emergency evacuation map. Please confirm with Kids Cove staff that all kids are accounted for. Wait in the designated area until all children are picked up by the appropriate adults.

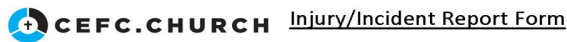
Active Shooter/Shelter in Place

In the event of an imminent threat/active shooter, Kids Cove staff will immediately contact each lead teacher to lockdown each classroom. Move your children away from any doors or windows. Take shelter in the corner/space of the room that is least visible to an intruder.

Incident Reporting

Kids Cove workers are responsible for completing an incident report whenever there is an incident resulting in an injury, abuse, or suspicion of abuse. The incident reports will be filled out and signed by all witnesses of the incident, and this completed form should be given to a Kids Cove staff member before you leave the premises.

SAMPLE INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT:



Time and Place of Incident/Injury	Date: _____ Time: _____ Where did the incident occur? _____
Person(s) involved/Injured Include witnesses. Continue on reverse if required.	Name(s) _____ Address: _____ Phone _____ Email: _____
Full Description of Incident/Injury Describe any injuries, first aid given, or other actions taken, to include notifying parents or leadership	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Parent/Supervisor Notified: _____
Individual making report	Name(s) _____ Address: _____ Phone _____ Email: _____
Signature of Reporting Individual	Signature _____ Date: _____

*Report must be turned in to Pastor/Director and forwarded to the Executive Director of Operations

TIPS FOR GUIDING BEHAVIOR:

Through their behavior, children communicate with us. Children's behaviors typically fall into one (or more) of these five categories:

1. *Attention-Seeking*

Children may act out—like yelling, interrupting, or being silly—to gain attention from adults or peers. Even negative attention (like being corrected) can reinforce these behaviors.

2. *Escape or Avoidance*

A child might try to avoid something challenging or unpleasant—like cleaning up, transitioning between activities, or participating in group time—by crying, hiding, or refusing to engage.

3. *Access to Tangibles*

Some behaviors stem from a desire to get something, like a toy, snack, or activity. If a child throws a tantrum and then receives the item, they learn that this behavior gets results.

4. *Sensory or Automatic Reinforcement*

Some behaviors are driven by internal needs. For example, a child might rock back and forth for comfort, touch everything to explore textures, or scream just to hear the sound. These behaviors help them regulate themselves or satisfy a sensory need.

5. *Control or Power*

Young children are learning independence, and sometimes behavior is a way to feel in charge. Pushing boundaries or refusing directions may be a way to express that need for control.

How do we identify what is causing the behavior?

The **ABC model** is a common framework that illustrates how environmental factors can influence behaviors before and after they occur. The model separates behavioral occurrences into three components:

- **Antecedent:** Any situation, action, or event that precedes a behavior (i.e., what happens before the behavior).
- **Behavior:** An observable and measurable act.
- **Consequence:** Any response, action, or event that follows a behavior (i.e., what happens after the behavior).

Antecedents and consequences can make it more or less likely that a given behavior will happen.

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
A child is playing with a peer at the end of class.	The child refuses to share a ball with a peer.	The peer walks away and plays with someone else.
The large group teacher asks a question.	A child calls out the answer without raising their hand.	The teacher calls on another child that was raising his hand.
The teacher asks the children to share markers during craft time.	A child willingly shares the supplies and helps another child that needs a marker.	The leader praises the child and highlights how their actions reflect Jesus' love.

Being able to identify what is causing the behavior can help you decide on an appropriate way to redirect the child. Please keep in mind that you can't control behavior, but you can make it easier for the kids to make good choices.

Encouraging appropriate behavior helps make room for what matters most: hearing the gospel and growing in Christ.

How do we best serve the kids?

- Pray and ask God to help you lead the children in your group. He made every one of them in His image and knows exactly what they need.
- Build relationships with the kids. The more you get to know them the easier it will be to come alongside them and disciple them.
- Set up your space for success (i.e. make sure each child has a space to work, remove any items that will cause unwanted behavior).
- Transition times can be hard for children. Give them a warning before they are going to change activities.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Use clear instructions and minimal words.
- Be aware that your behavior can affect the behavior of the children. Stay calm when difficult behaviors arise.
- Before communicating, THINK "True, Helpful, Informative, Necessary, Kind"
- Don't be afraid to ask for help! We are a team. Please ask another volunteer or Kids Cove staff member for assistance or advice about any situation you feel uncomfortable in.

Biblical perspective on behavior:

- Our behavior comes from our hearts.
- "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn-bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:43-45)
- Behavior is a heart issue. We have the privilege of teaching the kids about the one that can change their hearts and make them more like Him (Galatians 5:22).
- "The heart is the essential core of who you are ... it is not enough to alter my behavior or to change my circumstances. Christ transforms people by radically changing their heart." — Paul Tripp

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE:

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information and instructions for fulfilling our biblical and legal responsibilities to safeguard and minister to children and families and to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to CEFC staff and volunteers considered mandated reporters under Pennsylvania State law as well as other staff who encounter suspected abuse or neglect.

Philosophy

As a church and as individuals ministering to students and children, we have three fundamental responsibilities regarding suspected abuse or neglect:

- Safeguarding and ministering to children
- Safeguarding and ministering to families
- Fulfilling our responsibilities under the law

We will always fulfill our legal obligation to report suspected neglect or abuse, but we must also do everything in our power to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the children and families involved as well.

Procedures for reporting

1. If a staff member or volunteer has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected (see Appendix A) or if someone articulates that they are aware of possible abuse or neglect, then immediately inform the Pastor/Director in charge so that they can provide support and assistance during the reporting process.
2. The person who witnessed or received the information firsthand will immediately report the suspected child abuse or neglect. Report in accordance with Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (see below). A pastor or director may assist in this process.
3. The Director/Pastor in charge will also immediately notify the appropriate Executive Pastor/Director. The Senior Pastor must also be notified immediately.
4. The Pastor/Director in charge and appropriate Executive team member will immediately create a plan for pastoral care for all involved (See Appendix B).
5. The Pastor/Director in charge must also complete a CEFC incident report.

How to make a report to Child Protective Services.

These are the steps to take if you suspect abuse or neglect.

1. At CEFC, the Student Ministry Director or Leader, Children's Ministry Director, and Executive Pastor are subject matter experts with formal training. They are available to any mandated reporter or other individual throughout the reporting process.
2. Reports of suspected child abuse should be made to ChildLine, either electronically at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis> or orally by calling ChildLine at 800-932-0313.
3. If an oral report is made to ChildLine, the Report of Suspected Child Abuse (Form CY47) must also be completed and forwarded to the county's children and youth services within 48 hours after making the report. This form can be obtained at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe> or from Cumberland County Children and Youth Services. If a report was made electronically, no Form CY47 is required to be completed.
4. The county's children and youth services must begin an investigation within 24 hours. A thorough inquiry is conducted to determine if the child was abused and what services are appropriate for the child and family. The investigation must be completed within 30 days unless the agency provides justification as to why it cannot.

Mike Barbetta
Executive Pastor

Chris Bado
Executive Director

Child Abuse Prevention and Mandatory Reporting Video Training

All volunteers working in Kids Cove are required to view the Kids Cove Policies and Procedures videos annually.

Appendix A. Identifying Abuse

Reasonable cause to suspect child abuse is more than a hunch: it is a determination you make, based on your knowledge of circumstances, your observations, your familiarity with the individuals and your feelings about the incident.

The following table provides examples of physical and behavioral indicators you can look for if you suspect abuse. No one indicator from the list below is proof of abuse:

Physical Indicators

- Burns (form a distinct pattern, sock or glove-like, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back, buttocks)
- Bruises, welts and/or bite marks (“grab marks”, patterns reflecting an article, regularly appearing after an absence, in various stages of healing)
- Lacerations or Abrasions (on back or arms, legs or torso- to external genitalia)
- Fractures
- Head Injuries
- Persistent hunger
- Unattended medical needs
- Developmentally delayed
- Abandonment
- Inappropriate dress (clothing is wrong for weather conditions or dirty)
- Poor hygiene
- Always tired
- Mental or emotional developmental delays
- Speech disorders
- Depression
- Sign of self-mutilation
- Signs of attempted suicide
- Injury to genitals
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Suspicious stains or blood on child’s underwear Painful bowel movements or retention
- Early, unexplained pregnancy
- Frequent unexplained sore throats

Child Behavior Indicators

- Complains of soreness/pain
- Reports injury by caretaker
- “Accident prone”
- Behavior extremes
- Clothing covers body inappropriately (hiding injury)
- Seeks affection from any adult
- Intolerant of physical contact
- Wary of adult contact (seems frightened of caretaker) Afraid to go home (runaway)
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Depressed (suicidal)
- Begging for or stealing food
- Reports no caretakers at home
- Constant fatigue
- Lying or stealing
- Difficulty relating to others- (emotionally and socially withdrawn)
- Chronic truancy
- Alcohol or drug misuses
- Compulsive disorders
- Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, cruelty to animals)
- Neurotic traits
- Delinquent behavior
- Mental/emotional developmental deficiencies
- Inappropriately adult or infantile
- Verbal disclosure
- Wearing excessive layers of clothing
- Hiding stained or bloodied clothing
- Precocious sexual knowledge/behavior
- Seductive behavior toward adults of opposite sex
- Excessive masturbation
- Intolerance of physical contact
- Role reversal
- Specific fear of males or females

Appendix B. Behavior Resources

The ABC Model: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bp/cresource/q1/p02/>

IRIS. "Page 2: The ABC Model." IRIS, 5 June 2025, iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bp/cresource/q1/p02.

The "Why" Behind the Behavior: <https://behaviorresources.com/behavior/functions-of-behavior-the-why-behind-the-behavior/>

Resources, Behavior, and Behavior Resources. "Functions of Behavior – the 'Why' Behind the Behavior."

Behavior Resources, Inc., 25 Mar. 2025, behaviorresources.com/behavior/functions-of-behavior-the-why-behind-the-behavior.

