

CREATING A PRESCHOOL MINISTRY AREA

PHILOSOPHY

Every church should pay special attention to its preschool ministry. Nowhere else in the church is there a greater opportunity for reaching those who are seeking meaning and stability in their lives. Often, young couples who had, up until now, been content to be uninvolved in the church will consider attending church once again or for the first time when they begin to have children. The desire to be an effective parent can prompt a young adult to visit and become involved in the local church. A church that demonstrates concern for their children and a desire to assist them in their parenting responsibilities will be the one that they choose to join. Preschool ministry also plays a crucial role in the spiritual development of preschoolers, who are never too young to learn that Jesus loves them and to experience that love in the arms of dedicated, well-equipped preschool teachers.

As a committee, work through the following list of recommendations and suggestions for building to the unique needs of preschool ministry.

SPACE NEEDS

- Assess present space and determine if renovation or a new building is needed.
- Check the square footage per preschooler
Maximum 35 square feet per person (preschoolers and teachers) enrolled in room.
Minimum 25 square feet per person (preschoolers and teachers) enrolled in room.
- Analyze current class enrollment of members and prospects to determine the square footage for the preschool area. Enrollment plus 50% of the prospects.
- Determine the additional number of rooms you will need (base on growth).
- List other space needs such as laundry room, resource room, adult rest rooms and kitchen.

LOCATION

- Safety issues require preschool area be located on the first floor. Check with state and local fire departments for requirements.
- Located near Worship Center
- Placed near Young Adult classes
- Close to Parking areas
- Easy access to outside play area
- Select an area with low or very light traffic in hallway
- Choose a secure area
- Make sure area is accessible for physically impaired persons and strollers

PARKING

- Designated area near entrance to building
- Safe covered drive through for pickup and delivery
- Designated parking spaces for parents with preschoolers under the age of two-years of age.
- Limited other automobile traffic – no through traffic.
- Well surfaced for use of strollers and wheel chairs.
- Well drained parking lot and walkways
- Appropriate traffic signs visible and readable
- Adequate lighting available with emergency lighting that operates properly.

BUILDING ENTRANCE

- Well-drained walkway and entrance.
- Door controls to prevent fast closing
- Entry surfaces are matted or treated concrete is used to control slippery conditions.
- Entrance and hallway unobstructed and well lighted.
- Steps and stairs have non-slip surfaces and free of trip hazards
- Stair railings well secured.
- Fire exit doors installed with emergency bars
- Doors leading to outside well marked with emergency exit signs as required by the fire department

WELCOME AREA

- Large enough to have a small desk and love seat or chairs
- Area large enough to provide an aquarium or nature item to involve preschoolers while parents register their family.
- Phone jack and phone for emergencies.

HALLWAYS

- Doors open into the rooms rather than into the hallway.
- Eight to ten feet wide unobstructed hallways
- Color corrected bulbs used in fluorescent light fixtures (See **ROOMS** “*Lighting*”)
- Vinyl or carpeted flooring
- Bulletin boards and framed items hung at adult height
- Doors do not open directly across hall from one another (congestion during arrival and departure)

ROOMS

Size and Shape

- Rectangular in shape
- 25 to 35 square feet per person enrolled (teachers and preschoolers)

Space Specifications per age group

Age Group	Space/Person	Maximum Enrollment	Room Size	Leader: Learner Ratio
Babies	35 sq. ft.	12	420 sq. ft.	1:2
Ones-Twos	35 sq. ft.	12	420 sq. ft.	1:3
Threes-PreK	35 sq. ft.	16	560 sq. ft.	1:4
Kindergarten	35 sq. ft.	20	700 sq. ft.	1:5

- No preschool room smaller than 15 feet by 20 feet should be built.
- Play yard space per child is 75 square feet per child minimum or as required by codes.

Doors

- Two exits per room
- One piece solid wooden door opening into room. Avoid the use of half doors for teaching purposes and to keep the area secure and safe.
- Doors wide enough for a baby crib to pass through (36 inches).
- Small observation window in door
- Doors entering adjoining rooms not located next to each other or across from one another.

Windows

- At least two windows in every room. Each room needs an adequate source of natural light to alleviate the feeling of being trapped and prevent hyperactivity from incorrect lighting.
- Windows low enough for children to see through (18 inches from floor)
- Solid clear pane windows without sections allow for easy outside view for preschoolers and are easier to clean.
- For window coverings select windows with blinds built between the two glass panes.
- If sliding windows are used to provide adequate ventilation, protective screens or retainers are on the outside of the window to keep a preschooler from falling through an open window. If remodeling windows that open may be required to provide second source to outdoors. (Check local and state fire codes).
- Windows do not open into the room.
- Window ledges flush with wall and without molding.

Walls

- Durable, safe, and easily cleaned washable vinyl or paint on walls
- Neutral or soft colors, free of discernible patterns–
 - Southern exposure use cool colors (blue or green). Cool colors in a naturally warm room helps child feel cooler. Temperatures affect a child's behavior and emotions.
 - Northern exposure use warm colors (yellow or pastel peach). Warmer colored walls in a naturally cooler room helps a child feel warmer, when he is comfortable he is ready to learn.
- Absence of permanently hung or applied items (bulletin boards, frames, murals)
- All walls are the same color
- Two safety electrical outlets on each wall at adult height (about 4 ½ feet from floor).

Ceilings

- Acoustical tiles or sound absorbent materials
- At least 9 to 10 feet in height.
- Light colored preferably white or off white
- Provide for hanging mobile(s) in younger preschool rooms.

Lighting

- Windows for natural light preferred
- Color-corrected bulbs in fluorescent lighting units for artificial lighting. Fluorescent bulbs cause hyperactive children. If incandescent lighting may be used, be sure rooms are adequately lighted.
- Dimmer on light switch in baby department.
- At least two safety electrical outlets on each wall.
- Emergency lighting installed and properly working.

Flooring

- Durable and comfortable for child and teacher
- Easily clean and disinfected
- Moderately light in color and free from bold patterns
- Safe and fire-retardant covering
- Vinyl flooring preferred for preschool areas and strongly recommended for baby and ones departments (easy to clean and disinfect)
- If carpet is selected, use
 - Stain resistant,
 - Low pile,
 - No pad
 - Easy to clean,
 - Light muted colors and

- Fire retardant.
- Avoid bold bright colors, patterns, and designs.
- Carpet should be vacuumed between each use and deep cleaned once a month.
- If carpeting or partial carpeting is used, plan for the rest room to be placed so as to prevent mop bucket from being rolled across carpeted area.

Cabinet Storage and Sinks

- Adult height counters (36 inches)
- Adult height sink for washing hands although preschool sized rest room is located in room.
- A separate adult height utility sink for cleaning art supplies
- Child-sized sink in the room although a child-sized sink is provided in rest room
- Durable surfaces
- High neck faucet for washing hands
- Electronic sensors for “on” and “off” may be more expensive but promotes
 - Good hygiene,
 - Regulates temperature of water to prevent scalds and
 - Saves money on utilities.
- If conventional handles are used, hot water handles not within child’s reach.
- Scald prevention valve built in the water faucet.
- Hot water tank thermostat set at ___ to prevent scalds.
- Built in cabinet with closed shelving.
- Open shelving for diaper bags and preschoolers’ belongings.
- Minimal in-room storage provided (most teaching materials for twos and older are kept in resource room. A separate storage space for babies and ones toys that require being disinfected after each session).
- Double or triple the number of safety electrical outlets at counter height for crock pot to warm bottles, recorder, CD player, etc.

Additional Concerns for Babies and Ones Rooms

- If you have a weekday-licensed school, diaper-changing area designed according to the codes in your area. If not weekday school, change babies in their own crib and ones and twos on a scrubable vinyl mat on the floor.
- Closed cabinet for trash or wall mounted closed trash receptacle.
- Adult height counter with sink.
- Additional cabinet for linens
- Closed cabinet for dirty linens
- Nursing Room
 - Comfortable, secure, private
 - Nearby younger preschool room(s)

- Sink provided
- One wall mounted storage cabinet for washcloths and extra diapers.
- Diaper changing area (if built in, 5 inch sides and a safety strap is installed).
- Dimming capability for lights

REST ROOMS

Preschool Rest Room

- Located in each room or between adjoining rooms.
- Child sized toilet (10 inches high)
- Child-sized (height) sink (20 inches high).
- Electric sensor water faucet preferred (saves of utilities, prevents spread of disease, and prevents scalding).
- High neck faucet with non-scald valve.
- Hot water thermostat set at ----- to prevent scalds.
- No mirror needed
- Space for a covered trash can
- Floors vinyl tile so that it can be easily disinfected with bleach solution (See guidelines set by Infectious Disease Control Center, Atlanta, GA)
- Non-locking doorknobs
- Window in door for observation purposes
- Wall storage cabinet (adult height) for hygiene supplies

Adult Rest Room

- Located on nearby hallway (See guidelines “RESTROOMS” in this document).

KITCHEN

- Adult height counter (36 inches) with sink and durable top for preparing snacks
- Cabinet space for storage of cooking utensils
- Closet cabinet
- Food storage area
- Locked space for unsafe items
- Provide for
 - refrigerator,
 - range,
 - dishwasher
 - sink,
 - air drying area for disinfecting items
 - washer,
 - dryer,
- Instant hot water tap
- Preschoolers are not permitted in Kitchen area.

LAUNDRY ROOM

- Wash and dryer hook-ups
- Laundry Sink
- Closed cabinet that locks for detergents and disinfectants
- Instant hot water tap
- Preschoolers are not permitted in Laundry area

RESOURCE ROOMS

Twos through Fives Resource Room

- One room for twos through fives materials
- Sink
- Open Shelves
- Work Table
- Electrical Safety Outlets
- Counter space
- Stove with oven

Babies through Ones Resource Room

- One room for babies and ones materials as these materials require being disinfected before being placed in the resource room.
- Sink
- Open Shelves
- Work Table
- Electrical Safety Outlets
- Counter Space