

Getting Babies into Sunday School and ETC

Writer: Pat Murphy

Each child is a gift from God that is to be valued and nurtured not just by his parents but by the entire church family. When do babies need to attend Sunday School and ETC?

Some parents find it very difficult to adjust to new situations including separating from their young child. Parents are often anxious; before they had a child they were sure of themselves, but now may be uncertain about this new role.

Preschool Ministry to young families begins prior to the birth of a child, helping parents understand the process for enrollment and attendance in the babies and ones department. The Preschool Minister should have a strong presence within the church to share the importance of bringing young children to Sunday School and ETC. Guidelines in place include:

- Sensitivity to normal guilt feelings parents may have when they think of leaving their child.
- Think about and be aware of how parents and teachers see (view) each other.
- Parent meetings quarterly that include:
 - Photographs or a PowerPoint presentation of infant teachers and children in Sunday School and ETC (obtain permission to photograph children).*
 - Samples of security procedures*
 - Testimonies from parents with babies and ones*
 - A teacher's testimony about his/her calling to babies and ones.*
 - Sanitization of Preschool toys and equipment.*
- Updated Preschool Handbook that includes names and telephone numbers of those serving in the Preschool as directors and teachers.
- Newsletters monthly specifically geared to babies and ones.
- Invite parents or prospective parents to become a part of the ETC program.
- Provide a resource area with current information about how babies and ones learn and what parents can do to help their child adjust to new surroundings.
- Make changes in the learning environment (Sunday School and ETC space) to accommodate babies and ones.
- Topical workshops semi-annually geared to the development of babies and ones.
- Constantly provide training for babies and ones leadership to accept and value each parent's expression of concern while they show and model respect.
- Outreach ministry is provided materials that answer prospective member questions about the babies and ones ministry during Sunday School and ETC.
- Welcome suggestions and provide feedback on those suggestions.



Churches that place a high priority and value parents with young children have a high attendance in the babies and ones departments. This occurs as parents learn the value of placing their young child in his age-appropriate Sunday School and ETC department. There he hears from caring adults that Jesus loves him, and church is a happy place to be.

