

Child Care & Child-Friendly Events at First UU San Antonio

Updated 2019

When you host any event at the church, offering child care and/or activities for children and youth is an excellent way to encourage attendance and show your support for families with children.

Child care, or child-friendly event?

Child care means that you are taking responsibility for the children in your care, and children must be signed in and out of the designated care-giving space by a parent or guardian. In the case of a **child-friendly event**, parents and guardians retain responsibility for their own children and should monitor them accordingly.

So, when planning an event, your first step is to decide the ages for which the event will be appropriate. Adults only? Adults and teens? All ages? If you will offer child care, decide what ages the child care will be for. Be sure to clearly advertise this information.

General Guidelines

Be sure to have age appropriate activities at the event for any age group for which you will not offer care.

If the event will be longer than two hours, age-appropriate activities should be planned for any children above the age of three. Caregivers do not plan activities. Remember: fun events should be fun for everyone!

The chart below under “child care guidelines” gives detailed information about required caregiver/child ratios, but basically, children three and under require two caregivers and those four and older require two. Children can be cared for all together if there are fewer than eight. So, plan for four caregivers unless you are pretty sure there will be fewer than eight children. Requesting RSVP’s may be a good idea if you have no idea how many children to expect. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of activities, please consult the Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

Child Care Guidelines

Note: A minimum of two adult caregivers is required at all times.

The Director of Lifespan Religious Education is responsible for providing child care on Sunday mornings and for duly-called congregational meetings. For other events, organizers may arrange for care on their own using volunteers, or contact the DLRE, who will arrange for paid care if caregivers are available. The DLRE will bill your committee \$15/hr per caregiver. If you plan to offer child care, please think about the costs when making your yearly budget requests.

For one-time events, criminal background checks are not required for child care providers. Use your judgment and choose carefully. Child care workers must be familiar with our church's safety policy (see relevant section below).

If no one shows up for an after-church event, attendants will be paid for ½ hour beyond their regular end time. If no one shows up for child care at any time other than after-church events (for which attendants would have made a special trip in), they will be paid for a minimum of one hour's time.

When there are children under three years of age, care must be provided in the nursery.

A responsible church member should meet the caregivers and show them the locations of fire extinguishers and first aid kits.

Using television/movies to entertain the children can be problematic unless parents explicitly approve of content. It's better to have age-appropriate activities available. If you need help finding suitable activities and materials, the DLRE is willing to help (Sheri: dlre@uusat.org)

Relevant Excerpts from First UU's safety policy:

Nursery care workers will be at least 18 years of age; volunteers working with children ages 13 and below will be at least 21 years of age; volunteers working with youth ages 14 and up will be at least 25 years of age.

At least two adults, including child care workers, should be present in each classroom on Sunday mornings, and on every outing, overnight and other church-related activity with groups of children. In events where there is free-flow between rooms, two adults in the building will be sufficient, as long as doors remain open. Windows must remain uncovered at all times.

Except for brief periods when unforeseen circumstances make it necessary, at no time shall one adult and one child/youth be alone together out of sight of other adults unless the adult is a parent or legal guardian of the child/youth. The number of children per adult care provider should not exceed the recommended guidelines suggested by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Safe child-staff ratio and group size

Age	Staff-to-child ratio	Maximum group size
Newborn–24 months	1:3	6
25–30 months	1:4	8
31–35 months	1:5	10
3 years	1:7	14
4–5 years	1:8	16

6–8 years	1:10	20
9–12 years	1:12	24

When infants or toddlers are included in mixed age groups, the staff-to-child ratios and group size guidelines for the youngest child should be followed. Mixed age groups that do not include infants or toddlers should follow guidelines that reflect the most common age.

When there is a large number of children, babies and toddlers should be kept in a separate location, as they need closer care and supervision; older children who are not siblings shouldn't be playing in the same area as the babies or toddlers without extra supervision.

Note: There may be times when you have a very small number (1-3) of children to be cared for. Let common sense prevail. If you know the parents well, you may vary from these guidelines with parents' explicit written permission.

Child-friendly Events

Sometimes you may want to offer **children's activities** at an event without offering **child care**. **Alcohol protocol:** For all events at which children may be present, whether special activities are provided or not, care must be taken with the serving of alcohol. The church has a very specific protocol for the serving of alcohol, which may be obtained from the church web site or church office.