

Setting up and running an effective creche

Why have a crèche?

Providing childcare is an important way to help parents and carers to access events in churches.

Who will run your crèche?

Have at least one person who is responsible for planning and organising the crèche.

You might choose to have a rota of volunteers helping during the day, but it is important to have someone who knows what's going on and is taking responsibility for making sure that the childcare happens properly.

You need to make sure there are enough adults in your crèche to look after all the children properly. This will depend on the age of the children, and the environment you are in.

Ratios

Good Practice 5 (GP5) recommends the following adult to child ratios as the minimum to help keep children safe:

- ◆ 0 – 2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
- ◆ 2 – 3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
- ◆ 4 – 8 years: 1 adult to 6 children
- ◆ 9 – 12 years: 1 adult to 8 children
- ◆ 13 – 18 years: 1 adult to 10 children

In an environment that is unfamiliar to the children, and when the children don't know the volunteers, you should have a higher number of adults to make sure there are enough people around to help every child feel safe and secure.

Babies and young toddlers need constant care and supervision, so aim for a one-to-one ratio for children who are under one.

There should always be at least two adults present, even with very small groups.

Settling Children

Settling the children in to the creche is important, having a conversation with the parents/carers about whether the child does get upset in new environments, designate a creche worker to each child, they should be the first person a child meets and the person the child goes to if they are upset. A conversation with the parent/carer to understand how the child likes to be soothed and if they have a teddy or blankie which helps them be comforted.

Mobile Phones

You should also include a phone policy, where there is only one phone used for the purposes of the creche and all other phones to be switched off and put away. The main phone will be taken outside when venturing out for walks or to play outside.

Where will your crèche be?

Choose a suitable space for your crèche.

If your event is outdoors, you may want to set up a specific tent or marquee.

If it is an indoor event, you should designate a room. This needs to be big enough to allow the children to play. It also needs to be close to toilets and hand-washing facilities, and there should be drinking water available.

Think about how to make the space as pleasant and as safe as possible.

This includes making sure it is clean and warm.

It is useful to separate the space a bit, so that children have a choice to do different things.

For example, have a cosy corner with blankets and cushions for quiet play and reading, and an area for noisy or messy play.

Information about the children in your care

You should:

- ◆ Know when a child is dropped off, and when they are collected, this should be done with a signing in and out sheet
- ◆ Have the name and contact details of the child's parent/carer, and know who will be collecting the child
- ◆ Know if the child has any medical conditions or allergies that you need to be aware of
- ◆ Get parental consent for emergency medical treatment
- ◆ Get consent to take the children out for a walk if there is a suitable walk near to your church
- ◆ Get consent for any photos you may wish to take and be specific about where they will be displayed i.e. Facebook or noticeboard or for display purposes
- ◆ Nappy changing consent and policy.

Toileting

Ensure that you have a dedicated space in the toilet for the creche to use for nappy changing and toileting. This ideally should be a toilet which gives you sole use, if not please ensure that no-one else enters the toilet when any children maybe toileting.

Administration

- Ask parents to complete a short form when they leave their child with you, to give you the information you need. Don't keep personal information for longer than you need to (although for Safeguarding purposes keep the forms in a file and archive it. It should never be share with others) **See Appendix 2**
- Keep track of which children have been left in the care of the crèche
- Keep a list of the children who are in the crèche, via the signing in and out sheet, when they are dropped off and collected. This way, you know which children the crèche is responsible for at any given moment
- If a different person than the person you were expecting arrives to collect a child, phone their parent/carer to check this is okay
- It is always good to have feedback so ask parents or carers to fill in comments in a book. This can help you develop your creche.

Toys and other equipment

Think about the ages of the children who will attend your crèche, and how you can create a relaxing environment for children to play.

Some church creches will link their activities with the bible passage for that day or it maybe you have a theme for a season.

It's a good idea to have some organised activities, such as a game or a craft activity.

Try to think of activities that are fun but not too complicated, that children can drop in and out of.

Also offer the children the opportunity to do their own thing. Provide toys and books that are suitable for the ages of children you are expecting, and make sure there is enough space for the children to use these.

It is important to provide enough equipment, but it can also create a stressful environment if there is too much equipment. It can create a lot of mess and chaos.

Think about what you need, rather than just putting out every toy you can find!

- You can borrow children's books from local libraries.
 - Some local authorities have a toy library too.
- ! Make sure all the toys are cleaned or washed before and after the creche.
All surfaces and wiped before and after the creche time with disinfectant spray.

Food and drink

Be clear with parents about whether you will be providing food or not. If you are providing food, take care and make sure you are careful about food hygiene. Also remember that some children may be allergic to some foods, and you should find out before giving children anything to eat.

If you are not providing food, ensure that parents know that they need to make sure that their children have had enough to eat.

Ensure that you have some way of keeping the food cold and also of heating bottles for babies.

Many creches only run during the event times and not during break times, therefore parents are then responsible for feeding their own children.

Whether you are providing food or not, make sure there is fresh drinking water available for the children and volunteers.

First aid

You should have a well-stocked first aid kit, and a named first aider who has been trained in emergency paediatric first aid.

An accident book should be maintained, and easily accessible in all places where activities take place with children or adults at risk. Parents or carers should be notified of any accidents, and of any first aid that has been administered. If it is a serious injury the parent or carer should be contacted immediately.

The person responsible for the church's health and safety should also be notified of any accidents, so they can consider if any action needs to be taken to improve health and safety provisions.

Keeping children safe

Think about how you will keep children safe while they are in your crèche.

Think about possible dangers, and how to reduce the risk of accidents. Some things that could be hazardous are:

- ◆ power points
- ◆ steps and stairs
- ◆ unsteady furniture
- ◆ loose carpets and uneven floors
- ◆ electric or gas fires
- ◆ swinging doors
- ◆ substances such as cleaning products.

Have a look at the sheet on Risk in GP5 for more advice.

Also think about how to keep the space secure throughout the day. If possible, make sure the room is shut so that the children cannot leave by themselves. You can secure a room by having a double stair gate, if the door is not able to be secured. If this is not possible (e.g. at an outdoor event), you need a system to make sure each child is always accounted for. The easiest way to do this is for each volunteer to have a small group of children that they are responsible for, and they should know where the children are all the time. This requires a high adult-to-child ratio, even for older children.

It is a good idea for the volunteers to understand safeguarding and how to react in a safeguarding situation.

There are some types of work with children that may only be done by somebody who has had an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The leader of the creche will require an enhanced check and generally, volunteers are not required by law to have DBS checks, but you may choose to request them. Check with your Synod safeguarding officer if you are unsure.

Everyone working in a creche is aware of the church's safeguarding policy and has been on safeguarding training in the last three years.

Policies you should have available within the creche are:

- Nappy changing policy and consent form
- Phone policy – this is about workers using mobile phones
- Child collection policy.

These policies sit alongside the other standard policies the church should already have.

Emergency evacuation

In case of an emergency evacuation, you should follow the church's evacuation policy and meet parents and carers once outside of the building in a designated assembly point.

In the unfortunate event of an attack, the 'Stay Safe' principles should be followed. The principles are:

- RUN – escape if you can
- HIDE – if you can't RUN, HIDE
- TELL – call the Police.

In a lockdown situation, you should follow the correct procedure and contact parents by phone to inform them that the children are safe as soon as it is safe to do so.

Informing regulatory body

Ofsted/ CIW/The Care Inspectorate in Scotland

Some childcare facilities need to be registered with Ofsted, but any crèche that operates for 14 days or less in a year is exempt.

However, you do have to inform Ofsted/CIW/CI 14 days in advance if you are planning a crèche in which:

- ◆ Any individual child aged 7 or younger will be there for more than 4 hours (if parents are on the premises), or
- ◆ Any individual child aged 7 or younger will be there for more than 2 hours (if parents are not on the premises).

You don't have to inform Ofsted if your crèche is for children aged 8 or over only.

Running an ongoing crèche or playgroup

If you are planning to set up a regular crèche or childcare facility, contact your local authority for help and information.

Resources pages/ Links to webpages

- 1277- <https://1277.org.uk/>
- Scramblers Network Facebook group. Network for leaders of church led toddler groups or any family/under-fives groups. You may be asked for details of the church group you belong to or have links with. To be used for information, ideas, suggestions etc.
- Toy library - <https://www.madeformums.com/toddler-and-preschool/guide-to-toy-libraries/>
- Books – Access your local library for a range of books suitable for the age group.
- List of equipment, including Sensory ideas – **See Appendix 1**

Appendix 1: Materials/Equipment List for Creches

Basic equipment

Stair gates

Cleaning products

Wigwam or tent for quiet spaces

Cushions for reading area

Tough trays for sensory play

Tissues

Role play

- o plates and utensils pots and play food
- o infant dolls, small dolls for doll houses (diverse ethnic characteristics), doll house and accessories
- o small vehicles, road floor mat

Dress up clothes:

- o accessories such as jewellery, purses, tote bags, sunglasses
- o hats, including hard hats, hats used in different jobs, sun hats
- o clip-on ties, scarves
- o medical office: bandages, tape, doctor's kit, dolls, blankets, stethoscope, white shirts

Construction

- o small wooden blocks/cubes
- o interlocking blocks (Lego/Duplo)

Puzzles:

- o wooden jigsaws
- o matching cards
- o floor puzzles

Drawing and creative:

- o large crayons
- o thick and thin washable markers
- o paper
- o paper plates
- o collage materials
- o glue sticks and safety scissors
- o play dough and tools

Reading

- o an assortment of books large small, cardboard and storybooks
- o large floor cushion

Outdoor of larger equipment

- o balls (variety of sizes and textures)
- o riding on toys
- o bean bags, targets/containers
- o hula hoops
- o tunnels

Appendix 2: **Sample child registration form**

This is a sample form for a one-off crèche.

You should think about what information you will need and change the form to suit your needs.

Child's name		Child's date of birth	
Your name		Your relationship to the child	
Mobile phone number			
Your address			
Where will you be while your child is with us? (Where can we find you if we need to?)			
What time will you be returning to collect your child?			
Does your child have any medical conditions that we should know about? Please explain.			
Is your child allergic to anything? Please list.			
If I cannot be reached in an emergency, I agree to medical treatment being given to my child		Yes	No
I consent to photographs being taken for display	In church publication	On website	
	On Facebook	Within the church building	
I consent to my child being toileted by creche workers		Yes	No
Signature of parent/guardian			
Name of parent/guardian		Date:	