

Child & Youth Protection Training

First United Methodist Church of Auburndale
Spring 2014



The UMC Believes:

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the Children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church states that ". . . children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse." Tragically, Churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, and exploitation. . . occur in Churches, both, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. . . . God calls us to make our Churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.

“Child abuse prevention and Ministry Protection policies and procedures are essential for congregations, not only for the protection and safety of our children and youth, but also for our volunteers and staff working with youth.”



Why a Policy for FUMCA?

- FUMCA is a community of faith that can offer a safe haven and sanctuary where children and youth can seek advice, help, and nurture.
- FUMCA is a place where more than just facts of child abuse can be taught. We can also teach and proclaim our Christian values: **compassion, justice, repentance, and grace.**
- FUMCA is the place where children can come and learn and develop the inner strength and spiritual resources they will need to feel truly connected to God and to face suffering and evil.
- FUMCA can be the place where children and adults are able to learn how to respond to painful and confusing events using the wisdom of the Scriptures.



Child / Youth Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. Striking, biting, shaking resulting in bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns
- **Sexual Abuse:** any form of sexual activity with a child/youth in any setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another minor.
- **Emotional Abuse:** a pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child's/youths spirit attacking his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.



Maintaining a Positive Classroom Environment

- **Appropriate Discipline** – A well-designed and managed program prevents misbehavior by: limiting the number of children in a classroom; having adequate staff; discouraging competition; encouraging children to express feelings, and be empathetic; and developing and discussing rules of conduct.
- **Age-Level Characteristics** – Knowing what is appropriate for each age level enhances the learning by our students. Each level has it's own unique aspects that when they are acknowledged and planned for, produces more learning and less discipline problems.



Maintaining a Positive Classroom Environment

- **Reasonable Ratios Between Adults and Students:** The two adult rule should always be encouraged. This is a safety issue as well as help in handling the students. Ratios differ by age group but as a general rule: 3:1 for children under the age of 3; 5:1 for children between the ages of 3 and 6; 10:1 is a good rule of thumb for the rest.



Appropriate Behavior for Teachers

- **Listening to them** and discerning their needs is crucial to preventing difficulties.
- **Establishing a sense of trust** early in the life of a class or group is essential to communication, cooperation and creating a safe environment..
- **Aids in communicating with your students:**
 - make eye contact
 - use safe touch (shoulder, hand)
 - be clear regarding acceptable behavior
 - kneel to be on same physical level
 - use activities to keep students involved
 - take time to learn about each student's interests
 - listen and be sensitive to the quiet, shy student



Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries

The following are acceptable ways for touching a student:

- on the hand (especially with younger children), shoulder or upper back in the company of other adults
- never against a student's will (unless in the case of clear and present danger to them)
- never against a student's verbally or non-verbally expressed discomfort
- never when it would have the effect of over-stimulating a student
- never in a place on a student's body that is normally covered by a bathing suit



Inappropriate Interpersonal Boundaries

Behaviors that might be misunderstood as intrusive or invasive to students:

- embarrassing a student about his or her body
- a student sitting in a leader's lap
- telling stories or engaging in conversation that is lurid or over-stimulating.
- giving someone a deep back massage



Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

- Secure the safety of the child
- Do not confront the accused person, but report the incident immediately to the Pastor.
- If he can not be reached, report it to another church official such as:
 - Dorothea Heiden, Chair SPRC
 - Jere Stambaugh, Lay Leader
- You will make the report with the guidance of one of these church leaders who will counsel you and assist you with the procedures



What is FUMCA Doing to Keep Our Children and Workers Safe?

- Screening of Staff: Employees and Volunteers
 - Completed every 5 years
- Training of Staff: Employees and Volunteers
 - Yearly refresher course
- Reporting Suspected Abuse
 - Follow steps that are in place



What do YOU need to do now?

- Read, complete, and sign the *Participation Covenant Statement*
- If you have **NOT** been screened within the last *five years*, complete the *Authorization and Request For Criminals Records Check*
- Volunteer to serve in our programs and help keep our children safe! 😊