



# Safety and Security Audit

At KidCheck, we want to help you create a safe environment for the children entrusted to your care. We've compiled a list of safety and security best practices, plus a tracking and reference worksheet, to help you understand your current safety practices, keep you organized and capture key security information. These best practices come from consulting with leading experts, as well as the knowledge we've gained from working with many different organizations that provide childcare such as churches, daycares, fitness centers, activity centers and more.

## Auditing Your Safety and Security Practices

Safety and security is an important topic in childcare, and there are numerous aspects to consider. Keeping children safe should be a priority, regardless of the size of your organization. This whitepaper discusses concerns about child security and offers ideas for improving safety at your organization. We've listed some common issues to consider, as well as policy and practice suggestions that can help you minimize safety and security issues. Use the checklists to see how you measure up, and use the worksheets at the back to track your progress, note needed actions and capture important safety information specific to your facility.

## Are Your Facilities Safe and Secure?

Accidents, bumps and bruises can happen. While most are minor, it's important that childcare facilities create a safe place to learn and play. This applies to both the inside and the outside of the facility.

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- ✔ Ensure the facility meets building and fire code. Do not block hallways, doors, and exits with tables or other furniture. Inspect and test life safety equipment regularly, including emergency exits, smoke alarms, and fire extinguishers.
- ✔ Classrooms should be in high traffic areas and have windows (in the classroom door or otherwise). If there are not windows, keep the doors open and use a door gate for rooms with younger children. If a door needs to be closed, make sure there are two adults in the room.
- ✔ Furniture must be safe and appropriate for children. Make sure that bookcases are secured to the wall, desks do not have splinters, and chairs are in good repair. Do not stack chairs so high that they become unstable.
- ✔ If there is overhead storage, either a shelf or a cabinet, make sure it is secure and items will not fall on children if they bump up against the cabinet.
- ✔ Use safety plugs or safety cover plates on all electrical outlets. If you use safety plugs, check them often to ensure they've been put back when removed.
- ✔ Control the access to your building. Limit the number of entry points to your children's area. Create a single point of entry if you can by locking alternate exit doors from the outside.
- ✔ The outside of the facility is just as important to check for safety as the inside. Routinely perform facility maintenance such as trimming overgrown bushes and making sure there is adequate lighting, especially near entrances and parking lots. Be aware of any hiding spots especially around doors and windows.
- ✔ Know where your shut off valve is for natural gas and water, as well as how to turn them off in case of emergency. Keep a wrench handy just in case. Also, know where the circuit breakers are.

## Do You Insist on Safety for Activities, Snacks, and Crafts?

A note on Food Allergies: This is an increasing concern, and rightly so. Many food allergies are life-threatening if not treated properly. Childcare providers should always be aware of what ingredients are in snacks and how to identify an allergic reaction. In addition, they should know how to treat a child with allergies if he/she comes in contact with an allergen.

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- ✔ Scissors, glues, and craft materials should be safe for children. Avoid lessons or projects that could be unsafe.
- ✔ Some games are not safe for small rooms. If you don't have enough floor space for a suggested game, go outside or substitute another activity.
- ✔ Make sure all electrical cords and small appliances such as toasters, popcorn makers and microwaves are out of reach.
- ✔ Have a system to keep track of and quickly identify which children have allergies and what it is they are allergic to. Most children's check-in solutions, like KidCheck, track this information and clearly identify children with allergies.
- ✔ Familiarize yourself with common allergies and learn how to identify and treat an allergic reaction.
- ✔ Never serve a snack with nuts unless you have personally cleared it with every parent. Check the ingredient list. Even if it doesn't have nuts, it may have been processed in a facility that handles nuts; which can be fatal to a child with severe allergies.
- ✔ Do not serve hot liquids. Cool hot chocolate down with cold water or milk before serving. Thoroughly shake and test baby bottles with an instant-read thermometer.
- ✔ Supervise children closely during snack time. Even older children can choke on their food, especially if they are laughing or running around.
- ✔ Follow healthy hygiene practices. Maintain high standards for hand washing and other aspects of cleaning and sanitizing. Use precautions when dealing with body fluids such as blood and vomit.
- ✔ Promote strong two-way communication with parents about allergies or other needs and encourage documentation of incidents from bumped heads and biting to eating and potty behavior.

## Are Your Volunteers and Staff Members Safe?

Kidnapping: This is every parent's nightmare. While it may seem rare, childcare organizations and churches are one of the most likely places for this to occur. Childcare programs should establish systems and policies to make it very difficult for an unauthorized individual to pick up a child.

Sexual Abuse: Few things are more devastating to a child, especially when the predator uses friendship or authority to accomplish their crime. Have policies and practices in place to prevent children from being alone with a volunteer or staff member. This not only protects the child, but it can also protect the volunteer or staff member in the event of an accusation.

Other Children: It doesn't make the news as often, but a common threat for sexual abuse is one child abusing another child. This is devastating for everyone involved. Never allow unattended children in your facility when there is children's programming taking place. Even the children of pastors, owners, teachers or workers should not be set free after the program. Have a designated game room or similar location where the children of volunteers/employees can play until their parents are free to go.

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- ✔ Some predators abuse multiple children before they are caught. Conduct background checks on all paid staff and volunteers, especially those that work with children and the elderly.
- ✔ Criminal background checks are critical, but other safeguards must also be in place. Every volunteer and staff member should complete a written application and be screened and interviewed by the leaders and owners of your organization. It is highly recommended that re-screening is done at least every 1-2 years.
- ✔ It is also suggested your organization implement a waiting period before a person can work at your facility. Use common sense and judgment.
- ✔ Ensure your volunteers and employees are aware of all policies and procedures and obtain ample training. Provide regular training meetings and clear instruction manuals.
- ✔ Develop a Sexual Abuse Prevention policy and make it well known. This should start with never allowing a person to be alone with a child. Always have two adults in a classroom. Make this a rule with no exceptions.
- ✔ Even in counseling situations or when taking children to the bathroom, have another adult present.
- ✔ The best safeguard against abuse is preventing opportunities for abuse. For more information on developing policies, visit Stop it Now at [www.stopitnow.com](http://www.stopitnow.com)

## Do You Have a Security Team and Emergency Plans in Place?

A security team, or officer, acts as the point person should a situation arise, as well as identifying current risks and liabilities and exploring solutions for dealing with them. They can also assist in putting plans in place to deal with emergency situations. There may be more or less plans necessary depending on your congregation's size, location and ability to work through a community crisis.

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- ✔ To create your security team, find volunteers who might have experience in law enforcement, medical professions, emergency response or the military.
- ✔ Local police and fire departments often welcome the opportunity to work with your security team to help identify potential risks and hazards, and are a great resource for the kinds of threats they are seeing in your area.
- ✔ Be prepared with specific plans of action even for emergency situations you hope to never encounter, including evacuation, lock down, medical assist, lost or missing child, fire, and shooter or violent situations.
- ✔ In addition to creating emergency plans and procedures, regularly review them and ensure volunteers and staff are adequately trained on them. Complete fire drills on a routine basis.
- ✔ Meet with your insurance provider to review possible situations so you are aware what is and is not covered. Cover topics such as arson, burglary, theft, renting out the facility.
- ✔ Be aware of who has keys to your building and the last time it was re-keyed.
- ✔ Train leaders, greeters and key staff to be alert for behavior that is out of place and potentially dangerous, and what to do in specific scenarios.

## Do Your Policies and Guidelines Promote Security and Safety?

Here are some additional items to think about:

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- ✔ All the best policies won't help unless you train your staff and volunteers. Make safety and security training for volunteers and staff members a priority in your organization. Remind your staff members about the importance of safety by including it in all communications.
- ✔ No child (or group of children) should ever be alone with an adult.
- ✔ Recommend that your volunteers be trained in CPR and first aid.
- ✔ Your organization may have active or retired nurses who are great resources for minor accidents. Organize and offer training courses.
- ✔ Establish a check-in and check-out procedure that ensures every child is returned only to authorized parents or guardians after your program. Computer-based check-in systems such as KidCheck are very affordable and provide a secure, efficient and positive experience for children, parents, and volunteers.
- ✔ Attendance records, allergy information, authorized guardians and parent contact information are all types of information you need to track and maintain. Children's check-in solutions such as KidCheck capture all this information. Develop policies regarding how, where and how long that information is maintained and kept secure.
- ✔ Do not allow children to be unattended before or after programs and activities. Communicate to your parents that children are not allowed to run around unattended.
- ✔ Have clearly defined drop-off and pick-up times and locations. These should be clearly communicated and enforced. The children of volunteers should remain with their parents or be supervised in one location. Do not allow early drop-offs when volunteers are not present.
- ✔ Ask for hall monitors or greeters to patrol the facility during and after start and finish of programs.
- ✔ Have them make sure children are not unattended and that only authorized individuals are in the children's area. Ensure that authorized persons can easily be identified.



## Safety and Security Worksheet and Reference Document

### External Contact Information

Local Fire Department contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Police Department contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance agent contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Power utility company name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Water company name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Gas company name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Child abuse hotline is 1-800-4-A-CHILD. Child sexual abuse hotline is 1-888-PREVENT.

Background check provider contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's check-in provider contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Internal Contact Information

Our head of our security team name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Our main contact for child abuse information, questions or to report concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of company or volunteer/employee responsible for outside lights and trimming bushes: \_\_\_\_\_

Individuals with keys to the building: \_\_\_\_\_

Individuals who have been trained on CPR: \_\_\_\_\_

### Maintenance Information

The shut off valve for gas is located here: \_\_\_\_\_

The water shut off valve is located here: \_\_\_\_\_

Circuit breakers are located here: \_\_\_\_\_

A wrench is kept here: \_\_\_\_\_



Smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency exits have been tested on these dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

These exit doors should always remain locked and unavailable for use: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

These classrooms need more visibility. Add window or keep doors open: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Allergy and First-Aid Information

First aid kits are located here: \_\_\_\_\_

Do not purchase these snacks due to allergies we are aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

We do/do not have an epi pen for allergies and it can be found here: \_\_\_\_\_

We do/do not have an A.E.D (Automatic External Defibrillator). It can be found here \_\_\_\_\_  
and these people are trained how to use it \_\_\_\_\_

Procedures and Documentation

Procedures and forms for medical emergencies or to document an incident or accident can be found  
here: \_\_\_\_\_  
(resource for ideas - [http://www.healthychild.net/SafetyFirst.php?article\\_id=534](http://www.healthychild.net/SafetyFirst.php?article_id=534))

The building and fire code documents can be found here: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency procedures documentation can be found here: \_\_\_\_\_

Our volunteer/employee instruction manuals can be found here: \_\_\_\_\_

Our waiting period before someone can volunteer/work with children is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our volunteer meetings are (date) \_\_\_\_\_ and held here: \_\_\_\_\_

Our emergency fire or evacuation outside gathering place is: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire drills have been completed on these dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Children can only be dropped off or picked-up at these times \_\_\_\_\_  
from these locations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_