

Congregations & Early Childhood

From the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a collaboration between Durham's Partnership for Children & End Poverty Durham

Sixth Edition

January 2011

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SECTION 1: FAITH COORDINATOR NEWS

Welcome to the Partnership's new Executive Director, Laura Benson. She most recently served as Executive Director of Lutheran Family Services, previously led the Interfaith Hospitality Network, and is an ordained minister.

UPCOMING TRAINING: Join us on these dates: Feb 22, Mar 22 & May 10 from 11:30 am - 1 pm for training on early childhood issues & congregations at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church. A flyer will be mailed separately! Share the dates with faith educators & children/family ministers.

Thanks for supporting the B&N Book Drive in cooperation with Durham's Partnership for Children. 2,865 books were donated & distributed to Durham organizations. Consider having a book drive (new & used) with your congregation. We are able to connect you with young children that need books.

Please consider a donation to our \$25,000 challenge grant as you make contributions personally and from outreach budgets. For questions about donations, please contact Ted Whiteside at ted@dpfc.net or 919-403-6960 or send donations to Attn: Durham's Partnership for Children, 1201 S. Briggs Ave, Suite 210, Durham, NC 27703 with a note on the check: Child Poverty Faith Initiative.

Contact Winnie Morgan for questions or to speak to your congregation at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

SECTION 2: RESOURCES & MATERIALS

Are you interested in early brain development and how to engage infants in activities in your congregation? The main library in Durham has a wonderful collection of books on early development donated by DPFC. A couple you might find useful: [Baby Minds: Brain-Building Games Your Baby will Love](#) by Acredolo & Goodwyn and [125 Brain Games for Babies](#) by Silberg. Read and explore early development and bring your questions to our first training session on February 22.

Don't forget to use the handout: ***Faith in our Future: Congregations and Children Birth to Five*** (<http://dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx>). Available in both English and Spanish.

SECTION 3: QUOTES

"A person's a person, no matter how small." **Dr. Seuss**

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children." **Ghandi**

SECTION 4: SHARING IDEAS

Parents often ask faith leaders what policies are in place to protect their children. They expect safe environments and volunteers to be “safe” adults. How is your congregation dealing with protecting children and those that work with them?

In the last decade the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. SAFE SANCTUARIES is more than guidelines, policies, and procedures implemented to create an environment in which children, youth and adults who work with them have boundaries of safe space. SAFE SANCTUARIES is an overt expression of making a congregation a safe place where children and youth may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith.

These are some of the procedures that Duke Memorial MB has implemented: appropriate interpersonal boundaries, tonally rule, first aid/CPR training, five years older rule, no workers under the age of 18, sixteenths hospitality rule, windows in all classrooms, openwork counseling, advance notice to parents, criminal background checks, reporting & responding to abuse, nursery sign in-sign out, and much more. If you would like to learn more about the implementation of SAFE SANCTUARIES check with one of our United Methodist churches or search Safe Sanctuaries on the internet.

Briefly look at this **self-evaluation** and see how your congregation is doing:

- We screen and check references for all paid employees, including clergy, who have any contact with children and/or youth.
- We screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with children and/or youth.
- We train at least annually all volunteer and/or paid workers with children/youth to understand the nature of abuse and to recognize indicators of abuse.
- We train at least annually all volunteer and/or paid workers with children/youth in how to carry out our policies to prevent abuse.
- Our workers and volunteers are informed of state law requirements regarding abuse and their responsibility for reporting incidents.
- We have a clear reporting procedure for a suspected incident of abuse that follows the requirements of our state law.
- We have insurance coverage available in case a complaint of abuse occurs.
- We have a clearly defined building usage strategy as a component of our abuse prevention plan.
- We have a clearly defined response plan to be implemented in case an allegation of abuse is made against someone in our church.
- We offer at least annual education opportunities to parents of children and youth about how to recognize and reduce risks of abuse.
- We take our policies to prevent abuse seriously, and we are committed to their enforcement for the safety and security of all our children, youth and the adults who work with them.

Source: "Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in The Church"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx;

www.endpovertydurham.org;

www.heckmanequation.org; www.developingchild.harvard.edu,

Better Brains for Babies (<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/bbb/factSheets.php>)

To **unsubscribe** or for **more information**, contact Winnie Morgan at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

We would appreciate your feedback on this newsletter and ideas to be shared with others on birth to five and their parents in congregations. Please forward this newsletter to appropriate persons on your staff or submit their e-mail.