

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster

Fishbowl Childcare Volunteer Handbook

Our Fishbowl Childcare Volunteers are Approved Adults who care for our youngest attenders during our worship service. Our volunteers play with, read to, and provide overall support to children ages 0-4 after they are dismissed from the church service, typically after children's time.

Note: Childcare coverage during our Christian Education hour (ages 0-2) is currently not offered, but that could change in the future.

Requirements for Childcare Volunteers

To be a childcare volunteer for children ages 0-4 in the CMCL nursery (Fishbowl), the volunteer must be a CMCL Approved Adult. CMCL Approved Adults must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have attended CMCL regularly for at least 6 months.
- Read the Child Safety Policy.
- Complete the CMCL Service Application and sign the Covenant.
- Obtain a PA Criminal Record Background Check.
- Obtain a PA Child Abuse History Certification.
- Obtain an FBI Background Check or, if you have lived in PA continuously for the past ten years, sign a PA Disclosure Statement for Volunteers.
- Attend an initial child safety training, view an approved video on child safety, or submit evidence of recent workplace education on child safety training and mandated reporting.

- Submit all required paperwork and clearances to Meredith Fisher, Director of Children's Ministries at meredith@communitymennonite.org or childsafety@communitymennonite.org

- Wait to hear that all of your documentation has been received and that you have been added to the CMCL Approved Adult list. Contact Meredith Fisher, Director of Children's Ministries at meredith@communitymennonite.org or childsafety@communitymennonite.org with any questions about approval to work with children and youth.

- Keep paperwork and clearances up to date.
 - CMCL covenant and PA Disclosure Statement for Volunteers must be signed every year.
 - PA Criminal Record Background Check and PA Child Abuse History Certification must be renewed every 60 months.
 - Child safety training must be completed at least every 24 months.

Childcare Volunteer Responsibilities and Expectations When in the Fishbowl

1. Always respect the personal space of children.
2. Enjoy playing with the children. Feel free to read books to the children or lead them in singing. Crayons, paper, and other supplies and activities are also available in the white cabinet near the sink.
3. Make sure you can see all children at all times and do regular counts to ensure everyone is present.
4. If you are the only adult in the room (which should not be a regular occurrence), you must prop the door open.
5. Once two childcare volunteers are present, keep the doors to the Fishbowl securely fastened, in order to ensure no children get out without an adult.
6. Stay in the Fishbowl until every child is picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the service.
7. Keep hot beverages out of reach of children.
8. Ensure that all items or supplies that are not safe for young children are placed high enough that they are out of reach of the children and out of harm's way.

Sign-in Sheets

Please use a new sign-in sheet for each Sunday.

Even if children do not arrive right away, please stay in the Fishbowl for 15 minutes after the start of the service. If no children arrive for childcare after 15 minutes, you may then leave. Please complete a sign-in sheet and list that no children were present.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities When Dropping Children Off for Childcare

1. Be sure your child has used the bathroom before coming to the Fishbowl.
2. Label your child's diaper bag, water bottle, snack, etc.
3. *Alert childcare volunteers of any food allergies. (There is also a section to complete on the sign-in sheet about allergies and snack preferences.)*
4. Sign your child in and out of the Fishbowl using the sign-in sheet on the clipboard.
5. Put a name tag on your child, if your child is newer to Fishbowl.

Procedure for Signing In

1. Volunteers: complete all top sections of the sign-in sheet.
2. Parents: sign their child in, completing all information on sheet.

Procedure for Signing Out

1. Parents: sign your child out.
2. Volunteers: complete sign-in sheet.

Volunteer Identification Tags

Volunteer identification tags are hanging on the coat rack or white board for volunteers to wear. This helps parents, especially visitors, identify the childcare volunteers for that day and address any comments or questions to the volunteers.

Snacks and Drinks

On the sign-in/out sheet, there is a section for parents/guardians to list allergies or food preferences. Volunteers do not always offer a snack to the children during childcare. It is a decision each volunteer makes depending on the needs of the children that day. Parents/guardians may provide their own snack for their child. This is most helpful when their child has allergies or the family has certain dietary requirements, such as gluten-free.

Paper towels for snacks are usually located next to the sink. Snacks inside the white cabinet beside the sink might include Cheerios, pretzels, animal crackers, etc. Cups are available on top of or inside the white cabinet beside the sink, and tap water may be used for drinks.

Please close up snacks after use in order to keep them fresh.

Older Youth in the Fishbowl

Childcare in the Fishbowl is offered to children ages 0-4 during the worship service. Children older than 4 remain with their families in the service. Youth volunteers age 13 or older are sometimes scheduled to assist in the Fishbowl in the presence of two Approved Adults. Approved Adult volunteers may also have their older children (ages 5 and up) in the Fishbowl when they are volunteering.

Supplies

Please let the Fishbowl Coordinators or the Director of Children's Ministries know of any missing supplies, such as hand soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, paper towels, cups, pens, sign-in sheets, and snacks.

Toileting

If an Approved Adult needs to take a child to the toilet, be aware of visibility and the child's privacy when in the bathroom. (Follow Child Safety procedure on signs in bathrooms.)

The volunteer should stand holding the public bathroom door while the child enters the toilet stall alone. (This allows the adult volunteer to remain in the public eye, while protecting the privacy of the child).

If help is needed with wiping or dressing, help the child while keeping the door to the bathroom open. Encourage the child to wipe him/herself.

Help the child wash his/her hands thoroughly with soap and running water. The volunteer should also wash hands.

Always inform the parent/guardian that the child used the toilet and whether or not assistance was needed.

In accordance with the CMCL Child Safety Policy, youth helpers may not take children to the bathroom.

Diaper Changes

Two approved volunteers must be present when clothes or diapers are being changed. Use the diaper changing station mounted on the wall in the Fishbowl. Encourage parents to leave their cell phone numbers to text them if a diaper change is necessary.

Scheduling Conflict Procedure

Volunteers are asked for scheduling conflicts in advance of a new schedule being posted. After the schedule is posted, if any conflicts arise in your schedule, please contact other volunteers to swap dates with one another.

1. Refer to the Fishbowl Childcare Volunteer Roster for the contact information of other volunteers. Attempt to "trade" time slots so that the volunteer filling in for you is not being asked to take on more dates than originally assigned.
2. Let the Childcare Coordinator(s) know of the switch.
3. Inform the church office (admin@communitymennonite.org) of the switch (if the switch is made prior to Wednesday at 4:00 P.M. before the Sunday of your substitution) so the information can be corrected in the upcoming bulletin.

If you would like to increase or decrease the number of times per year you are available to serve in the Fishbowl, please contact the Fishbowl Childcare Volunteer Coordinator(s) to inform them of your change of availability for future scheduling.

Volunteer No-Shows

According to CMCL's Child Safety Policy, two Approved Adults must always be present in the Fishbowl, with the exception of taking a child to the bathroom.

Upon arrival to the Fishbowl, please ensure that both Approved Adults are present. If the person with whom you are scheduled to work is not yet present, please request that one of the parents stay behind until your co-volunteer arrives, preferably a parent/guardian who is an Approved Adult.

If the scheduled co-volunteer does not arrive, please ask that parent/guardian to stay for the remainder of the service. Please make note of the change on the sign-in sheet. One volunteer may not serve by themselves.

Childcare Coordinator Contact Information

Fishbowl Coordinators will use the Mailchimp account to communicate with all volunteers.

Childcare Schedule Link

<https://www.communitymennonite.org/child-care/>