

CHILDCARE HANDBOOK

Manual for Parents of Watch Care



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SECTION 1: WELCOME AND AIMS

WELCOME!

"Religious Support Office provides support to the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart military community and advises the command on religion, morale, morals and ethics as affected by religion. In addition, plans and implements the Command Master Religious Plan and trains the ministry team to conduct military religious support in a combat environment to support deployment and redeployment operations."

"Chapel Watch Care is typically provided by approved chapel volunteers or NPS-contracted individuals. Watch care volunteers... will meet the requirement for all background checks and training necessary in order to be approved to work with children in accordance with DOD and Army policy." (AR 165-1, para 5-7.a.1.)

Watch Care Volunteers are Specified Volunteers and serve under the Army Chapel Watch Care Volunteer Position Description.

Please know that we are here for you and your children. I want you to know how much we care for you, and we are praying for you and your children. We want to do whatever we can to make this a good experience. Please feel free to stop me in the hall or e-mail me, if you have anything to discuss.

Respectfully,

Dr. Becky Powell

Religious Education Program Director

OUR MINISTRY AIMS

- *Watch Care provides children with an essential element of religion in accordance with AR 165-1, para 5-7 and AR 608-10. Watch Care is provided using Army Chapel Watch Care SOP.*
- *Watch Care is for children aged 13 – 36 months while their parents are participating in a chapel program. (36-60 month olds may also be served on a space available basis.)*
- *All volunteers will work under the Supervision of the Garrison Chaplain through the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Sponsoring Chaplain. Curriculum and resources will be approved and/or provided by the Garrison Chaplain's Office.*

SECTION 2: GENERAL INFORMATION

WATCH CARE ROOM

Our watch care room is provided for children 13 -36 months old. We only allow children to attend when there are at least two or more vetted volunteers and within the allotted classroom ratios. This is to ensure the safety of the children and make sure that we have enough eyes on the children. Parents must stay on-site and attend the Chapel service in order to use watch care.

CLASSROOM RATIOS

The following are the ratios that we are required to follow. We consistently strive to have our ratios lower to have our ratios lower than these ratios so that we can best serve the children in chapel¹. No matter the number of children, there will always be 2 vetted adults in each room.

| Age Group | Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Newborns (Birth – 6 weeks) | 1 adult: 2 children | 6 |
| Infants (6 wks – 12 mos) | 1 adult: 4 children | 8 |
| Pre-toddlers (13 months – 2 years) | 1 adult: 5 children | 10 |
| Toddlers (2 years – 3 years) | 1 adult: 7 children | 14 |
| Preschool (3 years – 5 years) | 1 adult: 10 children | 24 |
| School-Aged (5 years – 8 years) | 1 adult: 15 children | 30 |

¹ Adult Child Ratios. AR 608-10, C1.

TIMES WHEN WATCH CARE WILL BE PROVIDED

We will do our best to have the watch care available during each of our services. The rooms are typically open 15 minutes before the service starts. It is very important that your child(ren) are picked up immediately at the end of service so that the volunteers can finish cleaning, turn-in paperwork, and make the room ready for the next service. Please be considerate of those who are working in the room and continue fellowship once you have your children back in your care.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:

Dropping-Off child(ren)

When dropping-off your child(ren), please be sure to remove their shoes and outer wear, complete the sign-in form, and notify the volunteers or contractors of any allergies or concerns regarding your child(ren). Make a nametag for your child and for any bag or outwear they may have. Nametags need to go on the child's back.

Picking-Up Child(ren)

Please be sure to pick-up your child(ren) immediately at the end of the service. Show your ID to the volunteer so they know that you are the parent of the child(ren) and sign them out on the sign-in form. Please be sure to take all your personal items home with you.

Slippers or Socks Required

To keep the room clean, dry, and safe for the little ones, shoes that have been worn to the nursery will be removed. Please bring an extra pair of slippers or socks for your child to wear while they are in the nursery.

Snacks and Drink Policy

In programs longer than 60 minutes, we will provide limited snacks. (Goldfish crackers, Cheerios cereals, etc.) for the younger children in watch care (ages 13 months -3 years). We also encourage you to bring water in sippy cups. Again, please clearly label the containers with your child's name.

Personal Items

We understand that children may need a special item or lovey to feel comfortable leaving their parents (and that's ok! 😊), but we ask that you leave toys and items that the child does not want to be lost or shared at home. From our experience, these items can cause tears and tantrums and we want to make watch care a positive experience for everyone.

Diapering Policy

Vetted volunteers do not change diapers; you will be notified (by texting the phone number provided at sign-in) if your child needs to be changed. (AR 608-10, para 4-14.f)

Crying Policy

The parents of any child crying more than 10 minutes, or the time specified by the parent, will be notified so they can attend to the child's needs.

Discipline Policy

We strive that all discipline carefully considers a child's dignity and fragile self-esteem. Gentleness, respect, and understanding are what guide all our actions and words. Disciplinary steps will be carried out

through instruction, training, and correction. **Physical punishment will never be used!**

The following steps will be taken if a child is disobeying or acting inappropriately:

Be Reminded

At the first occurrence of misbehavior that requires discipline, the child is given a verbal reminder using positive words. Reminding them “to make good choices” when doing such and such or redirecting the child to another activity.

Be Warned

If behavior occurs a second time, the child is given a verbal warning and may need to be separate from the group. At this time, we talk to the child about his/her behavior that needs to be changed in loving and positive words. In addition, we document the incident and will notify you at the end of the session.

Be with Parent

If the behavior occurs a third time, the Volunteer Coordinator for Watch Care or Chaplain Sponsor will inform you and ask you to remove the child from the nursery.

Any child who has congestion or has had the following symptoms and/or illnesses in the past 24 hours and has not been on an antibiotic for more than 24 hours cannot be left in our nursery room.

- *Vomiting*
- *Fever greater than 99 degrees F*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Constant coughing*
- *Chest congestion/ raspy breathing*
- *Rash*
- *Head lice*
- *Hand, foot, mouth disease*
- *Runny nose (with thick discharge)*

If a watch care volunteer or contractor suspects that a child has one or more of these symptoms, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. **Please note that we cannot administer any medicine!**

First-Aid Procedures

At any sign on serious illness or injury, parents will be alerted immediately by contacting either you directly or the location coordinator. Serious illness includes vomiting, difficulty breathing or any injuries with bleeding (not scratches).

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:

Volunteering

The most important thing you can do as a parent to help is to volunteer your time in our watch care. We ask all Parents using our childcare to become vetted. There is a great deal of joy involved in working with our children, and they love it when their parents serve. Becoming a vetted volunteer takes some time but is not that difficult. For more information, please contact your Chaplain Sponsor or Volunteer Coordinator about how to get started with this process.