

## **Protocol for working with VBS Kids**

### **Physical contact:**

- No corporal discipline of any kind. Never spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
- Do not discipline or counsel alone with a child behind closed doors.
- Give loving pats of affirmation on the head, or shoulder.
- Do not let older children (1st - 6th grades) sit on teachers' laps.
- Ministry workers should avoid frontal hugs from children; side hugs are ok, and there should be no hugs in private.

### **Acceptable steps for correcting behavior:**

- Take the child aside from the others and give a verbal warning.
- If the behavior persists, separate the child for a short period of time.
- A good rule of thumb is 1 minute for each year of age (i.e. A 4 year old can handle 4 minutes of 'time out').
- Once the 'time out' period is over, reassure the child and get them engaged once more into the activities as soon as possible.
- If the problem persists bring child to the VBS office or talk to the VBS Director.

### **Bathroom protocol:**

- Plan periodic class bathroom breaks. Always wash hands after games and give an opportunity to use the restroom before and after snack.
- **Scheduled group trips are recommended** with a minimum of 3 per group.
- Bathroom/Hall doors remain open at all times.
- If children need assistance in slipping down trousers or outer garments, do so in the open, sink area of restroom.
- If possible, two people should go with a group of children to the bathroom (especially if children need help).
- Junior High and Senior High students should not assist children in undressing or in providing bathroom assistance. Always communicate to other workers when a child needs assistance.
- Children 5 years of age and younger, should preferably be assisted by a gender appropriate adult (group trips).
- Children over age 5; An adult should check to make sure the facility is safe and then walk outside the restroom until the children come out.

### **Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse:**

- "Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means...shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information..." *—excerpt from Arizona's Mandatory Reporting Law*
- If you suspect any of the above talk to your Crew Chief, Station Leader, VBS Director or Kids Pastor ASAP, we have detailed information on making a report, phone numbers and forms.