

Childcare FAQs



It is our priority to provide excellent care for children for Bethany events. Our drive for excellence requires that we take into consideration safe staff-to-child ratios, facility capabilities, and hiring and training consistent, qualified staff who love to be here. We hope the following information will clarify some of our policies and needs.

I've never been asked to pay for childcare before – why now?

For several years parents have been encouraged to make a donation of \$3 per child per hour to offset childcare costs. This amount does not fully cover the cost, but helps offset the budget amount. For two years, we have also requested a donation from participating ministries. Annual donation income has come to less than 10% of labor costs. The current fee of \$3 per child per event (\$6 family max) is considerably less than the requested donation, but should offset about 25% of labor costs. The rest is covered in the Nursery budget.

What are actual childcare costs?

Annual cost for Childcare Labor is around \$70,000.

What's the big deal about no-shows?

When childcare is reserved for an event and the children do not come and do not cancel, the staff is still paid for 2 hours of scheduled time. We have a minimum of two staff present for each event, as required by Bethany's child safety policy. The annual cost of labor for no-shows is \$12,000 to \$15,000. In an effort to be good stewards of our Nursery budget and our staff time, we are encouraging accountability from parents and ministry leaders and hoping to make them aware of this issue.

What if I want to participate in an event, but cannot pay for childcare?

No one will be kept from participating in an event because of childcare costs. Scholarships are available by contacting the leader of the class who schedules the childcare. The fee will be marked "paid" on the sign-in sheet when the child is checked in.

How did this policy come into being?

It was shaped by conversations with other large churches; some are charging participants and some are requiring ministries to cover the entire staff cost. The proposal was vetted through the Nursery Administrative staff, Children's Ministries Vision Team and Bethany Ministry staff.

Do I have to pay for childcare to come to church and Sunday School?

There is never a charge for care for worship events.

Who pays the fees?

When a ministry program requests care, there is a box on the form to choose if the ministry area will cover the cost of childcare fees or include it in their registration costs. If they do, it will be marked "paid" on the sign-in sheet when children are checked in. Otherwise, the parents are asked to pay the fee, which they can do at the door or in advance. Any fees not collected will be billed back to the ministry.

Why isn't childcare always available?

We must work within staff and facilities limitations. During weekday care, the only room available for childcare is F108 in Fellowship Hall. The other rooms suitable for small children are used by Bethany Preschool. This puts a cap on the number of children we can accept without overloading the staff and the space available. Also, it is more difficult to find staff during the day when our teen workers are in school, or Friday nights during football season. In August many of our young adult staff leave for college. This creates a crunch in the fall, when we hire and train new staff. We try to maintain enough staff to sufficiently cover requests, yet not have so many staff that they can't get enough hours to work.

Still have questions?

The Nursery Fee Policy document is available on the Bethany website at www.bethany-umc.org or outside Nursery room F108. Or please contact Nursery Administrator Elizabeth Nettles at 258-6017 x270 or elizabeth.nettles@bethany-umc.org.