

Children's Ministry Child Abuse and Protection Statement
Calvary Baptist Church
State College, PA

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. It is an essential part of the nurturing process that should be characteristic of our ministry with children. However, staff and volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual child. Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.

1. **Appropriate Touch** - The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love:
 - * Meet the child at eye level by bending down or sitting.
 - * Listen to the child with your eyes as well as with your ears.
 - * Hold the child's hand while listening or speaking to him or when walking to an activity.
 - * Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
 - * Pat a child's head, hand, shoulder, or back when encouraging.
 - * Gently hold the shoulders or chin of a child when redirecting the child's behavior. This helps the child focus on what you are saying and is helpful with Attention Deficit Disorder children.
 - * Hold a preschool child who is crying.

2. **Inappropriate Touch** - The following types of touch must be avoided:
 - * Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
 - * Extended hugging and tickling.
 - * Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit. (Exception: Properly assisting a child in the restroom.)
 - * Carrying an older child or sitting the child on your lap.
 - * Sitting a small child on your lap when the room is darkened.
 - * Being alone with a child.
 - * Giving a full contact, body-to-body hug.
 - * Rough-housing with a child or children.
 - * Spanking, hitting, grabbing, shaking, or otherwise physically disciplining anyone.

Also, in an effort to assist your understanding of child abuse, the following are general definitions:

1. Child abuse is defined as a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or caretakers.
2. Abuse is categorized as physical, emotional, or sexual:
 - * Physical abuse means non-accidental injury of a child.
 - * Emotional abuse means chronic attitudes or acts that are likely to produce long-term serious emotional disorders.
 - * Sexual abuse means sexual exploitation of a child, consensual or not, for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator or a third party.