



## **VOLUNTEER FORM**

**Thanks for helping!**

Parents Night Out is a new, growing, and exciting ministry for children and especially the parents. We have been told countless times how grateful parents are to be able to get away for a little while as a couple. The church has proved itself to be a safe, warm, fun-loving place where parents feel good about leaving their children in our care. I take that very seriously, as I'm sure you do too, so we have a few prerequisites for working in the Children and Family Ministry and also some specific prerequisites for serving with Parents Night Out:

- 1) You must complete ALL required paperwork for serving with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Required forms/actions before serving:

- \*Volunteer Form
- \*Safe Sanctuary Policy
- \*Safe Sanctuary Acknowledgement Form
- \*Background Check Form

These forms can be printed from the church website [fayettevillefirst.com](http://fayettevillefirst.com) or obtained from the church office. Either way, the completed paperwork must be submitted to the church office.

- 2) If you have not ever served in the Children and Family Ministry you get to have a conversation about ministry with the Children and Family Ministry staff. This is to serve two purposes:

- \*Confirm that serving with Children and Family Ministry is a good fit for both *you* and the *ministry itself*, i.e., children, parents, tasks, spiritual gifts, strengths, etc.
- \*Allow time for you to ask any questions with the Children and Family Ministry staff and to better learn about each other since we hope to be serving with you soon and we want to make the ministry experience as effective, good, fun, creative, and meaningful as we can.

*(If you have served before and you would like to visit with the Children and Family Ministry staff please let us know. We always love to talk about Jesus and the Family and how to make things better!)*



# Operations Manual

## How things go smoothly

Parents Night Out is typically a Friday evening from 5:30-9:00 p.m. This large time block is intentional to be truly helpful to a couple who might want to eat dinner and do some activity i.e., movie, bowling, etc. This is a realistic time window for that to happen. Because it is quite a time commitment on the volunteer end of things we have implemented time slots for you. While some appreciate the whole experience, it is certainly not required by any means. We want our ministries to be good for everyone involved and that means creating opportunities that shoulder the burden across many shoulders (the body of Christ!)

The following are specific areas for volunteers and includes the *minimum number of people required* (can be more!), the *time commitment*, the *expectations*, the purpose or what might be a *ministry success*: **(You make pick two/all/one/combination of slots as you desire)**

### Setup Team:

**\*Minimum people required: 2**

**\*Time commitment: 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.**

**\*Expectations:**

Ensure the tables are set, play area set, sign-in area set, movie area set, activity area set, board game area set.

These each require a little time and intention and creativity goes a long way. The expectation is that these are in place by start time (5:30). Any creativity (decorations, theming, etc) is seen as above and beyond the call of duty. We may have pre-decided a theme and ask this team to cover tables etc. as part of the setup time but want to make a clear distinction that 'theming' is a welcome conversation ahead of time but not a requirement.

**\*Ministry Success:**

Left the church premises knowing that you set the areas well and communicated with the other volunteers and Children and Family Ministry staff any pertinent information regarding setup—i.e., "TV in place but didn't know how to fully set up."

### Sign-in Team:

**\*Minimum people required: 2**

**\*Time commitment: 5:00 - 6:15 p.m.**

**\*Expectations:**

Arriving at 5:00 p.m. to ensure you both understand and can implement the sign-in process. One person will be the "procedural ensurer" making sure the parents have successfully and legibly communicated all that they need to. The other person will be more of a greeter role while still understanding the sign-in process. The Sign-in role requires a little training with the computer and the badge printer to ensure understanding and how to troubleshoot. Sign-in team will meet with the Children and Family Ministry staff before the event. The Wednesday before is typically when this is done. The Children and Family Ministry staff will reach out to you regarding this training after you have signed up and to find a time that works for you.

**\*Ministry Success:**

To leave the church premises knowing that you did a great job welcoming and connecting the kids and parents to the ministry AND that all the emergency contact info and allergy info is clear and communicated to other volunteers and the Children and Family Ministry staff. Just like Jesus, the goal is to *welcome* the children (and parents) and also to *nurture (protect)* the children. We take these two (welcome/protection) very seriously and we know you do too. Leaving the scene knowing the kids and parents were warmly welcomed and the children were genuinely nurtured and protected by our processes would be a ministry success.

## Hour One: (5:30-6:30)

**\*Minimum people required: 3**

**\*Time commitment: 5:15 - 6:45 p.m.**

5:15 arriving early to be ready to receive kids and their parents, 5:30 is sign in and dinner time, 6:00-6:30 is play area time (board game area can be available for those not wanting or able to do physical play.) This is organized play time (relay races, freeze tag, etc.)

**\*Expectations:**

The 'hour one' commitment actually involves one hour and thirty minutes. During this hour the party gets started by eating if the families choose to bring food for their kids. The families are pre-alerted to bring food for their kids if they choose. However, helping some kids find their table place and helping open containers etc will be helpful during this time. Eating is the first thing so that it does not linger as an open option for kids, but rather an intentional dinner time so that after dinner you can go play. Please help children to 'finish their food' as much as reasonable before allowing them to play because this is their time to eat and parents will expect that their child is eating their dinner. We want to avoid any child saying "but I'm hungry" to parents when they had ample opportunity to eat but just didn't take advantage of the time. The expectation is that there is a time for everything and this 'dinner time' helps to set the tone of expectation throughout the night. For children that did not bring food, they are allowed to help get ready to play. The getting ready to play might be carrying toys from the gym closet to the play area or helping to prep the board game area by allowing a child to pick what they would like to play and then asking them to help set that particular game up then for later. We create a *structured schedule* that works because there is a time and a place for everything instead of a free-for-all which can quickly turn to chaos with children and leave volunteers (like you) exhausted and disillusioned. We don't want that! We want this experience to be genuinely fruitful for both the children and the loving adults (that's you) in their care. This is a special time, so we treat it like a special time. The children will respond to your direction so long as you are consistent and direct about what is happening next. Say "at 6:00 we will have play time" with excitement! But temper your excitement with real expectations for what the children are to do. The play area can easily become the greatest joy or the greatest headache depending on how you approach the time. If you are good with organized games (relay races, four corners etc) this is your time to shine. Coordinate someone from the 'Hour One' team to be the 'game guru' who will help teach how the organized games are to be played and then help officiate them. From 6:00 to 6:30 we have this intentional time slotted for kids to PLAY! This needs to be high energy and fun and intentional. A clear adult leader is important during this time. This will be the difference between open play turning into chaos slowly OR intentional time when kids get to meet new friends and play with one another in constructive ways. This is the Gospel for a little kid—they need to see how playing with each other is good and fun and that they are invited to participate etc. Typically, there will be a child or two who do not want to participate especially because it is early on in the evening. It is well worth a good invitation but do not linger and expend extra energy on the child who just needs a little extra time to get used to the surroundings. A little goes a long way with helping children feel comfortable—but the best thing you can do is keep the environment fun, light, hopeful, and inviting and typically the more shy child will take that step to join. This is a big deal for kids: we want them to learn that they are safe here, but that they also have to choose to join in. We will not be forcing participation but offering a few gentle invitations to join in. They will respect the process if you are consistent. Any true rudeness or outright disobedience needs to be told to the Minister of Children and Family Ministry and may require a phone call to parent/guardian at the minister's (director's) discretion. *Please do not make calls to parents regarding child behavior.* This needs to come from the minister (director) in charge. Emergency calls need to come from the minister (director) as well whenever possible.

**\*Ministry Success:**

To leave the church premises knowing that you truly gave of yourself to better the world in some way. The world needs loving adults who genuinely care for children and the parents that care for them. Did you show the love of Jesus to a child in some way? A ministry success is not just childcare but true caring for the child. Did you play a game with a kid? Did you help a little one with their shoes? Did you help a little one learn how to help themselves with their shoes? These are all helping children in tangible ways; and the love of Jesus is ever-tangible with us as we continue to grow in Him a little every day. Thanks for helping to show the next generation what love looks like.

## Hour Two: (6:30-7:30)

**\*Minimum people required: 3**

**\*Time commitment: 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.**

6:15 arriving to better understand what has been going on and how you can help for the next hour.

6:30 - 6:45 open play

6:45 cleanup play area

6:50 (or when play area clean) -7:30 board game area and activity area open.

**\*Expectations:**

The 'hour two' commitment actually involves one hour and thirty minutes. During this time you will help to graciously end the play area time and transition children to the board game area and activity area. This is table activity. This requires some true leadership or shepherding to transition from toys and fun to sitting with a board game or craft so reach into yourself and find that joyous, yet firm person to initiate this transition of cleaning up the play area at 6:45. This is a big deal for the overall ethos of the group. Children are all to help (as able) and lend a hand to be helpful with this process. Your job is to set the expectation that we are ALL helping and expect it and follow through with it. This will no doubt be tested by some children. *Expect* children to test this expectation. Yet use this as an opportunity to teach. Follow through and even take particularly rowdy children to the side (one at a time unless you are skilled with classroom management) and kneel down and look them in the eye and state the expectations of this new phase we are heading into. They will respect the process if you are consistent. Any true rudeness or outright disobedience needs to be told to the Minister of Children and Family Ministry and may require a phone call to parent/guardian at the minister's (director's) discretion. *Please do not make calls to parents regarding child behavior.* This needs to come from the minister (director) in charge. Emergency calls need to come from the minister (director) as well whenever possible.

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## Hour Three: (7:30-8:30)

**\*Minimum people required: 3**

**\*Time commitment: 7:15 - 8:45 p.m.**

**\*Expectations:**

The 'hour three' commitment actually involves one hour and thirty minutes. During this hour a movie will be started (usually 7:30-based on length of movie to be ending by 9:00). The expectation is to move the children to the movie area by putting away the play area toys. The board game area (so long reasonably quiet), and activity area are still available if children would prefer these over watching a movie. However, the expectation is that you will help the children understand that we are approaching a 'quiet hour' (during time of movie) and expect cooperation from all children in this regard to take on a manner of more quiet things. It will be tested. Expect children to test this expectation. But follow through and even take particularly rowdy children to the side (one at a time unless you are skilled with classroom management etc) and kneel down and look them in the eye and state the expectations of this new phase we are heading into. They will respect the process if you are consistent. Any true rudeness or outright disobedience needs to be told to the Minister of Children and Family Ministry and may require a phone call to parent/guardian at the minister's (director's) discretion. *Please do not make calls to parents regarding child behavior.* This needs to come from the minister (director) in charge. Emergency calls need to come from the minister (director) as well whenever possible.

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## Sign-out Team:

**\*Minimum people required: 2**

**\*Time commitment: 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

**\*Expectations:**

Arriving at 8:30 p.m. to ensure you are prepared and knowledgeable with the sign-out process and to send home early departures. This sign-out time typically does not go past 9:15 p.m. but we want to create an expectation that this role is here to ensure that each child finds their parent at the end of the night and that's what is most important—not the time frame. One person will be the “procedural ensurer” making sure the parents have successfully received the *correct child(ren)*. (The badges have unique codes for parent/child.) The other person will be more of a greeter/goodbye role *while still understanding the sign-out process*. Sign-out team requires a little training of the sign-out process with Children and Family Ministry staff before the event. The Wednesday before is typically when this is done. The Children and Family Ministry staff will reach out to you regarding this training after you have signed up and to find a time that works for you. Any child that has not been picked up by 9:10 p.m. should be alerted to minister (director) to make a phone call to parent.

**\*Ministry Success:**

To leave the church knowing all kids have been accounted for! It's an obvious one but one that we need to be intentional about always making sure that each child gets back to their responsible adult. How well we communicate and genuinely prove that this is important to us will directly impact a parent's trust of our ministry with their child. Sometimes security feels slightly awkward or inconvenient but it may just save a child's life. So we take it seriously because the children are important. Also for this to be a ministry success we need to say 'goodbye' well. How have you let this child know that you are glad that they came tonight? Did you make sure to call them by name? Take a little time to look a child in the eye and let them know that they are loved, they are cared for here, we love to see them, whatever it is, *that* is the last thing they will hear as they leave the church. What do you want them to walk away with?

## Clean Up Team:

**\*Minimum people required: 2**

**\*Time commitment: 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

**\*Expectations:**

Ensure the tables are put away, play area put away in gym closet, movie area put away, activity area put away, board game area put away, sign-in/out area (last thing after all children accounted for) put away. The movie will end about 9:00 so the rolling TV cannot be moved to Kids Room (B-225) until after movie is finished. Before 9:00, any tables or chairs not used can get put away, board games returned to game cart and brought to Kids Room (B-225), activity area supplies can be put on the activity cart and brought to Kids Room (B-215 this is room behind—was old robe room). Games and Activity supplies can stay on carts. We will put away from there. Little gym closet holds all toys, balls, hula-hoops, etc., and there is an intention to the space (this job SHOULD already be accomplished by the help of the children at an earlier time block. You will simply ensure all has been put away.) TV and speaker all need to be brought back to Kids Room (B-225) to prepare for Sunday School. The TV goes in the corner next to the window and the speaker next to it under the “FFUMC KiDS” sign. The sign-in/out table, computer, badge printer all need to go to Kids Room (B-225) to prepare for Sunday School. This table sits at entrance of room from hallway for easy access for sign-in. We will make sure all is connected well (unless you know how)—just getting to the right general place helps a lot.

**\*Ministry Success:**

To leave the church premises knowing that all these tasks have been accomplished because it is a way of serving those who are serving. This clean up task is a breath of fresh air to anyone who is serving at Parents Night Out. This is a hands and feet of Jesus type of self-sacrificing work that probably only a few will ever even see (We will! The volunteers will!). But it matters. This work matters because we are working to minister to children and their families in ways that also matters. This eases a burden and allows for more pastoral/ministry face-time with especially young parents with children at a critical moment of picking up children. It takes a whole team to effectively minister and this is a huge piece.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR MINISTRY WITH PARENTS NIGHT OUT!**

