Introduction
The security of a child is a paramount issue to every parent. In most public forums, it is something that has been addressed. Every few months, the news details a story of a child abduction. While they are exceedingly rare, these occurrences are an issue that churches should be concerned about. Sadly, many churches are playing catch-up when it comes to implementing basic security measures for children.

What Is Basic Preschool Security?
First and foremost, churches should provide a simple and relatively foolproof way to identify parents and children, and ensure a proper match to parent and child is always made. An easy way to do this is through the use of security cards. When parents leave a preschooler in the nursery, they are given a paper or laminated card with a security number, which they must present in order to retrieve their child. This nearly eliminates any possibility of child abduction. Often such instances are triggered by “the other parent” in a divorce situation. A security card and a firm policy behind it alleviate this possibility. Often churches that initiate preschool security measures will not allow parents into a room with children unless a card is presented.

Paging Parents
Cards can also be helpful if problems arise during a worship service. Many churches employ a numbering system—giving each card a unique identity. Electronic signs in the worship center will display your child’s number if a problem arises that needs parental attention. Some churches are now even employing a beeper system for these occurrences—parents are issued a pager when they place their preschooler in childcare and are paged if a problem arises.

Identifying Workers
Central to preschool security is also marking all official childcare workers with a name badge or other mandatory identification. Those not wearing proper identification should not be allowed to be with the children. A written record of authorized volunteers, as well as those working in the preschool area on a specific day, should also be kept.

Putting Parents at Ease
Simple measures for preschool security help to put parents at ease with leaving their children with childcare workers. Every parent should have confidence in their church and its preschool ministry, that their child is safe and secure while they are engaged in worship and ministry.

Written by Bob Gladney, Chief Financial Officer of The Parrish Group, Inc. a ministry support organization. Reprinted by permission of Practical Ministry Innovations. You may sign up to receive your own broadcast at www.parrishgroup.com/pmi.