As you seek to offer healing for the broken in your community and connect in missional global partnerships, do you have policies and procedures in place to protect children and abuse survivors? We have curated a collection of questions to ask yourself and your church as well as links to digital resources that can be of use.

Local Church Ministry and Outreach

Q: Do you have a written child protection policy and application process for staff and volunteers?

Know that simple changes such as adequate background screening, training, and always requiring two workers with children can reduce the likelihood of abuse. No staff or volunteers should be in closed rooms or taking children to the bathroom alone. Special attention should be paid to caring for children with disabilities or children from single parent homes as they are more likely to be targeted by predators.

The Review on the Prevalence and Risk of Violence Against Children with Disabilities, published in July 2012, found that overall children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled children. The review indicated that children with disabilities are 3.7 times more likely than non-disabled children to be victims of any sort of violence, 3.6 times more likely to be victims of physical violence, and 2.9 times more likely to be victims of sexual violence. Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual violence than their non-disabled peers. Read more.

Q: Do you know the referral networks and resources in your local community for victims of abuse?

Q: Do you know the signs of maltreatment for children, what to do if someone suspects abuse, or requirements for reporting abuse in your state?

Q: Do you speak out about sexual and physical abuse in sermons or through safety training programs for children and families? Reduce the shame felt by survivors by emphasizing abuse is never the fault of the victim and providing a safe space for healing. Read more


about how pastors are addressing violence and sexual abuse.

Additional Resources

Sojourners has compiled 100 sermons on domestic and sexual violence to help pastors address this topic in their congregations:

Love 146 has a trafficking prevention curriculum for youth.
Ministry Safe provides online training and resources to help “ministries meet legal standards of care and reduce the risk of sexual abuse by creating preventative measures tailored to fit the needs of churches, camps and ministry programs.”

SafeChurch is an online resource offering child abuse prevention information, child/youth safety guides, and examples of documents such as child protection policies and incident reports:

GRACE – Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment offers trainings and resources to equip the Church to protect children and protect abuse survivors. They offer an onsite Safeguarding Certification as well as online resources such as “Five Characteristics of Child Sexual Offenders in Faith Communities.”

Global Partnerships

Q: Have you researched your global mission partnerships to ensure you aren’t unintentionally causing harm to the vulnerable?

Q: Do your partners train their staff/communities on prevention and responding to abuse?

Q: Are you aware of the harm caused by institutionalization (orphanages) and orphan tourism?

Q: Are you supporting facilities or organizations accredited and supported by the national government and international aid agencies?

Learn more about the Sustainable Development Goals and support organizations working to meet these goals.

Educate yourself about best practices surrounding orphan care and prevention.

Additional Resources

Christian Alliance For Orphans (CAFO) – online resources and training events.

Articles:

- http://www.ccainstitute.org/resources/fact-sheets

Engage responsibly in short-term missions:

Faith to Action – Short-term Mission Guide
Chalmers Institute – Short-term Missions Participants Guide