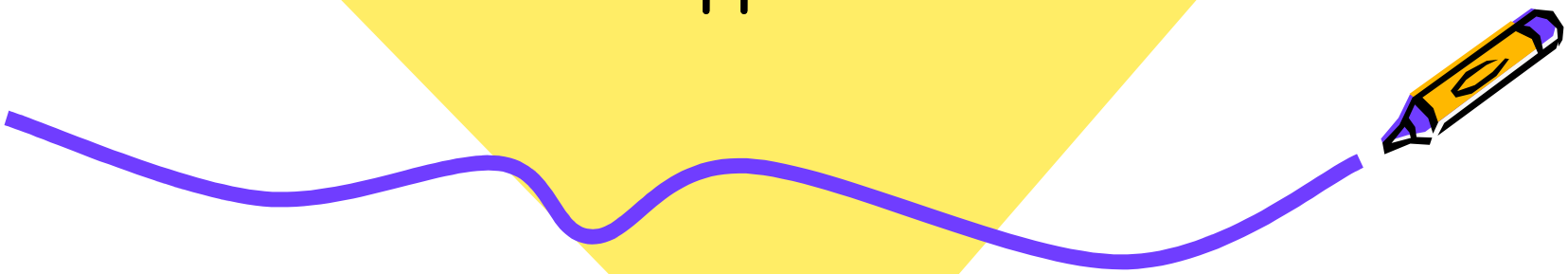
Registered Youth Worker Training

Overview and Application Process



Registered Youth Worker Purpose

- Educate the church on reducing the risk of child abuse in programs of ministry
- Screen, select, and register all people who serve children and youth in the church

What Is Abuse?

Bringing harm to a young person that occurs immediately or through accumulated effects over a period of time

4 Categories of Abuse

- Neglect
  - When harm is caused by withholding life's necessities

- Emotional
  - When young people are consistently told they are of no worth and never will be

- Physical
  - Bodily injury of person

- Sexual
  - Any sexual activity between young person and adult
  - Sexual activity between young people with unequal distribution of power
  - Exposure to sexual activity or pornography without their direct participation

Overview

- Church has developed basic protection barriers
  - Protects children and youth from potential abusers
  - Protects those working with children from false accusations

Guiding Principle

- Only registered youth workers will be used in the church's children and youth programs and ministries.
- Registered youth worker assistants will only be used under the supervision of a registered youth worker.

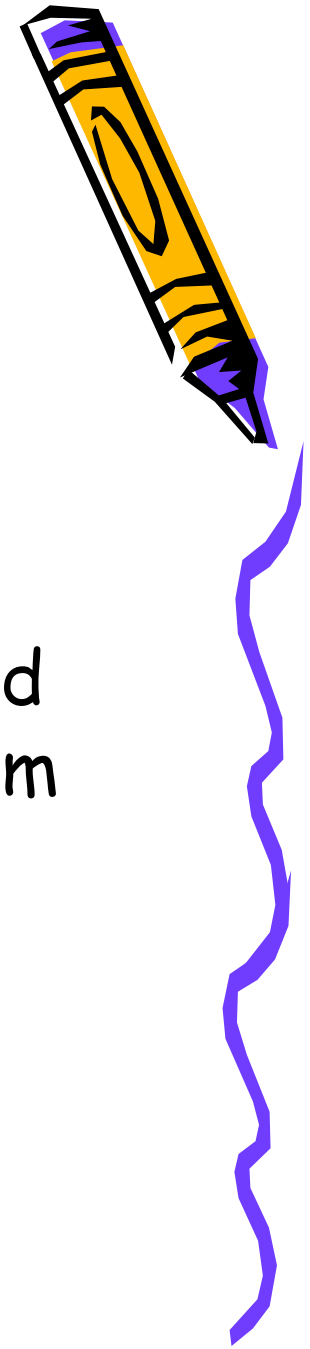
Foundational Principle 1

- Education
  - Educate young people, parents, children and youth workers, counselors, counselors-in-training, employees, volunteers, jurisdictional officers, members, and friends about the risk of child abuse.

Foundational Principle 2

- Selection
  - Use an established procedure in the selection of ministers and volunteers to minimize the risk that those persons will abuse children and youth.
  - We are morally and legally duty-bound to have all potential youth workers go through an application and screening procedure before they begin sharing ministry.

Foundational Principle 3



- Training
  - Provide opportunities for children and youth workers that will sensitize them to the issues of abuse: preventing, detecting, responding, and reporting.

Foundational Principle 4

- Protection Barriers
  - Follow procedures that will reduce the likelihood that those who abuse children and youth will have access to them.
  - Only those who are properly screened and selected should have access to children and youth on an ongoing basis.

6 Month Rule

- Person MUST attend a congregation for at least six (6) months prior to applying to become registered youth worker
  - Allow individuals to become better known
  - Evaluate suitability to work with children and youth

Two-deep Leadership

- Two fully registered youth workers REQUIRED
  - All trips and outings
  - All children's and youth programs
  - Co-ed activities MUST have co-ed leadership

- No one adult should ever be alone with one young person behind closed doors

Visible One-on-One Contact

- All contact with children and youth should be in view of other adults and young people.

- No one adult should ever be alone with one young person behind closed doors

Respect of Privacy

- Respect privacy of children and youth at all times.
  - Especially important in shared housing settings such as camps
  - All need privacy when changing clothes, bathing, etc.

Appropriate Dress

- Proper clothing for activities is required
  - Christ-centered nature of ministry
  - Model appropriate behavior and dress

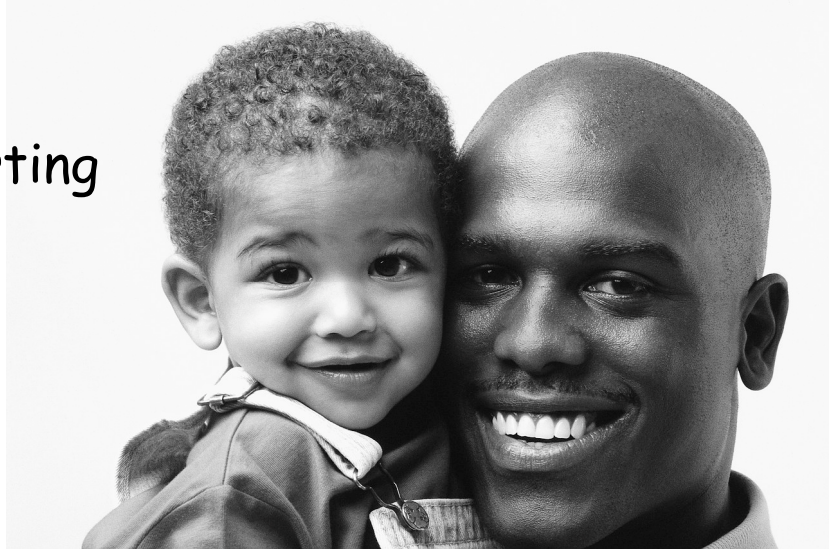
Constructive Discipline

- Keep discipline constructive
- Reflect values of the church
- **Corporal punishment** is not an option

Appropriate Physical Contact

- Exercise discretion at all times
- Physical contact must be for benefit of child

  -Give affirmation
  -Provide comfort when hurting
  -Express joy
  -Offer protection



Youth Worker Assistants

- Young people between 15-20 years old
- Must be supervised **at all times** by registered youth worker

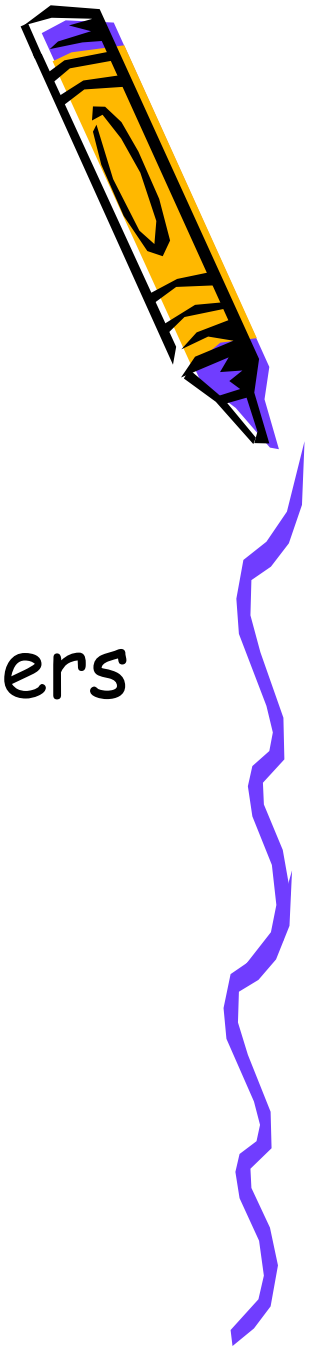
Foundational Principle 5

- Prompt and Full Reporting
  - Encourage children, youth, and adults to report improper behavior directed toward them.
  - Cooperate fully with local, state, and federal authorities.
  - Determine a proactive status regarding reporting and cooperation.

Prompt Reporting: The First R is "Recognize"

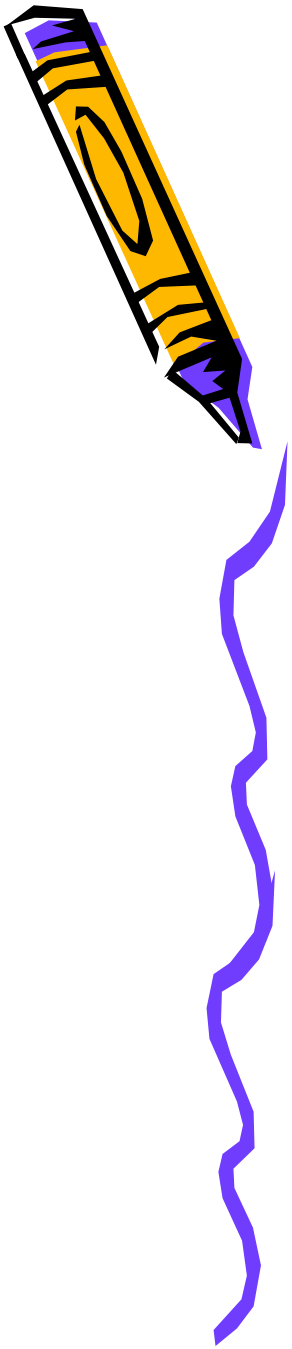
- Young people need to be able to RECOGNIZE situations that place them at risk of abuse, how abusers might operate, and that anyone can be an abuser.

Prompt Reporting: The Second R is "Resist"



- Young people need to know that if they RESIST, most would-be abusers will leave them alone.

Prompt Reporting:
The Third R is "Reporting"



- Young people need to know the importance of REPORTING any attempted or actual abuse.

The Child's Bill of Rights

- Trust their own instincts and feelings.
- Expect privacy.
- Withhold information that could place them in danger.
- Refuse gifts.
- Say "no" to unwanted touching or affection.

- Say "no" to inappropriate demands and requests from others.
- Be rude and unhelpful if the situation warrants.
- Run, scream, or make a scene.
- Physically fight off unwanted advances.
- Ask for help.

Foundational Principle 6

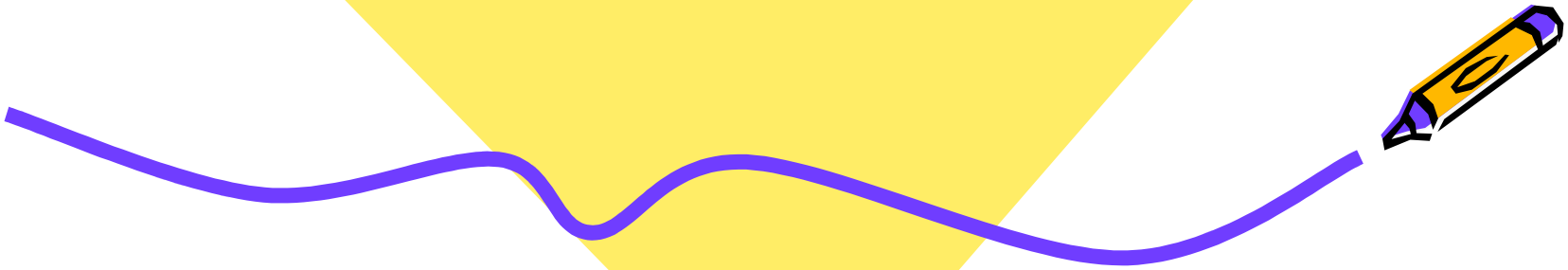
- Swift Action
  - Respond quickly to allegations of child abuse
  - Remove alleged offenders from contact with children and youth immediately.

- Children and youth workers who suspect abuse or who receive information about abuse are REQUIRED to inform their pastor or administrative supervisor.

- All states and provinces (US and Canada) have laws requiring the reporting of suspected abuse; know them and abide by them.

- Children and youth ministers who are accused of abuse must be immediately removed from direct contact and supervision with children and youth.

Becoming a Registered Youth Worker



Beginning the Process…

- Application process begins at congregational level
  - Sunday school teacher
  - Vacation Bible School
  - Jr. High/Sr. High youth programs
  - Any youth programs of the church

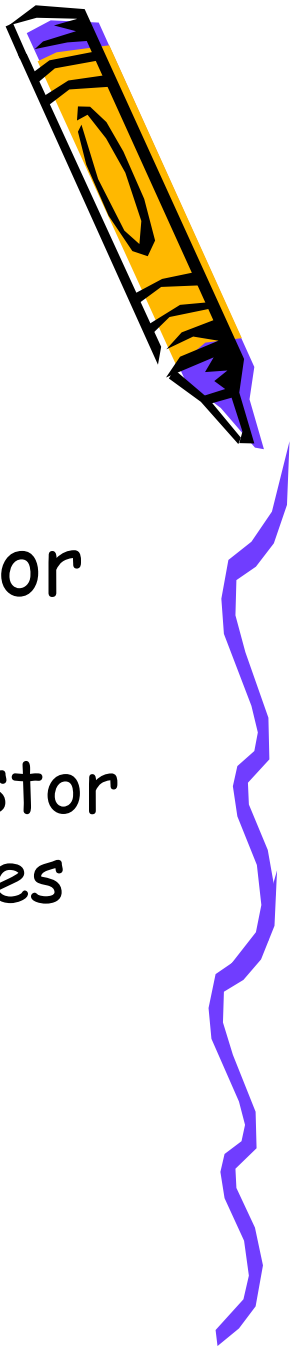
Training

- Covers number of topics
  - **Why** the youth registration is in place
  - Different types of abuse
  - Ways to protect children from potential abusers
  - How to respond to reports of past or current abuse

Application Form

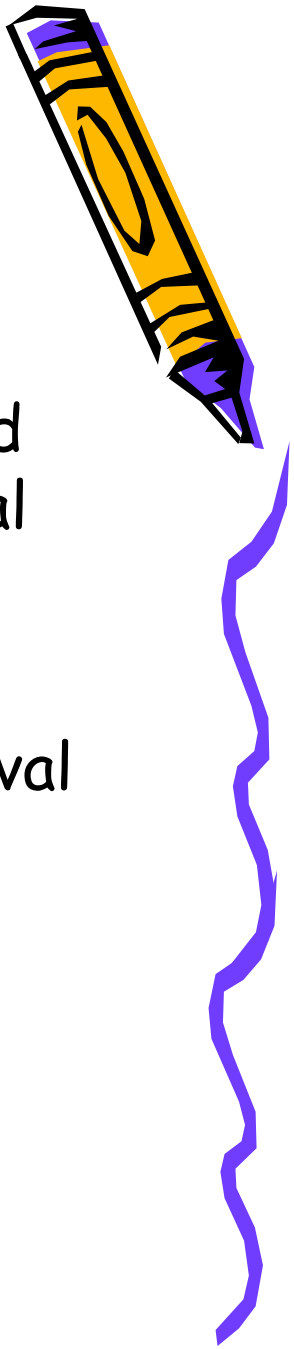
- General information (name/address/birth date/home congregation)
- Ever been convicted of crime (other than minor traffic violation)?
- Ever been recorded by Department of Social Services (or other similar agency)?
- 3 references

Approval Process



- Completed application goes to pastor
  - Pastor (or individual delegated by pastor or mission center) contacts references

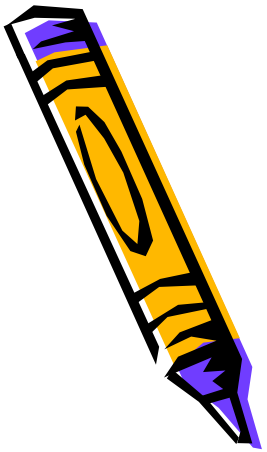
- Pastor (or designated person) interviews the candidate
  - Why they want to become registered
  - What skills they have
  - What weaknesses



- If application is correctly completed, and references support, pastor signs approval and sends to Mission Center for review.

- If references **do not** support, the approval process **cannot** proceed.

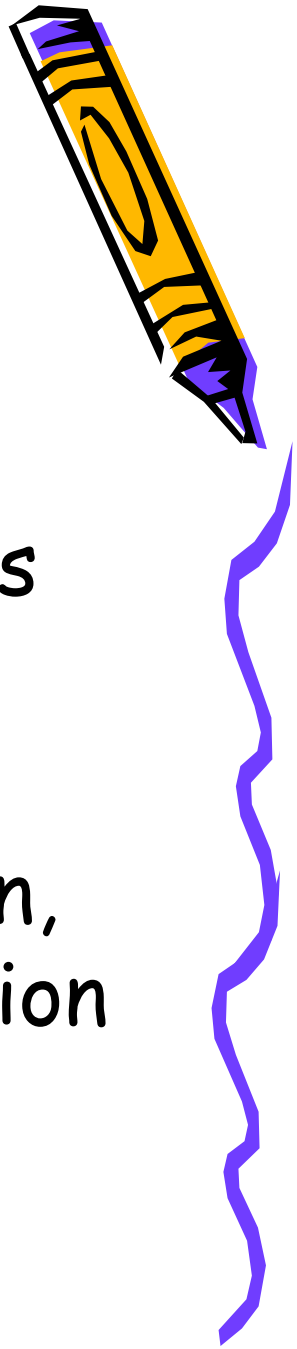
- Mission Center review comments from pastor
  - If everything is in order, application is sent to International HQ for final review
  - If application is not supported by Mission Center, process ends and pastor is informed the application is denied
    - Pastor notifies applicant
    - If appropriate, suggest ways to volunteer that do not relate to children



- At International HQ…
  - Application reviewed by Legal Services
  - After approval, International Headquarters staff add profile to Shelby to indicate individual is registered youth worker
  - **Filling out the form does not automatically mean you are registered**

If Problem…

i.e., Crime conviction or Record from Department of Social Services



- Additional documentation required
- Youth Worker Special Circumstances Committee will review
- Mission Center may approve or may request not to sign off on application, depending on Committee determination

What Happens If…

- If application is denied, the process ends
- May re-apply 1 year later **if** circumstances have changed significantly

Revocation

- Current process does not include renewal process – always registered UNLESS…
  - Crime is committed
  - Accusation of inappropriate behavior
  - Suspension or silence from priesthood

Being a registered youth worker is not an entitlement or a right…
It is a privilege.