



TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT

Children's Check-In

by Lauren Hunter and Keri Wyatt Kent



CHURCH TECH TODAY
TECHNOLOGY FOR TODAY'S CHURCH



ABOUT US



ChurchTechToday

ChurchTechToday is the #1 church technology website for pastors, communicators, and leaders. With the goal to provide insight into a variety of topics including social media, websites, worship, media, mobile, and software, ChurchTechToday aims to shed light on how church technology can empower and position churches for impact and growth.



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KidCheck

[KidCheck](#) provides secure children's check-in systems, designed for churches. Streamline the check-in process, improve security, easily track attendance, and create a positive parent and visitor experience. KidCheck offers easy-to-use software, including mobile check-in, and complete check-in station solutions, all backed by expert, personal service and support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Children’s Check-in Overview	5
Serving Children	
Church for Modern Families	
Children’s Ministry Foundation	
Big or Small, Safety Matters	
Chapter 2: Addressing Concerns	10
Medical and Allergy Concerns	
Abuse Prevention	
Staying Healthy	
Emergency and Security Procedure	
Security and Incident Planning	
Chapter 3: Children’s Ministry Volunteers	16
Background Checks	
Volunteer Training	
Volunteer Procedure	
Volunteer Agreement	
Social Media Policy	
Chapter 4: Visitors and Holidays	22
Visitor Procedure	
Special Events	
Holiday Volunteers	
Turning Visitors Into Attenders	
Chapter 5: Communication With Families	27
In-Person Communication	
Text Messaging Communication	
Email Communication	
Photo Identification	
Incident Reporting	
Chapter 6: Your Children’s Check-In Solution	33
Technology and Your Relationships	
Addressing Your Needs	
What KidCheck Offers	
Chapter 7: Resources	38

CHAPTER 1



Children's Check-in Overview

Serving Children

Setting up, improving, and running a children’s ministry program is no small task. From curriculum to volunteer coordination to classroom setup to safety and security, there are many facets to the equation that add up to a successful program. Whether your ministry is brand new or centuries old, it is vital to evaluate from year to year to improve upon the well-being—both physical and spiritual—of the children your church serves.

When parents bring their children to church, they are entrusting a part of their spiritual development to the teachers and staff. They’re also putting their child’s physical safety in the hands of the ministry leaders. Ministry leaders, in turn, want to serve kids and provide a fun, enriching, and safe environment.

However, many children’s ministry classrooms have no security system at all, or one that is casual and inconsistent. Many churches, eager to recruit volunteers for kids’ ministry, don’t require a background check of any kind for volunteers or staff in children’s ministry—this puts the children they desire to serve at risk.

Church for Modern Families

One in fourteen children in America lives in a household headed by a grandparent, according to the 2010 Census data. About 4.9 million are being raised solely by their grandparents, up from 2.4 million in 2000.¹ By some estimates, 35 percent of children in America live in single-parent households.² Do the math and you’ll

1 <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/07/26/more-grandparents-raising-their-grandkids/13225569/>

2 <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/106-children-in-single-parent-families#detailed/1/any/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/429,430>

see that children in your ministry are impacted by these trends.

In these days of blended families and complicated custody arrangements, it is essential to have a clear, consistent, computerized child check-in system to protect children and their families.

Any child in your classroom might be being raised by a grandparent, or might spend every other weekend with a different parent, or might be protected by a court order. An electronic children's check-in system stores all documents about the child's situation so that staff is aware of special situations. It allows parents to update information when it changes, and can accommodate different family members dropping off and picking up kids, as long as they are both authorized in the system.

Having this information readily available keeps kids safe and helps parents feel reassured—which is important in these complex situations.

Children's Ministry Foundation

A strong foundation for children's ministry strives for excellent safety and security by having a system in place that includes:

- Clearly defined emergency procedures
- A clear process for screening and recruiting volunteers that includes criminal background checks
- Policies that protect children, including student-to-teacher ratios, incident reporting, procedures for allergies or medical issues
- A secure area for classrooms that is both self-contained yet visible from the outside

- A check-in system that will allow only authorized guardians to drop off and pick up children

In addition to protecting the church from liability, utilizing an electronic check-in software system provides an easy way to protect children and let parents know that you care about their kids and make safety a priority.

A children's check-in system immediately reassures parents, especially newcomers, that you care about what is most precious to them—their children. It protects children from specific risks, including food allergies, abuse, and even abduction. It helps you to grow your ministry, and supports your efforts to serve children. It also helps you track attendance patterns and growth in your ministry.

The best system in the world, however, only works if the staff is trained to use it, and then actually uses it consistently. A secure check-in system needs to offer the following:

- Accurate records of all children who check-in and check-out
- Assurance that the volunteers working with children are qualified and safe
- Specific and easily viewable information about food allergies and medical issues
- A way to verify the identity of people picking up and dropping off children

According to one survey from K! Report³, only 37 percent of churches use an electronic children's check-in system. While some use a written ledger or attendance list, those systems can easily fail and do not adequately provide enough ways to track and secure children with allergy and medical needs, as well as

³ <http://kidzmatter.com/kidzmatter-magazine/k-report/>

custody details. Additionally, checking attendance patterns or trends on hand-written systems is cumbersome.

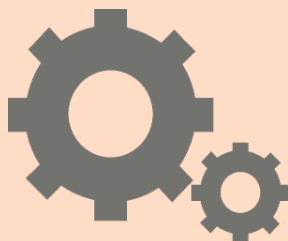
Big or Small, Safety Matters

Even small churches can make their children's ministry more welcoming and safer by using an electronic children's check-in system, in addition to having clear policies about check-in and check-out.

While your ministry volunteers may know all the parents personally, what happens when a new child comes? Or ten new children show up one Sunday morning? What happens if a child's parents divorce and only one has custody? What if a child has severe allergies your ministry wasn't aware of?

If ministry growth is a goal, a check-in system is essential. It not only helps keep track of children who may not yet be familiar to the staff, it also makes newcomers feel cared for and secure in leaving their precious kids in your care. It also provides a clear way to track attendance and growth.

Whether your organization is a tiny church, a mega church, or a church plant, having a plan in place (and making sure everyone follows it) that includes secure check-in procedures will help your ministry to be a safe place for all involved.



Technology Highlight: Implement, train volunteers, and consistently use a children's check-in software system to tighten your safety and security for each of your children's ministry programs.

CHAPTER 2



Addressing Concerns

A children's ministry check-in software system does not eliminate risks completely. Rather, it is designed to identify risks, reduce them significantly, and spell out clear procedures for dealing with emergencies should they occur.

Church leaders cannot prepare for risks unless they understand them. This section is not intended to be alarmist, but sets in perspective the concerns to be dealt with appropriately and thoroughly to prevent worst possible scenarios.

Medical and Allergy Concerns

Many families are raising children who have special needs. From mild to severe food allergies, medical conditions, and special educational needs, this area of ministry must be addressed. In order to serve families well, it's vital to think through how you will approach these special situations.

By far the most common of these is food allergies. About six to 10 percent of children under 10 have food allergies, but an alarming percentage of those cases (about 38 percent) are considered severe.⁴

To reduce the risk of an allergic reaction, be proactive. If you serve snacks, consider going nut-free, as nuts are a common allergy, as well as one that causes severe reactions. Allow parents to provide their own snacks if they prefer. Or simply choose not to serve snacks, which will eliminate allergy concerns and choking hazards, and also make cleaning up classrooms easier.

If your ministry serves a child with special needs or medical challenges, you may

⁴ Gupta, R, et al. The Prevalence, Severity and Distribution of Childhood Food Allergy in the United States. *Pediatrics* 2011; 10.1542/ped.2011-0204. (Accessed at: <http://www.aaaai.org/about-the-aaaai/newsroom/allergy-statistics.aspx>)

want to assign a dedicated person whose job it is to learn about medical conditions and communicate with the families of children with these challenges. Making sure every child's needs are being met goes even a step further to ensure that children will be both served and loved well.

Work with parents, listen to their concerns and take them to heart. Allow them to educate you about their child. Be sure that your check-in software system includes information about, and alerts you to, any allergies or medical conditions, as well as contact information so that the parent can be reached via text or phone immediately.

Electronic children's check-in systems can alert caregivers to medical concerns (including allergies) with name tags that are reverse-printed (white letters on black background) or contain a colored sticker or code word.

If an allergic reaction or medical incident does occur, document it promptly in your check-in software. Include specifics, photos, and any communication with the parents or guardians for future knowledge.

Abuse Prevention

While it may seem unthinkable, 90 percent of abuse perpetrators are not strangers to their victims. To keep the opportunity for abuse or even impropriety at a minimum, have these policies and practices in place and communicate them often:

- Don't have a child alone with an adult. Establish the "Rule of 2's" (minimum two kids and two adults) when moving kids or taking them to the restroom.
- Infants and toddlers need diapering and bathroom help. Keep the changing table in a clearly visible place. Do not allow an adult to go into a closed

bathroom with a child. Use common sense and strict accountability.

- Evaluate the physical environment of each room; open up hidden areas and prevent access to closets, etc. Make it impossible for an adult to be alone or out of sight with a child.
- Control the access to your building and limit the number of entry points to your children's area. Classrooms should be in high-traffic areas and have windows.
- Never allow children to be unattended in your facility. This will prevent a myriad of potentially harmful situations. Even the children of teachers, pastors, volunteers, and staff need to be supervised at all times, or visible in public areas of the church.
- Establish consistent screening policies for volunteers, staff and individuals participating in any kind of volunteering with children: this includes adults helping out on special occasions who might not normally serve in a children's ministry.
- Background checks are a must, as is a waiting period before approving a new volunteer. These checks should be conducted routinely every one to two years.

Staying Healthy

Prevent disease from spreading by using common sense and clear communication. Encourage proper hygiene among staff, volunteers and kids.

Have a clear policy (no fever or vomiting within 24 hours, for example) about not allowing sick children to attend, post it publicly, and enforce it. Let parents know ahead of time that sick children will not be allowed to enter the classrooms. To

soften the blow, offer take-home materials so kids don't feel they're missing out.

Emergency and Security Procedure

In the event of an emergency, which could range from a fire to a person with a gun, you need to know how to respond. That means paying attention to what's going on at any given time, and also having a plan ahead of time for incidents like this.

Especially in church, we may want to believe that lockdown drills are not needed, but it is better to be safe than sorry. Work with local law enforcement to have them help you develop a plan to respond quickly in an emergency. Learn from local schools and other organizations about how to put together an emergency response plan.

Security and Incident Planning

If a child has a medical emergency (such as a seizure, fainting or vomiting), where do you take them, and what do you do? In case of a fire or other disaster, how do you evacuate? If an angry parent shows up, or a non-custodial parent tries to pick up a child from a classroom, what do you do?

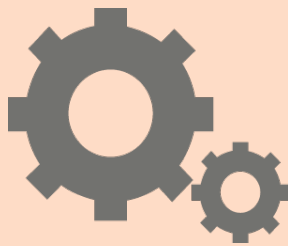
Deciding how to handle a crisis in the moment will likely result in unclear thinking and poor choices. Create a security team assigned to set up policies for these and other security incidents. Communicate policies clearly with all staff and volunteers. Create incident report forms, and be sure your staff and volunteers fill them out if something occurs.

Have a first aid kit easily accessible, and in every childcare room if possible, and

be sure caregivers and volunteers know where it is and how to use it. Have parents sign medical releases. Have policies against abuse in writing, and review them with your volunteers and staff.

Train your ministry staff and volunteers to be alert and aware of what's going on when they are serving so that they can preempt a potentially harmful situation.

In short, be proactive and plan ahead. This will minimize risks and make every child feel welcomed and loved in your ministry.



Technology Highlight: Children's check-in software can help manage and track allergy and medical needs, as well as facilitate and maintain good security and safety practices.

CHAPTER 3



Children's Ministry Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of any ministry. Even a large church cannot run its children’s ministry solely with paid staff—they need to develop a solid core of reliable volunteers. In some cases, recruitment can be challenging. However, that does not mean you should ever compromise on your standards for volunteers. Your volunteers are the first line of defense in keeping kids safe and secure within your ministry. They should be people of good character who are spiritually sound and trustworthy, and who have been through the background check process your church has put in place.

People want to be part of an excellent team, and keeping the bar high for volunteers will attract quality people. Ministries that require background checks will attract the caliber of volunteers who care enough about child safety to comply.

Background Checks

Interviewing a potential volunteer is a good start, but not enough. Abusers tend to be very good at deception. Every volunteer should also be cleared by a criminal background check. Unless someone has something to hide, they should have no problem with anyone looking at their background.

For help with this, you can contact local law enforcement, or use a company like Protect My Ministry. Accessibility to criminal records varies by state—so do your homework.

These background checks should be repeated every one to two years. Unfortunately, volunteering in a children’s ministry does not keep people from making bad choices, and you need to have up-to-date records to be sure kids in your ministry are safe.

Volunteer Training

Even volunteers who have experience parenting their own children can benefit from training that covers some basics of child development. Train your volunteers in effective teaching techniques, in how to communicate with parents, as well as in safety and security procedures and practices. If you are using an electronic check-in system, you will need to train your volunteers to use it properly. It's only as safe as those using it. Some systems provide free training and support.

Make training a requirement for serving in your ministry. This not only helps volunteers do their job better, it keeps everyone on the same page and moving forward together.

Decide whether you will create the materials to train your volunteers, or use training resources developed by experts, which may be available as a curriculum or an online course.

Volunteer Procedure

A specific plan for how you'll handle volunteers will help your ministry run smoothly. A written plan that answers the following concerns will help:

- What will your volunteer application look like? What questions will you ask, and what level of commitment will you require (such as serving weekly, or monthly, etc.)? It should include questions about the person's background.
- Who will review the background checks, and how will they respond? Having a committee rather than an individual reduces your liability and provides check and balance.
- Which volunteers will be required to have background checks, and how

often? Anyone in direct contact with children should be checked, ideally annually.

- Put in writing what to do if there is any incident involving a child.
- Provide training for volunteers to set them up for success. Clearly define your mission and values, and your expectations regarding attendance, behavior, and so on. Have a written volunteer agreement that spells everything out (see below).
- What are the age requirements for your volunteers? What are the policies for high school kids who serve in your children’s ministries? Are they paired with adult volunteers who can guide and supervise?

Volunteer Agreement

A safe and secure children’s ministry is built on clear communication. No one, even the best volunteers, can exceed your expectations if you don’t clearly spell out what those expectations are.

Create a simple volunteer agreement that spells out responsibilities and expectations, and have each volunteer sign a copy. This provides accountability and helps them understand their role.

You may also want to include language about a volunteer’s responsibility to nurture their own walk with God, to refrain from negativity or a bad attitude, and proper channels for resolving disputes or problems within the ministry team.

Social Media Policy

The volunteer agreement should include your policy on social media and phone use. You may want to have a “phones off, no photos” policy for volunteers. If a

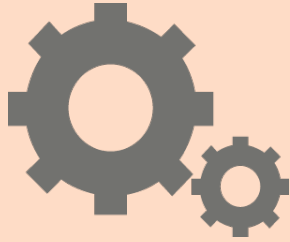
young volunteer posts a photo on social media of a child whose parent hasn't given permission, that's a liability.

Decide as a staff if the church's intent is to require all parents to sign blanket release forms once per year giving permission to use their children's photos online or in social media, or if asking permission on a case-by-case basis is better for your ministry. In the event that an image is shared online and the parents request it to be taken down, comply immediately. Having a section within your volunteer agreement with specific bullet points to tackle social media is a great way to get everyone on the same page.

Many experts warn against naming and tagging children in photos posted to social media due to increased threats of online stalkers. For instance, do not name children, "From left to right, Johnny, Suzie, Mary . . .", and do not state the location and the names together.

While these issues are complicated and ever-changing, talking to other children's ministry leaders, and reading publications and blogs that are constantly looking to improve this area of ministry are key to staying current on the issue of social media.

The strength and quality of your ministry, as well as the safety of the children in your ministry, are only as good as your volunteers. Don't compromise on quality, training or expectations. Set standards high, and your ministry will thrive.



Technology Highlight: Utilizing background checks, and having a volunteer policy that includes social media, together with children’s check-in software, help to ensure you’ve covered all the bases within your children’s ministry.

CHAPTER 4



Visitors and Holidays

For many parents, visiting a new church can be somewhat nerve-racking and overwhelming, especially if they have small children. Their experience of your church can hinge on how their children were cared for. These powerful first impressions speak volumes about your ministry—whether you want them to or not.

Hopefully, they'll experience great music, a compelling sermon, and friendly people. However, if visitors bring children, they are looking for more than just friendly faces or an inspiring message. Parents want to know that teachers are both kind and competent, that the classroom has age-appropriate toys and activities, and is cheerful, bright, clean—and that their children are safe and secure, and will only be released to them.

Visitor Procedure

Create a smooth, simple procedure to help visitors and their children feel welcome, no matter when they visit, and train your volunteers and staff to follow it. Your plan should include:

Greeting: Assign a volunteer (*or team*) to welcome and greet visitors with a smile and direct them to the check-in area or correct classroom, introduce them to their teacher, and tell them what they can expect. Also be sure to assign someone to say goodbye with a smile, to thank them for coming, and invite them to return.

Training: Make sure your volunteers know exactly how to check in and welcome new children. Teach volunteers to be intentional about being friendly (smiling, making eye contact, etc.), answering questions, and including newcomers.

Reassuring: When visitors check their children in, gather information without overwhelming them. You'll need the parent name, telephone number (that you can text

or call during the service if necessary), and email and/or mailing address (*for follow-up*). Get the child's name, gender, birthday, and any medical or allergy information (*see Chapter 2*) so that they can be safely checked in. Reassure the parent by clearly and quickly explaining check-in and check-out procedures, and how you'll contact them in case of any emergency or incident. Encourage volunteers to follow those procedures consistently, for both visitors and long-time attenders.

To make the child feel welcome, here are a few more ideas:

- Designate visitors with a colored sticker on their name tag, so volunteers can quickly identify children who may need more attention or assistance.
- Assign an older child, or one who's been around for a while, as a "buddy" for visiting kids.
- Find out if newcomers would like to be introduced to the other children – a more outgoing child may enjoy this, but a shy child may find this intimidating.
- Talk with the parents about how they'd prefer you handle any anxiety, if that happens. For example: how long should you let the child cry before contacting the parent?

Special Events

At certain times of the year, such as Christmas, Easter, or even Vacation Bible School, you may have extra visitors. Hopefully you'll have the good problem of many visiting children, and most likely you'll have to bring in additional volunteers. Families who have never been to your church may show up for the first time during the holidays.

This means there will be more "strangers" on your church campus, and a need for

simply being aware and carefully discerning whether someone is coming to church to visit, or to cause trouble. Communicate with your staff and volunteers prior to these special events to remind them that this is a critical time for outreach and putting “our best foot forward” as well as being aware of any potential emergencies that might arise. Train volunteers to be observant and to notice anything out of the ordinary.

During the busy holiday season, an electronic children's check-in system provides extra safety and keeps a record of all visitors. This technology plays an even more important role during these special times by providing extra safety and allowing ministries to gather tracking data to help them plan well for future outreach events.

Holiday Volunteers

Many children’s ministries ask for extra help during the holidays, inviting people to serve just one time. This can not only help your ministry handle an influx of extra children, but also be a way to recruit new volunteers who have fun serving “just this once.”

However, security measures for one-time serving at holidays need to be consistent with normal procedures. Policies requiring background checks, interviews, and a waiting period before serving should remain in force, even if a person is only serving at one Christmas Eve service. That means putting out a call for volunteers far ahead of time, and screening them just as carefully as you do the rest of the year.

Prepare your regular volunteers in advance for handling extra children in their classrooms. Review ways that they can help new or one-time volunteers by guiding

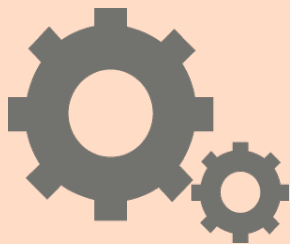
them. You may even want to have new volunteers serve alongside your veteran volunteers. Doing so will provide “on the job” training for the new volunteer, and also improve security.

Turning Visitors Into Attenders

Having a clear visitor procedure and training volunteers and staff to implement it will help you to welcome visiting children and their families, and to create a favorable first impression by demonstrating safety and friendliness. Be sure to communicate that you hope they will return again, without any pressure. Follow up with first-time visitors via email, or a handwritten note, and invite them to attend a future service and/or upcoming special event.

You may want to consider a short “first-timer” survey (not more than five questions) that can be mailed back or completed online. This can make visiting families understand that their input is important, and may encourage them to return.

A clear security procedure, including an easy-to-use check-in system, can help you make a great first impression on visitors. Knowing that you care about the safety of their children can help you begin to build a relationship of trust with visitors. This is true for everyday church services, as well as special church services and outreach events.



Technology Highlight: A simple, intuitive children's check-in system that is secure yet easy to use will help new visitors to feel safe but not intimidated. Make it easy for visitors to trust you and your ministry.

CHAPTER 5



Communication With Families

Children thrive when parents or guardians participate in their activities, from soccer to church. Clear communication between children’s ministry staff and caregivers will dismantle the barriers to parent involvement—which will ultimately make the ministry stronger, safer, and more effective. Technology can and should be used to maintain and improve communication with the families your ministry serves.

With the right tools, completing the communication loop can be easy, fast, and cost-effective. Smart ministry leaders utilize technology to communicate clearly and in a timely manner.

In-Person Communication

A great time to communicate with guardians is at check-in, when you are face-to-face for just a few moments. If you are using an electronic check-in system, any important information can be added to the child’s record as they are checked in. Many points of concern such as allergy information are printed right on the child’s name tag.

Parents and guardians can let staff know about any special instructions, from an upcoming birthday to a change in feeding schedules. For more sensitive communication about changes in the family due to death, divorce, or separation that may include a restraining order, be willing to set up a private meeting at a later date to provide privacy to the guardian checking their child in. Documenting all relevant information and storing it securely within your children’s check-in system can help keep everyone on the same page.

Also, children’s ministry staff can put notifications for parents in the check-in system so that when they check their children in, they see helpful announcements

such as “Ladybug class meets in room 32 today” or “Don’t forget the canned food drive begins next week.”

Text Messaging Communication

Text messaging is another valuable way to communicate. Texting a parent during the service will alert them to come to the classroom in a private way (rather than the distracting and potentially embarrassing “number on the screen” method or the cumbersome and expensive pager system). A quick text can also reassure a guardian that the child who was crying at check-in is now calm and playing happily.

Some check-in systems can automatically text a parent when a child has been dropped off or checked out, making one guardian aware when a different guardian is picking up the child. This way they can see when the husband, wife, or grandma has dropped off or picked up their child. It’s mainly intended to be a convenience feature, but has a safety element, too, so that parents know what’s going on when they aren’t the ones doing the physical check-in/out.

Most electronic check-in systems have a text messaging feature within their functionality to help alleviate the need for staff and volunteers to use their own personal phone or device to text parents.

Note: Texting should be reserved for simple, straightforward messages regarding the checking in or out of a child, or to quickly inform the guardian during a service. It is not the ideal form of communication to relay detailed or complicated information.

Email Communication

Email is easy and quick, especially when sending a general announcement to all guardians for a classroom, your volunteers, or even the entire ministry. Email allows you to document when, and to whom, messages were sent. It also gives you the option to attach documents such as schedules, permission slips or event promotion, or even point to your church website to register for events or calendars. It can also be used to share short videos from the ministry director, to send ministry newsletters, and much more.

Many electronic check-in systems have built-in broadcast email and text messaging capabilities to make email communication a simple and effective step.

Photo Identification

Utilizing photos of guardians stored within the children's check-in system is a valuable part of communication. They are particularly important in situations where a child's parent has alerted the staff to an "unauthorized guardian"—a person who may try to pick up the child but is not allowed to do so.

Having photos of both authorized and unauthorized guardians readily available to view in the system allows the check-out person to make sure that the child is released safely. Uploading photos of children to your system can also help with identification and safety.

Some electronic check-in software systems are set up to have parents upload photos themselves to their family information page online. Others have photos you take and input as a staff. Be sure that the photos are clearly focused, close-up shots that will allow ministry staff to easily identify kids and guardians.

Incident Reporting

If an unexpected incident occurs, such as a child being injured, or an emergency requiring classroom evacuation, it's essential to let parents know what happened.

Individual incidents such as a medical situation or injury should be carefully documented in writing and with a photo. What happened? Who was involved? What was done as far as first aid? Copies of the report and photos should be given to the child's guardian, and a face-to-face conversation is essential. Don't send an email or text about individual child incidents.

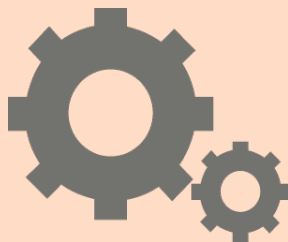
If there is an incident involving an entire group or classroom (say someone pulls the fire alarm or a pipe breaks and floods the classroom), a follow-up email explaining what happened and what procedures were followed will keep rumors from escalating, and will also reassure parents that you have emergency protocols in place. Email is best for a group, and should come from a staff person who oversees the classroom or teams affected.

A Note About Social Media: While social media is a great way to connect in a lot of ways, it is far more professional to communicate with parents about children's ministry issues through in-person, phone, or email when there is a specific issue to bring up with a particular family.

We advise not using private messaging tools such as Facebook Messenger, Twitter Direct Messages, and other networks' private messaging tools because these must originate from the staff or volunteer's personal account. Whenever possible, it's best for church staff to use their church email, not private email, when communicating with parents and guardians. Also, while text messaging is a valuable tool for

quick messages related to picking up your child, when there are deeper issues to bring forward to parents, it's better to broach the issue in person or by phone to convey appropriate emotion and tone.

With clear communication, your children's ministry will be safer, more effective, and enjoy the support and involvement of parents and guardians necessary to help your ministry flourish.



Technology Highlight: Name badges can be a discreet but highly effective way to communicate. Tags indicating allergies, check-out alerts, and more can let caregivers know what to watch for when interacting with children.

CHAPTER 6



Your Children's Check-In Solution

The right technology, properly implemented, improves safety and security so that you can focus on your main job: guiding children in your ministry to grow in their faith.

Technology and Your Relationships

Technology is only as strong as the people using it. Even the best and most innovative check-in system must be used by staff and volunteers properly and consistently to reap the full benefits.

The best way to make that happen is by building relationships of trust—with both your technology provider and your staff and volunteers. The people in your ministry are your true first line of defense. Arm them with great technology and training, and everyone wins.

A secure children's check-in system helps keep kids safe, while building a relationship of trust with your church members and visitors.

Addressing Your Needs

As you consider a comprehensive safety and security plan for your children's ministry, choosing a children's check-in software system to address the needs outlined in this book will be integral. You want to improve child security, streamline the check-in process, and create a positive parent and visitor experience, all at a great value.

As you consider what children's check-in system to use, here are a few important questions to ask:

- What features are available, particularly safety features, including medical/

allergy information, and parent communication tools?

- How easy-to-use and intuitive is the system?
- What sort of training and technical support is available? At what cost?
- Is the system accessible to parents but adequately protected with password encryption and other security measures?
- Does the system allow you to easily track attendance and other data?
- Does the check-in provider offer a free demo of the technology?
- Does the check-in provider specialize in check-in software, or is it simply an add-on feature of a larger software system? Is the system 100 percent web-based or is it desktop-based?
- Does the check-in system offer mobile access via tablets? Mac and PC? Kiosk functionality?

For many churches, fitness facilities, and childcare centers across North America and abroad, [KidCheck](#) has been their choice to serve their check-in needs with intuitive and user-friendly children's check-in software. KidCheck provides a reliable, flexible, and comprehensive set of software tools for check-in and check-out that will enhance the security and safety of the children in your care.

KidCheck works well for churches of any size, whether it's a small growing church, medium-sized, or mega church. The company provides a wide choice of features in a variety of custom packages.

Churches select which edition and number of check-in stations they need, but can change editions or the number of check-in licenses needed at any time as the ministry expands or demographics shift.

The company provides additional value beyond their children's check-in software,

including free training and live support which is available six days a week plus Sunday morning, a blog, and podcast highlighting the latest information on best practices in child safety and security.

In addition to building industry-leading software, KidCheck is devoted to building trust and maintaining a high level of relationship with the churches they serve.

What KidCheck Offers

Guardians create a free KidCheck account online, where they upload photos, contact information, any medical or allergy alerts, as well as information about who can (and sometimes who cannot) pick up the child. That information is accessible to your ministry when each family checks in. This eliminates the need for your staff to handle data entry, which saves time and ensures that information is accurate and kept current. Allergies or other key info is noted with a discreet but easily identified symbol on the child's name tag.

With their phone number or custom key tag, parents and guardians can check their children in at an unmanned stand-alone station, or at a computer station or tablet manned by a volunteer—whatever check-in method your church decides is best for them.

A label printer creates a label with a unique code for the child, and a matching one for the parent. In order to retrieve their child from the classroom, they must show the guardian name badge with the matching code. Additional security measures within the KidCheck system are available for check-out beyond matching name badge codes if a church desires additional safeguards.

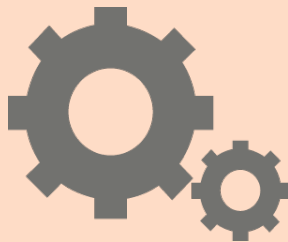
KidCheck software helps churches track attendance, communicate with parents,

and check children in and out smoothly and safely. It reduces liability by mitigating the risk of releasing a child to an unauthorized person.

The system includes a comprehensive suite of reports, including custom report features, and even a report that churches can use as a back-up in case they lose their Internet connection.

KidCheck also has a youth self check-in feature for older children, which includes automatic text messaging letting parents know if their child has checked in or out.

Overall, educating your ministry, aiming for excellence, and reaching out to a children's check-in provider such as [KidCheck](#) can bless your ministry, demonstrate your commitment to safety, and pave the way for improved communication and care of your church's precious children.



Technology Highlight: Having live tech support available just in case you need it can help make sure your Sunday morning check-in runs smoothly. KidCheck offers robust support tools online, plus live support six days a week including Sunday mornings.

CHAPTER 7



Resources

In this brief ebook we've tried to outline the most important aspects of children's ministry security and safety. But there is always more to learn. Here are some helpful online resources that will guide you as you continue to grow your ministry and strengthen your system:

Abuse Prevention and Reporting

- Center for Personal Protection & Safety - <http://cpps.com/>
- Safely Ever After – www.safelyeverafter.com
- Stop It Now! – www.stopitnow.org
- Darkness to Light – www.darkness2light.org
- Prevent Child Abuse America – www.preventchildabuse.org
- Crimes Against Child Resource Center – www.unh.edu/ccrc

Background Check Providers

- Protect My Ministry - <http://protectmyministry.com> (used by KidCheck)
- SecureSearch – <http://securesearchpro.com>
- Verified Volunteers - <http://www.verifiedvolunteers.com/>
- SSCI - <http://www.ssci2000.com/>
- Backgroundchecks.com - <http://www.backgroundchecks.com/>

Children's Ministry Magazines/Websites

- About the Children's Department - <http://www.aboutthechildrensdepartment.com/>
- Children's Ministry Magazine - <http://childrensministry.com/>
- Children's Ministry Today - <http://www.childrensministry.org/>
- CM Connect Community - <http://www.cmconnect.org>
- International Network of Children's Ministry - <http://incm.org/>

- Kidology - <http://www.kidology.org>
- KidzMatter/K! Magazine - <http://www.kidzmatter.com>
- Ministry-To-Children - <http://ministry-to-children.com/>
- PajamaHub Community - <http://pajamahub.com/>

Children's Ministry Blogs

- Brian Dollar - <http://www.briandollar.com/>
- Dale Hudson - Relevant Children's Ministry - <http://www.relevantchildrens-ministry.com/>
- GJ Farmer - Children'sMinistryBlog - <http://www.childrensministryblog.com/>
- Greg Baird - <http://www.gregjbaird.com/>
- Heidi M. Hensley - <http://www.heidimhensley.com/>
- Jim Wideman - <http://jimwideman.com/>
- Kenny Conley – <http://childrensministryonline.com/>
- Lindsey Whitney - <http://www.growingkidsministry.com/>
- Melissa J. MacDonald - <http://www.melissajmacdonald.com/>
- Monica Bullock - <http://www.toolsforkidschurch.com/>
- Sam Luce - <http://www.samluce.com/>

To get a free demo of KidCheck and learn more about how this children's check-in solution can help your church, please visit <http://www.KidCheck.com>, call 855-543-2432, or email info@kidcheck.com.

To read more articles on children's ministry technology, please visit <http://churchtechtoday.com/topic/kid-min/>.