

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Your name & role in the church:	
Name and location of the church:	
Church lead pastor/minister:	
Names & roles of other church leadership team:	
Head of children's ministry:	

The fact that you have received this assessment tool shows that your church recognises the importance of children's presence at the heart of the Christian community, as Jesus did when he placed a child in the midst of his disciples (Matthew 18: 1-5).

Self-Assessment

This self-assessment checklist will enable you to celebrate your existing achievements in making your church 'child friendly' and to identify those areas where further developments can take place. Please don't be put off by the length of the questionnaire – it will not be necessary to answer 'yes' to every one of the questions; you need to work out with your church leaders, children's workers and children which are the most urgent, which can be left as projects for future work, and which are not applicable in your situation.

The important thing is to have the enthusiasm for making your children's work as good as it can be as you seek to build up the Body of Christ.

Mentored Assessment

We recommend that you seek the help of **an external mentor to review your responses** to this assessment tool and **to assist you in planning developments**. Your local Viva partner network will be able to help with this.

Church Partner Learning Forums

An additional source of valuable support arises when two or more churches form a small group to share good ideas on developing child friendly churches. This has to be done in a spirit of openness and willingness to learn! Seek church leaders from different denominations or groups in order to share a breadth of ideas.

Links with Viva training

Viva offers churches three other training resources that complements the Child Friendly Church Assessment

1. **Understanding God's Heart For Children**
2. **Quality Improvement Steps For Churches**
3. **Why Families Matter**

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Aim 1: There is a vision for children's work	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
There a common vision for children's work in the church	0	1	2	Vision Statement for Children's Ministry	
Children's work is regularly on church leadership agendas	0	1	2	Minutes of meetings	
Church pastors & leaders regularly attend children's groups to observe and participate	0	1	2	Weekly diary and church records	
We are aware of the issues confronting children and their needs	0	1	2	Research, newspaper cuttings, reports	
We view children as people, who have spiritual needs, and who have a role to play in our church	0	1	2	Interviews	
We involve children fully in church life and communicate with their parents	0	1	2	Feedback from children & parents	
We promote the importance of children living in safe, loving families	0	1	2	Sermon's home group studies	
We have shared the teaching of Understanding God's Heart For Children (UGHFC) with church members	0	1	2	Viva partner network training on UGHFC	
<p>We recognise the following as a basis of our biblical beliefs: (tick)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God creates every unique person as a child with dignity. 2. Children need parental love in a broken world. 3. God gives children as a gift to welcome and nurture. 4. Society has a God-given responsibility for the well-being of children and families. 5. Children are a promise of hope for every generation. 6. God welcomes children fully into the family of faith. 7. Children are essential to the mission of God. 	0	1	2	Church vision statement and church practice	
TOTAL (maximum score: 18)					Consider joining an UGHFC course run by a Viva partner network

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Aim 2: Those working with children have been trained	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
We recognise that we have a responsibility towards children that comes both from the Bible and from our common humanity.	0	1	2	Interviews	
Young People and Children’s workers have specific roles & responsibilities including Sunday School Teachers, Youth Leaders, group leaders, helpers etc, according to their gifts, experience and passion for children.	0	1	2	Children’s ministry structure & strategy documents	
All those who work with children on behalf of the church have been cleared with references and police reports where possible	0	1	2	References and police reports	
Children’s workers maintain and submit weekly records of attendance, activities, any reported injury or CP issue, special needs care and use of resources	0	1	2	Church records & data collection	
All staff and people working with children have been issued with the church's good practice guidelines in working with children	0	1	2	Good practice guidelines for working with children.	
All activities in the church with children are properly supervised and approved by the church leadership	0	1	2	Interviews	
All those leading children’s work have a basic understanding of holistic child development or working with young people	0	1	2	Training Reports	
We have agreed guidance on behaviour management and motivation of children including the following: (tick) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of praise & reward 2. Establishment of boundaries 3. Solving difficulties positively 4. Giving tangible reward & recognition 5. Use of ‘time-out’ & other controls 6. Use of play & drama for learning 7. Age appropriate teaching & learning 8. Development of child worship 9. Development of spiritual awareness 10. Encouragement to pray 11. Child appropriate evangelism Peer evangelism 	0	1	2	Written guidelines	
TOTAL (maximum score: 16)					Consider joining a <i>Celebrating Children Course</i> run through a Viva partner network

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Aim 3: Child protection is in place and is being implemented	No	Un-sure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
We have some basic written rules and guidelines to protect children from harm within the church and activities connected with the church (often called a Child Protection Policy)	0	1	2	Written child protection policy approved by church leaders	
We have a person in charge of making sure the Child Protection Policy is working	0	1	2	Church members responsible for child protection	
We display information about keeping children safe in a prominent place in the church	0	1	2	Poster or other information on display	
We make sure that all adults in the church know what sort of behaviour is acceptable towards children	0	1	2	Written code of conduct	
We train all adults who are working with children in good ways to behave with children and how to keep them safe, how to recognise signs of abuse and who to tell if they are concerned	0	1	2	Code of conduct Guidelines on acceptable ways to discipline children Written procedures	
All volunteers and staff have been trained in child protection and have access to the church's child protection policy	0	1	2	Training registration lists and notes.	
We talk with children about their right to be safe from abuse and where to go for help	0	1	2	Training with children, Posters in church	
We record, act on and monitor any incident, allegation or complain about harm to children connected with the church	0	1	2	Forms	
Families of children in the church and other families in the community are strengthened and supported in protecting and raising children.	0	1	2	Child protection training with families	
TOTAL (maximum score: 18)					Consider Viva partner network training <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> , and/or network <i>Child Protection Training</i>

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Aim 4: The church building offers a safe environment	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The church has a health and safety policy and works to it	0	1	2	Health and safety policy	
Risk assessments are submitted by all group leaders and checked by the Health & Safety leader	0	1	2	Risk assessments	
Trained first aiders are available at all meetings and their names and first aid kits are prominently displayed	0	1	2	First aid kits, named (trained) first aiders and first aid records	
Group leaders keep a record of children's special needs and advise their team on best practice to appropriately care for these children	0	1	2	Records of special needs and allergies. Discreet displays of children needing special care	
Group meeting areas are warm, clean & comfortable with adequate space for learning	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
The church premises are accessible for those with physical difficulties	0	1	2	Accessibility standards & equipment	
The church has a disaster response plan and/or evacuation plan and adults and children know what to do	0	1	2	Record of drills	
The church has a way to put out fire on site that can be easily accessed in case of a fire break out	0	1	2	Location of fire equipment	
People who have been trained in fire safety are available for all events	0	1	2	List of fire officers	
Details of emergency contacts are displayed where all people can see them	0	1	2	Location of notices	
TOTAL (maximum score: 20)					Consider joining <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> run through the network

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Aim 5: Nurture groups are available for children and young people	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The church provides age appropriate Sunday or mid week groups for young people and children	0	1	2	Church programme	
Leaders prepare carefully for their sessions	0	1	2	Interviews	
There are opportunities for children to seek God through the scriptures, the teaching of the church and their personal experiences	0	1	2	Interviews	
There is regular prayer with and for children and young people	0	1	2	Interviews	
The church allocates a realistic amount of resources to children's work	0	1	2	Annual budgets or accounts	
The church support families in discipling their children and raising them in a loving environment	0	1	2	Positive parenting classes/seminars	
The church supports children with special needs and their families	0	1	2	Tour of facilities; report of interventions	
We develop Child Ambassadors/Leaders through a discipleship and training programme of young people	0	1	2	Church programme and evaluations	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are confident and effective advocates for children's needs with peers and adults in church and the community	0	1	2	Records of engagement of young people in advocacy for children and their needs	
TOTAL (maximum score :18)					Consider enrolling children on a <i>Child Leadership or Ambassador programme</i> run through the network

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Aim 6: There are opportunities for children to engage in worship in the church	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
Some services are designed to be for all ages	0	1	2	Service records	
Services are planned in a way that children are appropriately engaged in spiritual development	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children pray meaningfully with peers and adults. Adults pray with children	0	1	2	Observation of weekly practice	
Children's leaders and children are involved in planning and leading child friendly services	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children's contributions in adult meetings are valued by the congregation	0	1	2	Interviews with children & adults	
Language is adapted so that everyone can understand. Use of pictures & signs support communication for those with learning or physical difficulties	0	1	2	Church special needs policy and guidance. Observation of use of language in meetings. Interview children	
The length and balance of meetings maintains engagement and involvement of children	0	1	2	Interviews with parents and child workers	
Church pastors & leaders value children's contributions in adult meetings and make provision for reports & demonstrations from children's groups as well as prayer for the children	0	1	2	Church diary and records. Observation of weekly practice	
TOTAL (maximum score: 16)					Consider holding Viva World Wide Weekend of prayer for children in your Church

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Aim 7: Suitable facilities for under 5s are available	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
A special area is allocated for parents/carers to care for babies and very young children	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
This area is secure, safe and clean	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
Young children have access to engaging activities or appropriate toys and books	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
There is a system for welcoming families	0	1	2	Welcome pack	
Positive Parenting support is offered	0	1	2	Church programme	
Trained Under 5s staff lead activities to promote learning, understanding and engagement of young children and provide appropriate leadership in child care	0	1	2	Church training of children's workers for U5s	
A special area is allocated for parents/carers to care for babies and very young children	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
This area is secure, safe and clean	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
Young children have access to engaging activities or appropriate toys and books	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
TOTAL (maximum score 18)					Consider running <i>Why Families Matter</i> in your church

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Aim 8: Children and young people are involved as equal members of the church community	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
Children and young people are involved in the planning of worship and their group activities	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children and young people are listened to and consulted on church matters	0	1	2	Interviews	
We include children in our attendance figures	0	1	2	Attendance lists	
We have a generous budget for children's ministry	0	1	2	Church budget review	
Children are involved in the prayer life and outreach of the church	0	1	2	Church diary and records of activities	
One male and one female child advocate have been appointed by the church to be available to children. Their photos, names and numbers are displayed where children can see	0	1	2	Interviews and observation	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are recognised for their leadership	0	1	2	Child Ambassadors/Leaders programmes and reports	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are confident and effective advocates for children's needs with peers and adults in church and the community	0	1	2	Records of engagement of young people in advocacy for children and their needs	
TOTAL (max score: 16)					Consider enrolling children on a <i>Child Leadership Ambassador programme</i> run through the network

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Aim 9: There are outreach opportunities	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The Church is working with children and families in the community, beyond Church congregation members.	0	1	2	Annual Report	
The church's outreach programmes include opportunities for children to participate	0	1	2	Interviews	
The church has links with local churches, community organizations and networks that involve children and young people	0	1	2	Membership certificates	
The church is working with the local community and local duty bearers (Local Counsellors, teachers, police, parents etc) to raise standards of child protection and awareness	0	1	2	Meeting records	
The Church is aware of issues facing the most vulnerable children in the local community and is responding to the needs of those children through outreach programmes	0	1	2	Annual report	
As a part of its child care ministry, the church reaches out to the community to help prevent children being separated from their families e.g. support of widows; health care; parenting courses; education; feeding; income generating opportunities; etc...	0	1	2	Annual report	
The church supports children who have no living parents by supporting families offering kinship care, fostering, domestic adoption; supporting child headed households etc.	0	1	2	Child records	
The church continues to be involved in the child's life by promoting and teaching self sustainability for young people e.g. discipleship; vocational training; education; micro-finance etc...	0	1	2	Child records	
TOTAL (max score: 16)					Consider Viva partner network training <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> and running <i>Why Families matter</i> in your Church

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Please record your score for each section in this table and add up your total score. Then see the advice that follows.

SECTION	SCORE
1. Vision for children’s work	
2. Existing training	
3. Child Protection	
4. Safe environment	
5. Nurture groups	
6. Children engaged in worship	
7. Sustainable facilities for Under-5s	
8. Equal involvement in church community	
9. Outreach opportunities	
TOTAL SCORE (out of 156):	

Interpretation of Total Score

Your score is over 120
Well done! You have a lot of Child Friendly Church measures in place. Continue to review regularly and make sure that you meet any gaps that you have noticed during this assessment.
Your score is between 60 and 120
Not bad! You have some good Child Friendly Church measures in place but there is still room for improvement. Look at the sections where you have scored lowest and put a plan in place to begin to address the gaps.
Your score is less than 60
You have work that needs to be done! The fact that you have taken this assessment shows that you are willing to improve in keeping children safe in your organisation. You should start work immediately to put some measures in place to make your church child friendly.
Identify the next steps (at least 5) that will be prioritised and implemented to improve and make your church child friendly:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.