



## Kids Ministry Check Out Procedure

### WHY CHECKOUT IS IMPORTANT

To check kids out of our classes we must always ask the parent/guardian for their bar-coded pick-up sticker and scan it. That is simple until the person attempting to pick up their child says they don't have the sticker. What makes this so uncomfortable is that 9 times out of 10 the parent without a sticker is the teacher knows personally. It can feel unreasonable to make a big deal out of a missing sticker when you KNOW the child belongs to them. Why, you may ask, can I not just let them take their child and be done with it? Is asking for a sticker in this situation really necessary?

Yes. It matters, because while the teacher may know the parent, the visitor who may be waiting in line behind them has no way to know that you personally know that parent and child. To that visiting family, it looks like we don't take the safety of the children seriously. Here are a couple of cases where this was an issue:

- At one of our campuses we received a connect card from a visiting family. The father, a police officer, said that they loved everything about our church and were planning on making it their home church, but when he witnessed a child given to a parent without a barcode sticker, he and his wife didn't feel safe about their own children's safety and security so they said, regretfully, they wouldn't be back. That's a big deal and one of the reasons we ALWAYS get a bar code.
- In another campus we had custody situation. A teacher was accustomed to a father picking up his son up every week. One week he picked his son up without a barcode sticker. The teacher released the child to his father anyway because he was always the one to pick the child up. When the mother arrived, we learned that the dad had received a restraining order against him that week and was not allowed to be around the kids, but the mom failed to tell us. Thankfully the child was recovered, and no one was hurt, but that could have been BAD and all because the teacher "knew" the parent and didn't want to be rude or weird.

## HOW TO CHECK A CHILD OUT

1. Ask the Parent/Guardian for their barcode sticker.
2. Scan the barcode.
3. Check the child out and release them to their parent/guardian.

### **IF A PARENT DOES NOT HAVE THE BAR CODE:**

1. If a parent doesn't have their barcode, say "We have to have the barcode. Do you have ANY idea where it could be?" Often the parent will say something like "My husband has it. I will go get it."
2. If they have no idea where the bar code could have gone to, look the child up by the code on their sticker (the 4-digit alpha/numeric code in the black text box).
3. Ask the parent for their driver's license and compare the name on the license to the parent's name on PCO. If they match, release their child to them.

### **IF A PARENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY LEGAL IDENTIFICATION:**

If a parent/guardian comes to pick up their child and does not have their check out sticker or any legal identification:

- Ask: Is your ID in the building or perhaps in your car? If yes, please go get it.
  - If no, is there anyone else on their account in PCO who is in the building that has their license?
  - If no, ask if the phone number on their child's sticker is their cell number? If yes (and you have access to a cellphone), call the number on the child's name tag and see if the parent/guardian's phone rings.
- If they don't have their phone with them (or the number has changed) and they have no legal forms of identification:

- Grab someone in authority - kids ministry leader, Pastor of the church, etc.
- Have them ask the child these two questions away from the adult:
  - “Is that your mom/dad?”
  - “Did they bring you to church today?”
- If you are not happy with the answer, let the Campus Pastor make the call - they may know the person or they may decide to call the police if the situation is feeling really strange (this is an extreme case obviously).

**If every attempt to verify the person attempting to pick up a child has failed, a Lead Campus Pastor, Executive Pastor, Central Director, or on duty Police Officer are the only people who can release a child into an adult’s custody without proof.**