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Special Needs Ministry Checklist

- Designate special needs ministry champion(s) & on-staff ministry advocate**
 - Recruit advisory team & begin networking (parents, SpEd professionals, etc.)
 - Establish roles & expectations for staff leaders and lay leaders

- Research & develop church-specific vision**
 - Consider special needs population already participating
 - Assess existing facilities and logistical issues (H/C accessibility, toileting)
 - Identify existing typical programming strengths & weaknesses
 - Initiate directed conversation with church leaders & obtain broader staff buy-in
 - Begin developing budget (*note potential costs as you progress through checklist*)

- Establish a ministry mission statement and differentiate long-term goals**
 - Communicate the goals of the ministry to set volunteers & families up for success
 - Prioritize programming accommodation (Sunday AM, Wednesday PM, VBS)
 - Consider ministry events (mom's brunch, family outing, SN lecture series)
 - Visualize long term outreach & ministry opportunities (support groups, respite)

- Assess & anticipate accommodation adjustments for each ministry environment**
 - Self contained class, low stimulation area, H/C accessibility
 - Big group, small group (curriculum modifications), music
 - Based on needs of participants provide workers tools (training, curriculum)
 - Add sensory-friendly & other SN-friendly inventory to classroom(s)
 - Implement Buddy System & place additional volunteers where needed

- Recruit & develop volunteers**
 - Develop marketing & communication for recruiting volunteers
 - church newsletter, small group announcements
 - worship video or impact interview
 - partner with student ministry, local Christian college/seminary
 - Incorporate teaching techniques & behavior mgt strategies in all training
 - Develop standard process for training/acclimating SN buddies (teens & adults)
 - Consider recruiting volunteer professional medical provider or hiring onsite nurse

- Establish formal SN ministry policies & procedures, align with existing kidmin handbook**
 - Consult church insurance carrier and/or church attorney
 - Re-assess safety & emergency response across all kidmin with SN in mind
 - Develop behavior driven P&P and provide guidance for parent partnerships
 - Create standard questionnaire and other ministry communication pieces
 - Set up a process for in-take & updates for each participant & family

- Create a culture of acceptance**
 - Create a host team training event – *for sample outline, see:*
<http://theinclusivechurch.wordpress.com/2011/01/19/special-needs-training-for-church-greeters/>
 - Provide volunteer & support opportunities for ministry other than just childcare
 - Give disability visibility in church events, during worship
 - Create Facebook page, website for the ministry

Self-Contained Classroom Inventory

Phone	Land lines, working cell phones and/or walkie-talkies
Emergency Contacts	Posted laminated sheet with emergency protocol and procedures
Bathroom access	Family bathroom that enables parents to toilet children (ideal); shower a bonus
Posted Rules	5 – 10 behavior guidelines w/ pictures to aid visual communicators
Visual Schedule	Prepare children for transitions and make them part of the “change”
Curriculum	Adapt and enhance existing curriculum or purchase new/additional curriculum
Music	Music may be used to encourage movement & reinforce Bible teaching/Scripture
Sensory Toys	Children may manipulate toys during Bible lesson or use as a calming tool
Cause & Effect Toys	Use as a calming tool or as a way to engage/distract a child during transitions
Guide Rope	Helps wanderers travel between environments
Sand Timer	Provides personal countdown for children who require warning/reminders
Tri-write crayons	Aids children with fine motor deficits with coloring activities
Painters tape	Defines personal space on activity tables or on floor, denotes “line-up” spot
Bean bag chairs	Provides soothing and relaxing seat & recharge space
Small tent	Delineates recharge or quiet space & removes visual distraction
Rocking Chair	May fulfill a child’s need for movement or rocking motion
Therabands	Fulfills child’s need for exertion or pressure when wrapped around legs of chairs

Ministry Policies

Requirement of a completed participant intake form and annual profile update

Toileting / Diapering

Administering Medication

Snacks / Allergies / Peanut-free environment(s)

Behavior guidelines

Steps for responding to behavior challenges & related parent partnership/communication

Process for receiving and addressing parent or volunteer concerns

Response to a medical emergency; seizure recognition & response

Participant/family privacy & confidentiality

Volunteer roles & responsibilities; required vs. optional training

Parent partnership (parents onsite during church care, participation in volunteer rotation)