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

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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

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

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)

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