

The Components of A Healthy Children's Ministry

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Introduction

Every children's ministry (CM) is different because of its "setting." The "culture" of the people, community, and church leadership creates both strengths and weaknesses. These strengths and weaknesses dictate what needs to be accomplished in order to create a "healthy" CM. The list below includes components of "healthy" children's ministries that are common among most churches.

A "healthy" children's ministry is one in which

- Children are excited about what happens in the CM.
- Parents are excited about what is offered and done in the CM.
- Children are growing spiritually.
- Children are sharing Jesus with their friends and bringing them to church.
- The CM team members are joyful and happy to serve faithfully.
- The CM team is growing because of the "reputation" among the church.
- The CM team members must be encouraged to take breaks during rotation.
- The CM population is challenging the size and amount of space in the CM facility.
- There is a "culture" of "How can I help" among the CM team and children.



Consistent Components of A Healthy Children's Ministry

1. **A clear CM vision** – Coordinated with the church vision and known and used by the CM team and leadership to guide programs, policies, procedures, curriculum and decisions.
2. **A strong, confident CM director** – This person is full of the Spirit's calling and power. He/she boldly protects and pushes the CM vision through challenges from within the CM (policies, programs, curriculum, facilities, and team issues), and through challenges from outside the CM (administrative, "image," reputation, etc.).
3. **A supportive relationship with church leadership** – Close, supportive connections to church leadership through meetings, visits, events, worship service visibility/comments, etc.
4. **A good curriculum** – A kid-friendly, Bible-based, visually stimulating, teacher-friendly curriculum that supports the CM vision and satisfies the "Great Commission." The use of the curriculum is strongly required and monitored.
5. **A supportive budget** – Rather than simply asking for money when needed, "healthy" children's ministries have approved budgets with clear boundaries and procedures for purchasing items within the budget and beyond the budget. The CM budget becomes a tool to use in monitoring and projecting growth.
6. **The terms "childcare" or "babysitting" are not used** – Ministry is not reduced to the demeaning level of "childcare" or "babysitting" in meetings, announcements, online, or on printed material.
7. **Ministry supplies provided** – The CM budget provides the required "standard" supplies. Additional items brought or purchased by the CM team members are always reimbursed by the CM (or at least the offer is made).



8. **The limit of volunteerism is recognized** – A paid team of CM leaders leads the CM. The investment of finances into the success of the CM proves the church’s vision for the CM.
9. **Communication is clear and regular** – The use of regular meetings, newsletters, texts, phone calls, social networking sites, etc. is planned and used faithfully. The CM team, church leadership, and parents are all well-informed about the activities and challenges of the ministry.
10. **Mediocrity is not permitted** – The CM leaders and team members understand that there is no room for anything other than excellence (in the rooms, printed materials, program planning, etc.)
11. **Fun** – The CM leaders, team members, children, and parents all enjoy a significant level of fun and enjoyment. This is obvious in meetings, events, classes, and in the CM hallways.
12. **A strong growing CM team** – Rather than constantly fighting to recruit more, the current CM team reproduces itself.
13. **Weekly CM leadership meetings** – Weekly meetings that include ministry stories (from the week), challenging/inspiring/encouraging scriptures, laughter/fun, vision reminders, long/short term planning, food, and plenty of prayer. (This is a major, consistent component of a healthy children’s ministry nationwide!)
14. **On-going training** – The CM team members experience on-going training in policies and procedures as well as in ministry techniques.
15. **Regular CM team appreciation dinners** – These are usually connected with the rotation cycles. The meals are delicious times of encouragement for the CM team members and celebration of what God has done. This fosters a healthy sense of the importance of the ministry.

