# Children's Ministry Check-in System Options
## Steve Alley

In today's online world, the options for a check-in system for your children's ministry are many! Each one "sells" themselves as "the best"! Before you purchase and install a software system with all of the related hardware, here are some important questions to ask yourself, or others on your ministry leadership team:

1. **Scope of Use** – Do you want a check-in system that is JUST a check-in system, or are you looking for a complete church-wide system to track attendance, offerings, the budget, send emails and texts, etc.?

2. **Ease of Use / Accessibility** – Do you want a system that is more "user friendly" than technically robust?  Do you have plans to hire a tech person to maintain and set up this system, or do you foresee asking a moderately technical person to set it up for free?

3. **Growth And Future Options** – Are you looking for a system that is affordable based on your current small size, or are you interested in investing in a system that can "grow with you" over time, and which will permit you to utilize bar codes, QR codes, use of smartphones, etc.?

4. **Portable Tablet Options –** Are you wanting to incorporate the freedom to use portable tablets as check-in tools (in the rooms, etc.), or are you looking for a system that only check-in station based at a dedicated location in your facility?

5. **Smartphone Options** – Do you want a system that permits parents to check their children in from anywhere on the church facility instead of coming to a dedicated location to check their children in?

6. **Smartphone Texting Options** – Are you interested in a system that links to the parent/guardian's smartphone in order to send a text should the parent/guardian be needed in the classroom or area?

7. **Use of ID Pictures –** Do you want to utilize ID pictures of the children or approved parent/guardians in your system?

8. **ID Cards** – Are you interested in a system that produces ID cards for the parent/guardians to use in checking in their children?  Would the same system be used to produce ID cards for your CM team?

9. **Label Printing Options** – Do you want a system that will print allergy information and other programmable items on the child's label, or are you simply wanting a name and date?

10. **Budget** – How much are you willing to spend?  Do you have people in your church who are willing to support this venture with money, time, or talent?

## Check-in System Options

1. Top 10 Check-in Systems Reviewed –
   https://www.childrens-ministry-deals.com/blogs/childrens-pastors-only/childrens-ministry-check-in-system
2. "KidCheck" - (Child and volunteer check-in, parent communication, only)
   https://www.kidcheck.com/churches?gclid=Cj0KCQjwlMXMBRC1ARIsAKKGuwjO5z_iWqQhs1RUnraQfWrpuJvwIq4OzftMXVx2GBAhiUfjnOe_AH0aAs8XEALw_wcB
3. "The Planning Center" – (Child and volunteer check-in only)
   https://planning.center/check-ins/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwlMXMBRC1ARIsAKKGuwijVEMQmQjcKxum1lAYbDBnBTYgT0ez9DI5f5K6d18Z-UkvC_OBv7waAoKgEALw_wcB
4. "Fellowship One" – (Complete church management system including a check-in component)
   https://www.fellowshipone.com/features/church-check-in-systems/