

# WORKING WITH YOUTH

---

## *PROTECTION, POLICIES AND POINTS TO PONDER*

As you know, working with teens and children is a gift. Being able to influence the life of someone else, especially one whose whole life is before him or her, full of potential and excitement about what God can do in them and through them, is a blessing to all involved. Unfortunately, it also carries with it a certain amount of legal risk because of the actions of some who have abused this opportunity. One of our goals at Brewer Jackson, P.C., is to equip our clients with the tools to ensure a safe environment for your congregation. Below is a list of important things to remember when working with youth and ways in which to protect your church, staff, volunteers, and most importantly, the children.

1. Make certain to have all youth workers fill out an application prior to allowing them to work with your youth or children's ministries.
2. Be diligent at checking references for each and every youth worker.
3. Conduct criminal background checks for all workers, both paid and volunteers.
4. Conduct training with workers to help them understand child abuse and methods of abuse prevention.
5. Provide workers with accurate information regarding state laws pertaining to child abuse and responsibility for reporting incidents.
6. Make sure all of your workers understand "Universal Health Precautions" when working with children, such as hand washing, the use of gloves and other barriers, correct handling of sharp objects and other aseptic techniques.
7. Enact and maintain rules for healthy interaction between workers and children, like the "two-adult" rule and maximizing visibility of all workers during activities.
8. Implement a reporting procedure for any suspected incident of child abuse.
9. Obtain proper insurance coverage to protect the church in the event a child abuse complaint occurs.
10. Design a specific response plan to address allegations of abuse, including a media response strategy.