Children’s Ministry Policies & Important Information
Welcome to Children’s Ministry at The Ridge! We are thrilled you are partnering with us to help your child grow in their relationship with God. The following information is very important in understanding how we run our programs and how we desire to partner with families. Please read through all of the information carefully. We are genuinely excited to work together with you and look forward to how God will work in the life of your child and family at The Ridge.

Understanding Our Programs:
We separate our Children’s Ministry program into 2 main groups.

• **Ridge Kids Barnyard**
  - 4 months to PreK
  - Separated into age appropriate groups
    - Babies (promoted when developmentally ready)
    - Walkers (promoted when developmentally ready)
    - Runners (promoted when developmentally ready)
    - Three Year Olds (promoted in September)
    - Four Year Olds & PreK (promoted in September)
  - Year round programming

• **Ridge Kids**
  - Kindergarten through 5th grade
  - Separated into age appropriate small groups
  - School year programming
  - Special six week programming in summer
  - JUMP (Jesus Use Me Please) weekday programming

• **SPARK**
  - Special Program Assisting Ridge Kids
  - A Buddy for kids with diagnosed special needs

Our Mission:
- Have fun. Follow Jesus.

Driving Values:
- **R** - Relationships...share authentically in a loving, safe manner
- **I** – Innovation...obedient and mindful to leading of the Spirit
- **D** – Developing Worshippers...encourage, lead and guide to worship freely
- **G** – God’s Truth...know God, His Word and stories of His people
- **E** - Eager...plant seeds now to bear Kingdom fruit
Staffing and Family Involvement:
Our ministry to children is not possible without the involvement of families and other passionate adults to help care for our kids. In addition to our paid Children’s Ministry staff we rely heavily on parent involvement in both Ridge Kids Barnyard and Ridge Kids to make our programs possible. We use the following policies to ensure your child is safe, loved, and cared for each week.

Ridge Kids Barnyard
• Staffing
  • Early Childhood Coordinators
    Each service there are paid staff that oversee the set-up and clean-up of the rooms, in addition to serving guests, helping volunteers, and filling in open spots. These positions have all passed a background check (only people with background checks change diapers or assist in the bathroom).
  • Parents & Volunteers
    It is our joy to provide a fun, safe, and welcoming nursery environment for your children and our guests. We are only able to do this through the selfless serving of parents and volunteers. We ask that each parent serve two times each quarter (that's 10 hours a year).
    ▪ Signing up to serve
      1. Digital - We utilize Planning Center Online (planningcenteronline.com or Planning Center Services App) for all our Ridge volunteers. A sign-up email comes out quarterly but you can sign up at any time. (Need help? info@ridgelife.org)
      2. Paper - There is also a paper sign-up available once a quarter in the nursery hallway.
    ▪ How am I reminded of my serving time?
      You will receive an email from Planning Center Online the Thursday before you are scheduled to serve.
    ▪ Can I serve in my child’s room?
      Yes, when you sign up you may select which room you want to serve in.
    ▪ What if I have an upset child while I am serving?
      Inform a coordinator (in the RidgeKids shirts), they are here to help!
    ▪ Adult / Child Ratio
      We use the following adult/child ratios in these different age levels:
        ▪ 4 months – 12 months – one adult for every 4 children
        ▪ 1 year – 3 years – one adult for every 6 children
        ▪ 3 years – PreK – one adult for every 8 children
      If we are not able to meet the required ratios, part or all of the nursery may be closed.
• **Registration**
  
  o **New & Guest Registration:**
    ▪ New attendees & visitors in the Barnyard complete a paper registration
    ▪ New attendees can sign in using the computer system the following Sunday after registration
    ▪ Parents will not be asked to serve until they have attended six months and/or indicated that The Ridge is their church home.

**Ridge Kids (K-5th Grade)**

• **Staffing**
  
  **Kindergarten – 2nd Grade** – 1 leader for every 6 – 8 children
  **3rd – 5th Grade** – 1 leader for every 6-10 children

  o The number of children that are able to participate in Sunday Morning programming is determined by the number of volunteers.
  o We will receive registrations on a first come first serve basis. As we receive them, we will connect children with an available small group leader.
  o **If there are not enough leaders...children will be placed on a waiting list until more volunteers step OUT to serve IN with us.** For children on the waiting list, we encourage attendance in Big Church to worship with their families.

• **Registration**
  
  o **Registration for all RidgeKids who consider The Ridge their church home begins in April – with a deadline September 1st.**
  o **How do you register?**
    ▪ Use your computer or mobile device ([http://ridgelife.org/ridge-kids/](http://ridgelife.org/ridge-kids/))
    ▪ Complete a paper registration Sunday morning in April or May
  o **Why do we register each year?**
    ▪ To have accurate numbers and information for:
      ▪ adult/child ratio for safety and faith instruction
      ▪ materials for safety and faith instruction
      ▪ update special needs, allergies, and or pick up information
    ▪ To allow spots to welcome our guests

• **If your child is not registered for programming each year by September 1st**
  
  o Your child will not be able to participate in Sunday morning programming until you complete a paper registration form.
  o Once the paper registration is complete, your child will either:
    ▪ Participate the Sunday following the completion of the paper registration if there is availability in their age level classes, or
Will be placed on a wait list until additional volunteers/parents choose to step forward and help lead a new small group.

- Guest Registration
  - For new attendees in Ridge Kids
  - Register and participate same day
  - Sign in using the computer system the following Sunday after registration

RidgeKids Promotion & Schedule

- Promotion for Ridge Kids will be the Sunday after Labor Day each year. At this time children move to their age appropriate groups.

- Schedule – Children’s Worship runs the Sunday after Labor Day through the second Sunday in May.
  - Our Ridge Kids programming follows the Ankeny School District calendar. Therefore, when your child is “off” from school...we, too, will be “off” from children’s worship.
  - Thus, we will not have children’s worship on:
    - Thanksgiving weekend, the two Sundays between Christmas and New Years, and the first Sunday of Spring Break.
    - We encourage families to worship together during these times!

General Policies for both Ridge Kids and Ridge Kids Barnyard

Ridge Kids Peacekeeping Policy

- We understand that there are days that not all children desire this as we do☺ In order to fulfill this mission, we believe the following must be present in our Sunday morning environment: every member of a Ridge Kids Sunday Morning Small Group will work together to create a safe place to learn about God and connect with Him.

Ridge Kids Rules

1. Respect God and His Word
   - listen when someone reads the Bible or prays
   - remember...we’re here to get to know God more

2. Respect all the Leaders in the Square
   - listen when an adult is talking
   - participate and do what we’re told to do
3. Respect Each Other
   - be kind, loving and encouraging to our small group members
   - refrain from distracting others

Proactive Steps
   - Communicate the rules before starting an activity.
   - Make eye contact when speaking to a kid.
   - Catch the kid when they’re making a smart choice. Compliment them for it.
   - Smile at the kids. Look like you want to be here.
   - When necessary, have the kid/s repeat what you asked them to do.
   - Redirect when doing something they shouldn’t be doing.
   - Correct when previous steps are ineffective.

When RidgeKids Rules Are Violated
   1. Two of the Proactive Steps have been implemented.
   2. A Correction Step has been implemented by the child’s Small Group Leader.
   3. The Director/Vice-Director has met with the child and followed the “make it right” principle.
      a. (Child’s Name), you disregarded the RidgeKids rules multiple times by ______________.
         What are you going to do to make it right?
   4. If no change in adhering to the RidgeKids rules, we will have the child’s identification number put on the screen in the worship center. The Director will speak to the parent about the issue at hand. The child will then need to go to church with parent for the remainder of the service.

Restroom and Diapering Policies:
   - Accompanied by an adult that has been through a background check (nursery coordinators)
   - Diapers will be changed by an adult that has been through a background check (nursery coordinators)

Security Policy:
   - Computerized check in system entitled Checkpoint
   - Each Sunday new tag with number unique to each family
   - Parents drop off child to their leader in each Nursery classroom/small group area in Square
   - Tags must be shown to security team members to pick up the child
   - Numbers matched upon pick up
   - Siblings above 6th grade may pick up sibling but must have checkpoint parent tag
• No child will be released to siblings under 6th grade
• No parent will be admitted to the Square or Nursery/preschool hall without a parent tag.

Security Team:
• Each entrance to child areas will have a security team member
• They will check for parent tags to allow you to enter

Inclement Weather Policy:
• NOAA radios are placed throughout the church
• Should there be an inclement weather alert during church or any activity the Security Team will initiate appropriate action
  o If a Tornado Warning is Announced
    ▪ Children will be moved by their Sunday morning leaders to the basement via the south stairwell immediately
    ▪ All Church members will move to the basement via the north stairwell
    ▪ Everyone will stay in the basement until an announcement is made by the Lead Pastor that the weather is again stable

Fire/Smoke Policy:
• All leaders will know emergency routes and procedures
  o If the Fire Alarm Sounds
    ▪ All children will be immediately evacuated by their Sunday morning leaders
    ▪ No one will return to the building until the all clear is given by the fire department
    ▪ If we need to remain outside for an extended period of time you may pick up your children on the grassy area on the southwest corner of the church property
    ▪ Leaders will match all parent tags with the children tags before a child is allowed to leave