

Saltbush Strategy: Caring for our Kids

Vision:

- Connecting with God
- Growing in Christ
- **Loving Each Other**
- Serving Broken Hill and Beyond.

At Saltbush we are blessed to have lots of children. As Christians our desire is that each child coming along to Saltbush will grow up to know and love Jesus, submitting themselves to his Lordship over their lives. There are specific things that the bible says parents are to teach their children eg. Honor your mother and father. There is much wisdom in the bible as to how we can go about raising our children, but at the same time there is a certain freedom we have as to how we go about raising and training our children in the Lord. With this freedom comes differences, differences are not bad they are just different. One family may choose a certain method of training and discipline and another family will go about it in a different way. What this document is aiming to do is to help each of us at Saltbush, parents and non parents, to do our church gatherings in a way that cares for our kids and respects different parenting styles at the same time.

Parenting can be a very emotive topic, especially when it comes to training styles, discipline and rules. Interacting with other people's children can be stressful. Comments like these are common:

- "I'm unsure what to do when I see someone's child doing something that they shouldn't do"
- "Can I get a child in trouble for doing something wrong? If so, how do I do it?"
- "Am I responsible for the safety of children who aren't mine?"
- "I just don't know what to do, in the past I've stepped in to stop a child from doing something wrong and one of their parents have chastised me for it, and then on another occasion I've let kids do the wrong thing and parents have chastised me for not stopping it."

The list could go on.

Below are some guidelines to help us interact with each other well. They should give clarity as to how we engage with the children of Saltbush.

Method

1. Safety

Keeping our children safe while at church is a priority.

- Before church, the gates onto the road are open inviting people to come in and join us. At the end of the church service the gates are closed giving the children a fenced, enclosed area to play in.
- Parents are ultimately responsible for their own children's safety. Each parent/s needs to decide for themselves what level of supervision their children need, and provide it themselves.
- If there is an immediate danger **any adult** who sees this should take immediate action to rectify the issue. A few examples might be but is not limited to: If you see that someone has left the gate open, shut it straight away. If a child has escaped the grounds of church and is on the road you should physically remove them. If a child is climbing on the Air Cooler stand above the rocks and concrete, lift them gently down to the ground. If a child is physically hurting another child you should gently restrain the offending child.

- We limit out play to safe space and safe activities

2. Misbehaviour

As much as we might like to think that our children are good we all know that they misbehave. At church examples could be but are not limited to: hitting other kids, being nasty to other children, playing in area's that are out of bounds, throwing rocks, trying to escape from church grounds. We interact in the following ways with misbehaviour.

- If a parent is present during misbehaviour we leave it to them to manage their child/children.

If a parent is not present and we witness misbehaviour of a child we:

- We ask the child to leave the area, put the rocks down, come out of the toilets, stop being mean etc..
- If the misbehaviour is excessive (by your discretion) you should take the child to one of the parents and explain what has happened to the parent so they can deal with it.
- If the child refuses to listen then we go and find one of their parents, explain what's going on so they can go and deal with their child.

Note: Some families may know each other well enough to allow or even ask other parents to help in the training of their children at church. If this is something you do with the families at church that's great. This strategy is not intended to interfere with this but rather to give basic guidelines for all adults so that we can know how we can care for our kids and respect different parenting styles at the same time.