**Appropriate Affection for Next Level Kids**

To ensure respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries of the Next Level Kids environments the following are guiding principles for physical contact between ministry leaders and children.

Love and affection are a part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate age and developmentally appropriate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Examples of **positive** and **appropriate** forms of affection include:

* Brief hugs or side hugs
* Pats on the shoulder or back
* Handshakes
* High-fives and fist taps
* Verbal praise
* Arm around shoulders
* Holding hands while walking with small children
* Sitting beside small children
* Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
* Holding hands during group prayer

The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children in ministry:

* Lengthy embraces
* Kisses
* Holding children over **three years old** on the lap
* Touching of any area covered by a bathing suit other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
* Showing affection in isolated areas
* Touching legs
* Wrestling
* Tickling, piggyback rides, or massages
* Any form of unwanted affection

