




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



By: **Vilma Reynolds - Account Executive | Client Care**

Who is Responsible for These Kids?

 October 26, 2021

As I write this article, I can't help but think of the proverb that says, "It takes a village to raise a child." According to Wikipedia, this African proverb means the entire community "must interact with children for those children to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment." In other words, the villagers help take care of the children."

Each culture translates this proverb a little differently. The two that I particularly appreciate are:

- In Lunyoro ([Bunyoro](#)), there is a proverb that says, "Omwana takulila nju emoi." The literal translation is, "A child does not grow up only in a single home."
- In Kihaya (Bahaya), there is a saying, "Omwana taba womoi." In English this means, "A child belongs not to one parent or home."

Kids do not come with instruction manuals. As anyone with children knows, raising kids is a constant learning experience. Individual family situations can make raising kids even more challenging. As part of a military family, I often found myself alone raising our son when my husband is out to sea. I frequently relied on members of my church "village" to help me as I raise my son.

How can the church best serve the needs of all families by helping parents raise their children? What are the roles of parents and of the church as part of the spiritual "village?"

Roles and Resources

As parents, our first responsibility is teaching our children about Jesus. While the church can help, prioritizing our children's spiritual life starts in the home. On page 515 in *Desire of Ages*, we read, "Children need to be educated in spiritual things, and parents should give them every advantage, that they may form characters after the similitude of the character of Christ."

Parents must also remember that their responsibility does not stop when they enter the church. They should never assume that they can let "someone else take care of their kids." Parents should always know where their child is and know who is with them. Even in the church, predators come in many shapes and sizes, and constant vigilance is necessary.

The church also has a role and should take its responsibility for protecting children seriously. Speaking of the president's responsibility for signing laws, United States President Harry Truman famously said, "The buck stops here." For the pastor and church board, the "buck" stops with them when it comes to providing a safe environment for the children in its care.

This begins with providing proper supervision, from the Sabbath School room to youth outings, and everything in between. A good practice to follow is to have two adults supervising in every situation. However, some activities with more risk require a higher ratio of adults. You can learn how to provide 100 percent supervision by reading ARM's [youth supervision guidelines](#).

Some Practical Tips to Consider

- Create a [Check-In/Check-out Policy](#) that includes:
 - Trained Staff
 - Drop-off and Pick-up Point(s)
 - Permissions, Emergency Contact Information, and Authorized Audits
 - Defined Check-in/Check-out Method
 - Emergency Response Plan
- Create a proactive [Child Protection Plan](#) and learn the four P's of child abuse prevention:
 - Premises Review
 - Personnel Administration
 - Protecting Children
 - Program Review

By working together, parents and church leaders can create an environment where children can benefit from parents and church members in a safe environment. We can create the type of "village" that will keep our young people safe and help them grow closer to Jesus.

Additional Resources:

- [Appropriate Touch Guidelines](#)
- [End It Now - North American Division campaign to help break the cycle of abuse](#)

References

Don't blame the church, take responsibility - by Kegan Mosier | Sep 4, 2015 | Cornerstone Christian Counseling - <https://christiancounselingco.com/dont-blame-the-church-take-responsibility/>

Image credits: iStock/FatCamera

This material is fact based general information provided by Adventist Risk Management[®], Inc. and should not, under any circumstances, be modified or changed without prior permission. It should not be considered specific legal advice regarding a particular matter or subject. Please consult your local attorney or risk manager if you would like to discuss how a local jurisdiction handles specific circumstances you may be facing.