

LOCK-IN CHECKLIST

1. **Pre-Approve Activities:** Be sure that the Board or other appropriate body is aware of and approves of activities well in advance of the events. Later, if an activity is not on the list, the activity doesn't occur. This also lets parents and/or guardians know ahead of time, exactly what the child will be doing.
2. **Obtain permission:** Be sure to have parents and/or guardians sign a release and permission form well in advance of the event.
3. **Separate the Boys and Girls:** This may not be popular, but it is less likely to result in liability due to inappropriate sexual conduct. Having lock-ins or similar events for just the boys or the girls, separately, should be given serious consideration. For these, same-sex supervision is also strongly recommended, that is the girls' - only event should be supervised by women of the church, not the men, even if that means the male youth leader is not in attendance.
4. **Sufficient Supervision:** Be sure that there are enough adult supervisors for the event, even if it means cancelling the event for lack of proper supervision. If the lock-in goes all night, as is typical, a minimum of 2 adults must remain awake at all times.
5. **Restrict Areas:** Be sure that areas of the church or school or premises that are not essential to the event are closed off. Make it clear that these areas are closed off, and be aware of where the children are at all times such that the children do not go to such areas.
6. **After dark activities:** It is not unusual to watch a movie or some other such event that generally requires the lights to be off or dimmed. Abuse can occur during these times, so keep the lights all but completely on and do not permit blankets at mixed-sex events during these times.
7. **No One Leaves Without Permission:** Be sure that no one leaves the area of the event without parental permission or in case of an emergency. Have a way to periodically check to see who is present (i.e., roll calls usually work well for this).
8. **Monitor Bathroom Breaks:** Bathrooms that are not in the same area as the event should require the use of a sign-out sheet with a limited time to use same and, depending on the location, such child should be attended by an adult as this is an easy opportunity to leave the church. Children should use the bathroom one at a time as well, in the event not supervised during the break.
9. **Have a proper balance:** Be sure that there is a proper mixture of children so that older children cannot take advantage, sexually or otherwise, of the younger, weaker children.

10. **Encourage disclosures from children:** If the children see something wrong, they should be free to and, in fact, encouraged to report it. This is not “tattling,” it is good stewardship and it may prevent some children from doing something they should not do and which may end up in liability for the church.
11. **Screen workers:** Be sure that your supervisors are adults, and not simply (often barely) 18 or over. You want mature individuals supervising the children. Try as much as possible to use members of the church, members who have been with the church for a certain period of time, say 6 months minimum if possible. It is a good idea to have a written application process, include names of other youth organizations worked for or with, explanation of criminal convictions, if any, and references which must be checked if the person is not thoroughly known to the church. Check the references. Obtain permission to check criminal backgrounds, and check <https://epatch.state.pa.us/home.jsp> for state criminal convictions and www.nsopr.gov for the sex offense registry of the U.S. Dept. of Justice. Keep documents of the process from the application to whatever your criminal check turns up – even if it is clean. This will document that the church did due diligence. Also be certain to do a Child Abuse History check, to detect past abuse in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Contact the Office of Children Youth & Families at 717-783-6211 for full details.
12. **Check out what others do:** Always see what steps others in your area take in handling lock-ins. What do the Boy and Girl Scouts do, the YMCA, etc?
13. **Ban unsafe games and competitions:** This is a corollary to No.1, but needs repeated here, as events might occur by suggestion on the spur of the moment during the lock-in. Be sure that anything unsafe or potentially unsafe is not permitted at any time.
14. **Have Phone Numbers Handy:** Be sure to have the phone number for any emergency personnel that might need to be called, such as the police, ambulance, etc. Also, be sure to have the phone number of the parent or guardian handy in case you need to inform them of an injury, need for medical care, etc., You may need to tell the parent or guardian to come pick up their child if the child is being disruptive, unruly, or potentially harmful to others in the group as well.
14. **Written acknowledgement.** Have a written policy about what is expected of the supervisors at the lock-in, which policy may include many of the items on this checklist. Have each supervisor sign a form acknowledging that they read, understood, and will strictly abide by the policy.