

Sometimes the simplest things can make the biggest difference. When it comes to welcoming children into church, being intentional about setting them up for success is very important.

1. Set The Tone Early

- Greet each child with a warm smile at the door. Be even more intentional to spend time greeting a child who struggles. Sometimes children who have challenges expect to get in trouble or be misunderstood when they go somewhere new. By making sure they feel welcome and wanted, we can begin to help change the way they see the world. This will also set the tone for the experience on a positive note.
- Greet parents too. If a parent has concerns, take time to ask questions and listen. Make sure to find out what to look for if their child is having a hard time and what helps to make them feel more secure.
- If a child has special needs, get more specific information. Having a very short list of important questions that a new parent can fill out at the door can be helpful. Check out our Question Quick List available in the Setting Up For Success Unit.

2. Set Expectations

- Explain to children what is expected. If they make an inappropriate choice, don't just tell them to stop. Tell them what positive choice they can make instead. Model the behavior for visual learners.

3. Set the Focus on the Positive

- Give praise often. Find any positive behaviors a child has made and point these out. This will help to set a positive tone and clearly explain expectations.
- Be sure to share praise with parents at pick-up. Parents of children who process the world differently need to hear this. Never underestimate the power of kind words.