

# Foundations Special Needs Updates

## Special needs accommodations

Thanks to the help of Lisa Jones and Tabitha Lewis, we have been working hard to make our space and Foundations program more accommodating to those in our community with special needs. We love each and every kiddo that walks through our doors and it's our desire to love them well and teach them about Jesus. We want Sunday morning to be a positive experience for every child and adult that spends time in Foundations. Below are some exciting changes that we will be making in the new year.

- Training
  - We will be hosting a Foundations Volunteer Training on Saturday, February 24th (mark your calendars!). We will go over some basic Foundations information and Danielle Mitrovich from Glen and Koch Associates will provide us with special needs training! As a result of this training, it is my desire to start a buddy program that we will have in place on Sunday mornings. What this means is 5-8 volunteers who have attended this training, will be assigned as a buddy on Sunday mornings (1 buddy per week) to any of our children with special needs that may need extra support. They will use the information learned at the meeting to help them know how to best assist and support these children.
- Support
  - In the time leading up to the training, Courtlyn Seibert from Glen and Koch Associates, will be with us on Sunday mornings to assist any children with special needs. She is a behavioral health technician and she will help provide support and suggestions on how to improve our program. There will still be 2 Riverbend volunteers in the room with her.
- In the classroom
  - Lisa Jones has been a wonderful resource and advocate for loving those with special needs. She has created a template that can be filled out by families of children with special needs. This document outlines the child's needs and any accommodations that can be made in order for the child to thrive on a Sunday morning.
  - Tabitha Lewis has been updating our Foundations space to be more special needs friendly. She has created a sensory corner in our large group area with a large bean bag, weighted blanket and sensory boards. This is a great calm down corner! She will also be making each classroom more special needs friendly.

## Overall space updates

You may have noticed that Tabitha also has been working hard to update our Foundations space aesthetically to be more welcoming! We are planning on bringing these updates with us to our future church home.

We are always learning and growing in Foundations. As we see the needs of the children in our care, we want to adjust and grow with them! These are just some beginning steps we are taking and we look forward to what God has for the future of this ministry! Please reach out if you have questions about any of this!