

# BCH Child Participation Policy

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## Public Statement

### *Protecting the Children in Our Care: A Note on Child Participation Requests*

For generations, BCH has been grateful for the local church for your prayers, your generosity, and your willingness to walk alongside children and families who need you most. That relationship is one we do not take for granted, and it remains central to everything we do.

As we have grown in our understanding of trauma and its effects on children, we have also grown in our responsibility to act on what we know. Many of the children in BCH's care have experienced significant loss, instability, and fear before they ever arrived. For them, seemingly ordinary experiences being placed in front of a crowd, being asked to perform or speak publicly, or being introduced as a child "in need" can quietly undo the safety and trust we are working so hard to build.

Protecting a child's identity is also a legal responsibility we take seriously. Many children in our care are involved in active legal proceedings, and their images whether captured in photography, video, or live streams must be carefully guarded. Exposure in those formats, even unintentionally, can create real harm for a child whose safety depends on privacy.

Because of this, BCH leadership made the decision unanimously affirmed by our board of directors that we will no longer place children in settings outside their home church where participation may compromise their dignity, sense of safety, or emotional wellbeing.

We also believe that consistent, rooted participation in a local church is itself part of building the stability these children need. Sending them from place to place, even with good intentions, works against that.

This decision is not a reflection of distrust toward the churches we love. It is a reflection of our deepest conviction: that every child in our care is made in the image of God, worthy of protection, and deserving of a childhood that is not defined by their hard story.

We remain eager to partner with your church to help you mobilize toward the vulnerable, raise up missionaries in foster care and adoption, and resource your congregation to be the kind of community that wraps around them with the love of Christ. We simply ask that this work be done for children rather than through them.

If your church would like to request a BCH speaker or learn more about how to get involved, please reach out to us at [bchfamily.org/invite-a-speaker](https://bchfamily.org/invite-a-speaker) or contact us at 800-476-3669 ext. 1209.

As always, I am glad to discuss this matter in more depth. You can reach me at [dmelber@bchfamily.org](mailto:dmelber@bchfamily.org) or 336-816-7877

**David Melber**

**BCH**