

The Changing Role of the Children's Pastor

by Jay Hostetler, Church Team Connections CEO
Leadership Coach and Consultant

Changes in children's ministry are linked to our culture, educational methodologies, and the ever-changing world of the child. It has been my privilege to serve as a full-time children's pastor for over 25 years. During this time, ministry to children in the church has grown into a specialty field. These new directions for children's leaders have led to changes in their role/portfolio. Throughout this piece I've identified seven of these roles and resources that may help you succeed in them.



Role Change #1

Children's pastors are focusing more on ministries to the whole family.

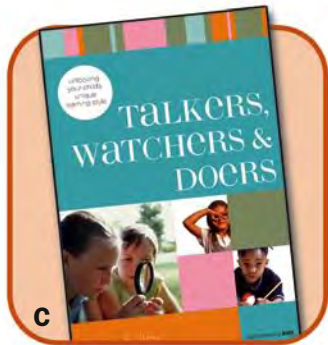
It is crucial to partner with parents to provide the best context for learning for the child. Kids' backgrounds are an essential factor in understanding a child's spiritual and emotional needs. It's important to know what kind of family makeup children have. Are they living with both biological parents, a step parent, mother or father only, or grandparents? Has a child's family structure recently changed through divorce? The [DivorceCare for Kids Kit \(28KM0443\)](#) is an excellent way to reach out and minister to hurting children in your community. Today's children's pastor also needs to assess how many activities and programs the church offers that separate families (e.g., age-level classes, interest groups) and how often families are involved together in activities at church. How can you bring families together more for spiritual and emotional growth?



Role Change #2

Children's pastors are doing more counseling.

Spiritual counseling has always existed in the children's ministry portfolio. You may want to keep (A) [Tender Topics Greeting Cards \(10KM0181\)](#) on hand to give kids a tangible reminder that you're there to support them. The new edge of counseling includes helping kids understand their fractured families, plus difficulties at school, in their neighborhood, and current event tragedies they see through media. It's important that kids know they can talk to you—and God—about these issues. The (B) [God, I Need to Talk to You about ... \(03KM6795\)](#) stories share everyday struggles from a younger child's perspective and are inexpensive enough to use as "send-home" lessons.



Role Change #3

Children's pastors need to understand the way kids learn.

Working with kids today requires a depth of knowledge of issues relative to learning styles, environmental stimuli, curriculum block building, media productions, etc. (C) [Talkers, Watchers, and Doers \(03KM8054\)](#) will give you a good foundation to build on, whereas the (D) [BibleVenture Centers \(03KM8056\)](#) will put learning into action.



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Role Change #4

Children's pastors need to be aware of legal issues.

Today's children's pastor needs to understand the liabilities associated with ongoing ministry. This includes everything from proper screening of volunteers to the filing of parental permission slips for field trips. The **(E) Children's Ministry Smart Pages (03KM6247)** will give you a great start on these important topics, along with providing dozens of other helpful resources.

Role Change #5

In many churches, children's pastors are becoming more people managers and less program managers.

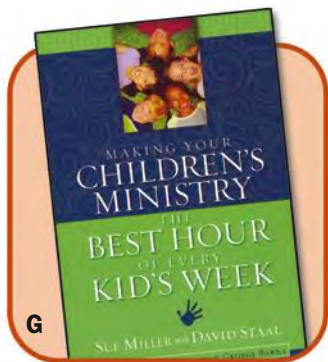
Managing people requires a different set of skills than managing a program. In recent years, I have attended seminars like: "Effective Team-Building," "Managing Volunteers," and "Developing Your People Skills." Can't attend a seminar? Pick up **Lead the Way God Made You (03KM8055)**. Managing adults to expand the ministry to kids is a crucial direction for today's children's ministry leader.



Role Change #6

Children's pastors need to understand how to lead teams.

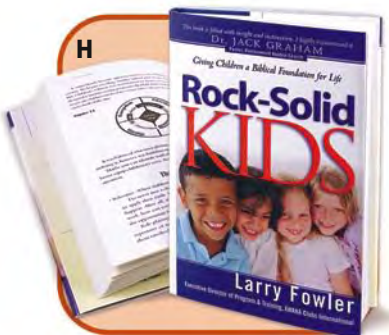
Whether a leadership team is paid or volunteer, children's ministry can only go as far as the team will take it. I read at least five teamwork books a year and attend seminars to improve my team building skills. Letting volunteers know they're appreciated is key; **(F) 2-Minute Encouragers for Teachers (03KM8064)** makes that easy to do.



Children's Pastors' Role Change #7

Many children's pastors are spending more time in administration, less time with kids.

As I coach children's ministry leaders, I often hear there is not enough time for kids because of increased details in administrative tasks. Leaders have to make every minute with the kids count. **(G) Making Your Children's Ministry the Best Hour of Every Kid's Week (03KM6136)** is full of tips from another ministry veteran who has learned to do exactly that.



The Future of Children's Ministry

Children's ministry will continue to change. These changes should not be viewed as problems, but rather as opportunities for the Holy Spirit to create in us new dreams and new approaches to positively influence kids. Reading encouraging, yet informative, books, like **(H) Rock-Solid Kids (03KM6917)**, helps keep you focused on what really counts—the children!

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