

## Safe Families



Soma Eastside Church believes in helping hurting families who are outside of our church body, whether they live in Issaquah or Sammamish or other parts of our beautiful region. By partnering with [Safe Families for Children](#) we are actively engaging with children and parents who need extra support.

### ***The Need***

When crisis strikes, many of us rely on relatives and our church family for support. But for some parents, there is no safety net. Problems such as drug addiction, domestic abuse, incarceration, or illness can be debilitating, making it impossible for parents to care for their children. With the changing economy many more families are experiencing financial crisis, unemployment, and homelessness. During such crisis, children are especially at-risk for neglect or abuse as their parents struggle to cope with crushing circumstances and emotions.

State welfare emergency hotlines throughout the nation reportedly receive over 5 million calls each year of suspected child abuse or neglect. Of those calls, about one million meet the criteria for state intervention. What happens to the remaining four million families that don't qualify for help?

Overburdened by need and restrained by resources, law and policy most state welfare agencies are only allowed to rescue children who have suffered blatant abuse or neglect. Overwhelmed and underfunded, the state is ill-equipped to deal with a problem of this magnitude.

Without assistance, many of these families will find the issues in their homes escalating to episodes of abuse and/or neglect with long lasting consequences for not only the child, but for our communities as well.

Since 2005, Safe Families for Children has offered sanctuary to thousands of children, minimizing the risk for abuse or neglect and giving parents the time and tools they need to help their families thrive. The ultimate goal is to strengthen and support parents so they can become Safe Families for their own children.

There are two main ways people serve with Safe Families:

### **Hosting**

One way to serve with Safe Families is to open up your home and invite children who are at risk to stay under your roof for a previously determined amount of time. Hosting can be for one child or for two or three siblings. Ages range from infants to elementary age, to teenagers. A host family might house a child for a week or for several months. Each case is unique. Soma Eastside has several families who have provided multiple hostings over the last several years. Hosts go through a training and equipping process with Safe Families before receiving a child into their home.

### **Helping**

Helpers come alongside the host family while they share their home with children. This might look like:

- Cooking a meal
- Sharing school supplies or clothing
- Carpooling to school or activities
- Scheduling playdates
- Prayer

There are several dozen people within Soma Eastside who are on call every time a Helper is needed. Would you like your name to be added to that list?

If you would like to sign up as a "Helper" or a "Host" please email Erika Gienger at [erika@somaeastside.org](mailto:erika@somaeastside.org).

For more info on Safe Families please visit [www.safe-families.org](http://www.safe-families.org)