

# Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches

*"God begins his  
work in children"*

– John Wesley



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*Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches*

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*“Embracing outreach as part of a weekday ministry program follows our (United Methodist) traditional roots of caring for the needs of the community. As a congregation responds to the needs of people in the community through weekday ministry, the community and the congregation discover many blessings.”*

*“Child Care and the Church”  
Book of Resolutions 2012*

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## PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to connect and support early childhood programs within The United Methodist Church and to maintain high educational and ethical standards that are consistent across United Methodist Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs.<sup>i</sup> We further recommend that each program becomes familiar with the local licensing standards and make every effort to meet and exceed them.

We encourage you to use these guidelines to complete a self-study. Strive to meet these guidelines fully and use them as goals for your Weekday Preschool Ministry Program. As a denomination, we believe that *“Churches should follow some process of self-study for their childcare programs on a regular basis.”*<sup>ii</sup>

In order to evaluate your school, please rate your program using the following scale on this document. *(Note that for sections with additional features, all boxes should be checked to mark a 3 for completed.)*

  1      Not Launched

  2      In Process

  3      Completed

## PHILOSOPHY

- \_\_\_\_\_ A published statement of the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program's philosophy/mission is available. This statement should be compliant with The United Methodist Church's statement of ministry to young children as found in the document *Child Care and the Church*.<sup>iii</sup>
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because children learn Christianity best by having it modeled for them, the director, teachers, and caregivers practice Christian values through their love, care, and concern for everyone, and they model what it means to be a follower of Christ.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Weekday Preschool Ministry Program has a by creating a written policy with the church regarding *Safe Sanctuaries*®, creates a culture that protects both children and adults and staff members are familiar with the policy and incorporate it into their daily routine.

**Philosophy Total = \_\_\_ / 9**

**\_\_\_ / 9 = \_\_\_ / 100%**

# ADMINISTRATIVE

## Program

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— The Weekday Preschool Ministry Program has an advisory board. The majority of the members are church members nominated and elected annually by the charge conference. The advisory board should be comprised of six to nine voting members, including a certified teacher, an attorney, an accountant, and also parents or guardians of young children served by the weekday preschool ministry program. These should include members and non-members of the church. Ex-officio members of the advisory board should include the preschool director, preschool staff member, the Christian education director, the pastor, the church business administrator, The Committee on Finance chairperson, The Board of Trustees Chairperson, and a representative from The Committee on Staff-Parish Relations.

*"A manager is focused on the people, problems, and tasks at hand, using technical skills to address them. Beyond that, working with a vision requires developing oneself into a leader who inspires others to participate in and expand the vision." (p. 22)*

*The Visionary Director, Margie Carter & Deb Curtis*

The advisory board should include

- Written, defined roles regarding the board's responsibilities and decision-making ability and a written purpose statement. *(For example, it is possible that personnel matters may be a responsibility of the The Committee on Staff-Parish Relations of the Church and not the Board of Trustees. In this case, personnel changes may be reported to The Board of Trustees but no decision-making power regarding personnel would be a responsibility of the advisory board.)*
- Regular meetings with the Weekday Preschool Ministry director and designated church staff member in an advisory capacity keeping in mind that state and local requirements and church policy take precedent over any board action or decision.
- A real link clearly defined partnership exists between board members and the committees they represent and the advisory board so that they are able to share information as well as advocate for the Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs.

— The program has written policies defining the roles and responsibilities of board members and staff.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The program has written policies for operating that include
- A parent handbook that defines program protocols and expectations, financial responsibilities, and a discipline policy .
  - A staff handbook that describes all policies relating to staff, including staff compensation, staff expectations, and training requirements, and social media use.
  - Nondiscriminatory hiring practices.
  - A signed agreement that states the handbooks have been read, understood, and agreed upon.

\_\_\_\_\_ Both the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program and the church administration have agreed upon a written fiscal relationship with the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fiscal records are kept and include evidence of long-range budgeting and sound financial planning.

\_\_\_\_\_ Operating budgets are prepared annually and approved by the advisory board and/or The Committee on Finance of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ At least quarterly, the budget is reviewed and expenses are reconciled. The program may work in conjunction with the church finance committee as dictated by church administration. Providing reports to the finance committee of the church on a regular basis is strongly recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_ Special funds, such as a reserve or scholarship funds, are collected, managed, and dispersed according to written procedures approved by the advisory board and/or The Committee on Finance of the church.

\_\_\_ /24 = Program Total

# Staff

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## **RECOMMENDED STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The director and assistant director are at least twenty-one (21) years of age with a high school diploma or GED and meet all state and local government educational, credentialing, and training requirements. Directors should be encouraged to complete a minimum of a two-year degree in early childhood education or related field.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each teacher and assistant teacher is at least eighteen (18) years of age with a high school diploma or GED and meets the state and local government educational, credentialing, and training requirements. Teachers and assistant teachers are encouraged to complete the minimum of a CDA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each teacher aide and caregiver is at least eighteen (18) years of age and meets the state and local government educational, credentialing, and training requirements. Teacher aides and caregivers are encouraged to complete a CDA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff members are committed and willing to support the Christian faith and the vision and mission of The United Methodist Church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All staff are trained annually in *Safe Sanctuaries*®.

## **QUALITIES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF**

- \_\_\_\_\_ They have a sense of responsibility for the ongoing development of children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They manifest a concern and love for children and their families.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are developing a mature faith and are able to articulate Christian values to young children in terms of a young child's experience and developmental level of understanding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are flexible, recognizing that the ability to adjust and use teachable moments is a must. They understand that too much structure in the daily classroom is not effective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They enjoy working with children and have a sense of humor, a friendly personality, and a relaxed nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They practice and model healthy living, both physically and emotionally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are knowledgeable of children's optimal learning times, based on brain development research, and the role it plays in optimal windows of age-appropriate learning.



- \_\_\_\_\_ They know and use developmentally appropriate and best practice teaching and learning strategies.<sup>iv</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are trained in parent relations and can effectively communicate with parents to ensure positive rapport with and active support of the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They seek resources and available services within the church and community to meet the needs of children and their families.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They get along well with other staff members while growing through teamwork and shared leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They support the purpose, philosophy, and *Safe Sanctuaries*® mandates of the church and Weekday Preschool Ministry Program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are committed to pursuing continued training in the field of early childhood as a part of continuing professional development.

\_ \_ \_ /54 = Staff Total

## Management

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Fair wages and benefit packages for full-time staff include paid leave (*annual, sick, jury duty, and personal*), medical insurance, and retirement options. Benefits for part-time staff are available on a pro-rated basis. Providing these benefits is supported by the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.<sup>v</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ The administration and staff have the opportunity to evaluate themselves and the program. [Appendix 2-3]
- \_\_\_\_\_ The director evaluates staff on an ongoing basis. Classroom observations and visits are frequent. Classroom observations are documented, written evaluations are completed annually, and both are kept on file. [Appendix 3]
- \_\_\_\_\_ The administration creates a climate where staff members feel comfortable offering constructive suggestions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conferences with the director are scheduled for each staff member. The director offers positive, constructive suggestions. Short and long-range goals are set for professional development.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff complete state required training and other training that enables professional and spiritual development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lead teacher meetings are held weekly, and staff meetings are held at least every two months. At these meetings the director may have teachers and staff share ideas, concerns, and expectations while keeping in mind the obligation to respect confidentiality issues regarding families and staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Management provides a staff/employee handbook for each staff member.

\_ \_ \_ /21 = Management Total

## Church and Weekday Preschool Ministries Relationship

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- \_\_\_\_\_ The church and Weekday Preschool Ministry Program see the preschool as a ministry and as a part of Christian education in the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The church and Weekday Preschool Ministry Program have entered into a covenant agreement. [Appendix 5]
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Weekday Preschool Ministry Program has an advisory board to set guide policies and oversee matters of the budget, personnel, space, and program regulations. [Appendix 6]
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Weekday Preschool Ministry Program has developed a strong and healthy relationship with the church and the pastor resulting in open communication and cooperation. [Appendix 7] This includes
  - Support and integration of the church and Weekday Preschool Ministry’s programming.
  - Support and opportunities for the integration of parents and church members into preschool and church activities and ministries.
  - Thinking of ways to make things better when things are going well.
  - Cooperation between the director, staff, and church committees to constructively and respectfully resolve problems when difficulties are encountered.

- A proactive preschool director who provides reports to appropriate church committees.
- Respectful cooperation between preschool staff and church education department, who both recognize that space and materials need to be shared and mutually cared for. Shared space issues should be addressed in the covenant agreement.<sup>vi</sup>  
[Appendix 7]
- Cooperation between the preschool and other ministries in the church to insure that all programs in the church receive necessary consideration of resources and space.
- Teaching children respect for God’s house and the property of others.
- Following *Safe Sanctuaries*® policies that insure the congregation and the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program are protected legally.<sup>vii</sup>

**\_\_\_ / 12 = Church and WPM Relationship Total**

\_\_\_ /24 = Program

+ \_\_\_ /54 = Staff

+ \_\_\_ /21 = Management

+ \_\_\_ /12 = Church and WPM Relationship

**\_\_\_ /111 = Administrative Total**

**\_\_\_ ÷ 111 = \_\_\_ /100%**

# CHILDREN

- \_\_\_\_\_ Each child has a completed registration form on file with most recent information which registration form contains name, address, date of birth, contact information, emergency contacts, special health care needs, adults authorized for pick-up, media release information, and other pertinent information that protect the best interest of the child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All personal information is treated as confidential and kept secure. Information is shared only with written permission of the custodial parent and/or caregiver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program policy regarding the enrollment and termination of children's enrollment protects children's rights as outlined in the *Childcare Centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act*.<sup>viii</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program is designed to be inclusive of all children regardless of race, religion, creed, culture, and ethnicity including children with identified disabilities and special learning and developmental needs. A child with special needs is defined as someone who is physically, socially, emotionally or behaviorally challenged, and who may require modification in a typical classroom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A policy is in place regarding children with special needs and efforts are made to make reasonable modifications in the classroom, to address this issue with the parents and to provide information regarding referrals in the county in which the child lives.

\_\_\_ / 15 = Children Total

\_\_\_ ÷ 15 = \_\_\_ / 100%

*"People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them."*

Mark 10. 13-16 (NRSV)

## PARTNERING WITH PARENTS:

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*The word “parents” refers to all legal custodial caregivers*

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- \_\_\_\_\_ A parent orientation meeting occurs at the beginning of the year. Information regarding church worship services, ministries, and programs should be included. An invitation to visit the church should be extended to the parents preferably by the pastor. *Keep in mind that your Weekday Preschool Ministry Program may be the only connection families have to a faith-based community.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ A parent handbook is provided that includes information about school policies, schedule and calendar, payment of fees and refunds and all information pertinent to your context. It is also recommended that a form is included to be signed and returned that the book has been read, understood, and agreed upon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers contact families to welcome them and invite them to visit the classroom parent/child visits to the classrooms occur before the school year begins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program policy states and a practice is in place that welcomes and encourages parents to visit classrooms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents have the opportunity to indicate what areas of the program they would like to volunteer and be involved in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A parent organization exists which allows parents to take on leadership and to assist in making decisions within the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confidentiality is maintained concerning all personal and private information regarding each family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents annually sign a form giving permission for their children’s pictures to be taken and used by the school for publicity and/or community information in printed form and/or online.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honest, open communication with parents is a top priority and occurs on a daily basis. Examples of communication could include newsletters, notes, phone calls, text messages, written accident reports, e-mails, home visits, Open Houses, and volunteer opportunities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents complete a form stating how they wish to be contacted and provide that information (*e.g., cell phone, text message, email, social media*). This may be part of the child’s enrollment form, and contain most recent information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opportunities are available for the teacher and the parent to communicate concerning the child and his/her needs and progress. These meetings may be formal or informal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Formal parent/teacher conferences are held at least once per school year in order to discuss the child's progress, concerns and plans for the child's individual development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Information and educational programming for parents dealing with family and child issues are offered. A faith perspective should be included.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents have an opportunity to evaluate the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program annually through a written survey. [Appendix 4]

\_\_\_\_\_ /42 = Partnering with Parents Total

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 42 = \_\_\_\_\_ /100%

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

## Ratios for class size: <sup>ix</sup>

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|       |             |      |        |
|-------|-------------|------|--------|
| _____ | Infants     | 1:4  | Max 8  |
| _____ | Toddlers    | 1:5  | Max 10 |
| _____ | Twos        | 1:6  | Max 12 |
| _____ | Threes      | 1:8  | Max 18 |
| _____ | Fours/Fives | 1:10 | Max 20 |

*If your local or state licensing agency ratio is lower, you should meet the lower ratio.*

\_\_\_ / 15 = Ratios Total

## Staff Interactions

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### STAFF TO CHILD

\_\_\_\_\_ Program staff treats children with respect, and they keep in mind, *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”*

\_\_\_\_\_ Program staff uses positive discipline to teach children right from wrong, which behaviors are acceptable and which are not and how to respect the rights of others. Discipline is never punishment. Discipline is teaching, done positively and with respect, and is appropriate to the situation and age of the child.

\_\_\_\_\_ The program staff does not use corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening discipline techniques. Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of discipline.

\_\_\_\_\_ Program staff is aware that children may display a variety of emotions. Staff helps children identify these emotions and teaches them appropriate ways to express them.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The program staff speaks with children in a friendly, positive, and courteous manner. Staff speaks to children directly and at eye level. Communications used are social and informational in nature more than maintenance communications (e.g., “sit down,” “line up”).
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program staff encourages each child’s development of independent functioning where appropriate. Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering the children’s learning, self-help, and social skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program staff builds a trusting relationship with each child that provides both emotional and physical security.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program staff model and encourage social behavior such as helping, sharing, and cooperating.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program staff is flexible enough to change planned or routine activities according to the needs and interests of the children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The program staff offers guidance and encourage communication during problem solving and conflict resolution.

### **STAFF TO PARENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program staff understands and respects the diversity of the children and their families. Each child and family is loved as a child and family of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program staff is professional and respectful when communicating with families in order to create an open dialogue. A strong relationship developed early in the year often helps when dealing with issues that arise later.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program staff works with families on shared care-giving issues such as separation, potty training, special needs, food allergies, etc.

### **STAFF TO STAFF**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff is professional when discussing children and families with other staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff model appropriate emotional responses for children when communicating with other staff.



\_\_\_ /45 = Staff Interactions Total

\_\_\_ /15 Recommended Ratio

\_\_\_ /45 Staff Interactions

\_\_\_ /60 = Classroom Management Total

\_\_\_ ÷ 60 = \_\_\_ /100%

# CURRICULUM

\_\_\_\_\_ The program has adopted a written curriculum based on appropriate practice in early childhood. The curriculum may be commercially obtained, created internally, or borrowed from a variety of sources, but the program’s philosophy and goals should be reflected in the curriculum. [Appendix 1]

\_\_\_\_\_ Goals within the curriculum include all the areas of a child’s development including

- Language & Literacy
- Cognitive
- Social/Emotional
- Physical
- Spiritual

\_\_\_\_\_ Staff members are familiar with and intentional when implementing the goals of the curriculum.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reports to parents include progress toward those goals.

\_\_\_\_\_ The curriculum supports a daily, posted schedule that incorporates a variety of activities including

- Child and teacher initiated activities
- Large and small group interaction
- Alternating periods of quiet and active play
- Daily outdoor experiences, weather permitting
- Development of age appropriate spiritual concepts [Appendix 14]<sup>x</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ Staff interacts with the children on the playground and plans activities that children may choose.

\_\_\_\_\_ Developmentally appropriate activities and materials are used.<sup>xi</sup>

\_\_\_ /21 = Curriculum Total

\_\_\_ ÷ 21 = \_\_\_ /100%

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Policies and Licensing

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- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool and its staff are responsible for each child from the time the child arrives at school until the time the child is picked up at school. Each school has written policies that cover each safety issue readily available to parents and staff in the form of parent and staff handbooks.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ As situations arise there are clear guidelines to follow. Safety policies and procedures are approved by the board of the school and reviewed each year by the staff. The preschool has a policy statement regarding safety issues. These policies are well known to staff and implemented throughout the school.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ An operating license and any certificates of inspection relating to health and safety from the state, as well as any that the local county or city requires, are posted.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unlicensed facilities are familiar with and strive to meet or exceed the minimum state requirements for a licensed facility.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Safe Sanctuaries*® policy protecting children is accepted, implemented, and publicized to both the congregation and parents. All church and preschool staff have attended sexual abuse and neglect training and have signed the church policy concerning child protection.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church counseling services [when available] and pastoral care ministries are accessible to Weekday Preschool Ministry Program families and staff.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool and its staff creates an intentional child health initiative which meets and follows The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 'The Social Community' PP162 *"Creating the personal, environmental, and social conditions in which health can thrive is a joint responsibility—public and private. We encourage individuals to pursue a healthy lifestyle and affirm the importance of preventive health care, health education, environmental and occupational safety, good nutrition, and secure housing in achieving health."*

\_\_\_\_\_ /18 = Policy and Licensing Total

# Physical Facility and Environment

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## INSURANCE

\_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate liability and child accident insurance is currently in effect.<sup>xii</sup>

## OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE

\_\_\_\_\_ Children are given opportunities to explore the wonder of God’s world, and they experience awe and wonder through exploration of creatures, weather and changing seasons, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ The playground is safe and includes opportunities for pushing, pulling, climbing, crawling, pedaling, throwing, catching, sand play, balancing, running, and quiet.

\_\_\_\_\_ The preschool follows *The Public Playground Safety Checklist* from [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).<sup>xiii</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ The preschool follows *The Dirty Dozen Checklist* found at [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org).<sup>xiv</sup>

## INDOOR SPACE

\_\_\_\_\_ Safe indoor space is available for large motor activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ample indoor spaces allow children and adults to move easily and comply with local licensing requirements for square footage in your area.

\_\_\_\_\_ The facility is in compliance with local fire marshal requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows allow for natural lighting and some ventilation, both of which can be regulated.

\_\_\_\_\_ Walls and other surfaces are in good condition. Paint is lead free.

\_\_\_\_\_ Equipment or shelves hung from walls are securely mounted.

\_\_\_\_\_ Furnishings and all spaces meet guidelines specified in the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Administration *Standards for Accessible Design*<sup>xv</sup> so they are accessible to parents and children with disabilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Spaces are kept clean and uncluttered and trash is removed as needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bathrooms are both supervised and easily accessible. Provisions such as steps, handrails and other toileting supplies are readily available.

## **INDOOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND STORAGE SPACE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ An office is set up for the preschool administrator and includes a desk, chairs, a computer, and a phone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool office provides secure storage for confidential files and records as well as a private location for conversations with staff and parents. If the office is used for conversations with children, the door has a window or remains open. [see *Safe Sanctuaries*® policies]
- \_\_\_\_\_ Storage for extra classroom materials, equipment, and furniture are available and easily accessible.

## **CLASSROOM SPACE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Furniture is age and size appropriate. Adaptive furniture allows for inclusion of children with disabilities and is aligned with U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A place is set aside and labeled for each child to place his/her belongings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom is designed with well-defined centers that are easily supervised. Centers include *(but are not limited to)*...
  - Worship space
  - Quiet space
  - Blocks
  - Dramatic play/Housekeeping
  - Art
  - Discovery/Science
  - Manipulatives/Math
  - Reading center/Library *(include books with Christian values)*
  - Music
  - Sand/Water/Sensory
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children's work is respectfully displayed at children's eye level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson plans and schedules are posted in each classroom for parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each classroom is a clean, welcoming, and safe environment for children.

\_\_\_ /69 = Physical Facility and Environment Total

\_\_\_ /18 = Policy and Licensing

\_\_\_ /69 = Physical Facility and Environment

\_\_\_ /87 = Health and Safety Total

\_\_\_ ÷ 87 = \_\_\_ /100%

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## *Making Intentional God Connections*

### We share our faith with children

#### **AS WE HELP THEM SEE THEMSELVES AS PERSONS OF WORTH**

\_\_\_\_\_ We use positive reinforcement to help children to see themselves as persons of worth by making the God connection: *"Jesus loves me this I know."*

#### **WHEN WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO MAKE CHOICES**

\_\_\_\_\_ As we offer children choices that are within their ability to make, we affirm the faith God has in us and help children learn to use this gift. We offer a prayer for the child to make a good choice, and we make the God connection that we can choose to do things that make us sad or things that make us happy, emphasizing that God wants us to be happy.

#### **AS WE HELP THEM BECOME BETTER STEWARDS OF GOD'S CREATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ We teach rules of health and safety that help us care for our own bodies (e.g., *hand washing*) to make the God connection that God wants us to take care of our bodies and be happy and healthy.

When we take care of the earth's resources by sharing and not hoarding more than we can use, we make the God connection that God is happy when we recycle, share food, and take care of the earth.

*Because young children "experience God's love embodied in caregivers," we must create an environment where children are "embraced by God and a community of faith as beloved and accepted." We must share our faith with our children.*

*Real Kids, Real Faith:  
Practices for Nurturing  
Children's Spiritual*

#### **WHEN WE HELP THEM PRACTICE THE RULE OF LOVE THROUGH THEIR ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

\_\_\_\_\_ We show children how to treat one another and learn to handle disagreements, differences, and feelings, using words and kind hands, and we let children help one another with boo boos, pouring juice, and age appropriate service/mission projects. This allows us to make the God connection that God wants us to love one another.

## **AS WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE NATURAL WORLD**

- \_\_\_\_\_ We explore God’s world and its wonder, including bugs, weather, and changing seasons, as the basics to worship to make the God connection that God gave us all of creation, – the plants, animals, ocean, earth, and sky – and we must take care of it.

## **AS WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO CREATE INSTEAD OF COPY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Because God created us to love God and one another and to create expressions of that love, we encourage this creativity by providing opportunities for children to paint, sculpt, sing, dance, play, pretend, build, glue, cut with scissors, and imagine. In this practice we make the God connection that God gave us our minds, hands, eyes, voices, and ears to create.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We post scriptures in our centers to help remind us and other adults who may be in our room to make intentional verbal God connections. [Appendix 9]

## **WHEN WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO BE INVOLVED WITH MANY OTHER PEOPLE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Community helpers, the custodian, church office staff, and senior church members who may volunteer at your school are people the children come to know. When the children experience how we are all interdependent, we help them make the God connection that we are all part of God’s family and that we all have special things we can do to help others.

## **AS WE USE THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH IN INTERPRETING EXPERIENCES**

- \_\_\_\_\_ We use biblically based storybooks to share stories of faith.<sup>xvi</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ We use children’s story Bibles, and also adult or youth Bibles when telling a Bible story and/or sharing scripture in our own words. When we use Bibles in our classrooms, we are making the verbal connections between activities, actions, ideas, feelings, and scripture.

## **WHEN WE ADMIT WE ARE WILLING TO TRUST GOD WITH THE THINGS WE DO NOT KNOW**

- \_\_\_\_\_ We make the God connection that we can be sure God is always with us and wants us to be safe.



**WHEN WE LIVE IT OUT WITH THEM**

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\_\_\_\_\_ Children and staff participate in age appropriate worship through weekly Sacred Circle Time [Appendix 1] or Chapel Time.

\_\_\_\_\_ We make the God connection that God loves us and wants us to love one another.

**WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO LIVE WITH THEM, SHARING THE RICHNESS OF EVERYDAY LIVING, THE HURTS, THE JOY, THE NEEDS, AND THE FULFILLMENTS OFFERING HOPE IN HONEST AND OPEN WAYS**

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\_\_\_\_\_ Children learn to respond in the same ways they have seen us behave. We are not perfect creatures and we share our faith as we share our own growing pains. Through this we make the God connection that God loves us even when we have a bad day, are angry, or hurt someone.

***You have made a God connection intentionally!***

\_\_\_ /45 = Christian Education Total

\_\_\_ ÷ 45 = \_\_\_ /100%

*“When you make intentional use of the bible and bible stories, as well as moral lesson stories, you are not only sharing your faith and making a God connection; you are laying a foundation for your students to use the bible for guidance and information. They will become familiar, respectful, and comfortable with the bible as a tool and guide that they can use as they grow and develop their faith.”*

*Lynne Paredes  
Intentional God-Connection Workshop*

## GUIDELINES FOR WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL MINISTRY PROGRAMS EVALUATION TOTALS

|                         |         |      |
|-------------------------|---------|------|
| Philosophy              | ___/9   | ___% |
| Administrative          | ___/111 | ___% |
| Children                | ___/15  | ___% |
| Partnering with Parents | ___/42  | ___% |
| Classroom Management    | ___/60  | ___% |
| Christian Education     | ___/21  | ___% |
| Curriculum              | ___/87  | ___% |
| Health and Safety       | ___/45  | ___% |

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_/390

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 390 = \_\_\_\_\_ /100%

## APPENDIX

1. Resources for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs
2. Director Self-Evaluation
3. Staff Self-Evaluation
4. Parent Evaluation
5. Covenant Guide
6. Board of Directors
7. Healthy Church and Preschool Relationships Checklist
8. Shared Space
9. Scriptural Support
10. Playground Safety
11. Managing Risk in Child Care Centers
12. Screening Workers
13. Weekday Preschool Book List
14. Bibliography

# Appendix One - Resources for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs

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## **SAFETY, POLICY, AND ADMINISTRATION RESOURCES**

### ***Handbook for Early Childhood Administrators – Directing with a Mission***

Hilde Reno, Janet Stutzman, Judy Zimmerman. 2008 Pearson Education, Boston, MA.

This handbook invites readers to examine the many duties and responsibilities inherent in managing staff, budgets, and a quality program that conforms to all legal and regulatory requirements. Each chapter carefully addresses one leadership or management task to provide concise, yet comprehensive coverage of every aspect of child care administration.

### ***Childcare and the Church***

This is the official document of The United Methodist Church that outlines the church's responsibilities in initiating, encouraging, and participating in the highest quality of child care for children and families, not only in the local community but also nationwide.

### ***Safe Sanctuaries***<sup>®</sup>

This mandate out of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church is an overt expression of a congregation in making a congregation a safe place where children and youth may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith.

### ***Legal Manual of the UMC***

This manual is a byproduct of the General Council on Finance and Administration's responsibility to protect the legal interests of the denomination. Its purpose is to provide basic information about legal issues common to organizations throughout The United Methodist Church.

### ***Managing Ministry Risk in Preschools***

UM Property and Casualty Trust [PACT], Insurance Protection for Ministry, offers quick and efficient resources that support creating a safe space for everyone. These include *Managing Risk in Daycare Centers*, *Safe Playgrounds*, and *Screening Workers*.

### ***The Visionary Director: A Handbook for Dreaming, Organizing, and Improvising in Your Center***

Margie Carter and Deb Curtis

The director's leadership is the primary nutrient for growing a quality program. This on-line resource will contribute to the ability of directors to summon the resources and skills to be visionary leaders for their programs.

### ***Certification Guidelines for Weekday Preschool and Kindergarten Programs***

Certification guidelines developed by the Preschool Directors Association of the North Georgia United Methodist Annual Conference

## **CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES**

### ***Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction to Teachers of Children 3 to 6***

Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp

Based on research in development, learning, and effective practices, as well as experience with intentional teaching, DAP articulates the principles that should guide our decision-making. Chapters describe children from birth through age 8 in detail, with extensive examples of appropriate practice for infant/toddler, preschool, kindergarten, and primary levels.

### ***Creative Curriculum Program***

This research-based system offers early childhood educators a comprehensive collection of resources to help them build high-quality programs. Many UM preschools use this curriculum and incorporate faith development through resources like Seasons of the Spirit or Wonder-filled Weekdays.

[www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com)

[www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)

### ***High Scope Curriculum***

A research-based program based on teaching and learning through hands-on experiences, this curriculum is available for infants through K-5 and is flexible enough for multi-age grouping. Music, movement, and literacy are important components.

### ***Wonder-filled Weekdays***

Abingdon Press

This resource includes developmentally appropriate learning through activities while offering Biblical reference and prayers.

### ***Seasons of the Spirit***

Offers faith development resources for 52 weeks of the year, nurtures imagination & creativity through the arts, and offers Bible stories that are age appropriate.

***Addison-Wesley Active Learning Series***, Cryer, Harms & Bourland, Dale Seymour Publications  
1987 Parsippany, New Jersey

***Simple Transitions for Infants and Toddlers***, Karen Miller, 2005 A Gryphon House Book, Beltsville, Maryland

***The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning***, Ann S. Epstein, 2007 National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC

***Ramps and Pathways; a constructivist approach to physics with young children***, DeVries and Sales, 2011 National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC

**The Project Approach** website outlines a set of teaching strategies in which teachers guide children through in-depth studies of real world topics. The website contains information about the project approach as well as many examples of projects.

**Resources for Early Childhood**, from the Ohio Resource Center, offers a comprehensive selection of quality online resources organized by subject area: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Visitors will find book recommendations, family connection resources, and articles on best practice, and activity and lesson ideas.

**The Innovative Teacher Project** is designed for early childhood educators who are interested in developing a deeper understanding of the Reggio Emilia approach and issues related to this approach in the United States.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Autism Speaks** offers a variety of resources for teachers and families including information about autism spectrum disorders, treatment, and diagnosis, a video glossary showing differences between typical and delayed development in young children, news, research, and services for families.

**Growing Ideas tip sheets** from The University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies are a series of guides for early childhood professionals. Topics covered include transitions, social skills, inclusion, and early literacy.

### **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning**

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. CSEFEL is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country.

### **Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children**

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) takes the research that shows which practices improve the social-emotional outcomes for young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities and creates FREE products and resources to help decision-makers, caregivers, and service providers apply these best practices in the work they do every day. Most of these free products are available right here on our website for you to immediately view, download and use.

## **FAITH FORMATION AND CHAPEL TIME**

### ***Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives***

Karen Marie Yust

Drawn from a three-year study of children's spirituality as well as the best in theological tradition and literature, *Real Kids, Real Faith* provides insight into and a variety of helpful tips for nurturing children's spiritual and religious formation.

### ***Building a Children's Chapel: One Story at a Time***

Bill Gordh

Based on his work with young children at the Episcopal School of New York, teacher and storyteller Gordh offers a collection of stories from the Bible, arranged and told to create a meaningful childhood chapel for children ages 3-7 and their families.

### ***Sacred Circle Time***

Leanne Ciampa Hadley

First Steps Spirituality Center is dedicated to the nurturing and healing of children's spirituality.

Stream Sacred Circle Time Webinar

Download Sacred Circle Time Webinar

### ***Godly Play***

Teaches young children the art of using religious language – parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action – helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

## **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**

***Fill a Bucket, A Guide to Daily Happiness for Young Children***, Carol McCloud & Katherine Martin, M.A. 2010 Fern Press, Northville, MI.

***Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood***, Jim Fay and Charles Fay, Ph.D. 2000 Love and Logic Institute, Inc., Golden, CO.

***Positive Time Out: And Over 50 Ways to Avoid Power Struggles***, Jane Nelson ED.D. 1999 Prima Publishing, Rocklin, CA.

***Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline: The 7 Basic Skills for Turning Conflict into Cooperation*** by Becky Bailey Ph. D. 2000, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, NY.

## PLAY

### ***101 Great Games for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers: Active, Bible-Based Fun for Christian Education***

Jolene L. Roehlkepartain, PhD.

Each lesson includes a Scripture passage, a teaching point, a supervision tip, materials-needed list, and game instructions. A Scripture index and a topical index provide information on locating games that tie into specific Scriptures and teaching points.

### ***I Love You Rituals***

Becky A. Bailey, PhD.

This book supports parents, grandparents, caregivers, and teachers in brain development, coping skills, coping with change, and affirming the parent-child bond, through easy and effective activities.

### ***Unplugged Play***

Bobbi Conner

Includes creative and imaginative play, classic games, play ideas for parent and child, and easy, real-life ideas to deal with electronic toys, games, videos in your child's routine

### ***From Play to Practice: Connecting Teachers' Play to Children's Learning***

Marcia Nell and Walter Drew

Helps teachers strengthen their ability to skillfully and intentionally guide children's learning through play.

### ***Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Focus on Intentionality and on Play (DVD-ROM)***

This DVD-ROM features the video segments from NAEYC's two online programs—"DAP and Intentionality" and "DAP and Play"—produced by NAEYC with the 2009 release of the third edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*.

## ADVOCACY

***Born Learning*** is a public engagement campaign to help families, caregivers, and communities create quality learning opportunities for children. The website contains parent education materials, information on child development, video clips, and a newsletter. Also available in Spanish.

***The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center*** (ECLKC) from the Office of Head Start (OHS) provides information and resources for the Head Start and Early Head Start community, as well as for anyone involved in early childhood education. The site offers tips and information on many topics including child development, education, and health.



## PARENTS

**TRUCE Toy Action Guides** can help adults make informed choices about toys. TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment) is a national group of educators concerned about how children’s entertainment and toys are affecting the play and behavior of children in classrooms.

**Reading Rockets** research-based information collected especially for preschool teachers, Head Start teachers, teacher aides, and other staff, as well as for parents. The information reflects what we know about instructional and parenting practices that build a foundation for literacy in the formative years between infancy and five years of age.

**The Cooperative Extension System** is a nationwide, non-credit educational network designed to provide practical, research-based information to the public on a variety of topics, including food, nutrition, health, family, youth, and communities. Visit this site to find your nearest Cooperative Extension office.

**NACCRRRA**, the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, provides child care information, early childhood news, and a variety of other resources for teachers and parents.

**The Illinois Early Learning Project** website offers a variety of resources for caregivers and parents, such as printable tip sheets, videos, and a frequently asked questions section. Includes material in Spanish, Polish, and Chinese.

## VENDORS

**Kaplan Early Learning Company** is a leading international provider of products and services that enhance children’s learning.

**Constructive Playthings** is committed to providing high quality products for teachers and children in the early care and education field. Their products are designed and constructed to meet or exceed all Federal requirements.

**Lakeshore** is dedicated to creating innovative educational materials that spark young imaginations, instill a sense of wonder and foster a lifelong love of learning.

**The National Teacher Registry** is similar to a bridal or baby registry. It allows teachers to create a wish list of needed items like books, art supplies, musical instruments, and games. Donors can view the online registry to select and purchase needed items, which are delivered to the teacher.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS**

***Phi Delta Kappa International*** helps researchers and practitioners deepen their expertise, elevate their careers, and ultimately experience better results in their work by providing professional learning opportunities, targeted networking, and relevant research.

***The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center*** is supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The website offers webinars, discussion groups, an electronic newsletter, and resources on a variety of topics like autism, brain development, and challenging behavior.

***The National Network for Child Care*** provides articles, newsletters, an e-mail forum, and other professional development resources for early childhood professionals on an array of topics regarding children and child care.

***PBS Teachers*** offers information on the core curricular areas of the arts, health and fitness, math, reading and language arts, science and technology, and social studies. Resources are organized by grade level (including pre-K). The site includes classroom and professional development resources, as well as discussion forums.

***MenTeach*** offers news, research, information, an online community, and an e-mail newsletter about supporting and increasing the number of men in the early childhood field.

### ***United Methodist Association of Preschools-Florida***

This site includes information and support in the area of accreditation for preschool ministry.

### ***Zero to Three***

National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

This resource provides free resources for parents and caregivers as well as research in the area of child development.

### ***NAEYC***

National Association for the Education for Young Children

The NAEYC promotes excellence in early childhood education.

### ***GBOD***

General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church

GBOD provides webinars, resources, training, and support for preschool boards, preschool and church staff, and directors in weekday preschool ministry programs in United Methodist Churches. Contact Melanie C. Gordon at [mgordon@gbod.org](mailto:mgordon@gbod.org).

### ***Council for Professional Recognition***

Child Development Associate [CDA]

This is the National Credentialing Program.

## Appendix Two - Director Self-Evaluation

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Name

School Year

*Please rate yourself for each of the following questions using the scale below, and then make an appointment with the pastor to discuss your evaluation.*

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Some of the time
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 Always
- N/A Not applicable

### **CHURCH/PRESCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS**

\_\_\_\_\_ I see the preschool as a Christian ministry for Jesus Christ and as a part of the Christian education of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ I facilitate mutual and prayerful support of the church and preschool as well as activities in ministry to the community, such as:

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\_\_\_\_\_ I ensure that spiritual expression is a part of every meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_ I uplift the ministry of the preschool to the church congregation through newsletter articles, bulletin boards, media, brochures, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ I uplift the ministry of the church to the parents and preschool staff.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am part of the church staff.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am an active member of the administrative board and other relevant church committees.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I support the pastor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am in consultation with the nominating committee for the selection of advisory board members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I route information for decision-making through the appropriate church committees after approval of the advisory board. These include...
  - Overall policy through administrative board
  - Coordination with other church activities through the council of ministries
  - Budget and salary planning and financial agreement for sharing preschool income through The Committee on Finance
  - Approval of hiring preschool staff through The Committee on Staff-Parish Relations
  - Facility related issues and maintenance through The Board of Trustees
- \_\_\_\_\_ I facilitate church members' active participation in the life of the preschool through:
 

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- \_\_\_\_\_ I encourage and facilitate the staff's attendance at professional and spiritual conferences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a commitment to pursue continued training in the field of children's programs and spiritual growth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I help ensure that students are taught respect for God's house and other people's property.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I manifest a concern, respect, and love for children.

## **GROWING PEOPLE**

### **Children**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I help ensure a warm and loving atmosphere where children interact, laugh, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know the children and what is happening for the children in the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I keep careful records on each child to monitor social, emotional, physical, and cognitive progress and well-being.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The curriculum is working well. I constantly monitor its effectiveness and work with staff to change it to meet individual needs and diverse personalities and situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ As is required by law, I know the indicators of abuse and neglect, and I report all suspected cases. I train and support staff to do the same.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I offer information and suggestions regarding good nutrition to parents.

## **Parents**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I offer parents several opportunities to attend orientation programs at the beginning of each school year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I make sure parents feel free to spend a few moments at drop off and pick up times to talk with me or with their child's teacher. I ensure they are comfortable enough to ease the transition and share information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to answer questions, address concerns, and refer parents to other professional services as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parent education happens informally in day-to-day interactions and formally through center events, meetings, conferences, and workshops that I plan, conduct, and/or advertise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I offer parents opportunities to evaluate the program.

## **Staff**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I give the staff support, information, and guidance. I know how to be there for them as a person while maintaining a professional relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The staff and I work well as a team. We know how to work out differences and when to laugh.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In hiring, training, and working with staff, I build on each person's strengths, allow for individual differences, and help each person grow beyond their weaknesses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I encourage staff to visit other programs and to attend conferences and workshops.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide training through regular staff meetings, frequent observations, and informal feedback.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know when to intercede and when to watch from the sidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_ I provide staff with opportunities to evaluate themselves, the program, and me.

## **Director**

\_\_\_\_\_ I feel a sense of accomplishment in what I am doing, and I accept the difficult challenges.

\_\_\_\_\_ I take time for myself, both to be alone and to be with my family and friends. The commitment I have made to my job is not all-consuming.

\_\_\_\_\_ My meetings with other directors, both informally and through conferences and workshops, give me opportunities to vent my frustrations, renew my commitment, and adjust my perspective.

\_\_\_\_\_ I keep myself well-informed on childcare issues through professional reading and participation in community, state, and national activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I pray regularly for the church and school ministries.

## **GROWING AN ORGANIZATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ The learning center is in compliance with state and local laws for licensing.

\_\_\_\_\_ The daily flow of activities and responsibilities is effective and flexible, and it seems to work well for us.

\_\_\_\_\_ UMAP and NAEYC standards are met.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ensure emergency plans of action are clear to everyone.

\_\_\_\_\_ I inspect, or have someone assigned to inspect, the facility both indoors and outdoors to make sure that it is a safe, comfortable, and pleasing place for adults and children to spend their days together.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ensure that record-keeping systems are efficient and up-to-date on vital information regarding staff, children, families, finances, evaluations, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ The program philosophy guides decision-making for myself and my staff. There is a sense of history and continuity, and it is clear what we stand for.

\_\_\_\_\_ My responsibilities and my expectations of others are clear.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable with my ability to delegate meaningful tasks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When I need help, I do not hesitate to ask for it, and I know who to go to for help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know where our program is going, and we have a long-range plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our plan is altered as new conditions require.
- \_\_\_\_\_ From year to year, I ensure the organization operates on a fiscally sound basis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I continually monitor enrollment patterns for the purpose of programming and budgeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I keep staff and parents well-informed. I seldom hear, *"I never knew"* or *"Why didn't you tell me?"*
- \_\_\_\_\_ I monitor happenings within the community so that we will be well prepared to guide the program into the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The community respects our program. People turn to us as experts in issues relating to children and families.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know my role as an advocate for children's issues and see myself as a leader in the community.

I feel that my weaknesses are:

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I feel that my strengths are:

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My professional goals for next year are:

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The goals for the school for next year are:

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My reflections on the past year are:

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Signature

Date



**SINGLE REVIEWER**

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Reviewed by

Date

Results will be reviewed with director on: \_\_\_\_\_

**GROUP REVIEW**

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Reviewed by

Date

Reviewed by

Date

Reviewed by

Date

Results will be reviewed with director on: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix Three - Staff Self-Evaluation

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Name

Age Group Taught

*Please rate yourself for each of the following questions using the scale below. Then make an appointment with the director to discuss your evaluation.*

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Some of the time
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 Always
- N/A Not Applicable

### **RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CHILDREN**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I use consistent, appropriate, and positive discipline techniques according to our discipline policy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I observe, record, and report significant individual and group behavior, progress, and unusual incidents of students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide opportunities for prayer and Christian education through play, activities, songs, worship, Bible stories, and pictures that are age appropriate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide consistent opportunities for the children to develop a positive self-concept as a child of God and a person of value.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide opportunities for the children to know the creative power of God as they experience and enjoy the world in which they live.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I treat each child with dignity and respect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I encourage pro-social behavior and help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration by comforting, identifying, reflecting feelings, and helping children use words to solve their problems.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I prepare a warm and safe environment that is orderly, clean, and appealing and permits the child to grow and explore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I interact with the children and encourage their involvement in activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I operate the classroom in compliance with all childcare licensing standards, paying particular attention to ensuring that standards prohibiting corporal punishment are obeyed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I decorate the classroom using children’s art work, posters, and other appropriate early childhood materials.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I modify the environment, schedule, and activities to meet children’s special needs.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PARENTS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I establish good communication with parents through verbal contracts, written notes, and planned conferences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide opportunities for parents to participate in classroom activities, programs, projects, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I treat parents with respect and as partners in their child’s educational experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I protect the health and safety of each child as a parent would their own child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I talk positively about the children’s families, and I provide opportunities for sharing about their cultural holidays and heritage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I report eating and napping habits to parents as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I welcome the children in the morning to facilitate smooth separation from their parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I respect the privacy of parents by keeping confidential any private family matters which the parent or child divulges.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I respect the parents’ right to decide what is right for the child. (When this is in direct conflict with school policy, I explain tactfully and refer matters to the director if there is still disagreement.)

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO ADMINISTRATION**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I prepare weekly lesson plans based on a yearly curriculum.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I inform administration of developments with children and parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I attend teacher meetings and/or evening staff meetings and special evening programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I inform administration of needs for new equipment, repairs, and supplies as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I keep medical reports current.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I attend classes, workshops, and training opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I arrive at work on time and have consistent attendance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I explain the programs in the area to visitors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I act in a professional manner at all times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I follow policies, procedures, and guidelines of the preschool.

I feel that my weaknesses are:

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I feel that my strengths are:

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If I were the director for a day, I would:

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My goals for next year are:

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My suggestions for our school are:

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My reflections on the past year are:

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Signature

Date

## Appendix Four - Parent Evaluation

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Child's Name

Parents' Name(s)

Teacher's Name

School Name

*Dear Parents,*

*We feel that good communication between home and school is critical to providing the best nurture and education for your child. Please take a moment to fill out this questionnaire so that we may better serve your family.*

What have you seen in your child's classroom recently that you liked?

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Have you seen anything that you disliked? Please explain.

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How has your child's teacher helped you most?

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What, if anything, do you feel your child's teacher or the administrative staff should be doing that is not being done? Please explain why.

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Are your child's most important needs being met to your satisfaction? If not, please explain.

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What are your dreams for your child?

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*Please return to your child's teacher. If you would like a conference with your child's teacher or the administration, please contact us and set up a convenient time.*

## Appendix Five - Covenant Guide

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### GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A COVENANT BETWEEN A WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL MINISTRY AND A UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATION

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**Melanie C. Gordon**

Director, Ministry with Children  
Leadership Ministries Division

The General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church  
mgordon@gbod.org

***An Ecclesiastical Covenant is defined as a solemn agreement between the members of a church to act together in harmony with the precepts of the gospel.***

Development of a covenant for a Weekday Preschool Ministry Program and a United Methodist Church should be written jointly. The document should clearly express the common relationship and maintain the integrity of each of the two bodies. Negotiation of understandings and wording should happen in good faith, keeping in mind the need for clarity.

#### **People of the Covenant:**

- Pastor(s)
- Preschool staff
- A parent from the advisory board
- Office and church staff
- The Board of Trustees
- The Committee on Staff-Parish Relations
- The Committee on Finance
- Sunday School teachers who share the space

#### **Contents of the Covenant should include the following:**

- Common statement of the importance of children and families as well as the need for ministry with them on behalf of the church and the weekday preschool ministry program
- Relationship connections between the preschool ministry and the congregation including staff and congregational responsibilities
- Avenues and terms of communication
- Clarity on "in kind" gifts from one to the other
- Clarity on a mutual financial commitment
- Clarity on sharing facilities, equipment, furnishings and supplies
- Process for making changes in the covenant
- Signatures of church and weekday preschool officials
- Set date of the initial covenant, and dates of additional changes



# Appendix Six - Board of Directors

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF A WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL MINISTRY PROGRAM**

### **Serving on the Board of Directors**

The advisory board of the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program should be comprised of six to nine voting members, including a certified teacher, an attorney, an accountant, and parents/guardians of young children. These should include members and non-members of the church.

Ex-officio members of the advisory board should include:

- Preschool director
- Preschool staff member
- Christian education director
- Pastor
- Church business administrator
- The Committee on Finance chairperson
- The Board of Trustees chairperson
- The Committee on Staff-Parrish Relations representatives

Take a look at the makeup of the congregation. Churches are filled with people who, in their daily lives, practice the skills needed to establish a weekday preschool ministry.

- Are there community leaders who know the needs of the surrounding area?
- Are there educators who are well-versed in developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education?
- Are there parents who are looking for a program for their own children?
- Is there an accountant to help with financial information, tax issues, salaries and benefits?
- Is there an attorney who is knowledgeable in the area of liability?
- Are there others in the church who feel strongly about the need for a weekday ministry?

Of course all of these people are not present in every church, nor may they all need to participate in meetings of the board of directors. However, the areas of interest represented by these people will need to be continuous points for communication with the Weekday Preschool Ministry Program. The church staff should be represented through the director or other designated staff member at all board meetings.

# Appendix Seven - Healthy Church and Preschool Relationships: Keeping the Lines of Communication Open

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*Please note that the word preschool will be used throughout this document as an inclusive term for any weekday program in the church, i.e. morning preschool, full day child care, parents' days out, after school care, etc.*

## **PHILOSOPHY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The church and preschool see the preschool as a ministry and as part of the Christian education of the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The church and preschool have agreed to a mission statement or written agreement that defines childcare as ministry. It includes purpose, philosophy, and whom the program serves as well as the congregational role. The church's administrative council has approved this document.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Regular meetings between the preschool and the program staff of the church provide the opportunity to discuss the ways in which ministry can be shared. These gatherings are a time of spiritual sharing, planning, and celebrating.

## **STRUCTURE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The state child care protection policy is accepted, implemented, and publicized to both the congregation and the parents. All church and preschool staff have been instructed and have signed the policy concerning child protection.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church counseling services (*when available*) and pastoral ministries are available to preschool parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The pastor uplifts the ministry of the preschool to the congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The director uplifts the ministry of the church to the parents and the preschool staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The director and staff are recognized and treated as members of the church staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The director is an active reporting member of the administrative council.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The director and pastor have a mutually supportive relationship.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool has an advisory committee, the majority of whom are church members, and who are nominated and elected annually by the charge conference. They include:
- Representatives from the Christian education department, The Committee on Finance, The Committee on Staff-Parrish Relations, and The Board of Trustees
  - A church member representing the congregation
  - A preschool parent from each age group, including church members and non-members
- \_\_\_\_\_ The advisory committee meets regularly with the director and pastor. Designated church and preschool staff members are invited as ex-officio members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board members are a real link clearly defined partnership between the committees they represent and the advisory committee, so they are able to share information, as well as to advocate for the ministry.

### **GROWING HEALTHFULLY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ When things are going well, you are thinking of ways to make things better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When difficulties are encountered, the director, pastor, staff, and church committees work together constructively and respectfully to resolve problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool director is proactive in giving reports to appropriate church committees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool staff and the Christian education department work together respectfully, recognizing that space and materials need to be shared and mutually cared for.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The preschool and other ministries of the church work together cooperatively to ensure that all programs and ministries receive needed consideration of resources and space.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children are taught respect for God's house and the property of others.

## Appendix Eight - Shared Space

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### GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

There is a lock on the gate of the playground and only the preschool director or the chair of trustees hold the key. Or a needed space for the nursery on Sunday remains dark and locked because the weekday preschool director does not want the church to “mess with her space.” How do these scenarios exemplify Christian community?

Our responsibility to our children can be seen in several places. Jesus passionately spoke of the importance of refraining from being a “stumbling block” in the formation of our children. John Wesley encouraged ministers to visit children in their homes. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church address how we are to care for the children entrusted to us.

What is the answer to the long asked question of shared space between the Weekday Preschool Ministry and the Christian education staff within the church? To solve the problems presented in these examples, we must develop healthy communication; we must come to the table. We can write policies, conduct meetings, and stake out territory, but if we are not communicating with one another, all of those actions are moot and sometimes destructive.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How are we continually looking at ways to improve communication and the relationship between preschool staff members and the church education staff?
- What mechanisms do we have in place to bring people to the table to constructively work through issues regarding use of space? A covenant?
- What policies do we have in place to allow ongoing communication concerning issues around space between the preschool director and church committees?
- How do we communicate with one another so that there is more of a focus on community rather than individuality?
- What budget process do we have in place to adequately maintain ongoing ministries given varying economic climates?
- How do we set an example for children through our actions and decisions regarding shared space?

## Appendix Nine - Scriptural Support for Learning Centers

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*These examples lay a foundation for integrating scripture into learning centers. Post, seek additional scripture that supports each of these areas, and create learning centers to accompany scripture.*

### HOUSEKEEPING CENTER

#### **Luke 15.8**

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"

#### **Jeremiah 29.5**

"Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce."

#### **Luke 10.40**

"But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.'"

### BLOCK CENTER

#### **1 Chronicles 22.19**

"Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God. Go and build the sanctuary of the Lord God so that the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God may be brought into a house built for the name of the Lord."

#### **Ecclesiastes 3.3a**

"A time to break down, and a time to build up"

### MANIPULATIVE CENTER

#### **Matthew 7.13-14**

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

## **MUSIC CENTER**

### **Psalm 100.1-2**

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing."

### **Psalm 49.4**

"I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the harp."

### **Psalm 92.1-4**

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy."

### **Psalm 47.1**

"Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy."

## **SCIENCE CENTER**

### **1 Corinthians 4.1**

"Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries."

### **Ecclesiastes 1.5-7**

"The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises.  
The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north;  
round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.  
All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow."

## **ART CENTER**

### **Jeremiah 18.3-4**

"So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him."

### **Ecclesiasticus 38.29 [Apocryphal]**

"So it is with is the potter sitting at his work and turning the wheel with his feet; he is always deeply concerned over his products, and he produces them in quantity."

## **OUTDOOR CENTER**

### **Matthew 13.1-9**

"That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

### **Genesis 1.29-31a**

"God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."

# Appendix Ten - Playground Safety



## Safe Playgrounds

The church children and neighborhood were fortunate to have a generous donor who donated funds for the church to build a new playground. Volunteers from the men's group had spent several weekends installing the equipment. It had only been in use for a month when one Sunday, during children's hour, the kids were released for part of the class time to go outside and enjoy the refreshing spring weather.

In less than two minutes after turning them loose, a loud cry rang out. One of the children had fallen from the top level of the equipment and lay motionless on the ground. The emergency squad was called. Luckily, before they arrived, the boy was conscious and alert. To be safe, they took him to the hospital for observation and he was later released.

When church leaders began to ask questions, they realized that no one had really taken steps to follow basic guidelines for installing and maintaining the play equipment. In this case, no protective surface was considered and, therefore, had not been installed.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground. Use this simple checklist to help make sure your local community or school playground is a safe place to play.

In several states and jurisdictions, there are very specific laws relating to installation and maintenance of playgrounds. In some cases plans must be approved and the playground and equipment must be inspected by authorities before they may be used.

However, in most places, very few regulations exist, especially when it comes to private playgrounds (e.g. churches, homes, etc). As a result, many times the installation is not well-planned and the playground and

equipment not adequately maintained. Therefore, churches should take extra steps to make sure that they are meeting acceptable standards when it comes to playgrounds and equipment.

While there are many areas to be considered, the following basic guidelines are recommended:

- Make sure **surfaces** around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel, or are mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
- Check that protective **surfacing extends** at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are **spaced** at least 9 feet apart.
- Check for **dangerous hardware**, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.
- Make sure **spaces** that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Check for **sharp points or edges** in equipment.
- Look out for **tripping hazards**, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
- Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have **guardrails** to prevent falls.
- Check **playgrounds regularly** to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition.
- **Carefully supervise children** on playgrounds to make sure they're safe.

### INSPECTIONS

Churches, made up mostly of volunteers, find it more difficult to stay diligent with inspections. Therefore, it is critical that someone, as part of their job description, be charged with either doing the inspection or making sure it is completed. Document the inspection and place the form in a file.

### ACCESS

Church leadership will need to discuss their views on when and to whom the playground is accessible to. Is it for church children only? If so, can they play on it when there are no adults around to supervise? If it is open to the public, are their liability issues that need to be discussed with the church's insurance agent? If it is to



be off-limits to the public, is signage or a fence going to be needed?

**COMMUNICATION**

Leadership, parents and even neighbors should understand the guidelines for the playground area. Get input and make a decision and stick to it. Address concerns and violations quickly and fairly.

While a playground may be viewed as a great way to reach out and be a part of the neighborhood and community, careful planning, assembly, inspection and use is vital to the ongoing success of such a project. For more extensive information or for a project of larger magnitude, a visit to the internet or the services of a contractor may be in order.

**TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT PLAYGROUND SAFETY**

Safe playground equipment and adult supervision are extremely important, but that is only half of a successful playground safety program. Children need to know how to be safe and act responsibly on a playground.

Here are some general rules to teach the children:

- Never push or roughhouse on jungle gyms, slides, seesaws, swings, and other equipment, play responsibly
- Do not wear bike helmets when playing on playground equipment, take off your helmet
- Use playground equipment that is age appropriate
- Use equipment properly. Slide feet first, don't climb outside guardrails, no standing on swings, one child to a swing/seat, sit facing one another on a seesaw, etc.
- If you jump off equipment, make sure that you check to be sure there are no other children in your way. When you jump, land on both feet with knees slightly bent
- Leave bikes, backpacks, and bags away from the equipment and the area where you are playing so that no one trips over them and falls
- Playground equipment should never be used if it is wet because moisture causes the surface to be slippery
- During the summertime, playground equipment can become uncomfortably or dangerously hot, especially metal slides. Use good judgment - if the equipment feels hot to the touch, it is probably not safe or fun to play on

- Don't wear clothes with drawstrings or other strings at the playground. Drawstrings, purses and necklaces could get caught on equipment and accidentally strangle a child
- Wear sunscreen when playing outside, even on cloudy days, so that you don't get sunburned

There should always be an adult supervisor present when you are playing. If you see an unsafe act or condition, report the unsafe act or condition to the supervisor!

**For additional information**

Please refer to Sample Policy 15 in the United Methodist Insurance Church Safety Manual, or log on to [www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/327.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/327.html)

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# Appendix Eleven - Managing Risks in Child Care Centers



## United Methodist Insurance's Risk Management MO

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 19 20a, NRSV)*

*"I look upon all the world as my parish. I am employed according to the plain direction of (God's) word - 'as I have opportunity, doing good to all'"..... (cf Galatians 6:10) John Wesley*

The United Methodist Church is a denomination which takes seriously the mandate of Jesus and the example of its early leaders. We have developed our witness and mission with a Biblical basis, evangelical fervor and vigorous social activism and outreach. The result is a variety of programs in local churches beyond weekly worship and church school. Many of these ministries are intentional outreach activities into the community such as:

- Daycare centers and preschools
- Respite care centers
- Scouting organizations
- Vacation church schools
- Day camp programs
- Community food and clothing banks
- Homeless shelters
- Congregate meals sites
- Recreation programs
- Alcohol and other drug abuse groups

Being engaged in these ministries brings the Gospel alive. It also creates liability exposures.

The Church today interacts with secular society. Church leaders have become very attuned to the business of the church. Current business principles and

methodologies are evermore utilized. In the offices of the denomination's financial and administrative agency, a visitor is likely to see copies of the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Harvard Business Review* or *Business Week* on staff desks as well as the Interpreter, *The Book of Discipline* or *The United Methodist Book of Worship*.

One of the business disciplines increasingly used by annual conferences and local churches is risk management. The United Methodist Insurance Service Center has been responsible for distributing a number of resources on these topics. These materials are provided to assist church leadership to be good and effective stewards of church resources. But what is risk management, and why should church leaders be concerned about it?

Risk management can be understood as a decision making process. In the Church, that process begins with identifying the property owned or controlled by a local congregation, conference, agency or institution, along with the activities it is engaged in, which create the possibility of a loss or accident.

Churches seeking to effectively manage their risks not only identify the exposure to potential losses, which their real property, income and investments, personnel and ministry and mission create. They also determine steps that can be taken to reduce the possibility of a loss, or minimize the impact an occurrence. Some of the approaches widely used to control losses include:

- Identify possible risk exposures
- Avoid exposure when feasible
- Prevent losses when possible
- Implement loss-reduction procedures

Insurance is a risk financing mechanism to help pay for those losses that cannot be prevented. Insurance transfers the loss to a commercial insurance company, which indemnifies the church for financial loss created by specified perils or exposures.

Other risk financing mechanisms include self-insurance with either a funded or unfunded reserve, current expensing of any losses which occur, borrowing of funds, and/or appealing to a congregations members for special financial gifts.

The use of risk management tools by United Methodist churches is important to the process of preserving and even strengthening the assets that are needed to carry out the mission and purpose of the Church.

An argument could be made that the best way to manage exposure to risk in our churches would be to cease doing anything which might potentially result in a loss. But to avoid all exposure is to avoid the church's mission.

For example, if the daycare center isn't open, then the exposures it provides to potential physical or psychological harm no longer exists.

Senior citizens will no longer slip and fall at the church if programs which attract them to the facility are discontinued. Prohibiting a pastor from talking to church members or constituents outside the confines of a worship service or organized class could protect him or her from the temptation of sexual misconduct with a parishioner.

Of course, the viability of the church would soon come into question if these approaches to "managing risks" were implemented. A congregation should never allow risk management considerations to define its ministry, and ultimately its identity. But it should use risk management techniques to assist in determining how to safely and responsibly be about its ministry as the congregation understands it.

**THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS:**

**First:**

Identify potential activities and situations which could result in a loss, and take steps to prevent those losses. For example, questions which may be asked include:

- Are the church facilities reasonably safe?
- What have we done to minimize potential fire, lightning, or storm damage?
- Are appropriate and adequate safeguards for handling church funds in place?
- Are employees and volunteers screened, trained, and supervised?
- Have adequate precautions been taken to provide security for individuals and property?

**Second:**

Plan what needs to be done to correct the problem areas and decrease exposures. It is unusual for a local church to have adequate financial resources on hand to respond immediately to every concern, so congregational leadership must prioritize projects. Some situations may require a fundraising initiative prior to implementation of necessary loss prevention measures.

**Third:**

Obtain adequate insurance. Keep in mind that insurance is a financial arrangement, not a prevention tool. Among the insurance coverages a local church should obtain are property and liability, boiler, fidelity (crime), automobile, Directors and Officers, Employment Practices, and Workers' Compensation. The Property and Casualty Trust (UNITED METHODIST INSURANCE) provides a captive insurance arrangement for United Methodist Conferences, offering these coverages.

When properly used, risk management can be extremely helpful in enhancing ministry protection. Do not let risk management define your ministry, but be aware that your ministry defines your risk management needs.

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# Appendix Twelve - Screening Workers



## Screening Children & Youth Workers

The widespread tragedies of the abuses of children, youth, and vulnerable adults by church employees and volunteers have received massive media coverage over the past decade. These tragedies are not confined within any single denomination or church organization. We can cite known examples involving perpetrators who work in schools, camps, and churches. For us, in the United Methodist Church, we must ask not, “If it happens in our church . . .?” but, “When it happens in our church, what will we do?” Because child abuse happens every minute of every day, the most important questions for church leaders to answer is, “How must we work to prevent abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our ministries?”

### CHURCHES ARE VULNERABLE

Church schools are vulnerable to potential sexual abuse and other forms of child abuse. Most church sponsored programs rely on a strong and large group of volunteers for leadership. Often, only minimal screening of volunteers occurs. Some of the programs have used teenagers as lead teachers with little, if any, training. Many staff members have not been carefully screened by checking references and having a completed criminal background check.

There is an assumption in the minds of many that church, school, and youth ministry volunteers are only motivated by faith and a desire to serve others; therefore, these folks couldn't possibly act to harm anyone in their care. Minimal volunteer screening and selection processes along with minimal supervision practices have resulted in violations of the trust given by families to pastors, church, school teachers, coaches, and other church leaders. The consequences are devastating. In the church, or church related ministries, the super enthusiastic welcome that is given to virtually anyone willing to work with children or youth can make for easy access to potential victims for predators.

There can be no doubt about the importance of children and youth in the community of faith. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is quoted, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” John Wesley worked continuously at the inclusion of children and for their blessing by establishing schools and making medical care available for them. As a church, we recognize the importance of educating and caring for children and youth. Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, UMYF meeting, youth choirs, and many other experiences are providing Christian Education and nurture regularly in our communities of faith. Whenever abuse occurs, as a consequence of failed selection procedures or lax supervision practices, we have kept one or many children from growing in faith and discipleship.

Church leaders must use the utmost care in screening the volunteers and employees who will be working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our ministries. Recommended best practices include conducting a criminal background check on each applicant/worker, check references and experience of each applicant/worker, and interview each applicant/worker. The best practices for selection also include using written applications for positions that will involve engagement with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Utilizing these best practices in the selection process is valuable for a variety of reasons. The applications, reference checks, background screening, and interviews give the church multiple opportunities to discover the applicant's skills and gifts for ministry as well as providing opportunities to discover previous incidents or experiences that would disqualify the applicant from placement within your ministries.

### OUR RESOLUTION

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in 1996, adopted a resolution to reduce the risk of abuse of children and youth in the church. That commitment by our communities of faith stands today. The screening and selection of new hires, volunteers, and all staff members is a vital element in your plan for protecting those your ministries will serve. Some insurance companies implement coverage exclusions and will use such exclusions to deny a claim if the best practice, such as conducting a criminal background check, has not been carried out. Therefore, it is vitally important that your church review its general liability and umbrella policies to be sure they do not include such exclusions. Insurance provided by UNITED METHODIST INSURANCE includes coverages for such

claims.

**RESOURCES FOR YOU**

United Methodist Insurance has partnered with Trak-1 Technology to develop an economical multi-state criminal background check product that is available for your church’s use and for use by all the ministries you sponsor. For more information, please contact Kyle Hendricks at Trak-1 Technology ([Kyle.Hendricks@trak-1.com](mailto:Kyle.Hendricks@trak-1.com)).

**SCREENING CHECKLISTS**

Since screening of staff and volunteers is the key beginning point as you develop your Safe Sanctuaries policies, here are some items to review.

**CHECKLISTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS**

1. Evaluate current screening/hiring practices for paid and volunteer workers
2. Review all training procedures
3. Adopt and implement in-depth staff supervision practices
4. Document all staff and volunteer personnel practices including hiring, probations, dismissals, incidents
5. Assure that day-to-day practice reflects the written practices/policies.

**CHECKLISTS FOR LOCAL CHURCH AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE GROUPS**

1. Identify areas of potential problems in advance such as camp procedures and mission trip procedures
2. Develop procedures for response to allegations, incidents, and to known offenders
3. Prepare leaders to work with parents, children, and congregation in the event of an incident.

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## Appendix Thirteen - Weekday Preschool Book List

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Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs should stock their libraries with age-appropriate books for children that teach life lessons and support healthy cognitive, relational, and spiritual development. The books listed will set a solid **foundation** on which to build your library.

### BIBLES FOR CHILDREN

- *Spark Story Bible* – a story book for toddlers through early readers
- *The Children’s Bible in 365 Stories* – Bible stories for families to read together

### CREATION AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

- *Three Pandas Planting* by Megan Halsey
- *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
- *God Created* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones

### NAPTIME

- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

- *On Noah’s Ark* by Jan Brett
- *Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown
- *Let’s Make a Joyful Noise: Celebrating Psalm 100* by Karma Wilson
- *Psalm 21* illustrated by Tim Ladwig
- *Morning Has Broken* by Eleanor Farjeon
- *Adam and Eve and The Garden of Eden* by Jane Ray
- *Noah’s Ark* by Jerry Pinkney
- *Psalms for Young Children* by Marie-Hélène Delval
- *Psalm 23* by Tim Ladwig
- *Jonah and the Big Fish* by Sekiya Miyoshi
- *Star of Wonder* by Leena Lane
- *The Friendly Beasts* by John J. Blumen
- *The Nativity* by Julie Vivas
- *Easter, Easter, Almost Here!* by Kathleen Long Bostrom (board book)
- *The Colt and the King* by Marni McGee

- *J is for Jesus: an Easter Alphabet and Activity Book* by Debbie Trafton O'Neal
- *The Miracles of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola
- *Tonight You Are My Baby: Mary's Christmas Gift* by Jeannine Q. Norris

### **LIFE'S LESSONS**

- *Cookies: Bite-Size Life Lessons* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst and Ray Cruz

### **PARENT AND CHILD... AND GRANDPARENT**

- *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney
- *Mama Do You Love Me* by Barbara M. Joosse
- *Papa Do You Love Me* by Barbara M. Joosse
- *Are You My Mother?* by Dr. Seuss

### **SACRAMENTS**

- *Water, Come Down!* by Walter Wangering, Jr.

### **FAITH FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown
- *Where is God?* by Lawrence and Karen Kushner (board book available)
- *My Spiritual Alphabet Book* by Holly Bea
- *Good Night God* by Holly Bea
- *Where Does God Live?* by Holly Bea
- *Because Nothing Looks Like God* by Lawrence Kushner

### **STEWARDSHIP**

- *Beatrice's Goat* by Page McBrier
- *Peter's Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats
- *Three Pandas Planting* by Megan Halsey

### **FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION, AND PEACE**

- *Children of God Storybook Bible* by Desmond Tutu

## **DIVERSITY**

- *There is a Flower at the Tip of My Nose Smelling Me* by Alice Walker
- *A Child's Book of Blessings* compiled by Sabrina Dearborn

## **GRIEF, LOSS, AND TRAUMA**

- *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger and illustrated by Michael Hays

## **AUTHORS**

- Eric Carle
- Kevin Henkes
- Ruth Krauss
- Margaret Wise Brown
- Ezra Keats
- Dr. Seuss
- Sam McBratney
- Crockett Johnson
- Sandra Boynton
- Bill Martin, Jr.
- Peggy Ruthmann
- Robert McCloskey
- Don Freeman
- Laura Joffe Numeroff
- Audrey and Don Wood
- Tana Hoban
- Mary Hoffman
- Jan Brett

For a more extensive list of books and authors, visit:  
<https://ministrywithchildren.wordpress.com/childrens-books/>



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