

ABSTRACT

Preschool Ministries and Churches that House Them: A Study to Develop Best Practices to Promote Healthy Collaborative Relationships

by

Miguel A. Vélez Andújar

Churches engage in preschool ministries with the hope of serving their communities, reaching new people, educating children in the Christian faith, and hopefully growing the overall ministry of the church. Often, however, they find it difficult to achieve these goals because of the many factors that can affect the relationship, factors like communication, sharing of space, staffing, and differing values and/or vision.

As the history of Christian early education shows, preschools and churches have been partnering in ministry for a long time. Those that have healthy and collaborative relationships attribute their success to improvements in the areas covered in this study. This study explores the factors that promote and hinder collaborative relationships between preschools and churches that house them. By studying the relationships between twelve churches and their preschools, interviewing staff, and conducting surveys, this study identified ways to promote more symbiotic relationships and identified some areas that warrant attention. By listening to the staff who is engaged in preschool ministry daily, the study found ways to improve the relationships.

This study was conducted in United Methodist Churches in the North Georgia Conference of the UMC, so it approaches these relationships from a Wesleyan

perspective taking into account the development of Christian education in churches and identifying some of the benefits of having preschool ministries.

This study discovered that senior pastors have a very important role in the relationship between the preschool and the church, that an intentional plan is needed to develop these relationships, that having staff who shares a common vision of the ministry is crucial, that preschool teachers should not be left out of the relationship and that where the preschool is physically located can have an impact on the relationship.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

Preschool Ministries and Churches that House Them:

A Study to Develop Best Practices to Promote Healthy Collaborative Relationships

presented by

Miguel A. Vélez Andújar

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary

Dissertation Coach

Date

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

Date

Dean of the Beeson Center

Date

TITLE:
SUBTITLE

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Rev. Miguel A. Vélez Andújar

May 2019

© 2019

Rev. Miguel A. Vélez Andújar

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER 1 NATURE OF THE PROJECT	1
Overview of the Chapter	1
Personal Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Project	5
Research Questions	5
Research Question #1	5
Research Question #2	5
Research Question #3	5
Rationale for the Project	5
Definition of Key Terms	8
Delimitations	9
Review of Relevant Literature	10
Research Methodology	12
Type of Research	14
Participants	15
Instrumentation	16
Data Collection	18

Data Analysis	19
Generalizability	20
Project Overview	22
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT	
Overview of the Chapter.....	23
Biblical Foundations	23
Theology of Education.....	23
Old Testament Philosophy on Education.....	24
Responsibility for Education in Scripture.....	25
The Great Commission and Education	26
Jesus’ example valuing children	27
Jesus’ Teaching Ministry	27
Foundations for Christian Education from the Early Church	28
Other Influences on Christian Education from Philosophy	29
Early Church Fathers on Education	30
Methodist Views on Christian Education	31
John Wesley and Advocate for Education	31
United Methodist Support for Education	33
History of Early Childhood Education	34
Theorist on Education.....	35
Benefits of Early Childhood Education	37
Types of Programs in Early Childhood Education	37

Christian Early Education	40
Value of Early Childhood Education	40
Variety of Choices for Preschool Education.....	41
Choosing a Preschool Program.....	42
Collaborative Ministry of the Church	44
Education as a Collaborative Ministry of the Church.....	44
Christian Education of Children as a Collaborative Ministry of the Church.....	45
Contributions to Education of Collaborative Church Ministries	46
Opportunities and Challenges for Collaborative Educational Ministries ..	46
Impact of Collaborative Educational Ministries	47
Research Design Literature	47
Summary of Literature	49

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter	51
Nature and Purpose of the Project	52
Research Questions.....	52
Research Question #1	52
Research Question #2	53
Research Question #3	53
Ministry Context(s).....	53
Participants	54
Criteria for Selection	54

Description of Participants.....	56
Ethical Considerations	57
Instrumentation	58
Expert Review.....	60
Reliability and Validity of Project Design	61
Data Collection	62
Data Analysis	67
CHAPTER 4 EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT	
Overview of the Chapter	68
Participants	69
Research Question #1: Description of Evidence	74
Research Question #2: Description of Evidence	83
Research Question #3: Description of Evidence	92
Summary of Major Findings.....	97
CHAPTER 5 LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT	
Overview of the Chapter	98
Major Findings.....	99
First Finding	99
Second Finding.....	103
Third Finding	105
Fourth Finding	107
Fifth Finding	108

Ministry Implications of the Findings.....	111
Limitations of the Study.....	112
Unexpected Observations	114
Recommendations.....	115
Postscript	119
APPENDIXES	
APPENDIX A Discovery Survey (DS)	122
APPENDIX B Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS).....	124
APPENDIX C Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI)	127
APPENDIX D Informed Consent Letter	128
APPENDIX E Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches	129
WORKS CITED	195
WORKS CONSULTED	204

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Table 1 Participants by Ages	73
Table 2 Other Factors Contributing to a Collaborative Relationship	78
Table 3 Shared Values	81
Table 4 Other Factors that Hinder the Relationship	84
Table 5 Coordination of Use of Space	87
Table 6 Constituents are Given Opportunities to Interact on a Regular Basis	91

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 Participant Church Membership.....	69
Figure 1.2 Participants Geographic Area: Urban, Suburban, Rural	70
Figure 1.3 Participants by Job Role	71
Graph 1 Participants Gender Demographics.....	72
Graph 2: Participants' Age Demographics	72
Chart 1 Collaborative Evaluation of Relationship	75
Chart 2.1 Church Staff views on Collaborative Relationship.....	76
Chart 2.2 Preschool Staff views on Collaborative Relationship.....	76
Chart 3 Most Important Factor Contributing to a Collaborative Relationship	77
Chart 4 Important Factor that Contributes to Collaborative Relationship	78
Chart 5 Preschool Teachers Shared Values	82
Chart 6 Factors That Most Hinder the Relationship	84
Chart 7 Factors that Hinder by Job Role.....	85
Chart 8 Preschool Teachers' Coordination of Use of Space.....	88
Chart 9 Preschool Teachers-Constituent Interaction	92

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the four years that I have been in this program, I have had the great opportunity to meet and share with Latino colleagues in ministry from several countries engaged in ministry in the United States and abroad. Their friendship, prayers, encouragement, and support in this process of learning have been greatly appreciated.

I have been blessed with great professors and the best dissertation coach I could have ever hoped for in Dr. Verna Lowe. Dr. Lowe is not only featured in the instructional videos on how to write dissertations, but she also has a passion for education and children that I share. Thank you for sticking with me through all the red corrections and helping me believe I could do this.

I could not have made it through this program without the love and support of my loving wife Alynnette and my three beautiful blessings from God, my children; Miguel, Alycia and Anna. I pray my achievement serves as an inspiration to them to continue to grow and learn and be the best they can be.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Skyland United Methodist Church and its staff for supporting me through this process in every way possible. It is awesome to serve a spirit-filled church that prays for its pastor and believes in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I would also like to thank Mr. Ralph Waldo Beeson and Asbury Theological Seminary who had the foresight to establish the scholarship that made it possible for this bilingual Latino pastor serving in ministry for 23 years to obtain a Doctor of Ministry that has helped him grow spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

I want to thank God for this opportunity, for without his grace and mercy, I would not even be in ministry. I dedicate this degree to Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior who gave it all for me and to the Holy Spirit who empowered me to finish it. He continues to have great plans for me!

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter includes a description of the research project and outlines the key features of the project. A personal statement shares my background and experience with early education ministries in churches I have served and some of my observations. The problem to be addressed in the research and the purpose of this project are covered as well as the research questions that are used throughout this project. The rationale explains why this project and more like it are needed and important.

To facilitate the study I define key terms, delimitations, and my research methodology in this chapter, as well as doing a brief review of literature which will be expanded in Chapter 2. This chapter also defines, as part of my research methodology, the participants, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and generalizability of this project. The chapter concludes with an overview of the project.

Personal Introduction

I have served three churches that had preschool ministries over my 22 years of ministry. Through this experience, I have grown to love and appreciate the importance of early education ministries and their impact on the local church. In these appointments, I discovered that the church and the preschools can at times operate almost like two separate entities sharing building space, resources, and at times staff. This can lead to competing goals for the use of these things, instead of collaboration and mutual support in ministry, and often strains the relationship between the two.

In ministry, as in business, life and just about everything else, relationships are very important. How one relates to others individually and collectively makes a huge difference in

what can be accomplished. I have discovered that relationships can deteriorate over time if they are not cared for, nurtured, and evaluated regularly. Relationships between parishioners and churches, ministries and churches, churches and denominations, all have this in common. For relationships to be mutually beneficial, both sides must be willing to invest time, resources, and energy in developing and maintaining those relationships in healthy ways. They must also be willing to evaluate those relationships objectively to adjust as necessary for the good of the overall ministry.

In ministry, numerous relationships exist at any given time. One such relationship that requires the church's immediate attention is the church's relationship to community ministries such as preschool ministries. Preschool ministries have the potential to serve as one of the greatest outreach opportunities for the church. They provide direct contact with families with young children at a time when parents are considering how they want to raise their children and what they want to provide for them in terms of education, religious upbringing/background, social interaction, peer groups, and living environment. This is a prime time for churches to introduce themselves to these families and help them see the benefits of raising their children in the church and being a part of a faith community. This is also a time in which the church can play a major role in the life of these children and impact their future.

Unfortunately, because of many factors that I have studied in this project, churches often miss the opportunity to integrate their preschool ministries into the overall ministry of the church. The relationship between the church and the preschool often reflects a disconnect that affects both ministries. This in turn reduces the effectiveness of both ministries and greatly diminishes the witness to the community. At times, the relationship becomes nothing more than a tenant/landlord relationship without much ministerial impact.

One of the greatest challenges to improving the relationship between preschool ministries and the churches that house them is the status quo. Churches and preschools tend to operate by set policies, procedures, and guidelines that are not always easily adjusted, and which have become codified over time. Written and unwritten codes of conduct that regulate these relationships can become ‘set in stone’ and make it very difficult for the two to work out their differences and find better ways to relate to one another. Another factor to consider is that these relationships are often set up in adversarial ways rather than in cooperative modes. This means that the two are structured as competitors and often see each other as having conflicting goals. These conflicts are often reflected in struggles for space, resources, staff, and signage.

In being involved in churches with preschool ministries at a staff level and as a participating family (two of my children attended our church preschools), I also found that there was a lack of communication between churches and preschools. At times the church had activities or services that would have been adequate for preschool families, yet they were not invited or included. At other times the preschool had programs, fundraisers, or presentations that the church could have supported or participated in, yet they were not invited or included. The lack of invitation and inclusion on both sides represent missed opportunities to be in collaborative, supportive, and healthy ministry relationships that would benefit both ministries. They also indicate the disconnect that exists in communication that affects things like coordination of space, resources, and staff, planning of major joint events/activities, and the sharing of information that could enhance each other’s ministry.

I hope that through this project I will have helped churches and preschools identify ways to improve the way they do ministry together. The insights into some of the pitfalls that should be avoided will hopefully help all of us learn from the mistakes others have made in this area,

and provide a roadmap to developing church and preschool ministries that will be collaborative and mutually supportive. Some of the success stories of those collaborating well will hopefully inspire and encourage those engaged in early education ministries and programs. This project highlights some of the best practices that churches and preschool ministries are currently using in hopes that others might be able to learn from them and apply them in their context where applicable.

I believe the church is in a unique position to engage in early education ministries that affect the greater society. It must not miss this opportunity to help educate the children, who will be the leaders and citizens of tomorrow, in Christian principles that will serve them for a lifetime. It must also not neglect our call to serve children in ministry, recognizing them as part of the church today and not just as the leaders of tomorrow.

Statement of the Problem

Churches and preschools that share facilities need to find ways to be mutually supportive of each other if they are to be partners in ministry to their communities. Churches that foster healthy relationships with their partners in ministry tend to thrive while those that do not tend to struggle. Likewise, preschools that function as separate entities within churches often experience competition for space and resources with the church instead of collaboration. The problem is that these relationships, if not maintained, have a tendency to deteriorate over time, become neglected, or be altogether abandoned by one side or the other, or both.

Churches that engage in truly collaborative ministries must be intentional about establishing policies and procedures that promote their relationships and mutual support. Too often these relationships are not well defined, structured, or shared with the constituents of the ministries or the congregation. For these ministries to flourish and for there to be ownership at

the local church of its collaborative ministries, there needs to be better communication with the constituents of the ministry and the congregation about the overall vision and mission for the relationship.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What factors promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

Research Question #2

What factors hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschools and their host churches?

Research Question #3

What best practices, moving forward, promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

Rationale for the Project

Part of the church's ministry is to serve children and their families. Churches must seek to be more effective in serving the community by providing educational opportunities that benefit people inside and outside the church. This will enhance the church's outreach and

witness to its community. A harmonious relationship between the preschool and church will also improve the preschool's reputation and relationship with the community at large.

Effective preschool ministries can also serve as a bridge for the church to serve and be in relationship with the public-school system. This can potentially lead to other forms of outreach and ministry for the church. Given that a majority of the population sends their children to public schools, this relationship is vital to engage the larger population that does not participate in the church's preschool ministries.

Preschool education reflects the church's focus on children and education, and shows that the church values children as part of the body of Christ. "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray;" Proverbs 22:6 has been one of the biblical foundations for engaging in preschool ministry. Providing a good foundation in learning for our children gives them a good start in the educational process and some studies have found that early education programs help them be more successful in further studies and in life in general (Fernandez; Oppenheim and MacGregor; Burchinal et al.; Council of State Governments). Children must receive a strong spiritual foundation so that they can grow in faith as they grow in understanding. As members of the body of Christ, the church must care for all the members of the body as taught by I Corinthians 12; all members are needed. This is one of the biblical foundations for age-appropriate ministries since we want to serve every age group in our churches and communities in some way. This Scripture also reminds us that teaching is a gift, one that must be used for the benefit of the body of Christ. Preschool ministries provide a forum for teachers to exercise their gifts and to help care for the children. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs"

(Matthew 19:14 NRSV). Preschool ministry is one of the ways the church serves the children and helps them draw closer to Jesus.

Churches often house preschool ministries in their buildings. Churches and preschools that are housed within the same physical plant sometimes experience difficulties in making their relationship work smoothly for the benefit of both organizations. For the purpose of this study, both examples of well-developed church and preschool relationships and hindrances in such a partnership are explored. To do this, the study looks into the ways in which these two areas are organized, communicate, allocate space, share resources, coordinate schedules and calendars, meet legal responsibilities and obligations, and share staff. Not paying attention to these relationships could result in churches losing their preschool ministries, to a decrease in the quality of the education provided, to a lack of efficiency in the use of resources and staff, and to the creation of a culture of disconnect with the community being served.

Finding best practices for preschools and churches that house them to work together is also important because they have a great potential to benefit each other. These benefits can only be achieved through collaborative relationships that are monitored, evaluated, and improved over time. Identifying the benefits of these relationships also encourages more churches to engage in preschool ministries or to consider them in their long-range plans and visioning.

The relationship between the preschools and churches that house them could also model relationships between the church and other ministries that wish to share facilities. Learning best practices that work with preschools could open the door for these ministries to partner with the church and expand the church's reach and service to the community. The same principles that work to strengthen and make the relationship between the early education programs and the

church could be applied to other collaborative ministries looking to establish ministry partnerships with the church.

Effective preschool ministries can also serve as a bridge for the church to serve and be in relationship with the public-school system. This can potentially lead to other forms of outreach and ministry for the church. There are a large number of children that now participate in public preschools and headstart programs funded by the state and federal governments. Having a good relationship with these programs could prove to be beneficial to churches, specially to those engaged in their own preschool ministries.

Definition of Key Terms

Preschool. For the purpose of this study, preschool is defined as ministries of early education with children between ages 2 to 5 in a program housed in a United Methodist Church in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference. These ministries serve children who are part of the general community and the church and can be part of the educational ministry of the church formally or be a collaborative ministry that shares in the use of the facilities through some form of a formal agreement. Preschool will be used interchangeably with preschool ministry, preschool program, children's education program, children's day school, early education ministry and other similar terms commonly used to designate weekday preschool type ministries.

Community Ministries. Community ministries will be defined as ministries that help the church serve and relate to its general community. Community ministries can include, but are not limited to, early education programs, scouting, AA, adult classes or training, town hall meetings, and community civic groups.

Preschool staff. Preschool staff is defined as all the employees of the preschool including directors, teachers, assistants, Para pros, physical education coaches, music or arts instructors, administrative assistants, and/or office personnel. This staff includes staff hired directly by the preschool ministries to accomplish its program and, in cases where the preschool is a ministry that is part of the church's Christian education program, it includes staff hired to conduct the day-to-day operations of the ministry.

Church staff. Preschool staff is used to refer to appointed clergy and lay staff employees in the church with responsibilities that have to do with early education ministries in the church they serve. This could include pastors, children's ministers, administrative assistants, secretaries, and outreach ministers, among others.

Host churches. Host churches are designated as those churches which provide the building space for the preschools, be it through a lease agreement, a ministry partnership, or other format. These churches are local congregations that hold regular worship services and church activities.

Delimitations

This study focused on churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church who have preschool ministries that serve children between the ages of 2 to 5 years old. I have looked only at United Methodist churches that have preschool ministries that have been established for more than a year and have had some time to develop their relationship with the church.

The study was also limited to schools with at least one class per age level, serving children between the ages of 2 to 5 years old, or with a minimum of 3 classes. The Atlanta Emory District is in north east Atlanta in Georgia and has a diverse population. Most of the

churches of the district with preschools are located in suburban areas within the city or in the suburbs of Atlanta where there is a high demand for preschool ministries. This study will be applicable to preschool ministries housed in churches in urban or suburban areas.

Review of Relevant Literature

This project required the study of several areas and disciplines. First and foremost, literature regarding preschool education from historical, theological, and biblical perspectives formed the basis for this project (Eavey; Ulich; Gangel and Benson). Other disciplines studied covered cooperative ministries and organizational models. In addition, documents such as United Methodist denominational guidelines, covenant relationships, newsletters, internal policies, procedures of preschools, preschool director job descriptions, and event calendars were reviewed.

I also studied early education theory. In the twentieth century, important theoretical influences in early childhood education were drawn from the psychology of Sigmund Freud, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Erik Erikson (Morgan; Foster and Moran; Conn). These theories on early education have influenced many areas of early childhood education, including curriculum, staffing, structure, programing, and approaches to learning.

Church leaders must understand the nature and purpose of preschool ministries, particularly as it pertains to church related preschool ministries in the United Methodist Church, so that they can identify trends and observe commonalities. The documents reviewed in this project came from preschool ministries and reflect their current policies and procedures.

Denominational documents from the United Methodist Church including the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions and guidelines produced by general agencies (Paredes, Callis, and Gordon) provide insight into the theological rationale for preschool ministries in the church.

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)

While denominational documents reflect a longstanding concern for children and education and a desire to offer weekday ministries to serve the community in the name of Jesus Christ, these documents are either not being used or are not familiar to preschool ministry and church leaders. The United Methodist Church has produced guidelines for preschool ministries, children’s ministries, and a wide variety of educational programs through its Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and Board of Higher Education and Ministry. An excellent example of these resources is the “Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches” (Appendix E) produced by the General Board of Discipleship which provides a step by step process for establishing and evaluating preschool programs.

Many studies conducted regarding the benefits and possible adverse effects of early childhood education inform this discussion (Oppenheim and MacGregor; Fernandez; Council of State Governments; Guralnick and Bennett). This includes an analysis of the differing views on early childhood education and the role of the church in this area. Education theory continues to evolve, and current journal articles provide insight into where practitioners are in relation to early childhood education theory and practice. Much of the current literature found reflects a concern with practical issues and a desire to measure results in qualitative and measurable ways.

A section of this project deals with collaborative ministries in the church and the way they are organized, structured, and practiced. Some of the literature reviewed has to do with the

practical aspects of conducting collaborative ministries and the agreements, policies, procedures, organizations, and structures put in place to facilitate them.

Many biblical references related to education inform this project. Probably one of the most well-known Scriptures on education, as it pertains to children, is Proverbs 22:6 “Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.” In this simple verse, we find theological foundations for general Christian education and for having Christian early childhood education ministries in our churches.

Research Methodology

This study was a preintervention study using an exploratory mixed methods design, consisting of quantitative surveys and qualitative instrumentation of interviews and document analysis.

Research data was collected over a period of eight weeks. Four instruments were used for data collection. Data collection instruments included a Discovery Survey (DS), a Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS) administered to a staff member of the church and preschool, a Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA), and the Preschool and Church Leadership Interviews (PCLI) with preschool directors and their church staff counterparts.

Discovery Survey (DS)

The discovery survey (Appendix A) was sent to churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist church to gather demographic data and identify qualified participants for the study. Key data gathered by the survey included the existence of a preschool ministry or weekday early education program meeting the criteria to participate in the study.

Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS)

The Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS) (Appendix B) was administered first to gather information from church and preschool staff. The survey consisted of 13 questions: 5 demographic questions, 6 questions on a Likert scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being the highest and *strongly agree*, 2 multiple choice questions, and a final comment box for participants to share additional information. The PCSS sought to gather information regarding the perception of the relationship between the preschool and the church from the staff.

Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA)

The Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA) was performed collecting vision statements, newsletters, calendars of events, policies, and other relevant documents defining the relationship between preschool ministries and their host churches. These were analyzed to find common practices, themes, and language. The document analysis included, when available, documents in three broad categories: Relationship reflecting documents (leases, agreements, covenants, newsletters, calendars), Vision or Mission-type statements (purpose statements, vision and mission statements, documented goals or objective), and Theological documents (statements of faith, definitions of Christian nature of the preschool ministry, documents reflecting beliefs reflected in the preschool director's job descriptions). Denominational documents (Paredes, Callis, and Gordon; Discipleship Ministries) also provided information regarding denominational policies and positions regarding early education programs.

Preschool and Church Leadership Interview

The Preschool and Church Leadership Interviews (PCLI) (Appendix C) were conducted with preschool directors and the church staff person with responsibility for the preschool. These interviews were held in private and sought to get a deeper understanding of the working

relationship between the church and the preschool, and to identify staff perspectives of this relationship, to identify factors that hinder the relationship, and to capture staff ideas for improving the relationship.

Type of Research

This study was a preintervention study using an exploratory mixed methods design consisting of quantitative surveys and qualitative instrumentation of interviews and document analysis. The Preschool and Church Staff Surveys was the same for all church and preschool staff surveyed. The Preschool and Church Staff Survey was made available via email through SoGoSurvey.com and reminder emails were sent to respondents if they did not fill out the survey within three days. The survey was also available in printed form for those preferring to receive a hard copy.

The interviews were conducted privately on an individual basis by the researcher and lasted no more than thirty-five minutes with most interviews lasting around twenty-five minutes. An interview protocol was followed for these conversations with probes dependent on the responses (Appendix C).

Participants

The Discovery Survey was sent to sixty-nine pastoral or church staff in the Atlanta Emory District. Seventeen responded to the survey and twelve qualified for the study. The study included these twelve preschool ministries/programs housed in United Methodist Churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church; all participants were selected from these twelve programs. The participants in this study included leading preschool and host church staff members serving children between ages 2 to 5 years old in a preschool program housed in a United Methodist Church as defined above. Participants in

the Leadership Interviews and Preschool and Church Staff Survey were employed and had worked with the program for at least a year. The preschool staff selected to participate in the Preschool and Church Staff Survey consisted of lead teachers in K2-K5 (2-5 years old), employed for at least a year in their teaching positions, and were selected by the preschool directors. Having twelve preschool ministries and churches that host them in the study provided a good sampling of ministry settings to study that share a common denominational affiliation and theological background, and yet had diversity of organizational models and formats including half-day, partial-day and full-day programs.

Instrumentation

Four instruments were used in the study to gather data: a Discovery Survey (DS), a Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS), a Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), and a Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA).

Discovery Survey

The Discovery Survey (DS) consisted of a simple survey to gather data to identify preschools and churches that qualified for the study criteria in order to invite them to participate in the study. The DS consisted of multiple-choice questions and fill-in-the-blanks. The DS identified churches with preschool ministries with at least three separate classes K2-K5 (serving 2 to 5-year-old children) that had been in existence and operation for a minimum of a year to invite them to take part in the next stage of the study.

Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS)

A Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS) was conducted to gather qualitative data for analysis. Preschool and church staff filled out the same PCSS providing data regarding the state of the relationship between the preschool and church. The PCSS was administered by email

and gave participants an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between the preschool and church. The PCSS was on a Likert scale from one to four with four being the highest. The four categories used were strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree. The PCSS was given to a lead teacher of each age level class: K2-K5 (classes serving 2 to 5-year-old children). In some preschools, this meant that a teacher from K2, K3, and K4 filled out the study survey while, in others where the preschool went up to K5, the survey was filled out by K3, K4, and K5 teachers. A question in the survey identified the class level of the teacher filling out the survey. This information was collated to draw some conclusions, find common trends, and identify positives and negatives of the preschool/church relationship. A sample of this Preschool and Church Staff Survey, which was filled out by both populations, is found in Appendix B. The PCSS was administered to provide quantitative data for analysis for the study and to compare and contrast the responses from preschool and church staff. A final comment question was provided for the teachers to be able to add any additional information regarding the relationship they felt was relevant which might have not been covered by the survey. These comments were analyzed using the same methods applied to the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI).

Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA)

For the Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA), different documents were collected, including mission statements, job descriptions, newsletters, parent handbooks, and similar documents and purpose statements of the different preschools and churches that provided them. These were reviewed looking for key words and considering language that reflected the relationship between the preschool and the church. I have analyzed the different relationship documents used by the preschools and churches provided to identify how they were related and

operated. These documents were in different formats, including job descriptions, newsletters, covenants, statements of mission and ministry, purpose statements, policies, charters, and others. All documents were grouped into three main categories: Relationship-defining documents (leases, agreements, covenants, job descriptions, calendars), Vision or Mission-type statements (purpose statements, vision and mission statements, documented goals or objective), and Theological documents (statements of faith, definitions of Christian nature of the preschool ministry, documents reflecting beliefs reflected in the preschool). By analyzing these, I was able to see some common language and determine some common values used by churches and preschools in communicating their relationships. I looked for inclusive language, collaborative statements, words that reflected unity of purpose/theology/mission. I reviewed organizational charts and some job descriptions, if available, to see how they reflected the church/preschool relationship.

Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI)

The fourth and final instrument used in the study was the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI) which consisted of semi-structured interviews with preschool directors or equivalent and the church staff person or volunteer with responsibility for the ministry. The interviews sought to get a better sense of what is working well in their relationship, what are stumbling blocks, and what are potential actions or changes they might seek to employ to improve the relationship. It was important to obtain this information from the point person at the preschool and church. This varied from one preschool/church to another. In some instances, the point person was clearly defined, while in other circumstances it was uncertain who this person was supposed to be on the church side. In some cases, the church had a clearly defined

staff person assigned to the preschool, and in others the senior pastor or a volunteer were the default contact person.

Data Collection

Initial contact was made with pastors in the Atlanta Emory District of the United Methodist Church using the district email list provided by the district office. Pastors, or their representatives, were asked to fill out the Discovery Survey (DS) to determine eligibility and willingness to participate in the study. Once the respondents met the criteria and agreed to be part of the study, the Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS) was made available through SoGoSurvey.com accompanied with instructions on how to complete it and the guidelines for participation. The surveys were taken individually online. These surveys did not require personal information beyond basic demographic data and information regarding the person's position with the church or preschool to confirm their eligibility for participating in the study. The surveys included questions aimed at obtaining information regarding the status of the relationship between the preschool and the church. Preschool directors and church staff received the survey first and then, once directors had seen and filled out the survey and provided contact emails for their teachers, the survey went out to preschool teachers through the same process.

The Preschool and Church Staff Interviews (PCSI) were conducted with twelve preschool directors or equivalent and twelve church staff or volunteer members with responsibility for the relationship with the preschool. The interviews were done individually in a room with at least a desk or table and two chairs. The interviews were held privately and confidentially to promote honesty among the participants. The interviewer used a script to assure uniformity in this process with all participants and a disclaimer with instructions for the process was read to each participant before beginning the interview. The interviews were aimed at identifying the ways in

which the preschool and church engage in healthy and cooperative relationships and to identify factors that hinder the relationship. The interview also gave participants an opportunity to identify ways these relationships could be worked on and improved.

For the Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA), documents were requested from both the preschool director or equivalent. The documents for each preschool and church combination were then grouped into three main categories: Relationship-defining documents (leases, agreements, covenants, job descriptions, calendars), Vision or Mission-type statements (purpose statements, vision and mission statements, documented goals or objectives), and Theological documents (statements of faith, definitions of Christian nature of the preschool ministry, documents reflecting beliefs held by the preschool, documents interpreting Scripture that express a theology of preschool education). These documents were coded and then analyzed based on the document protocol I established found in Appendix E. Language and themes that reflected collaboration between the preschool and church and statements in common in documents from both were highlighted in the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from all four instruments was analyzed to address the purpose statement and research questions.

The data analyzed covered the PCLI (leadership interview responses), the staff surveys, and the documents gathered. The document analysis and interviews were analyzed using qualitative methods. The Preschool and Church Staff Survey was analyzed using quantitative and statistical analysis. I used descriptive statistics.

The interview responses were analyzed to find common themes and recurring comments. The responses of preschool and church staff were kept separate so that preschool staff and

church staff responses can be compared and contrasted with each other. The interviews revealed best practices that promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches. They also revealed factors that hinder these relationships in their current settings. The interview further gathered data regarding potential practices that could be implemented to promote the development of healthier and more cooperative relationships.

Preschool and Church Staff Surveys were tabulated in order to identify whether church and preschool staff consider their relationship a healthy and cooperative relationship. The survey also helped identify the factors that hinder or promote healthy and cooperative relationships from the point of view of the staff. I performed a simple correlation between the church and preschool staff surveys to determine the relationship between their responses. I also compared the comment box at the end of the survey with the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview for that preschool.

The document analysis included a compilation of common terms, language, and guidelines found in the different documents provided by preschools and churches. Part of the analysis identified whether these documents provided a correlation with the staff sentiments expressed in the surveys and interviews. The document analysis provided additional context for the analysis of the results of the study and helped identify factors in the documents that hinder or promote healthy and cooperative relationships between the preschool and their host church.

Generalizability

I hope that the project will be translatable and be applicable for churches in other denominations and geographical locations engaged in preschool ministries. Some principles will also help with applying best practices to other cooperative ministries sharing facilities and/or

staff. I also believe the project will aid churches considering preschool ministries as they seek to structure their ministries and relationships in healthy ways. Knowing the factors that hinder these relationships will also be useful for anyone seeking to conduct these types of collaborative ministries in the church.

Preschool and church ministry are affected greatly by the context and community they serve. In that regard, this study will be more easily applied to urban settings where the church and preschool are large enough to have at least 3 classes. Atlanta is a diverse area and, though the principles learned from this project might work in other settings, it should be noted that there might be socio-economic and cultural factors that shape the relationships between preschools/churches in other areas.

This study was done with established churches and preschools, so it might not be applicable in its entirety to the mission field where flexibility of relationship, organization, and resource allocation might be necessary. This project is significant because the principles of collaborative relationships between ministries could be used in a variety of areas in the ministry of the church and beyond. Nonprofits and civic organizations could apply some of the relational principles to their organizations to improve their effectiveness, communication, and resource allocation.

Project Overview

This study identified factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to discern best practices for these partnerships. Chapter 2 discusses the most influential writers regarding preschool ministries and church partnerships. Chapter 3 outlines the various ways the

researcher will investigate the research questions. Chapter 4 analyzes the findings that emerge from such qualitative methods as interviews, surveys, and document analysis. Chapter 5 outlines the study's major findings with implications for each discovery now and in the future.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study was to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships. The literature review encompasses biblical and theological foundations relating to education. Historical sources tell the story of the emergence of preschool ministries and other educational programs within the church and the theological foundation for such programs. Next the focus shifts to the historical and missional efforts relating to preschool education and the view of Christian preschool education as a ministry of the church. Christian education has evolved and developed in many expressions within the church, including Sunday school, day cares, preschools and schools and even Vacation Bible School programs as part of children's ministries. The review included an engagement of literature related to purpose and framework for early childhood education, partnerships, institutional alignment, cooperative relationships and missional focus, and these sources will include both secular and religious materials.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Theology of Education

Theologically, Christian education draws its foundation from Jewish education. Jewish education is unashamedly and explicitly theistic as evidenced by the famous *shema* passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

“Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And thou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, you shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise.”

Teaching was thus a religious responsibility, an action commanded by God as part of the covenant. Education begins at birth. The curriculum was the Torah, the Law, followed by the prophets and the writings of the Old Testament. Recitation, storytelling, symbolism, question and answer – those and other methods built a consciousness, a unit of custom based upon the Old Testament concept of an omnipotent God (Eavey; Ulich; Lascarides and Hinitz; Gangel and Benson). Monotheism dominated the educational patterns as well as all facets of life of the Hebrew people. This commandment affirms God’s commitment to Christian education of children and to the responsibility of parents for that education. It also stresses the importance of continued, daily and regular education in every setting.

The commandment is repeated in Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (NRSV):

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

Old Testament Philosophy on Education

The Old Testament philosophy of education is effectively stated in Psalm 78:3-7. Scripture affirms that God is the ultimate teacher and that believers have the responsibility of teaching each generation to look to the Lord for instruction and to know the things the prior generation has known about God (Ps. 78:1, 119:27; Isa. 8:19-20; 30:20,54:13; Jer. 31:33-34). Scripture also stresses that God has entrusted us with the responsibility of teaching each subsequent generation and establishes what should be taught. Theses Scriptures also teach us that

the curriculum must include the teaching of the stories of what God has done and they explicitly mention the teaching of children as a primary task of every generation.

The purpose of Christian education is also stated in Psalm 78:7, “so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep his commandments.” This tells us that theologically, Christian education is indeed about helping people believe and trust in God. This will be further expanded in the New Testament to helping people become believers and disciples of Jesus Christ.

Responsibility for Education in Scripture

In the New Testament, fathers are directly charged with the discipline and instruction of their children. “And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). For this reason, early education programs did not seek to usurp the parental responsibility, of both mothers and fathers, to educate their children, but to partner with parents in their child's education. Early Childhood Christian education is beneficial for a lifetime. “Train children in the right way and when old, they will not stray” (Prov. 22:6). In Proverbs 1:7, the Bible teaches that fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Such fear is foundational to education and is the basis for all subsequent goals. Therefore, the Bible should permeate all that a child is taught. In raising our children to be godly, mature Christians, we must ensure that their formal education follows this pattern and that they understand that wisdom comes from God and is needed in addition to the knowledge they can obtain from schooling.

Psalm 1:1-2 reminds us that who we associate with has an impact and influence on how we live our lives. “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on

his law, they meditate day and night.” This agrees with Proverbs 13:20: "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffer harm." Children spend up to 40 percent of their time in school exposing them to instruction, teachers, and classmates. School has a big influence on the lives of children and their future educational and life goals. Therefore, Christian education should be conducted in an environment where positive and Christ-like influences can be found and where children’s spiritual development can be supported as they grow intellectually and otherwise.

The Great Commission and Education

In the New Testament a key passage when it comes to education is the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

In this Scripture, Jesus not only directed his followers to make disciples and baptize them, he also charged them to teach the new Christians to observe all that he had commanded. Matthew Henry’s commentary says that those baptized are “to learn their duty according to the law of Christ, from those whom he has appointed to be teachers in his school, for therefore we were entered into his school” (*Matthew 28 Bible Commentary*). The command to teach and make disciples of all nations includes children, who when introduced to the Christian faith, should learn the biblical stories that are foundational to the faith. In patriarchal days, there was no organized system of education, the home was the school for preschool aged children and the parents were the teachers. Faith was passed down from one generation to the next through constant instruction on a persistent basis.

Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes the use of informal opportunities to teach and teaching as a daily and almost moment-by-moment task. Later in Jewish history, the development of Synagogues provided a new educational institution that promoted the learning of the Torah, Jewish history in relationship to God, and the covenant with Abraham. All Jews were expected to be students of the law. By the time of Jesus, each synagogue had a school for children where memorization was the main method employed and the aim was to inculcate habits of strict ritualistic observance (Sisemore).

Jesus example valuing children

Jesus spoke directly about children in Mark, encouraging his disciples not to limit children's access to him and to the kingdom of God.

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)

Jesus' words also reflect a desire to bless children and receive them with their curious and inquisitive nature. Jesus warns us that whoever does not receive the kingdom as a little child does will never enter it. Jesus' concern for children is lived out in the church in many ways, one of which is through preschool and early childhood education ministries. It is one way the church answers the call to let the little children come to him. Other noteworthy ways the church responds to this call are Vacation Bible School and Sunday School.

Jesus' Teaching Ministry

Much of Jesus' recorded ministry in the Gospels was a teaching ministry. Through parables, sermons, question and answer sessions, Jesus sought to teach people about the coming kingdom of God and about the proper understanding of the spirit of the Law. Jesus taught both

publicly and privately, publicly in front of crowds as in the Sermon on the Mount and privately as when he taught his disciples as they retreated for prayer or some time to relax. Jesus was regarded as a teacher and called out as such in several Scriptures. His authority to teach was questioned at times by the religious leaders. Christians ultimately see that Jesus' teaching authority stems from him being God incarnate, the one whom God the father said we should listen to. Jesus said he was the way, the truth and the life, and that no one would come to the father except through him. Jesus thus instructs us to teach this truth and live in this truth as the ultimate truth we all need to know.

Foundations of Christian Education From the Early Church

During the period of the early Church, the first three centuries of the Christian church, the church was not able to freely engage in educational endeavors publicly. Persecution by both the Romans and the Jews made being a Christian a risky proposition. Promoting the faith through open educational opportunities would have drawn too much attention to the early church. This does not mean that education, particularly Christian education, was not important, since it was through the sharing of the Christian faith, discipleship, that Christianity grew. What it does mean is that formal schools and classes could not be organized during this time and that most Christian education was done informally and in homes.

In the early church, Christian education largely consisted of educating new Christians in the faith by using Scripture and sharing oral traditions about Jesus. New Christians, if educated, were educated in Hellenistic, Roman, or Jewish schools of thought either formally or culturally (Elias; Hauge and Pitts; Little; Eavey). Greek philosophy played a huge part in the development of Christian education, since Plato's Republic, which details his educational ideas, is one of the most influential books in Western culture. The other influential Greek philosopher was Aristotle

who, with his scientific mentality, focused on gathering data through observation and contemplation and his tendency to generalize based on this information. While Plato had a great influence on Augustine, one of the most significant early fathers of the church, Aristotle influenced Thomas Aquinas, who also had a significant impact on the early church through his writings, and the scholastics in medieval universities. Even today when we study Christian Education and thought, it is impossible to get away from the Platonic and Aristotelean schools of thought and the world views associated with them (Hauge and Pitts; Benoit; Baggini).

Other Influences on Christian Education from Philosophy

Christian education was influenced by philosophies which were prevalent during the ancient world. Stoicism, with its emphasis on remaining in harmony with the universes and not becoming overly attached to material things, had a special appeal to Christians who saw this world as temporary and looked forward to the time when they would leave this material world for an eternal life in heaven. In addition to philosophies that influenced education, there were orators and Roman writers who also had an impact in the development of Christian education. Isocrates, an orator and rhetorician, had a different approach to education that emphasized speaking well and thinking right; it was practical and sought to teach people the skills they needed for participation in public and political life. Romans, like Cicero (d. 43 BC) and Quintilian (d. ca. AD 90), wrote extensively on education (Benoit). For Cicero the goal of education was *humanitas*, a term parallel to the Greek *paideia*. *Humanitas* refers to the lifelong striving for both erudition and ethical character that are to be achieved through the traditional liberal arts with special emphasis on rhetoric (Benoit; Muir; Setran; Muir). This educational model centered on discussions of history and literature, the writing of speeches, and participation in mock trials. For Quintilian, the goal of education was to produce intelligent and ethical

persons and orators active in public life. Many of the goals of current early childhood education have their roots in these orators, philosophies, and educational models.

Early Church Fathers on Education

The early church fathers were the early ecclesiastical writers who wrestled with the issues of the church in theological treatises and writings. The early church fathers dealt with a variety of subjects that affected the mission, ministry, and identity of the early church as well as with theological issues that defined the faith. When it comes to education, we find that this is not a topic easily referenced in the early church fathers. Even though the subject was clearly important for the church early on, many of the church fathers wrote about education in the context of instruction of the Christian faith with the purpose of disciple making based on the Great Commission. Statements like these from early church fathers show that there was a concern for the education of children as it related to their Christian faith and place in the church:

Rear our children in the Lord [...] Teach them from infancy the Word of God. discipline them when needed, and render them respectful to legitimate authority. Never let them exercise authority over you. (The Apostolic Constitutions)

With s everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children, and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord. (St. John Chrysostom)

The primary lesson for life must be implanted in the soul from the earliest age. The primary lesson for children is to know the eternal God, the One who gives everlasting life. (St. Clement)

John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo wrote brief but significant treatises on education that give us some perspective on the early church's positions on education.

Chrysostom proposes his regimen of education, the goal of which is the inculcation of the Christian virtues of wisdom, temperance, and fear of the Lord. His goal, like that of many of the early church fathers, was to help people become Christian through education in the Christian

faith (Schlager; Tonias; Alonso Terme). The Antiochene preacher fully believed that the individual, the family, and the city would be transformed through his preaching and through the actions of his congregation if they put his teachings into practice.

The early church was surrounded by Hellenistic and Greco-Roman culture and in many ways Christian education was a product of the culture. At the same time, early Christians sought to transform the educational models when they clashed with their Christian values or principles. Augustine, as well as other early church fathers, would modify educational philosophies and models to suit the Christian ethos and to ensure that Christian education stood in contrast and at times in opposition to pagan and secular instruction. Many of the influences of the culture of the time are still seen in education today and have significantly contributed to our models of early childhood education.

Methodist Views on Christian Education

John Wesley an Advocate for Education

As a child, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was greatly influenced by his mother Susannah Wesley who developed her own theology and theories of education. Susannah devoted herself to the education of her children and to their Christian formation from an early age. She helped Wesley develop a love and appreciation for education, including early childhood education, though Susannah believed it should be carried out in the home. Susannah also imparted many puritan ideals to her children and was truly methodical in her teaching before Methodism ever came into existence (Baker; Newton; Body; Willhauck). Susannah is credited with helping shape John and Charles Wesley's religious views and their views on education, and thus had a big impact on the Methodist movement.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote, taught, and preached on a variety of subjects throughout his life (1703-1791). Wesley showed a concern for and dedication to the Christian education of children through his writing, practice, and theology. For Wesley, the aim of education is “Christian Perfection” and this is evident from his sermons and writings on the subject. His journals, sermons, letters, notes, and instructions helped Methodism place an emphasis on the education of children in their ministries. He wrote that “the education of children should be a special priority in the Methodist society.” Wesley believed that, in order to achieve the state of perfection, education has to begin early in order to “break” the otherwise rampant self-will of the child; i.e., the child has to learn Christian meekness, humility, and self-denial (Ulich; Matthews; Rack).

So concerned was John Wesley with education that he saw it as a needed component for healing in the Christian life in order to fight the human bent to sinfulness, something he compared to diseases of human nature, with which he saw every child afflicted.

Now, if these are the general diseases of human nature, is it not the grand end of education to cure them And is it not the part of all those to whom God has entrusted the education of children, to take all possible care, first, not to increase, not to feed, any of these diseases; (as the generality of parents constantly do;) and next, to use every possible means of healing them. (*The Wesley Center Online: Sermon 95 - On The Education Of Children by John Wesley*)

John Wesley went as far as starting schools, producing educational material for children and adults, and promoting access to education for all children. Kingswood school (1748), a primary school founded by Wesley in Bath, Somerset, England, is a good example of his dedication to education and his commitment to children (Body; Matthews). In many ways, Wesley was one of the few men of the eighteenth century who was really and practically interested in the education of children of all classes, seeing education as having a direct correlation to social wellness. He was also very practical and did not satisfy his interest in

education with mere study and theories, but sought ways to put them into practice and to develop best practices. Wesley was also very much interested in Christian education and not just secular education. He believed that one of the components missing from public and private schools of his time was a dedication to the instruction of religion as of primary importance (Body; Ulich; Rack).

United Methodist Support for Education

Wesley's concerns for education, Christian education, and the education of children have greatly survived in the denominational documents, policies, and discipline of the United Methodist Church. Our doctrinal heritage in the Book of Discipline (BOD) states that our "preaching and teaching were grounded in Scripture, informed by Christian tradition, enlivened in experience, and tested by reason" (BOD ¶ 65.1). The Book of Discipline also has paragraphs that outline the need to have a program of Christian education at the local church as well as at higher levels of the church going all the way up to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Board of Higher Education and Ministry "exists, within the expression of the total mission of the Church, for the specific purpose of preparing and assisting persons to fulfill their ministry in Christ in the several special ministries, ordained and diaconal; and to provide general oversight and care for campus ministries and institutions of higher education including schools, colleges, universities, and theological school." (BOD ¶ 1504). It further states that the Board of Higher Education is in place "to maintain the historic mission of the United Methodist Church in higher education and to serve as an advocate for the intellectual life of the church." The existence of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry is proof of the United Methodist commitment to education at different levels. The BOD contains provisions that outline the structures, organizations, and guiding principles of committees, boards, and agencies at all levels

of the church that have educational responsibilities. The social principles of the UM Church affirm that education “can best be fulfilled through public policies that ensure access for all persons to free public elementary and secondary schools and to post-secondary schools of their choice” (§ 164E). The Book of Resolutions contains numerous resolutions regarding the importance of education, the need for it to be available to everyone, the call to Methodists to help promote it, and the historical and theological reasons for Christians to be engaged in it. There are also many resolutions regarding UM support of public school systems and the need to improve their quality, staffing, and curriculum.

Historically, education has been held to contribute to the development of religious faith. To that end, the great figures of the Reformation called for the establishment of schools. Our founder, John Wesley, was dedicated to the education of poor and underprivileged children. The Sunday School Movement of the latter 18th century was an outgrowth of this ministry and largely established a model for access to public education, regardless of social or economic status. Our heritage should lead us to defend the public schools and to rejoice that they nearly reflect our country’s racial, ethnic, and religious diversity now more than ever before.

(The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church – 2016)

United Methodist and other Wesleyan Christian denominations have sought to live out Wesley’s concern for children through the establishment of schools, Sunday school programs, preschools, vacation bible schools, orphanages, and children advocacy ministries. These ministries again reflect the denominations’ commitment to these sorts of ministries and their longstanding tradition of being engaged with the community in ministries that provide learning opportunities.

History of Early Childhood Education

Infant schools were first created throughout Europe in the 1700s to care for the children of workers at mills and fields. These schools, in large part, did not account for the special needs

of children in learning and treated younger children the same as older children for education. It was not until Friedel Froebel founded a school (1837) for very young learners in Germany, that a different form of early education was born. Froebel theorized that childhood was a special phase in a person's life requiring a different method of learning. He proposed that young children should not be subjected to formal instruction in the same way as older children, but rather that they should learn through "self-activity" in play. By 1852, 25 years after his death, his educational theories had spread to the extent that kindergartens had been started in several countries including Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and the United States. Many of these nurseries and kindergartens were run by women wanting to help children in poverty and were philanthropic endeavors (Lascarides and Hinitz; Morgan; Elias).

Theorist on Education

Another major figure in the history of preschool education is Maria Montessori, a researcher in education theory who had studied medicine in Rome. Montessori developed her educational theories working with mentally deficient and culturally deprived children. She started her first school, Children's House, in 1907 and within a few years had become world famous. Montessori went on to open schools in many countries and became an influential figure for education reform. She proposed that there were different ways to learning, the importance of concrete or hands-on learning, the stages of cognitive development in children, and the link between children's emotional development and their ability to learn at an optimal rate.

Two major thinkers in child development and human development theory are Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget. Their ideas and theories have become foundational in early childhood education as well as education in general in the twentieth century.

Erik Erickson on Education

Erik Erickson (1902-1994) was interested in the changing dynamics of the emotional lives of individuals. He divided a person's life into eight stages, each of which he said presented a unique "crisis," his term, to be resolved by the individual in order to continue to grow into a psychologically healthy person. Erikson's focus was on the relationship between our psychological lives and the social and cultural environments where we live. He proposed that the way we face and deal with each stage of our development will affect how we approach subsequent stages (Little; Nutbrown, Clough, and Selbie).

Jean Piaget on Education

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a Swiss scientist who focused his attention on the intellectual development and growth of children. As a result of his work, we have come to understand that children's thinking is qualitatively different from that of older youth and adults (Krych). Piaget helped us realize that children see the world differently and must be allowed to develop and learn in their own way until their thinking becomes more complex and their reasoning more flexible. Piaget focused on observing children to see how they learned and adapted methods of education to maximize learning. "The Teacher-organizer should know not only his own science but also be well versed in the details of the development of the child's or adolescent's mind." (Piaget and Inhelder).

Like Erickson, Piaget identified a series of stages of development, four to be exact, that people go through in their development from birth to adulthood. He proposed that children's thinking grows as a result of their active engagement with the world. His theory is sometimes called a constructive developmental approach because it describes the process of development as

one in which the individual interacts with the world to construct meaning (Lascarides and Hinitz; Foster and Moran; Conn; Nutbrown, Clough, and Selbie).

Benefit of Early Childhood Education

Though there are different theories on early childhood education, they agree that early childhood education should benefit the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development of children and help them in their pursuit of further learning (Fernandez; Council of State Governments; Ansari). Studies like the High/Scopes Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Center Program have shown that quality preschool education produces long-term positive outcomes (Gerald W. Bracey and Arthur Stellar). The different theories simply approach the essential needs of early childhood education in different ways and at times using different methodologies.

Another essential component of early childhood education is the socialization of children. Preschools provide an opportunity for children to learn to interact with other children, experience social environments where they can grow, learn, and develop in ways necessary for primary and secondary education and which are helpful for the rest of their lives into adulthood.

Types of Programs in Early Childhood Education

There are four main types of early childhood education programs or preschools: Montessori, Head Start, Goddard Schools, and Christian Preschools. Head Start programs are considered public education systems and are geared for low income families, though they can serve a percentage of families above the established poverty levels. Montessori, Goddard, and Christian Preschools are private schools which have been growing in popularity and number.

Montessori

Montessori preschools have been in existence for over a century. Maria Montessori, an Italian educator and physician, founded the Montessori movement in 1907 based on the idea that “play” is a child’s work and that learning should happen naturally through real life experiences. The Montessori philosophy teaches a progressive curriculum that uses child-directed learning, backed by observation and scientific research, as its core value. Instead of being traditionally taught, kids are encouraged to make their own choices in the classroom, with a teacher to guide them along the way. Most Montessori education is hands-on and encourages plenty of play and collaborative activities with the other kids in the class. In a Montessori preschool, children are grasping the same concepts as their peers in a traditional classroom, but the idea is for children to learn individually and at their own pace by moving freely around the room and choosing from a wide range of hands-on, age-appropriate activities that are designed to teach specific skills (McGolerick). Montessori educational practice helps children develop creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and time-management skills, care of the environment and each other, and prepares them to contribute to society and to become fulfilled persons. The Montessori method is based on the spontaneous activity of the child which is aroused precisely by the interest the child takes in the material (Montessori).

Head Start

The Head Start and Early Head Start programs are administered by the Office of Head Start, within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The HeadStart preschool program is federally funded and was created for low income families who have children under the age of 5. The Early HeadStart

program directs its focus on pregnant women and children up to the age of 3. The HeadStart/Early HeadStart programs are created to prepare a child for kindergarten as well as to teach parents about child development and their own responsibilities (Bassok et al.; McKey; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Office of Headstart). Since these are federally funded, families who wish to enroll their children must contact their local HeadStart office or get information for enrollment through the Department of Human Services (DHS) or the Department of Family and Children Services depending on the state. Children who receive public assistance are usually eligible for enrollment though space is usually limited. Head Start programs provide a learning environment that supports children's growth in many areas such as language, literacy, and social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. These programs help build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas.

Goddard Schools

Goddard Schools were started in 1988 by Anthony A. Martino to deliver a high-quality, play-based learning program to families all over the United States. These schools account for over 460 schools in 36 states. Goddard schools support learning through play, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) learning programs, and enrichment programs to provide a well-rounded education to preschool children. They “emphasize both academic and the development of cognitive skills, including communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and the executive functions, to help children learn to succeed in diverse environments” (*Our Play-Based Curriculum / The Goddard School*).

Christian Early Education

The fourth type of preschool education is Christian Early Education or Preschool programs. Essentially, these are classical education models within a Christian environment that reflects the values, beliefs, and theology of the church that sponsors or houses them. These programs tend to be Bible-centered and incorporate the Christian faith into all areas of learning. Programs tend to focus on providing a strong early education program in a nurturing, loving, and educational environment where the whole child can grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically (Little; Eastern Christian School; Fredericksburg Christian School). Many of these programs have vision or mission statements that reflect their commitment to promoting faith and a godly world view as part of their educational process. These programs are known for being very nurturing and supportive based on their valuation of children.

Value of Early Childhood Education

Studies show that early education is important for children in their development and can provide a good foundation for their future studies (Guralnick and Bennett; White and Casto; Ramey, Bryant, and Suarez; McKey). Though studies disagree about the actual quantifiable benefit of early childhood education, they agree that overall the effect is positive in most cases. Some studies also support the notion that early education improves a child's cognitive abilities and has many additional positive effects over the life of the individual (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network; Ellen S. Peisner-Feinberg et al.; Burchinal et al.; Vandell et al.) Studies have further shown that the benefits of early childhood education have lasting effects on the child and their family that span a lifetime (Teti; Council of State Governments; White and Casto)

For many years, parents have viewed early education as a way to help their children with the transition from the home to the school, and as a way to help their children adjust socially, develop cognitively, and academically. All early education programs are not created equal

though, and many studies have argued that the quality, duration, and features of a program make a difference on their effectiveness (Burchinal et al.; Peisner-Feinberg et al.; Mashburn; Zaslow et al.). In addition to this, children from lower income families, children with special needs, and otherwise culturally marginalized children tend to benefit the most from early education programs. Low-income children exposed to high quality program care show better academic outcomes through high school and higher rates of employment and less criminal activity as young adults (Campbell et al.; Lazar et al.; Schweinhart, Weikart, and Lerner)

A shift from single working parent households to two working parent households has occurred in most urban areas in the United States. This shift has increased the need for quality preschool and early education programs. It has also given rise to a higher demand for higher quality programs with longer hours of operation to accommodate the schedules of working parents. Early education programs are in high demand among young professionals beginning families, single working parents, and grandparents raising grandchildren due to a variety of circumstances.

Variety of Choices for Preschool Education

Parents have many choices when it comes to preschool education. Choices vary from half-day programs to full-day programs, from private to public, from religious-based to secular, and from accredited to non-accredited programs. Preschool accreditation is a voluntary process that is designed to improve the quality of preschool programs. Many preschool programs seek accreditation as a way of certifying the quality of their programs and the standards by which they operate. It is also seen by many parents as an assurance that the preschool is following certain standards in education. Many states do not require preschools to be formally accredited, and there are numerous preschool programs that have no formal accreditation. Those that are

accredited are supposed to follow the standards of their accrediting agencies. The largest accrediting organization for preschool programs in the United States is the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which accounts for around 10 percent of all preschools and early childhood education centers accredited nationwide. Other prominent accrediting programs include Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE), American Montessori Society (AMS), Association of Christian Schools International, and National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) (Rock). An accredited preschool program should not be confused with one that is licensed. To be accredited, a program has to be licensed but not all licensed programs are accredited. If the preschool a child attends is through a religious organization such as a church or temple, they are often exempt from many accreditation requirements.

Choosing a Preschool Program

Parents consider many factors when choosing a preschool for their children. Some of the most common factors include student-to-teacher ratio, location, accreditation, affordability, curriculum, extracurricular opportunities, after school care, program duration (full vs half day), experience of teaching staff, setting, safety, diversity, school affiliation, playground, classroom facilities, espoused values, and creativity in the program (Morgan; Percy; Bassok et al.; Natsiopoulou and Vitoulis). Parents often weigh these factors and prioritize them in different ways depending on their background, circumstances, and reasons for seeking preschool education. Some of the studies suggest that parents look for programs that support the socio-emotional development of children, healthy living (diet and exercise), as well as culture and language (Van Vleet; Natsiopoulou and Vitoulis; Percy; Pullen).

Another factor that affects the selection of preschools is the reputation of the school and its longevity. When comparing preschools, parents tend to value the experience and opinion of other parents whose children have participated in the program. Word of mouth is often a preschool's best marketing tool as parents satisfied with the preschool program will help promote it to other parents and share their experience. Longevity seems to be another factor that is taken into consideration by parents. Well established preschools with a good reputation and track record tend to have waiting lists for new students and are in high demand, especially in urban areas, where the selection of schools might be limited geographically.

The state of Georgia, where this project was conducted, has government sponsored and/or funded preschool programs, including Headstart and other lottery-funded programs. Children for these programs are selected by a lottery system and existing programs are not enough to cover the demand for early childhood education in the state. This has led to a rise in private and religious early education programs to fill the gap. Some churches have hosted or sponsored early education programs for over twenty years, while other churches are beginning preschool programs and ministries as a form of outreach and evangelism in their communities. Because of the way the government publicly funded programs allocate space to students, enrollment at private and religious early education programs tends to vary greatly throughout the year. When parents find out their children did not get a spot in the public school PreK program, they scramble to find private and religious early education programs for their children. For those with significant economic resources, early registration is key to secure a spot for their children in privately funded programs. The cost of early childhood education programs can vary greatly depending on location, size, teacher-student ratio, and accreditation, among other factors.

Collaborative Ministry of the Church

Collaborative or cooperative ministries, ministries that are structured to be mutually beneficial, have existed in the church for most of its existence. These ministries often share core values, reflect common concerns, and value each other's contribution to the overall ministry of Jesus Christ. In the early church, collaborative ministries emerged in Acts when seven were chosen to handle the distribution of food to the widows. Diaconal ministries and other collaborative ministries in the church have sought to address particular community needs and to help free preachers and evangelist to concentrate on the preaching of the word. These ministries started off as ministries to Christians within the community of faith, but then expanded to reach out to the larger community as a form of witness and service. Cooperative ministries unite Christians in ministry and service to the greater community.

Education as a Collaborative Ministry of the Church

Educational ministries have been part of the church's collaborative ministries and have been an integral part of the Christian movement. Discipleship, which in many ways is Christian education and formation of new believers, has been a core value in Christianity from the very beginning. Jesus practiced Christian education with his disciples, crowds, and even total strangers who came to him for instruction and wisdom. Jesus' instruction was holistic, encompassing not just faith, the kingdom of God, sin, salvation, and healing but also addressing relationships with God and others, social structures and conventions, and cultural issues of his time. When Jesus left his disciples, he gave them the Great Commission which included the responsibility of teaching others everything he had taught them. With this command, Jesus established Christian education as a missional focus of the church.

Christian Education of Children as a Collaborative Ministry of the Church

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines collaborate as

1: to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor, 2: to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force and 3: to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected.

When Christian education is defined in this project as a collaborative ministry of the church, all three definitions are applicable. When Christian education is seen as collaborative ministry, the church recognizes that it will be a joint effort with others in the community, that at times, it will require the church to cooperate with or assist people who might not share the Christian faith, and, finally, that it means the church will serve people who are not necessarily members of the church.

The Christian education of children, as stated earlier, was mostly left to the parents and the household until the late 1700s and early 1800s when the religious education of children began to shift to religious institutions. Through catechism, children were taught the Christian faith and instructed in different aspects of Christianity. The Sunday School movement, which began in England as a means to educate poor children to read and write, spread to North America at the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century as a solely religious institution and helped promote the education of children (Morgan; Elias; Eavey). This collaborative ministry of the church, which began as a ministry to help poor children learn how to read, became an integral part of the ministry of the church in North America and is still a big part of the ministry of Christian churches today. Many expressions of this collaborative ministry of education in the church can still be seen today in ministries like Vacation Bible School, retreats, confirmation classes, Bible studies, and children's church ministries.

Contributions to Education of Collaborative Church Ministries

Further evidence of the collaborative ministry of the church in the educational field can be seen in the number of colleges and universities in America that can trace their origins back to

the Wesleyan roots of the Methodist movement and the many seminaries started by Methodist members. Many of these seminaries still retain an affiliation and relationship with the United Methodist Church. This contribution to education was not only here in the United States but also in other places around the world where Methodists established schools, orphanages, universities, and even hospitals. Many different schools that can trace back their origins to Methodists have existed and still exist in many countries around the world, including Canada, Australia, South Africa, Cuba, Jamaica, Japan, Italy, and China, just to name a few (Body; Willhauck).

Opportunities and Challenges for Collaborative Educational Ministries

With the expansion of public education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many religious educational institutions have become secularized. Colleges and universities that were once religious institutions that promoted Christian religious education are now liberal arts colleges and secular institutions with a varied curriculum and diverse philosophies. Many private and public educational institutions now exist that do not have a religious or theological foundation.

Whereas preschools used to be started by local communities and individuals motivated by their religious beliefs and their convictions regarding the need for children to be educated in the Christian faith, that is no longer true. Preschools have been developed as privately owned and operated businesses with different educational philosophies, approaches, and theories; most urban areas have government-run programs and an assortment of other day cares/schools. Though there are a significant number of preschools that operate in churches and as part of church ministries, they are no longer the main source for preschool education, but rather one of several offerings available to parents looking to provide an early education opportunity outside

the home for their children. Another challenge is that in many cases the preschools that operate within church buildings are only loosely connected to the church ministry.

Impact of Collaborative Educational Ministries

Collaborative educational ministries are, by definition, community ministries that help the church membership engage and work with the larger community to promote and provide educational opportunities. Collaborative ministries depend on relationships between the church and other community groups and constituents. Collaborative educational ministries done with excellence can benefit participants and the greater community. They also provide a powerful witness to the community about the church's desire to bless the surrounding community. By engaging families in educational opportunities, the church also seeks to win the opportunity to share its Christian faith with those who do not yet know it. The impact of such ministries is hard to quantify as they can transform individuals and communities and bring people closer together.

Research Design Literature

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study and explore the research questions, a mixed methods design was used using qualitative and quantitative instruments. By having both qualitative and quantitative instruments, the researcher was able to explore these answers more thoroughly than if only one method had been chosen. Creswell's system of a dominant-less dominant design (179) provided the beginning framework for letting an initial stage lead to another stage of greater significance. In this case, a simple survey reduced the list of churches in the Atlanta Emory District or the North Georgia Conference into a smaller subgroup of churches with preschools that fit the criteria for the study. The group in the study was then able to provide substantial qualitative and quantitative data through the Preschool and Church Staff Survey and the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview.

Exploratory mixed methods employed in this study allowed the researcher to gather quantitative as well as qualitative data regarding the preschool church relationship from staff on both sides. Modern approaches to research have begun employing mixed methods to conduct studies recognizing that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenge is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than adhering to some narrow methodological orthodoxy (Patton; Sensing; Hatch; Creswell). The Association of Theological Schools states, The purpose of the Doctor of Ministry degree is to enhance the practice of ministry for persons who hold the MDiv degree and have engaged in ministerial leadership. The goals an institution adopts for the DMin should include an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry, and continued growth in spiritual maturity . . . The program shall include the design and completion of a written doctoral-level project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry. The project should be of sufficient quality that it contributes to the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards and has the potential for application in other contexts of ministry. Doctor of Ministry projects are a type of participatory action research that introduces an intervention in order to provide ministerial leadership for the transformation of the organization. The intent of *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach for Doctor of Ministry Projects* is to provide the fundamentals of qualitative research so that significant projects and theses emerge. (Sensing; Patton; Hatch; Creswell). The literature suggested that this mixed methods approach would yield good results as long as the instrumentation was aligned to the purpose of this study and its research questions, which it was.

This study used interpretative qualitative methods to discover how participants in the study viewed their own context as it applied to the goals of this study of identifying factors that contribute or hinder healthy collaborative relationships between preschools and churches (Creswell and Miller; Sensing; Hatch). This helped answer the research questions and provided useful insight from the staff currently engaged in these ministries who clearly have experience in the field. This research method required coding and classification of data and for participants in the interviews to provide illustrations or examples to qualify their responses because individuals can never clearly separate their experiences and meanings from the context in which they work (Creswell and Miller)

Summary of Literature

From a biblical perspective, education is clearly part of the Great Commission and therefore a vital part of the church's ministry. Jesus practiced a teaching ministry with his disciples, crowds, and one-on-one interactions with people as he traveled. As part of that teaching ministry, Jesus welcomed children and encouraged his disciples to welcome them too. Jesus was known to many as a rabbi, a teacher and many Scriptures tell us stories of Jesus teaching the crowds about the Kingdom of God. There is ample scriptural support for educational ministries with children, and for churches to take seriously the task of engaging in these ministries in collaborative and healthy relationships with their communities. Jesus did not engage in ministry by himself but rather worked collaboratively with his disciples, teaching, training, and deploying them as needed.

From a historical perspective, the literature revealed that Christian religious education began in the home with the parents who had the primary responsibility to educate their children in the ways of the Lord, but that it has also been a concern and responsibility for the church. The

early church Fathers emphasized the need to educate children from a young age in the Christian faith. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, showed a concern and dedication to the Christian education of children through his teaching, writing, and preaching that greatly influenced the Methodist movement.

Wesley's support for education was not only noticed by those attending Methodist societies but also acted upon by local Methodist communities as they sought to provide educational opportunities for children by establishing schools, orphanages, and institutions of higher learning. The Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church still contain language and statements that support the ministry of Christian education in and out of the church with people of all races, ages, and backgrounds.

Though different theories of early education exist, and more are still being developed, the church seeks to engage in early education ministries through preschool from a Christian perspective. One of the main goals of preschool ministries is to introduce children to the Christian faith and help them to develop an understanding of who they are in relationship to God, others, and the world.

By engaging in preschool ministries through collaborative and healthy relationships between preschools and churches, Christians seek to provide a powerful witness to their communities for Jesus Christ. The literature shows that churches are still engaged in this vital area of ministry, but that the relationships between preschools and churches are not always healthy or collaborative and that there are many factors that can affect the relationship.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This project involved data collection through three instruments to help gather relevant information that helped identify factors that promote or hinder healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches. The aim of the project was to utilize this data to help develop best practices for these ministries.

One of the research instruments was the Preschool and Church Staff Survey which helped identify the level of cooperation between the preschools and churches that host them. This survey also helped to identify which factors are considered important in the relationship.

The second research instrument used to gather data was a document analysis. The document analysis provided valuable information regarding the structure, values, organization, beliefs, and goals of the different preschool ministries and churches. The document analysis included, when available, documents in three broad categories: Relationship-defining documents (leases, agreements, covenants), Vision or Mission-type statements (purpose statements, vision and mission statements, documented goals or objectives) and Theological documents (statements of faith, definitions of Christian nature of the preschool ministry, documents reflecting beliefs reflected in the preschool). Through the document analysis, common practices, policies and values were identified.

The final research instrument utilized was the Leadership Interview, a semi-structured interview conducted with the lead person on both the preschool and church sides. This interview helped identify how each side viewed their relationship and identified factors that each side could name as helping or hindering this relationship. The open-ended questions allowed for more

detail to be shared regarding the relationship between the preschool and the church. Questions such as, “What is your role and involvement with the preschool and/or the church?” allowed participants to share their story and connection with the ministries and provided context for their answer on further questions. A final question was asked to ascertain what the respondents considered was one aspect that could improve the preschool and church relationship.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

This study of preschools and churches that host them sought to identify the factors that promote or hinder the development of cooperative relationships. The project started with the staff survey provided to the host churches and the preschools. Then the relevant documents were obtained for the document analysis. Finally, the Leadership Interviews were conducted at the churches/preschools. This project sought to determine some best practices for these ministries based on the gathered data and existing research.

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to discern best practices for these ministries.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: What factors promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

The first question sought to find the positive factors, practices, or habits of preschool and churches that promote good relationships between the two. In essence, this question was aimed at finding out “what is working well” to promote these relationships. There are three instruments used to address this question. This research question was addressed in the Preschool and Church

Leadership Interviews through questions 4 and 7. The PCSS also addressed this question through questions 6 through 12 and 14. The document analysis helped to highlight language, practices, and policies that are commonly used to facilitate these relationships or promote them.

Research Question #2. What factors hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschools and their host churches?

This question was aimed at identifying the stumbling blocks to having healthy and collaborative preschool and church relationships. This question was addressed in the Preschool and Church Leadership Interviews through question 3, 4, and 7 through 9. The Preschool and Church Staff Survey also addressed this question through questions 7 through 11 and 13, 14. The document analysis also helped to identify factors that preschools and churches address in written form because they see them as potentially detrimental to their relationship if not well defined.

Research Question #3: What are best practices, moving forward, for promoting the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

This question was designed to help identify the best practices preschool and church ministries that host them can utilize to promote healthy and collaborative relationships with each other. This question was addressed in the PCLI (interview) through question 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8. The PCSS (survey) also addressed this question through questions 6, 12, and 14. The document analysis also helped to identify factors that preschools and churches have addressed to help promote healthy and collaborative relationships and how this is being communicated.

Ministry Context (s)

There are forty-one churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church. There are sixty-nine appointed clergy in the district and all of them

were emailed the Discovery Survey to see if their churches qualified for the study. Seventeen clergy responded to the Discovery survey and out of those responses, twelve churches and preschools qualified for the study and were invited to take part of the study. The Atlanta Emory District is one of twelve districts in the North Georgia Conference of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church. Most of its churches are located in urban areas spreading from the middle of the city of Atlanta to the north and northwest of the city and its adjacent suburbs. Congregations in this district range in membership from as low as under 100 members to as high as 3500+. Atlanta is a multicultural city and this district is located in one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse areas of the city. That said, there are predominantly white and African American churches in the district. Churches and preschools that participated in the study were predominantly larger membership churches that had the space and resources to house preschools with a minimum of three preschool classes K2-K5.

The churches that participated in the study tended to be larger churches with facilities that were able to house a preschool and often other weekday ministries. Many of the churches had multiple ministry staff members and administrative support staff in addition to the preschool staff. The preschools that participated in the study had staff ranging from five to thirty members. Many of the preschools employed part time staff and had additional afterschool type offerings provided by third parties. Many of them have been in operation for over ten years with the longest having been in operation for fifty-two years.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

Churches with preschools housed in their facilities, in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, were invited to take part in the study

after taking the Discovery Survey to determine their eligibility. The criteria for selection included being in operation for over 1 year, having 3 classes for children between the ages 2 to 5 years old (K2-K5), being housed in a United Methodist Church in the Atlanta Emory District, and having a preschool director or person in charge of the preschool and a corresponding church staff or volunteer.

These preschools and churches were selected because they are practicing the relationships this study seeks to understand and learn from, because they are in an urban geographical area, and because they share a denominational affiliation. They are the people doing the day to day work when it comes to preschool ministries housed in churches in the district. This study was particularly concerned with United Methodist Churches engaged in preschool ministry, so it seemed only fitting to limit the participants to churches and preschools within the denomination and then the district to get a manageable sample.

Including preschool staff, besides the point person, from the preschool and the church in this study was important to get a better understanding of the relationship and what is working or perceived as working well and what is not from the preschool teacher's perspective. The teachers being included in the survey also provided a basis for comparison for preschool director and church staff or volunteer perspectives.

Description of Participants

There are three categories of participants in the study: Preschool directors or their equivalent, preschool teachers, and a church staff or volunteer with responsibility for the relationship with the preschool. Participants in the study included a variety of people in different stages of life and education associated with the preschool ministries or churches in the study. Preschool directors and point persons in the church staff were generally more educated with regard

to administration than the teaching staff, but many preschool directors revealed that they had experience teaching at the preschool level before becoming preschool directors and being parents of preschool children attending the preschool program or a similar one.

The first category of participants was preschool directors or their equivalents. The preschool directors or leaders were not always members of the church, but the point person for the churches was almost always a member and/or staff member of the local church where the preschool was housed. Preschool directors varied in tenure from as few as a couple of years to as many as over 20 years. They also ranged in age from 35 to over 65+ years old. All directors' interviews revealed they had been in their position for a minimum of a year.

The preschool staff that participated in the PCSS (survey) were all teachers for their grade levels. They represented K2-K5 teachers at the different preschools and varied in ages and stages in life. The teachers for the survey were selected by the preschool directors or their equivalent following the guidelines provided by the researcher of them being in their current position for at least a year.

The third category of participants was the church staff person or volunteer with responsibility for the relationship with the preschool. This group was composed of a variety of individuals, many of whom served on the church paid staff, and have been designated by the church as having direct responsibility for the preschool ministry or the relationship of the church with said ministry. At times, this person was an ordained and appointed clergy with responsibilities within the church for children's ministries. In other instances, this was the senior pastor of the church or one of the associate pastors. In a few occasions this was a lay person hired by the church as a children's ministry coordinator or leader. In almost all the cases, this participant had direct supervisory responsibilities over the preschool director or equivalent.

Participants for the document analysis were mostly preschools as they supplied the bulk of the documentation related to their ministry and relationship with the church. Most of the participants for the document analysis provided material they already had on hand which were produced or developed as promotional materials for the preschool and/or church. Participants included material provided for prospective parents and families of preschool children and newsletters and other communications that reflected the relationship of the preschool and church.

Ethical Considerations

Maintaining standards of ethical behavior is of paramount importance in any research project. As this study did not include minors or any other population with vulnerabilities, the risks were limited. This cannot diminish the importance of maintaining confidentiality for the project. Given the sensitive nature of the discussion, particularly as it relates to the relationship of the church and preschool, the statements shared have to remain confidential and only be utilized for the study without identifying names or references. Each participant was assigned a designation for the study only known to the researcher and kept in a locked and password protected computer. This promoted honesty and assured participants that comments and statements would not be used against them in any way by the preschool or the church.

All staff surveys were submitted electronically through SoGoSurvey.com. Participants received instructions in the survey stating that their completion of the survey constituted consent for the study. Within a year of the conclusion of the project, all survey submissions were erased and any printed copies shredded. All digital copies were erased and removed from storage in any computers or flash drives used during the study. No copies of any kind remained at the conclusion of the study in the possession of the researcher. The only remaining copy of the survey belonged to

the person who submitted the survey if they chose to receive a copy of their submission at the time they filled out the survey.

Those interviewed were read the letter of informed consent (Appendix D) and were asked if they had any questions regarding the study or the interview process. Once questions were answered, if there were any, the participant was asked if they were in agreement to participate in the study and continue the interview process. Interview notes were taken down to be transcribed into a computer or directly recorded in computer documents on the spot. These transcripts and interview notes were erased in their entirety after the publication of the study. Any emails, documents, or messages regarding these interviews were also deleted to protect confidentiality. Any handwritten notes were also shredded.

Instrumentation

This project employed research tools to gather and analyze data. Three research instruments were created to collect data from preschool directors or equivalent, church staff or volunteers with responsibility for the relationship with the preschool and preschool teachers. The three tools were a Discovery Survey, a Preschool and Church Staff Survey and a Preschool and Church Leadership Interview.

Discovery Survey

The study began with a confidential, online survey administered by SoGoSurvey.com that was emailed to sixty-nine appointed clergy in the Atlanta Emory District of the United Methodist Church. This simple survey asked churches about the criteria for selection to participate in the study: 1. Do you have a preschool or childcare type ministry in operation that has been in operation for more than one year? 2. If yes, does it have three classes serving children in K2 through K5 classes? 3. Do you have a preschool director or equivalent for the preschool and a corresponding church staff member or volunteer? The respondents who qualified to participate in

the next stage of the study, based on their responses, were invited to form part of the study and provide the name, title, and contact information of the church staff or volunteer and preschool director or equivalent in their setting. This step was necessary to identify participants that qualified for the study out of all the churches in the district.

Preschool and Church Staff Survey

The second instrument used in the study was the Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS). The PCSS was emailed to the preschool director or equivalent, three preschool teachers either from K2-K4 or K3-K5, and the church staff person or equivalent related to the preschool using SoGoSurvey.com. The PCSS included instructions and an informed consent letter for the study. Brief demographic data was collected as part of the PCSS. This survey was on a Likert scale of one to four with four being the highest and representing *strongly agree*. The survey was used to assess the current relationship of the preschool and church from the point of view of their respective staff. It was also used to gauge how the staff felt about the level of collaboration and support their ministry was receiving from their counterpart. This survey also provided an opportunity for input into what the staff at all levels felt would be helpful or hindered the relationship between the preschool and the church.

Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI)

The third instrument used in the study was the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI). The PCLI consisted of eight semi-structured interview questions conducted with the preschool director or equivalent and the church staff or volunteer leader with responsibility for the relationship with the preschool. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were read the consent letter, given instructions and given the opportunity to ask any questions about the interview process. The interviews were conducted privately on a one-to-one basis following the interview protocol (Appendix C) which included probing follow-up questions

to encourage participants to offer examples and explain their answers further. Interviews lasted no longer than thirty minutes with most of them being conducted in around twenty-five minutes. These interviews gathered data about the current relationship of the preschool and church, the factors that contribute or hinder a healthy and collaborative relationship, what is being done to promote the relationship, and the staff person's view of what could improve said relationship in the future. This instrument was extremely important in helping identify best practices based on feedback from people actually engaged in these ministries.

Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA)

The Preschool and Church Document Analysis consisted of existing material used by the preschools and churches to reflect their relationship, values, and sharing of information. Most of these documents were newsletters, parent handbooks, policies, and job descriptions. These were gathered from the preschools willing to share them and analyzed for use of language, set practices, statements of values or beliefs, and to identify ways they reflect the relationship between the preschool and the church. Many of the preschools forwarded these materials in electronic format and they were coded for the study so they could be referenced as part of the evidence for the study.

Expert Review

An expert review was conducted for the research instruments used in this project. All three instruments, accompanied by a letter detailing the purpose statement, research questions, and a general description of the project, were sent to a current preschool director not in the study, my dissertation coach, and the head of our Doctor of Ministry program. After reviewing the instruments, all three agreed that the instruments addressed the research questions and got at the purpose for this study. There were some suggestions to language and wording of some of the

questions that helped shape the final instruments submitted to the Institutional Review Board for approval. This included expanding the gathering of brief demographic data from participants at the beginning of the Preschool and Church Staff Survey. The review also was effective in catching a question that had been inadvertently pasted twice into the survey.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The expert review showed that the research instruments were closely aligned with the research questions and followed the purpose statement of the study. All three expert reviewers shared that they felt the study instruments would produce data that would be relevant to the stated problem and would provide insight into best practices for preschool ministries and churches that house them.

The expert review also confirmed that the process and order of the use of the instruments would provide a reliable and consistent method for data collection. Each instrument was designed to be used in the same manner with each participant following the same process. Reviewers deemed the questions as necessary and relevant to answer the research questions individually as feedback was solicited on each question of each instrument.

As mentioned, some minor changes were made to the instruments based on the expert review once all three reviewers had evaluated the tools and provided their feedback. Overall, the expert review affirmed the tools as adequate for the study and they were submitted with the IRB application for the study.

If someone was to take the research tools and implement the protocols used to administer them in the same setting, a high probability exists that they would discover similar findings and insights. If the tools were used in a different setting, the findings might be contextualized but would yield similar results in terms of answering the research questions in that particular context.

This project has outlined not only the design of the research instruments but also how they were administered, making it possible for this study to be replicated in a different setting with contextual adjustments to take into account the setting. Preschool ministries by and large have a director and churches typically have a pastor, staff person, or volunteer in charge of the relationship with said preschool that could be included in a similar study in another conference, district, or geographical area.

Data Collection

The gathering of data for the study was conducted from January to March of 2019. Data collection consisted of the administering of a Discovery Survey (DS), a Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS), a Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), and the gathering of documents for a Document Analysis.

Data collection followed a systematic process for the delivery of instrumentation following established protocols, follow ups to complete the process in a timely fashion, email and phone communications to schedule the interviews and to communicate throughout the data collection process with the preschool directors and church staff persons or volunteers.

Discovery Survey (DS),

The first step in this study was to identify preschool and church ministries that qualified for the study because they had a preschool ministry that had been in existence for a minimum of a year with three preschool classes K2-K5. The first tool administered to identify participants who qualified was the Discovery Survey which was sent using SoGoSurvey.com to all 69 appointed clergy in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church. The district provided the email addresses for all the clergy and was kind enough to send out a message to let pastors know to look for their survey coming via email. The

email shared the purpose statement of the study, a brief description of the project, and invited pastors to identify whether their church had a preschool or early education program housed in their church facilities by filling out the Discovery Survey once they received it. Seventeen clergy filled out the DS and out of those twelve qualified for the study and moved into the next phase of data collection.

Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS)

The next stage of data gathering involved using the contact information obtained in the DS for preschool directors and church staff or volunteers in charge of the relationship with the preschool to schedule interviews and provide an overview of the study to participants. This was done by sending out the Preschool and Church Staff Survey to the preschool directors and church staff or volunteers and following up with a phone call and email. The PCSS included instructions and an informed consent letter for the study. Brief demographic data was collected as part of the PCSS to help identify the population traits of those taking the survey (DeFranzo). Some questions in this survey were on a Likert scale of one to four with four being the highest and representing *strongly agree*. The survey was used to assess the current relationship of the preschool and church from the point of view of their respective staff. It was also used to gauge how the staff felt about the level of collaboration and support their ministry was receiving from their counterpart.

The email outlined the study purpose statement, research questions, and what was needed from them to participate in the study. It also included a request for the three preschool teachers who would take the PCSS. Once those emails were received, invitations to take the PCSS were sent to the teachers' emails provided through SoGoSurvey.com. The online service through SoGoSurvey.com allowed me to track survey completions to inform preschool directors when

their staff had completed the surveys. SoGoSurvey.com was set up to send automatic reminders for those who had not filled out their surveys which helped increase the responsiveness to the survey and reduce the time it took to gather all surveys.

Preschool directors were instrumental in reminding their staff about the survey and letting me know if the teachers were having any difficulties accessing the survey. In a few instances, the direct unique link to the survey for specific teachers was emailed directly to them because they were not receiving the email invitation from SoGoSurvey.com to take the survey. Some of this was attributed to spam filters, internet service providers software blocking the messages, and messages being flagged as junk by antivirus software.

Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI)

As the PCSS was being filled out by preschool and church staff, the interviews were scheduled with the preschool directors and the church staff or volunteers in charge of the relationship with the preschool. In general, these were scheduled back to back at each location, allotting an hour for both interviews. There were two instances when schedules did not work out for the interviews to be held back to back and separate times were set for the preschool director and church staff person in charge of the relationship with the preschool.

The interviews were aimed at identifying the ways in which the preschool and church were engaging in healthy and cooperative relationships, and ways these relationships can be improved and to identify factors that hinder the relationship. They were held privately and confidentially in an office or classroom with at least two chairs to promote honesty among the participants. The researcher followed an interview protocol with questions and probes to assure uniformity in this process with all participants. Before beginning the interviews, a statement of consent was shared as a reminder, since both the preschool director and the church staff person

had agreed to be part of the study by filling out the PCSS which contains the consent letter as a prerequisite. An opportunity was also given for participants to ask any questions about the process for the interview.

Participants were reminded that their answers would be coded for the study and not presented in ways that identified them by name if quoted or used as part of the project. The interview protocol found in Appendix C was used to conduct the interviews with probing questions used to gather additional data on key areas relevant to the study. This method offered a balance between the flexibility of an open-ended interview and the focus of a structured ethnographic survey (Bernard, *Social Research Methods*).

After the interviews for both the preschool director and the church staff person or volunteer in charge of the relationship with the preschool were conducted, the last one at a location to be interviewed was given a gift card for \$10 to Starbucks to encourage the two people in these key positions to engage in conversation about their ministry together. This was not a requirement, but both participants were made aware of the gift card and encouraged to schedule a time to share with each other since their responses to the interview were not shared with their counterparts.

Document Analysis

The Preschool and Church Document Analysis (PCDA) consisted of gathering lease agreements, vision statements, policies, and other relevant documents defining the relationship between preschool ministries and their host churches or illustrating the relationship. After the interview with the preschool directors, the researcher requested any documents referenced during the interview such as newsletters, bulletins, parent handbooks, or job descriptions for the document analysis. Preschool directors were encouraged to email those to the researcher if they

had them readily available in digital format. They were also encouraged to share any other documents they had in digital format that they felt reflected the relationship between the preschool and the church. In a couple of instances, hard copies of documents were provided instead at the interview. Documents received through email were coded for the study and placed together in a folder for analysis.

The document analysis included, when available, documents in three broad categories: **Relationship-defining documents** (leases, agreements, covenants), **Vision or Mission-type statements** (purpose statements, vision and mission statements, documented goals or objectives), and **Theological documents** (statements of faith, definitions of the Christian nature of the preschool ministry, documents reflecting beliefs reflected in the preschool). The documents were coded based on the category they fell under and each preschool/church location was assigned a number. Denominational documents (Paredes, Callis, and Gordon; Discipleship Ministries) also provided information regarding denominational policies and positions about early education programs that are readily available to preschools and churches.

This study was investigative in nature and therefore there were no hypotheses implemented at any time. As its design was a pre-intervention investigation into best practices, it concluded with identifying common traits, policies, and structures of the different preschool and church ministries that could possibly be replicated in other preschool and church ministries to produce healthy and collaborative relationships.

Data Analysis

This preintervention study used an exploratory mixed methods design, and included the following instruments: quantitative surveys (PCSS), qualitative instrumentation of interviews (PCLI), and a document analysis (PCDA).

This study relied on a simple Discovery survey (DS) to identify participants. This data was analyzed to qualify participants for the study and exclude those who did not meet the study criteria. The PCSS gathered qualitative data about how staff from the preschool and church perceived the relationship between the two ministries. This data was recorded and then organized in an excel spreadsheet. This made it possible to compare the Preschool staff and Church staff responses and compare percentages in Chapter 4.

The Preschool and Church Leadership Interviews (PCLI) followed the interview protocol for a semi-structured interview with prompts (Appendix C). The responses of preschool and church leaders were analyzed to identify common themes, language, practices and perspectives on the relationship between the preschool and the church. A comparative analysis was also conducted between the different preschools and the different churches to identify patterns and common themes. The responses for each question were placed in an excel spreadsheet so that they could be sorted by the preschool director and church staff for comparison and contrast.

All of the gathered data from the PCSS, the PCLI, and the PCDA provided the research for the conclusions of this study and helped formulate the findings in this study.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Problem and Purpose

Churches and preschools that share facilities need to find ways to be mutually supportive of each other if they are to truly be partners in ministry to their communities. Churches, that foster healthy relationships with their partners in ministry, tend to thrive while those that do not tend to struggle. Likewise, preschools that function as separate entities within churches often experience competition for space and resources with the church instead of collaboration. The problem is that these relationships, if not maintained, have a tendency to deteriorate over time, become neglected or be all together abandoned by one side or the other or both.

Churches that engage in truly collaborative ministries must be intentional about establishing policies and procedures that promote their relationships and mutual support. Too often these relationships are not well defined, structured, or communicated to the constituents of the ministries, the congregation, or the greater community.

The purpose of this study was to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships. In this chapter, I share my findings that address the research question for this project drawn from the Preschool and Church Leadership Interviews, the Preschool and Church Staff Surveys, and the Document Analysis in combination with the research conducted in the literature review.

Participants

The discovery survey was sent out to sixty-nine clergy staff in churches of the Atlanta Emory District to determine eligibility for the study. Out of these, seventeen people filled out the survey. Twelve preschools, housed in United Methodist Churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, qualified and participated in the study. These preschools had been in existence for at least one year and had at least three classes spanning K2 to K5. The church participants in the study varied in size from over 102 members to as many as over 1001+ members (Figure 1.1) and most were located in suburban areas (91.67 percent) (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1 Participant Church Membership

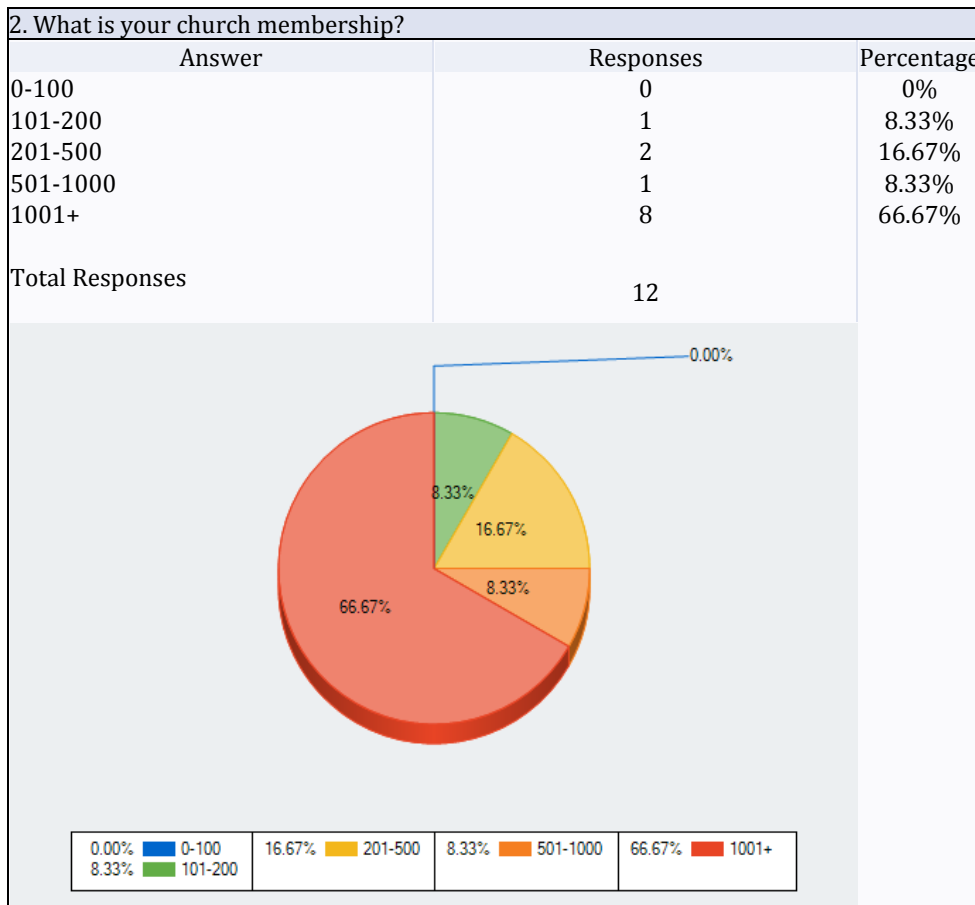
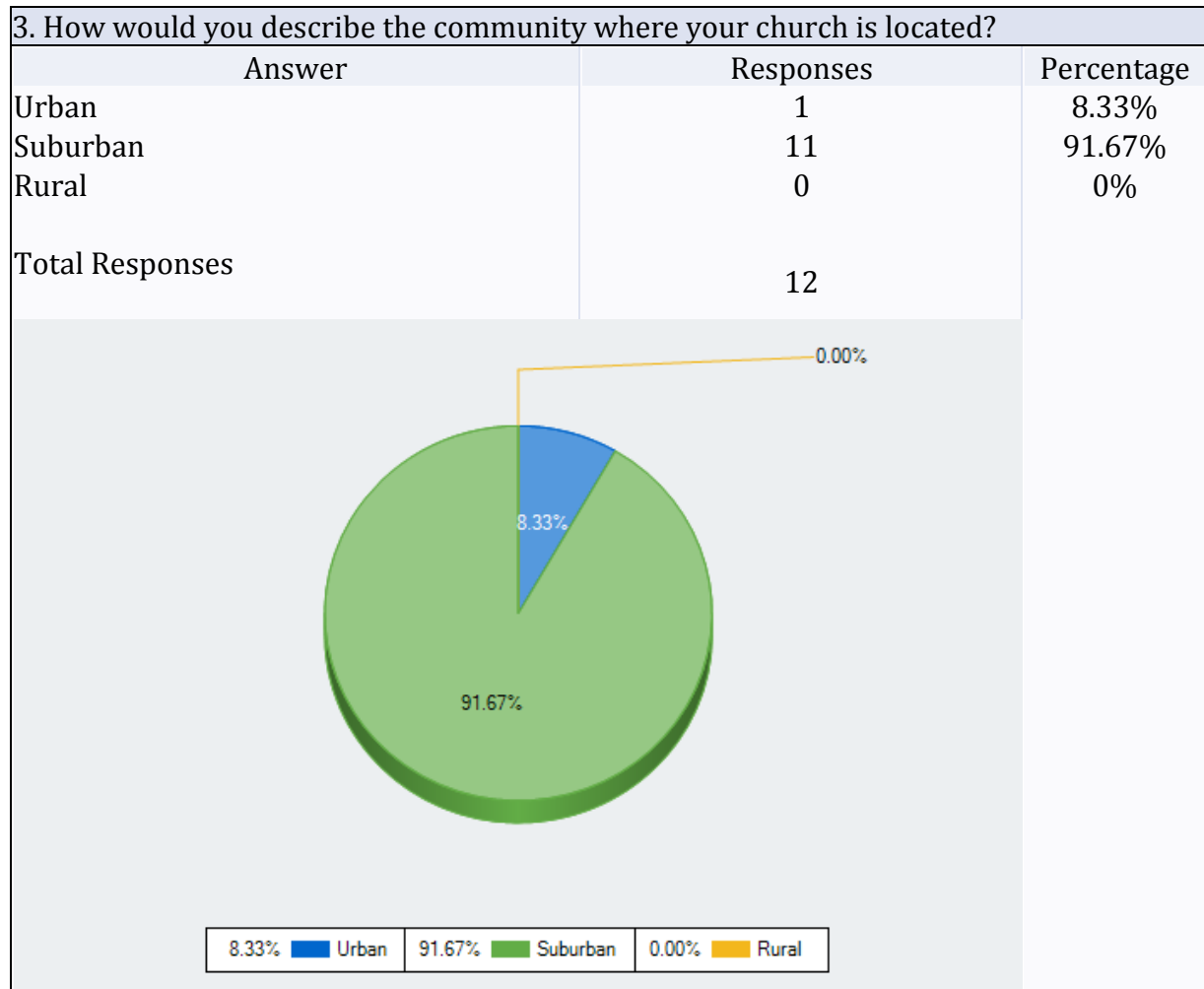
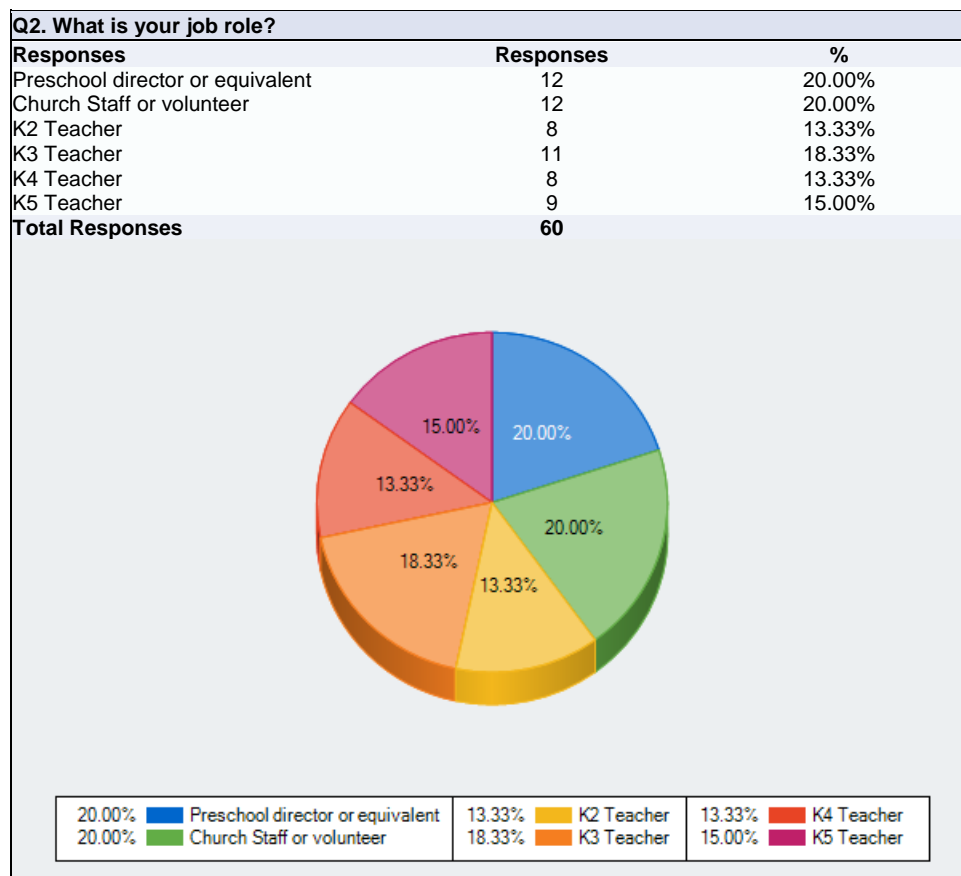


Figure 1.2 Geographic: Area Urban, Suburban, Rural

There were sixty individual people from three categories in the study: Preschool directors or their equivalents, church staff persons or volunteers with direct responsibility for the relationship with the preschool, and K2-K5 preschool teachers. One preschool director, one church staff person or volunteer with direct responsibility for the relationship with the preschool, and three teachers from each location participated in the study. The different amounts in the K2-K5 teachers who took part in the study is due to the fact that some preschools had K2-K4 teachers participating in the study while others had K3-K5 teachers participate in the study. The

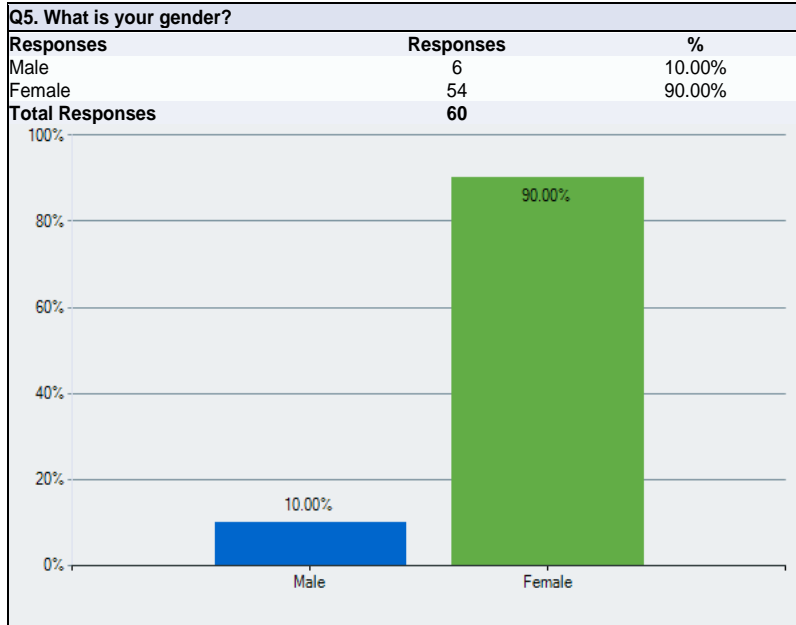
breakdown by job role was 20 percent preschool directors, 20 percent church staff or volunteers, 13.33 percent K2 teachers, 18.33 percent K3 teachers, 13.33 percent K4 teachers, and 15 percent K5 teachers (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Participants by Job Role

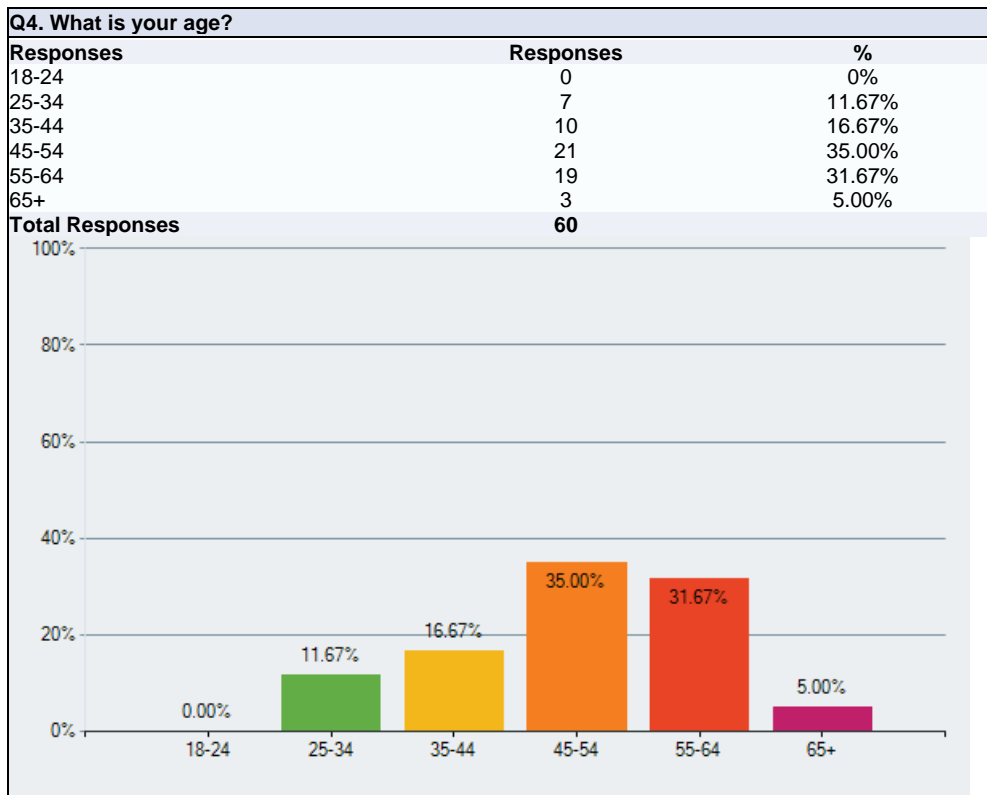


Of those who took part in the study, 90 percent were female and 10 percent were male (see Graph 1). The participants ranged in age from 25+ years of age to over 65+, and two-thirds of the participants were between the ages of 45 and 64 as illustrated in Graph 2.

Graph 1 Participants Gender Demographics



Graph 2: Participants' Age Demographics



For this study twelve preschool directors were surveyed and interviewed. All of the Preschool directors, 100 percent, were female and they ranged in age from 35+ to 65+ years of age with 41.67 percent of them in the 45-54 age bracket. Twelve church staff or volunteers with responsibility for the relationship of the preschool were surveyed and interviewed. Unlike preschool directors who were 100 percent female, 50 percent of these were male. Participants in this category ranged in age from 35+ to 65+ years of age as seen in Graph 4. The final category of participants was the K2 through K5 teachers who took the Preschool and Church Staff Survey. All 36 participants were female, and they ranged in age from 25+ years of age to under 64.

Table 1 Participants by Ages

Church Position Age Range

Responses	Responses	%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	0	0%
35-44	4	33.33%
45-54	2	16.67%
55-64	4	33.33%
65+	2	16.67%
Total Responses	12	

Preschool Directors Age Range

Responses	Responses	%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	0	0%
35-44	2	16.67%
45-54	5	41.67%
55-64	4	33.33%
65+	1	8.33%
Total Responses	12	

K2-K5 Teacher Age Range

Responses	Responses	%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	7	19.44%
35-44	4	11.11%
45-54	14	38.89%
55-64	11	30.56%
65+	0	0%
Total Responses	36	

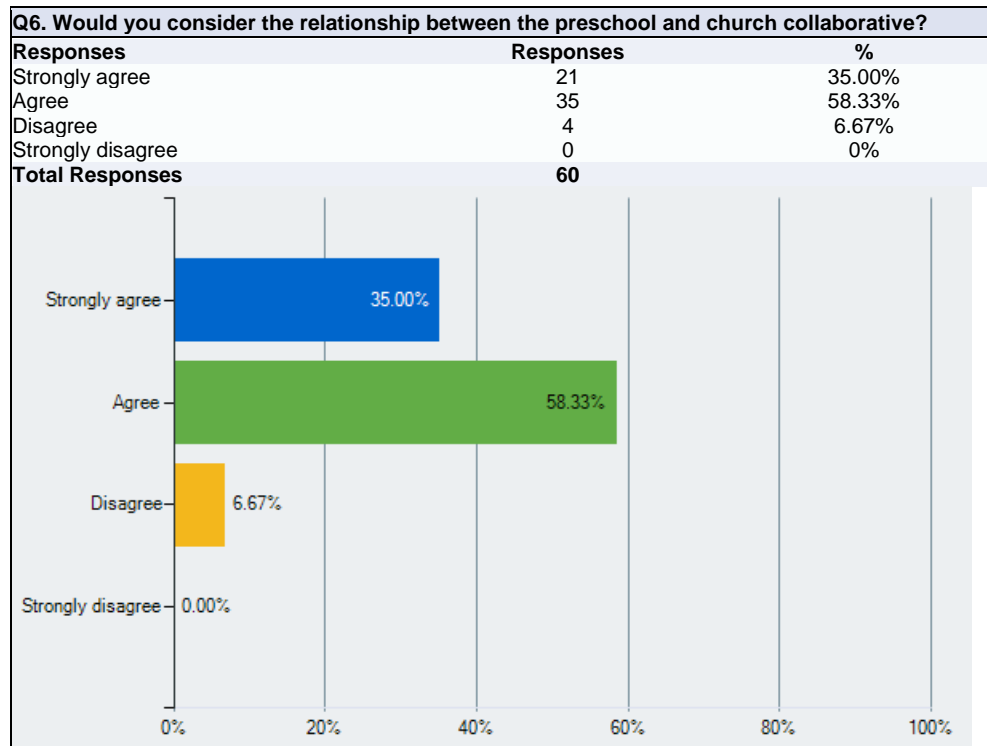
Research Questions: Description of Evidence

Research Question #1: What factors promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

To answer this question, the study used the Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS), the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), and the Document Analysis (DA). In the PCSS, question 12 asked participants what they would consider the most important factor contributing to a collaborative preschool and church relationship and question 14 gave them an opportunity to add additional comments regarding the relationship. In the PCLI, questions 4, 7, and 8 addressed this research question. In question 4 of the interviews, participants were asked what factors contribute to the collaboration and relationship of the preschool and the church. In question 7, participants were asked what the preschool and church do to promote their relationship, and finally in question 8, participants were asked what one aspect of the relationship they would want to see improved and why. The DA simply looked at language in documents obtained from the preschools and churches that provided them, that reflected a collaborative relationship to answer RQ1.

Collaborative Nature of the Relationship

The PCSS revealed that 58.33 percent of those surveyed agreed that the relationship between the preschool and the church was collaborative, 35 percent strongly agreed it was collaborative and 6.67 percent disagreed it was collaborative (Chart 2)

Chart 2 Collaborative Evaluation of Relationship

When the question was analyzed further by category of job position, the study revealed that church staff or volunteers overwhelmingly felt the relationship was collaborative with 66.67 percent strongly agreeing and 33.33 percent agreeing (Chart 2.1) For Preschool staff (directors and teachers), 27.8 percent of participants strongly agreed that the relationship was collaborative, 64.58 percent agreed that it was collaborative, and 8.33 percent disagreed that it was collaborative (Chart 2.2). The difference in perception is significant, reflecting the differing views of the collaborative nature of the relationship between preschool staff and church staff or volunteers, though some of it could be attributed to the difference in roles and responsibilities.

Chart 2.1 Church Staff views on Collaborative Relationship

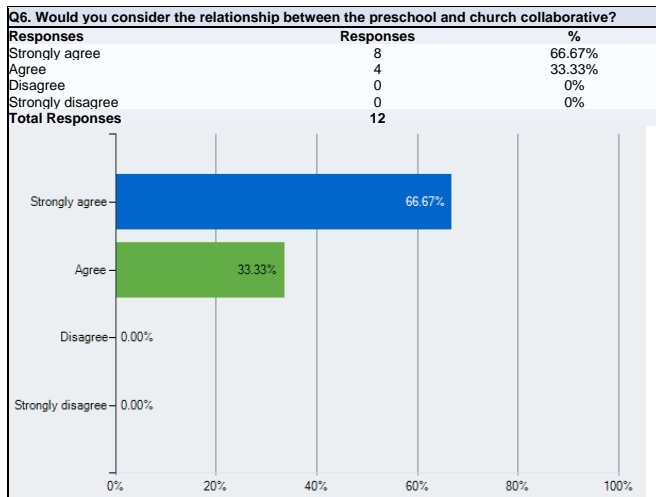
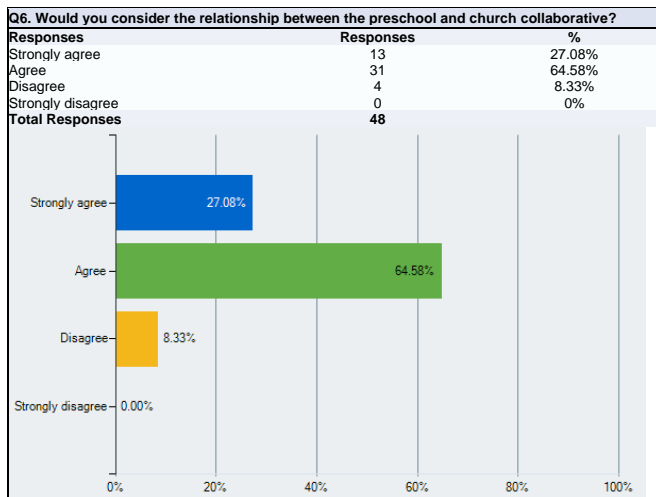
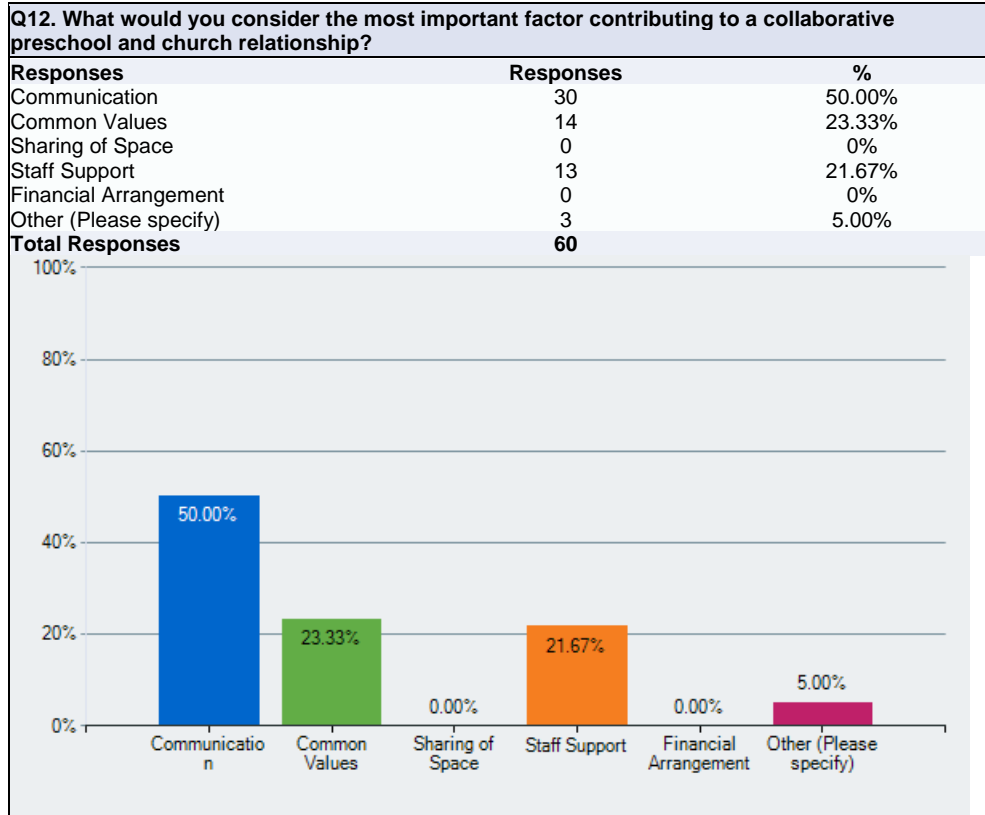


Chart 2.2 Preschool Staff views on Collaborative Relationship



The most important factor, that participants in the Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS) identified as contributing to the collaborative relationship between the preschool and church from question 12, was communication (50 percent), followed by common values (14 percent), and staff support (13 percent) nearly tied (Chart 3). Five percent of participants used the other box to enter factors that combined multiple factors in their answer. No participants in the survey considered financial agreement or the sharing of space as factors that contribute to a healthy and cooperative relationship.

Chart 3 Most Important Factor Contributing to a Collaborative Relationship

Communication was ranked the highest with all participants, except K3 teachers showing that in almost all job roles it is considered one of the most important factors that contributed to a collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church (Chart 4). For preschool directors and church staff, the second factor considered most important was staff support while, for most of the teachers, the second most important factor was having common values. Three participants entered other responses (Table 2).

Chart 4 Important Factor that Contributes to Collaborative Relationship

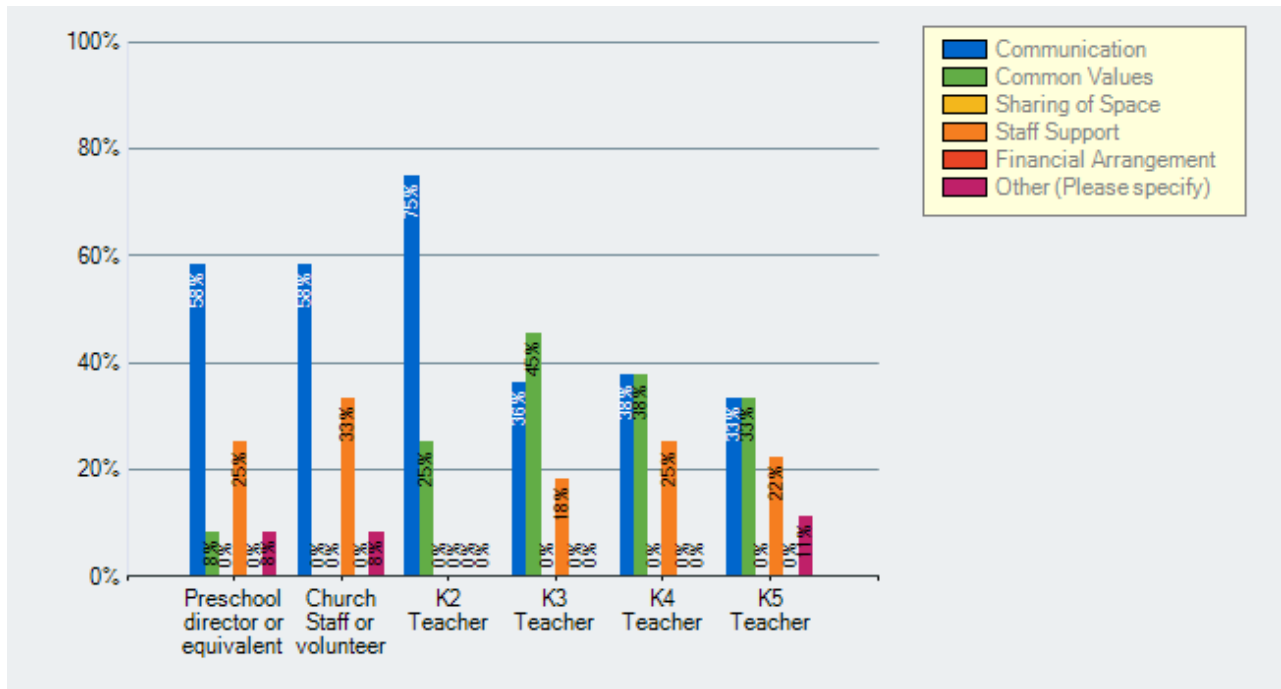


Table 2 Other Factors Contributing to a Collaborative Relationship

Q12. What would you consider the most important factor contributing to a collaborative preschool and church relationship?

SR No.	Response No.	Response Text
1	7	Other (Please specify) : The director has to be heavily involved in our church staff functions. In my case I am actually employed by the church and also responsible for children’s ministry.
2	13	Other (Please specify) : I as Children's Minister lead Chapel for our weekday preschool, and our Preschool Director teaches our Pre-K 4 Sunday School class on Sundays (and volunteers at most children's ministry events). We are intentional about there being crossover between our ministries.
3	16	Other (Please specify) : All of the above

The Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI) also showed that communication is one of the main factors that promotes the development of healthy and collaborative relationships with eight interviews identifying communication as the top factor.

Regular communication and shared resources are factors that help our collaboration. (Interview CSV7)

Communication is huge. Everything from the preschool goes out to the church and everything going on at the church goes out to the preschool.” (Interview P1)

The pastor and I take the time to meet with each other as representatives of each other’s part and we will share what needs to be done and how we can support each other. (Interview P3)

The factors that support our collaboration are our trust in one another, our communication, the preschool boards being responsive to the needs and having a support group that helps coming up with ideas and working together to implement those ideas. (Interview P10)

The interviews also revealed that even though communication was identified as a main factor in eight out of twenty-four interviews, seventeen interviews mentioned staff relationships, staff tenure, or staff leadership, which affects communication, as the main factor contributing to a collaborative relationship. Some interviews directly pointed to staff as the main factor that contributes to collaboration in their relationships:

Good staff is what contributes to the good relationship. (Interview P2)

Shared vision and leadership between pastor and director. They must be on the same page and understand working as a team. (Interview CSV12)

Having capable staff and supporting each other is what contributes to a good relationship. (Interview CSV2)

The most important factor is leadership and forming close personal relationships between the staff and including each other. (Interview CSV8)

The PCLI also showed an alignment between preschool directors and their church staff or volunteer counterpart when identifying factors that contributed to the collaboration. For example, “Trust in the director and knowing what her values are and seeing how she interacts with the family and staff and how she handles situations” (Interview CSV10) and “Our trust in one another, our communication and the preschool board being responsive to needs...” (Interview P10) both point to the staff having trusting relationships. In several cases, the preschool director and their church staff or volunteer counterpart used similar language to describe their

relationships or identified the same factors. They significantly were unaware of each other's answers and shows that in some of these settings the two staff positions were indeed closely aligned and/or communicating when it comes to how they viewed their relationship and the factors that helped them be collaborative.

Document Analysis (DA)

The DA revealed collaboration between preschool and churches through their written use of language in newsletters, bulletins, policies, parent handbooks, and other publications used to promote the preschool ministry and/or the church. Inclusive language was found in many of these documents. Preschool calendars and newsletter also showed the promotion of church events to preschool families. These documents were evidence of communication which was identified as the most important factor contributing to the collaboration between preschools and churches.

Join **us** for services. (C3)

We are starting to plan for **our** summer programming. (C11)

We are proud of **our** preschool ministry. (C11 Handbook)

Our mission is to provide and **maintain** a Christian environment in which children may experience success as they develop the physical, emotional, mental, creative, social, and spiritual aspects of their personalities as well as provide **our** families with a program high in quality, stability, and continuity. (C5 Information Sheet)

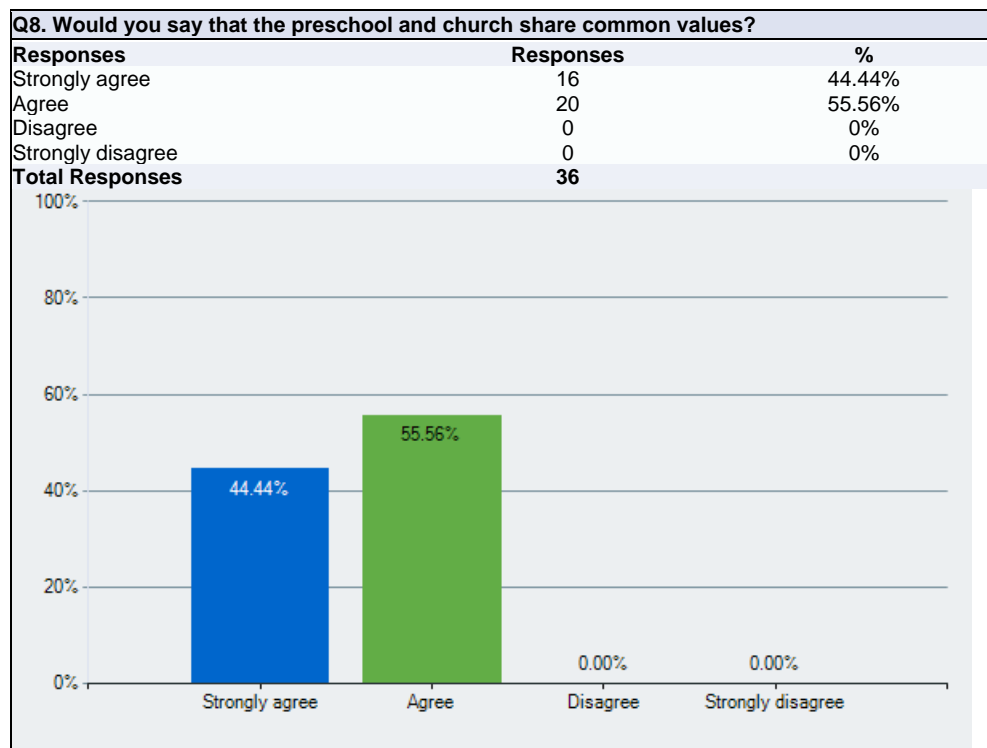
Shared Values in the Relationship, another important factor in the Relationship

When it comes to shared values in the relationship between the preschool and the church, the PCSS revealed that the majority of those surveyed (61.67 percent) strongly agreed that there are shared common values between the preschool and the church, while 38.33 percent agreed that there are shared values with no respondents marking disagree or strongly disagree (Table 3).

Table 3 Shared Values

Q8. Would you say that the preschool and church share common values?								
Q2. What is your job role?								
Ver. Hori.		Preschool director or equivalent	Church Staff or volunteer	K2 Teacher	K3 Teacher	K4 Teacher	K5 Teacher	Total
Strongly agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q8 % of Total	10 83.33% 27.03% 16.67%	11 91.67% 29.73% 18.33%	3 37.50% 8.11% 5.00%	5 45.45% 13.51% 8.33%	4 50.00% 10.81% 6.67%	4 44.44% 10.81% 6.67%	37 61.67% 100.00% 61.67%
Agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q8 % of Total	2 16.67% 8.70% 3.33%	1 8.33% 4.35% 1.67%	5 62.50% 21.74% 8.33%	6 54.55% 26.09% 10.00%	4 50.00% 17.39% 6.67%	5 55.56% 21.74% 8.33%	23 38.33% 100.00% 38.33%
Disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q8 % of Total	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%
Strongly disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q8 % of Total	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%
Total	Count % within Q2 % within Q8 % of Total	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	11 100.00% 18.33% 18.33%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	9 100.00% 15.00% 15.00%	60 100.00% 100.00% 100.00%

When the question was analyzed further by category of job position, the study revealed that church staff or volunteers at 91.67 percent and preschool directors at 83.33 percent strongly agreed that there are shared values between the church and the preschool, while only 44 percent of the preschool teachers strongly agreed (Chart 5). This might indicate that most of the sharing of values is taking place at the preschool director and church staff person level and that it is not being communicated as effectively with the teachers.

Chart 5 Preschool Teachers Shared Values

In question 2 of the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), participants were asked to identify the values and beliefs shared by the church and the preschool and to share how they are reflected or communicated. Some participants had to take some time to gather their thoughts before answering this question. Many of the participants then shared that the preschool and church share core Christian values and then identified those beliefs that more directly impact the education of children.

We share the same common core belief in God, and both promote the fundamentals of kindness, love for one another and generosity. (Interview P9)
 Our mission is being a nurturing community, connecting all through Christ and that includes children. (Interview P11)
 All children are a precious blessing, and all are children of God, we value providing a Christ centered environment where they can grow, develop and mature. (Interview P12)

This preschool is very diverse, but it is distinctly Christian. (CSV9)

When it came to identifying how these values are communicated, most preschool directors and church staff shared examples of how the values and beliefs were lived out in their ministries. The communication of said values again pointed to how important communication was in the relationship between preschools and churches.

Core values of Christianity, loving other, loving God and caring for your neighbor are part of the curriculum and part of the materials sent out to families and prospective families. (Interview CSV11)

We believe in bringing children to Jesus and introducing them to the Christian faith so they can have that when they go home. (Interview P8)

Chapel times is extremely important to the kids, they have daily prayer time and have a Christ centered program. (Interview CSV10)

Our goal is to help children begin a relationship with God and learning at the same time. (Interview P7)

Research Question #2: What factors hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschools and their host churches?

When asked in survey question 13 which factor hinders a collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church, 48 percent of those surveyed identified a lack of communication as the factor that most hinders the relationship (Chart 6). The second highest was lack of staff support with 17 percent. Only 4 participants identified factors outside of the four included in the question by using the other category (Table 4). Nearly half of all participants identified lack of communication as the biggest factor that hinders the development of a healthy and cooperative relationship.

Chart 6 Factors That Most Hinder the Relationship

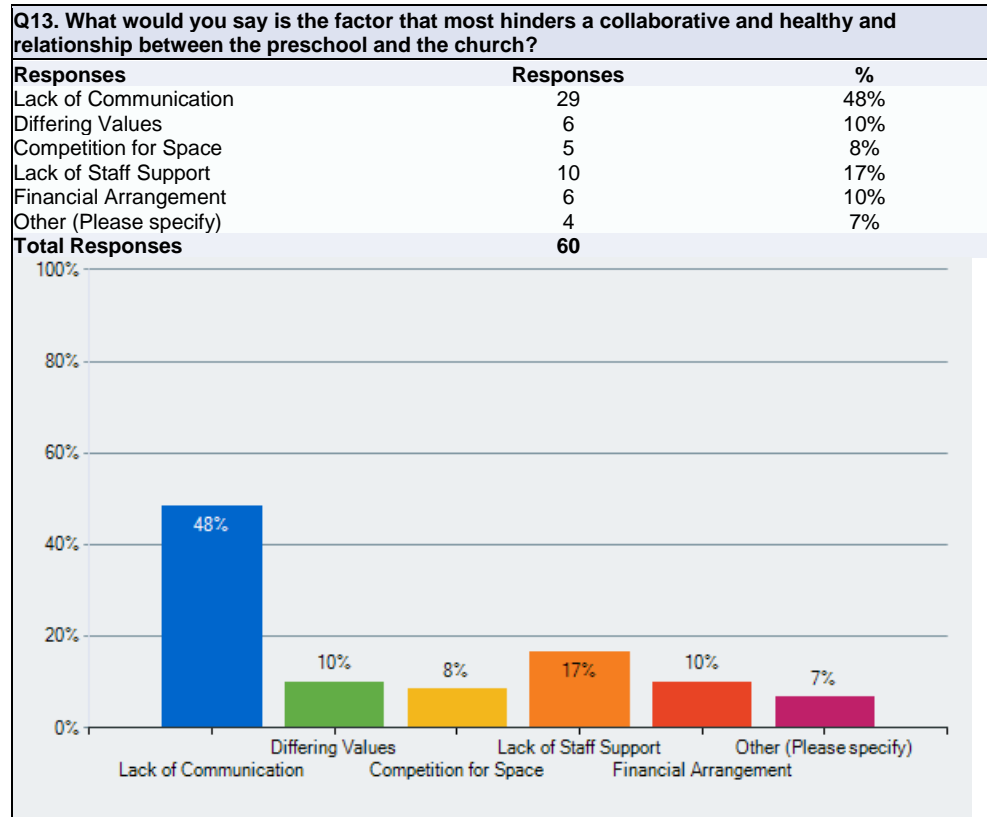


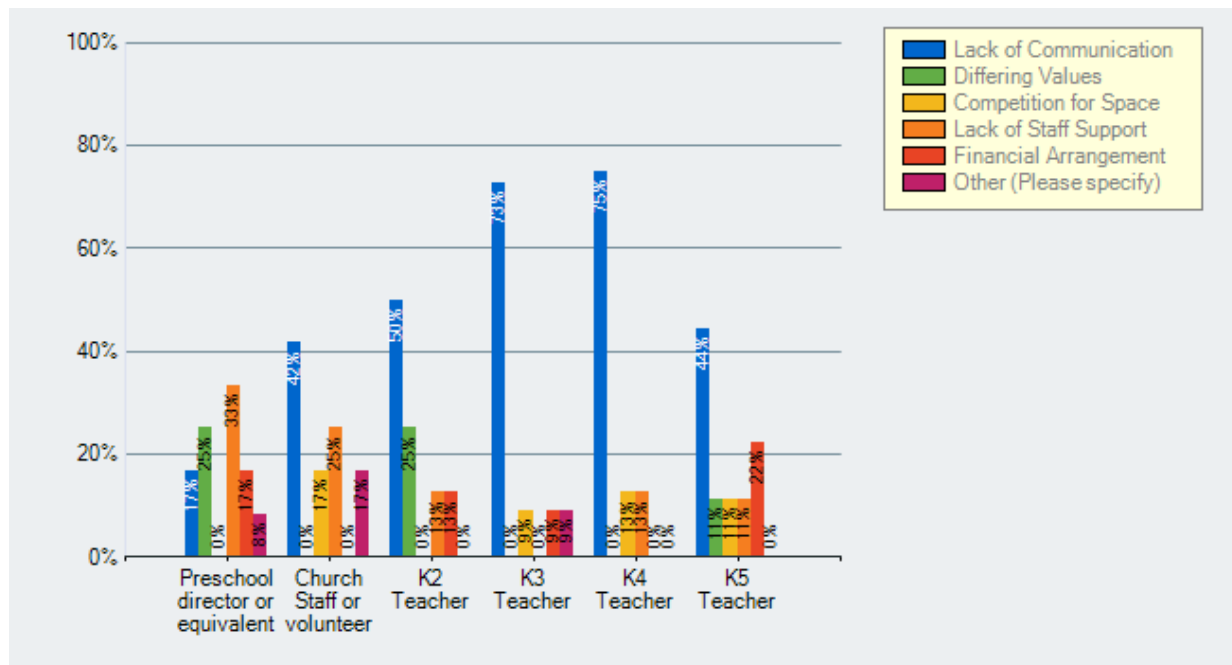
Table 4 Other Factors that Hinder the Relationship

Q13. What would you say is the factor that most hinders a collaborative and healthy and relationship between the preschool and the church?		
SR No.	Response No.	Response Text
1	12	Other (Please specify) : Sharing some equipment
2	13	Other (Please specify) : While I wouldn't say it hinders, I would love to see more of our church staff be involved with our weekday preschool.
3	39	Other (Please specify) : neither staff nor parents church members
4	46	Other (Please specify) : Development of the preschool

When question 13 is broken down by job role, all positions, except for preschool directors, chose lack of communication as the number one factor that hindered a collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church. Preschool directors ranked lack of staff support (33 percent) and differing values (25 percent) above lack of communication (17 percent)

as the largest factor that hinders the relationship between preschools and churches (Chart 7). This might be indicative of what preschool directors feel they need to be more effective in their ministries.

Chart 7 Factors that Hinder by Job Role



In conducting the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), question 4 sought to get input from preschool directors and church staff or volunteers in regard to what they considered the factor that most hindered the relationship between the preschool and the church. The PCLI showed some agreement with the survey results with six out of twenty-four participants pointing to lack of communication as the main factor that hindered their relationship.

Lack of communication is the biggest problem, if they start doing things without getting things okayed or operating without staying connected. (Interview CSV2)
 Lack of communication, the only issue is not being included in email and communications. (Interview CSV6)
 When you have good communication, you can get along instead of competing for resources and space. (Interview P12)

Others did not name communication directly as a factor, but rather talked about connection, accountability, and issues related to scheduling space which are all related to communications or the lack thereof.

Missing bridge between the preschool and the other ministries of the church. (Interview P8)

Lack of connection and accountability. (Interview CSV11)

People in the church who have no idea what the preschool does and don't understand the preschool's ministry. (Interview P11)

The church is busy, and the preschool is busy, and sometimes some of the smallest intentional points of connection can be lost. (CSV12)

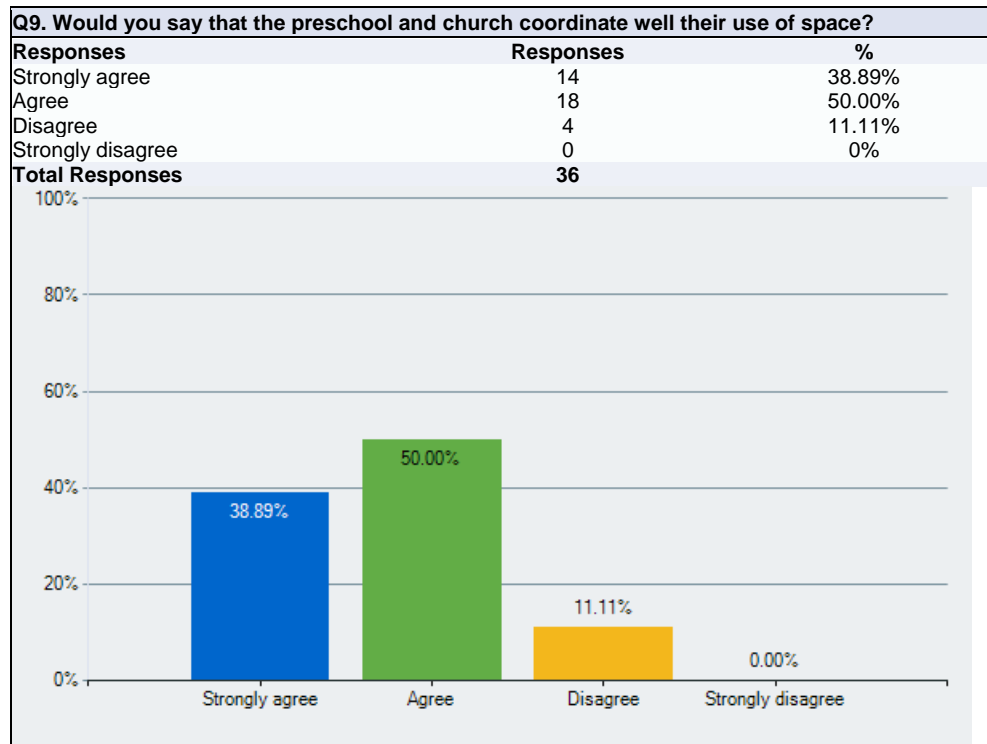
Coordination of Shared Space in the Relationship

The PCSS asked participants if they would say that the preschool and church coordinate well their use of space. The majority of those surveyed, 56.67 percent, strongly agreed that the preschool and church coordinate well their use of space, 36.67 percent agreed that they coordinate well their use of space, and 6.67 percent disagreed that they coordinate well their use of space. When broken down by job role, 100 percent of church staff and volunteers strongly agreed that the preschool and church coordinate their use of space well, while only 66.67 percent of preschool directors strongly agreed (Table 5).

Table 5 Coordination of Use of Space

Q9. Would you say that the preschool and church coordinate well their use of space?								
Q2. What is your job role?								
Ver. Hori.		Preschool director or equivalent	Church Staff or volunteer	K2 Teacher	K3 Teacher	K4 Teacher	K5 Teacher	Total
Strongly agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q9 % of Total	8 66.67% 23.53% 13.33%	12 100.00% 35.29% 20.00%	5 62.50% 14.71% 8.33%	3 27.27% 8.82% 5.00%	4 50.00% 11.76% 6.67%	2 22.22% 5.88% 3.33%	34 56.67% 100.00% 56.67%
Agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q9 % of Total	4 33.33% 18.18% 6.67%	0 0% 0% 0%	2 25.00% 9.09% 3.33%	7 63.64% 31.82% 11.67%	3 37.50% 13.64% 5.00%	6 66.67% 27.27% 10.00%	22 36.67% 100.00% 36.67%
Disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q9 % of Total	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	1 12.50% 25.00% 1.67%	1 9.09% 25.00% 1.67%	1 12.50% 25.00% 1.67%	1 11.11% 25.00% 1.67%	4 6.67% 100.00% 6.67%
Strongly disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q9 % of Total	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%	0 0% -- 0%
Total	Count % within Q2 % within Q9 % of Total	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	11 100.00% 18.33% 18.33%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	9 100.00% 15.00% 15.00%	60 100.00% 100.00% 100.00%

Out of preschool teachers, only 38.89 percent strongly agreed that the preschool and church coordinated well their use of space, 50 percent agreed that they coordinated well their use of space, and 11.11 percent disagreed that they coordinated their use of space well (Chart 8). These numbers indicate a much more favorable view of how well the preschool and church coordinated their use of space among church staff compared to preschool staff. The emerging trend in the surveys might suggest that indeed there are different perceptions of the relationship by the preschool staff versus the church staff in most cases.

Chart 8 Preschool Teachers' Coordination of Use of Space

In question 6 of the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI) participants were asked about how space is shared and allocated between the preschool and the church. All participants stated that the preschool and church offices are designated space only used by the respective staffs though some preschool directors held dual roles making their offices both preschool and church offices. In most cases, the preschools have designated preschool rooms that were used on Sundays and Wednesday for children's ministry programs or Sunday school. Some of those surveyed shared that their church and/or preschool have developed preschool wings or floors for more dedicated use by the preschool ministry even though these spaces were available when the preschool was not in session for other groups to use upon request. This revealed that the sharing of space and particularly the location of the preschool and church offices and rooms

can hinder the relationship between the preschool and church. The physical distance seemed to have an impact on the relationship between the church and the preschool.

Preschool is primarily on the back wing of the church; the nursery and children's ministry use preschool area every week. (Interview CSV7)

Our children's center uses the ground floor, 9 rooms and 4 play yards while the church occupies the second floor and share the play yards on Sundays. (Interview P5)

We share a whole wing with the preschool, 8 rooms, 4 of which are used on Sunday morning for nursery, Sunday school and Wednesday night choir and nursery. This also includes sharing of bulletin boards and cabinets, everyone has their designated storage spaces and each group respects the others. (Interview P4)

Most of the churches and preschools identified a church staff person such as administrative assistant, a secretary, or building manager as the official keeper of the calendar through which all requests for space were made. Some of the larger churches even use room scheduling software to facilitate the process. They also described how part of the staff meeting time is devoted to calendaring together and allocating space use for special events and activities outside of their normal agreed use. In some cases, the needs for space are communicated and worked out directly between the preschool director and the church staff person before being put on the church calendar. Preschool directors also expressed that because of the preschools being in United Methodist Churches, they all observed safe sanctuaries and remained on lockdown during the school day with limited access to areas used by the preschool.

We have an events coordinator that helps us set up rooms for use, she keeps the calendar and keeps good communication with us. (Interview P1)

We use a website room reservation form that all ministries in the church use to reserve space. All building use is requested this way and the church administrator handles the requests and puts them on the calendar. (Interview CSV2)

The church administrative assistant works out the sharing of space and the church calendar so that there is no overlap. Priority is given to the church and preschool before outside groups that might want to use space. (Interview CSV5) We use a computerized system to reserve and manage space use. This same system is used church wide. (Interview P12)

The PCLI also revealed that for some preschool directors, sharing space and financial expectations can be hinderances in the relationship though some church staff persons also shared this view.

Shared space, any time you share space there will be conflict. We have to rearrange or adapt as needed. (Interview CS7)

Money can be a hinderance, having church people make decisions about where the money is to be spent, when to raise tuitions and how much to pay staff. (Interview P5)

The expectation that the preschool is a cash cow for the church gets in the way of it being a ministry. (Interview P7)

The sharing of space can be a hinderance, but we work it out. (Interview P10)

Preschool and Church Constituents Interaction

Another factor that hinders the relationship between the preschool and church that was identified in the PCLI, more predominantly among church staff, was that preschool families tend not to be part of the church.

Part of what hinders the relationship is that there is not much participation of the membership families in the preschool or of preschool families in the church. (Interview CSV4)

Kids see the preschool as their church home, but parents and families don't. (Interview CSV5)

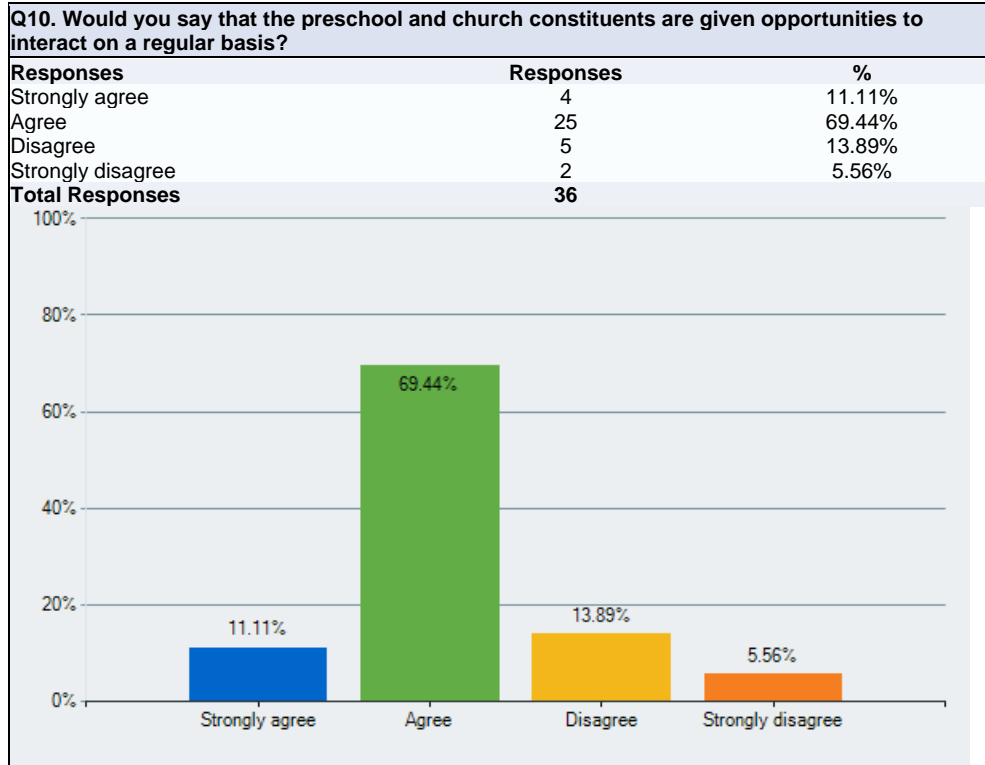
Good working relationship drifted apart over time as fewer parents were involved in church. (Survey Response 27).

The PCSS (survey) asked participants if they would say constituents from the preschool and church are given opportunities to interact on a regular basis. This was one of the questions where preschool directors and church staff views aligned more closely. Among both groups, 25 percent strongly agreed, among preschool directors 50 percent and among church staff 58.33 percent agreed that their constituents were given opportunities to interact on a regular basis and 25 percent and 16.67 percent respectively disagreed that their constituents were given opportunities to interact on a regular basis (Table 6).

Table 6 Constituents are Given Opportunities to Interact on a Regular Basis

Q10. Would you say that the preschool and church constituents are given opportunities to interact on a regular basis?								
Q2. What is your job role?								
Ver. Hori.		Preschool director or equivalent	Church Staff or volunteer	K2 Teacher	K3 Teacher	K4 Teacher	K5 Teacher	Total
Strongly agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q10 % of Total	3 25.00% 30.00% 5.00%	3 25.00% 30.00% 5.00%	3 37.50% 30.00% 5.00%	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	1 11.11% 10.00% 1.67%	10 16.67% 100.00% 16.67%
Agree	Count % within Q2 % within Q10 % of Total	6 50.00% 15.79% 10.00%	7 58.33% 18.42% 11.67%	5 62.50% 13.16% 8.33%	8 72.73% 21.05% 13.33%	6 75.00% 15.79% 10.00%	6 66.67% 15.79% 10.00%	38 63.33% 100.00% 63.33%
Disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q10 % of Total	3 25.00% 30.00% 5.00%	2 16.67% 20.00% 3.33%	0 0% 0% 0%	2 18.18% 20.00% 3.33%	2 25.00% 20.00% 3.33%	1 11.11% 10.00% 1.67%	10 16.67% 100.00% 16.67%
Strongly disagree	Count % within Q2 % within Q10 % of Total	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	0 0% 0% 0%	1 9.09% 50.00% 1.67%	0 0% 0% 0%	1 11.11% 50.00% 1.67%	2 3.33% 100.00% 3.33%
Total	Count % within Q2 % within Q10 % of Total	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	12 100.00% 20.00% 20.00%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	11 100.00% 18.33% 18.33%	8 100.00% 13.33% 13.33%	9 100.00% 15.00% 15.00%	60 100.00% 100.00% 100.00%

Among preschool teachers, 69.44 percent agreed that preschool and church constituents were given opportunities to interact on a regular basis, 11.11 percent strongly agreed, 13.89 percent disagreed, and 5.56 percent strongly disagreed (Chart 10). This aspect of the relationship drew the most negative responses from the teachers in the whole survey.

Chart 9 Preschool Teachers-Constituent Interaction

One of the interview responses captured a sentiment that was shared among many participants in different ways when they spoke about the need to stay connected and be intentional about their relationship.

We are a well-oiled machine, we don't cause a lot of problems and sometimes chug along, and people forget we are over there. This leads to a loss of communication or connection due to familiarity. When it goes well it is easy to forget the relationship and work on it. (Interview P1)

Research Question #3: What are best practices, moving forward, for promoting the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches?

In identifying best practices moving forward that promote the development of healthy and cooperative relationships, many participants used question 14 in the Preschool and Church

Staff Survey. This question asked participants to share any additional comments regarding the relationship between the preschool and church, and to share what they felt helps or hinders the relationship from either side. The responses reinforced some of the earlier survey responses from questions 12 and 13 mentioning communication and staffing often, but they also added more information regarding the participants' views on what could be helpful going forward. Survey responses are reported using survey response numbers to preserve anonymity of participants.

Communication

If it has not become clear yet, most staff members, both in the preschool and the church acknowledged that communication is one of the key factors that leads to a healthy and collaborative relationship.

In my opinion the best pastors were those that interacted regularly with the children and staff which also improved communication and relationship between church and preschool. (SR1)

Relationship can go awry without staying connected. (SR2)

I think we have a successful line of communication and shared values. (SR11)

While I do not think it is intentional, I think communication and understanding is the issue.” (SR22), “Communication and support are very important. (SR18)

Our preschool leadership allows for our church to be involved with what they do. Communication is key. (SR10)

The only reason there is communication, is due to the director. (SR25)

Communicate some preschool needs to the church that would make for a better program for the children. (SR26)

Continued coordination and communication between Lead Pastor and Preschool Director/Staff. (SR38)

These and other responses reflect the importance of communication as a key to developing and maintaining a healthy and collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church. Several practices were identified as supporting communication between the preschool and the church: having the preschool director involved in church staff meetings or the church staff participating in preschool staff meetings and/or board meetings, being present with

each other in events and activities, increasing interaction between church members and preschool children and families, and expanding communication beyond the preschool director/church staff.

Those surveyed identified that these were areas that still needed work in their own settings and which they saw as potentially helping improve the relationship.

I feel the most important facet of the relationship is having members of the church staff realize and support the MINISTRY of the preschool. (SR35)

The biggest factor that has aided our collaboration is staff support and facilitation of a “one family” model. (SR38)

It is helpful when church employees attend functions with preschool employees. (SR28)

It is imperative that Preschool Ministry is supported by the pastor and church staff, but an understanding of shared space, financials and common goals are also an integral part of having collaboration and a healthy relationship. (SR14)

I feel the relationship would be better if more members would volunteer their time. (SR41)

Helpful- church staff interacts with our students on a weekly basis at music and chapel, so they get to know the children and teachers and vice versa. (SR12)

Staff Relationships

Another practice identified from survey responses was the importance of a good relationship between preschool and church staff. Some preschool staff expressed that they do not feel appreciated by the church or the church staff or that they feel like members of the church do not understand the importance of the preschool’s ministry for the church.

I feel as though sometimes the preschool is an afterthought, or not at all. I wish they would tap into the group of people we have at our fingertips and make them a priority in their outreach. They say we are an outreach of the church but do little to facilitate that. (SR3)

Support and respect from the church staff is also part of the relationship between the preschool and the church. (SR15)

I feel the church needs to have a more active role in the preschool and support us. (SR24)

I believe a majority of preschool staff feels the church doesn't realize the amount of work we do and how we truly are an outreach. We are not babysitters but educators. (SR17)

Beyond those that work for the church-church members and preschool families need to understand that the preschool serves as a ministry of the church; preschool does not exist without the church and church benefits from having this ministry that helps build disciples. (SR14)

Participants identified several practices that would help staff relations; some of the sites included in the study were already implementing some of these. Among the suggested practices were: being intentional about showing staff appreciation, praying for each other and sharing outside of regular preschool hours, increase volunteerism of church members in the preschool and of preschool families in the church, and provide opportunities for the staff to interact beyond the preschool director and church staff person in charge of overseeing the relationship with the preschool.

I am very blessed to work at a church where the preschool is considered a ministry of the church and not a separate group. That is what has made us successful over the years. (SR4)

It is helpful when church employees attend functions with preschool employees. Even if it is something as simple as CPR training, or praying, or eating together during staff training. (SR28)

Our church as a whole does not always consider the preschool families when planning or communicating events. I feel there is room for improvement. (SR32)

I feel that we are lacking church member involvement with the preschool.

Especially with our big holiday events like Thanksgiving and Christmas. (SR43)

We do little things for the teachers at Christmas and the end of the year to celebrate with them... The preschool staff will also do things for the church.

When they have special lunches or dinners, they invite the church staff to come to that. (Interview P9)

The study also revealed that the support of the senior pastor for the preschool ministry is crucial to having a collaborative and healthy relationship between the preschool and the church.

Overall the senior pastor sets the tone for the collaboration. (Interview P12)

I want to have a day or two where the senior pastor greets and meets families through preschool carpool in the morning and gives out invitation to Easter. The more families that know the pastor and see him interacting in the community the more opportunity there will be to help them connect to the church. My family

came through the preschool and I think pastoral involvement will help that happen for more families. (Interview P7)

One of the things we did last year, when the preschool had their open house, on multiple days, the entire church staff was willing to pitch in and help out. Realizing that my presence as senior pastor goes a long way, I was there as well. When I as senior pastor am willing to help and be present it sends a message that our church loves and believes in our preschool and there is a deep bond between the two. (Interview CSV12)

If I was going to make a suggestion for the next pastor coming here, since they would be living next door in the parsonage, it would be to have them greet the parents in the morning in carpool as a way to reach these new families. (Interview CSV5)

The Document Analysis also showed the importance of staff and personnel selection for the preschool ministry in their director's job descriptions, policies, and guidelines.

As part of goals: To carefully select all personnel and equipment so as to effectively prepare the children for academic readiness coupled with Christian ideals for living. (C5 Job Description)

Unify and inspire staff and families around preschool's established philosophy and goals. Hire, train, and encourage a preschool staff. (C12 Director Job Description)

Hiring, managing and evaluation of staff of 10-12 teachers and assistant teachers. (C10 Director's Job Description)

Respect for Each other in the Use of Space and Resources

Though the use of space did not score very high in the survey when it comes to the highest factors to help or hinder the relationship, issues of space and resource use showed up in question 14 when participants were given a chance to share any other feedback regarding the relationship, showing that going forward it seems of importance to the relationship. These practices were identified as helping the collaborative relationship between the church and the preschool: showing respect for each other, respecting each other's schedules and setups, seeing each other as being on the same team and working together to calendar and allocate space and resources.

Having support and respect from both is important.” (SR19), “Lack of respect of shared space is difficult. (SR22)

Feeling comfortable to use the spaces (decorate, arrange tables) is important. You don't want to feel church or preschool is the priority and the other party just has to deal with it and always accommodate. (SR28)

Sometimes shared spaces for outside of school hours events and church events is not communicated well and have been booked at the same time. (SR36)

Shared space can be a challenge from time to time, but we always seem to work it out without much conflict. (SR2)

I sometimes find that volunteers do not always respect shared spaces as much as employees do. I was raised to always leave an area cleaner than I found it. I noticed that being a good steward means different things to different people. (SR5)

In the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), preschool directors and staff pointed to several practices used to help this aspect of their relationship: holding joint check in meetings to check on upcoming events, in addition to regularly scheduled staff meetings, engaging in informal communication by dropping in on each other from time to time, making sure their activities are on the church calendar and/or church reservation software, identifying issues related to use of space and working those out with stakeholders at the table.

Summary of Major Findings

This study provided a lot of insight into the factors that help promote a healthy and collaborative relationship and some of the things that hinder the relationship between preschools and churches. The study found:

- 1. An intentional plan is needed to promote and develop a healthy and collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church.**
- 2. To promote a more collaborative relationship, attention must be paid to the relationship with preschool teachers.**
- 3. Leadership at the preschool director and church staff positions must be of one accord.**
- 4. Location, Location, Location: Where the preschool is located in your facility matters.**
- 5. Having the senior pastor support the preschool ministry with his presence greatly helps to promote a healthy and collaborative relationship.**

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Problem and Purpose

This research project sought to study the relationship between preschools and churches that house them in order to determine what are some of the best practices to promote healthy and collaborative relationships between them. Churches and preschools that share facilities need to find ways to be mutually supportive of each other if they are to truly be partners in ministry to their communities. Churches that foster healthy relationships with their partners in ministry tend to thrive while those that do not tend to struggle. Likewise, preschools that function as separate entities within churches often experience competition for space and resources with the church instead of collaboration. The problem is that these relationships, if not maintained and nurtured, tend to deteriorate over time, become neglected, or be all together abandoned by one side or the other or both. The results of the study suggest the following findings and recommendations that could help promote more collaborative and healthier relationships between preschool ministries and churches.

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will present the five major findings of this research project as well as their implications for ministry. It will also cover the limitation of the study as may be applicable to applying the findings to other contexts and ministries. Next unexpected observations and results will be discussed and finally the chapter will provide some recommendations based on the findings. The chapter will close with a postscript of final thoughts and observations regarding this study and my hopes for its use by churches and preschools as well as a word of appreciation for those who participated in the study.

Major Findings

First Finding: An intentional plan is needed to promote and develop a healthy and collaborative relationship between preschools and churches.

Relationships take time and effort to grow and develop. The relationship between preschools and churches are no different. Many of the churches and schools interviewed for this project did not have an intentional plan to promote their relationship. Even though the relationship starts at the staff level, and it is often nurtured and grown there, it must also encompass the constituents of both the church and the preschool if the relationship is to be truly healthy and collaborative in a broader sense and for the long term. Where there was more intentionality about the relationship, the preschool was a ministry of the church and the church was seen as a partner in ministry by the preschool.

One of the major findings of this study was that, for the most part, preschools and churches do not have an intentional plan in place to promote and develop their relationship in a collaborative way. When preschool directors and church staff or volunteers were asked question 7 in the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI), most of them had to pause and consider the implications of the question. The question simply asked: What do the preschool and church do to promote their relationship? Are there any specific yearly or regular events, meetings, or activities that promote the relationship?

Most of those interviewed pointed out that there were no specific events, meetings, or activities designed to promote the relationship between the preschool and the church. When the relationship was promoted, it happened through regularly scheduled events or activities, like graduation, preschool Sunday, or a fundraiser where the stated goal was not promoting the relationship. Any promotion of the relationship seemed to be an afterthought or side effect of the events, activities, or meetings rather than one of its intended outcomes.

Christian Preschool education is intentionally a disciple-making process for most churches in that children are being introduced to the Christian faith through chapel, the

curriculum and the daily way of operating in the classroom. “It is about letting the children know that they are loved and important. Bottom line is we are here for the kids. The child is our first priority and their well-being is our top goal” (Interview P3). Ironically, a program based on the idea of discipleship and connection suffers from a lack of intentionality in its relationship with the church. The relationship between the preschool and the church is too important to be left up to chance and therefore must be worked on and intentionally developed as part of the overall ministry strategy of the church. Being intentional about this relationship requires the development of ample opportunities for constituents of both the preschool and the church to interact with each other, get to know each other, and have an opportunity to feel a part of each other.

Biblically and theologically, this is what being a part of the body of Christ is all about, the parts getting together to work together and to know each other and support each other in every way possible. This also promotes the reduction of the “us” and “them” mentality that is prevalent in these relationships. Churches have a clear mandate in Scripture in the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations. This “making disciples” responsibility at the preschool level does not just include the children. It includes the families, the staff, the church members, and the general community. Disciple making is a process and therefore must be approached intentionally and systematically to maximize its effectiveness.

Preschool ministry might have started in the homes as a responsibility of the parents as revealed by the literature, but it has certainly moved out of that setting in many ways and into more formal structured and organized institutions such as preschools, daycares, and mother’s morning out programs. As this move took place, Christians took on preschool ministry to

intentionally share the faith with children at an early age and to oppose more secular forms of education.

As St. Clement pointed out, “The primary lesson for life must be implanted in the soul from the earliest age. The primary lesson for children is to know the eternal God, the one who gives everlasting life”(The Apostolic Constitutions). The early church understood the importance of education and therefore was intentional about training “children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray” (Proverbs 22:6).

Intentionality has always been a big part of the Methodist movement. John Wesley was intentional about how he went about organizing class meetings, circuit riders, and leaders in the Methodist movement. He was also very intentional when it came to discipleship and the formation of new Christians. When he formed Kingswood school in 1748, he intentionally designed it to serve children of all classes and to promote social holiness among the children who went to school there. A return to the intentionality of Wesley in the ministry of education would serve current church preschool ministries well and help them to be more effective in building stronger, healthier, and more cooperative relationships with the church and the community at large.

The existence of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church shows that United Methodists understand the need to be intentional about educational ministries and promoting higher education. The absence of a similar board or agency to address the needs of preschool education and ministries, to provide resources and guidance for churches wanting to engage in such ministries, and the staff to resource existing preschool ministries to help improve their relationships with the churches they are partnering with, reflects a lack of intentionality by the denomination. This has left these relationships entirely up to the local

churches. If the local church does not develop an intentional plan, as this finding revealed, the relationship will not be as collaborative, healthy, and strong as it could be, and the results will show in the lack of connection between the church and preschool ministries.

Second Finding: To promote a more collaborative relationship, attention must be paid to the relationship with preschool teachers.

This study found that there is a disconnect between church staff and preschool directors as leaders of these programs and the preschool teachers. Teachers perceived the relationship more negatively and saw more issues with lack of communication, connection, and alignment of values. For the most part, they also felt underappreciated and misunderstood as not being a full ministry of the church, but rather something separate. I must pause here to qualify that statement by pointing out that in 3 of the 12 sites that took part in the study, there seemed to be more alignment between the preschool teachers and those in leadership at the director and church staff positions. Some of this disconnect could be attributed to the fact that teachers are preoccupied in the classroom, with children and with parents, and have less interaction with the church staff or church members. It is however still troubling and could be an indication of a breakdown in communication.

Much of the literature on preschool education points out the need to find qualified teaching staff who have a heart for working with children. It also reminds us that not everyone has the ability, patience, and disposition to work with preschool aged children. There is mention of the need to support preschool teachers by offering them continued education opportunities and encouraging them to grow in their craft. Attention is also paid to their organizational responsibilities and duties, their role with parents and even their accountability to the preschool

director but there is little to no mention of establishing more than a professional relationship with them when the preschool is a Christian ministry of the church.

One possible way to address this issue might be to create a plan to involve more church members as volunteers in the class room, in opportunities such as mystery readers, assistants, and guests for special lessons or topics where they can contribute to the learning process. Involving church members in this way would help to connect teachers and church members directly and help them to be closer partners in ministry and develop personal relationships. Teachers would appreciate the extra help, if it is not administratively encumbering to set up, and church members would likely become more invested in the ministry at the preschool through their active participation.

Showing teachers appreciation at different times of the year and recognizing them at church services can also go a long way to promote the relationship. It would certainly reaffirm their teaching as a form of ministry and help them to feel more included as a part of the church. Another great idea that one of the churches implemented was that they had people in the church praying for the teachers on a regular basis and even took prayer requests from the teachers. This furthers the connection with the church and helps teachers feel part of the overall ministry of the church and that they are not only appreciated, but also cared for and loved by the congregation as individuals. We are supposed to pray for those in authority and in positions of responsibility, so it makes perfect sense to pray for these teachers charged with the important task of instructing the children.

The Bible holds teachers in high esteem, listing teaching as one of the roles of those who are part of the ministry of the church: “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance,

forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues” (I Cor. 12:28). Teaching is clearly part of the Great Commission in Matthew which tells us to go teach all that Jesus has taught us. This means that teachers in Christian preschools in United Methodist churches are in ministry as coworkers with the members of the church, its staff, and its other ministries. Treating these teachers as missionaries with the children instead of just hired help would help the relationship between the preschools and the churches immensely. Establishing supportive and healthy relationship with the teachers and their families will only serve to promote the preschool and church relationship.

Third Finding: Leadership at the preschool director and church staff positions must be of one accord.

One of the very early lessons about the community of believers in the book of Acts was that they were of one accord and had all things in common. Church leaders would do well to apply this same principle to the preschool director and church staff positions. The people serving in these key roles should be of one accord in terms of the vision and mission of the preschool ministry and how it relates to the general church ministry. Constant communication and good personal relationships between these two people are crucial to the success of the integration of the preschool and church ministry.

One of the keys to developing healthy and collaborative relationships between preschools and churches based on the study is having staff who are on the same page. Most of those interviewed in the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI) could point to an earlier period in the relationship between the preschool and the church where the preschool director, the pastor of the church, or other church staff were not working well together. At times, this breakdown in communication and collaboration was attributed to people not sharing a common vision or holding the same beliefs, and at other times it was that the preschool and the church had

gotten to a point where they were operating as two separate entities. The financial aspect of the relationship was also mentioned as one of those things that had affected the relationship negatively. Those interviewed often attributed the improvement in their relationship to the preschool director and the church staff person being of one accord and to there being staff changes in one or both positions.

While this was a factor that contributed to collaboration in the relationship, having staff changes was also seen as a factor that could hinder the relationship. This is because the study was conducted in United Methodist churches where pastoral staff are subject to the itinerant system and regular pastoral changes. Some of the preschool directors shared that changes in the church staff often affected their relationship. Changes in the pastoral leadership at the church led to adjustments in the relationship to consider the new pastor's vision and priorities for the overall ministry of the church. In one site, the pastor and preschool director came in at almost the same time. This allowed them to work together to be on the same page and to share a similar vision for their work together. This is very uncommon though as most preschool directors had long tenures and therefore had served under several pastors. This means that new pastoral staff coming into a church with a preschool must place an emphasis on understanding the current relationship before they seek to make any significant changes.

In my review of literature, I found information about aligning calendars and goals for the preschool and church ministries, how to set up a Christian curriculum, and information about how to organize a preschool and get it started, but not so much about the preschool director and church staff having a shared vision of how the two ministries could have collaborative and healthy relationships (Krych; Tobey; Evans et al.; Munro and Shaver). Senior pastors should be visionaries when it comes to preschool ministries and not just managers or administrators.

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. (Carter and Curtis 22)

Fourth Finding: Location, Location, Location: Where the preschool is located in your facility matters.

Another interesting finding in this study was that the physical location of the preschool within the church building in relationship to the church offices had a direct impact on the relationship between the preschool and the church. In sites where the preschool was located on a separate wing or floor, maintaining a collaborative and healthy relationship seemed to take more intentional effort. In sites where the preschool and church were physically closer together, there seemed to be more informal communication and sharing which led to more collaborative relationships with less effort. This also held true in cases where preschool families and church members had to go through or interact with each other's staff offices or ministry areas because of location. Since the study concluded that communication was indeed the top factor contributing to a healthy and collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church, where you locate the preschool within a church facility could be an important factor.

A lot of the literature about preschools and daycares covers the amount of space and type of site you ideally want in order to run a program, but the location of the site in relation to the church offices and ministry is usually not even discussed (Evans et al.; Munro and Shaver; Krych). States have regulations about the amount of space needed per child and the minimum staff required, but these regulations and guidelines do not take into account the need for preschools in churches to coordinate their use of space with other groups and they certainly do not take into account the need for the use of space to help the relationship be collaborative and healthy. This responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the church and preschool staff as

they work out the allocation and use of space in ways that benefit their relationship and individual ministries at the same time.

Though it is convenient to have separate facilities, even separate floors or buildings for everyday operational purposes, the fact remains that such arrangements can make the relationships become more difficult to maintain, grow, and nurture. Where the facilities are arranged in such a way that the staff of the preschool and the staff of the church, the church members, and the preschool families do not interact on a regular basis because of the physical constraint, efforts must be made to provide other opportunities for such interaction. Otherwise, the preschool and church become more like roommates and less like partners in ministry and the relationship is harder to grow and maintain.

Fifth Finding: Having the senior pastor support the preschool ministry with his presence greatly helps to promote a healthy and collaborative relationship.

One of the most crucial findings of this study was that the closeness of the relationship between the preschool director and the senior pastor of the church is absolutely crucial to establishing and maintaining a healthy and collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church. In the smaller churches in the study, the senior pastor was the person in charge of the relationship with the preschool and was often involved in chapel, activities, and functions. However, in several sites in the study, the person in charge of the relationship with the preschool was an associate pastor or another person in charge of children's ministries on the church staff. This is a natural alignment for ministry and makes logical sense, but it also created distance between the senior pastor and the preschool, and this was perceived negatively by preschool directors and teachers as observed in the surveys and interviews. Preschool directors often expressed in the interviews a desire to have more involvement by the senior pastor and a stronger

ministry of presence with the preschool families. When asked “If you could change one thing in the relationship between the preschool and the church, what would it be and why?” Several directors and church staff shared that they wished more preschool families would be a part of the church, and having more direct involvement by the senior pastor was pointed out as one of the keys to accomplish this.

The literature on preschool ministries points to the importance of the preschool director but little is said about the involvement of the senior pastor in larger churches. A good example of this is the United Methodist guidelines prepared by the Board of Discipleship (Appendix E) which mentions the pastor only in fourteen places and mostly does so in relation to the pastor’s administrative duties and responsibilities.

The director and pastor have a mutually supportive relationship (Paredes, Callis, and Gordon).

In comparison, when the weekday preschool program director or weekday preschool program are mentioned, things are explained and outlined in much greater detail and, as can be expected, much of the responsibility for the relationship is placed on the director or the program itself not to mention that the director is mentioned in every single section of the document at length. The Weekday Preschool Ministry Program has developed a strong and healthy relationship with the church and the pastor resulting in open communication and cooperation (Paredes, Callis, and Gordon).

In my estimation, this is due to the fact that the senior pastors in larger churches are often not involved directly with the preschool programs. This unfortunately affects the relationship with the preschool and the church and is one of the factors that hinders the growth of preschool families involved in the church. In a multi-staff church of over 1001+ members, it is

clearly difficult for the senior pastor to be involved with every ministry area of the church directly. Preschool ministry, however, is one of the areas that the study revealed could greatly benefit from senior pastor involvement and support and which potentially could yield church growth.

Christian education is one of the main roles of pastors as established in Scripture and is clearly part of the Great Commission to go and “teach.” Senior pastors should want to be more engaged in their preschool ministries as a way of fulfilling that Great Commission with the children whom Jesus welcomed and blessed. Helping preschool families and children see the senior pastor as their pastor would surely help further the relationship between the preschool families and the church and would help preschool families feel more comfortable coming to the church. Senior pastors also signal, through their participation, their support for the preschool ministry and can encourage other church members to want to be involved, which in and of itself, is one of the factors that promotes the preschool/church relationship based on this project.

John Wesley, as the leader of the Methodist movement experienced disconnect with his own school at Kingswood when he hired headmasters to be in charge of the staff and educational program there. He was only able to visit occasionally and found himself frustrated by what he called the gap between the “ideal and real.” The ideal, of course, was his vision for the school and the real was what the headmaster was implementing, which was not always up to par with Wesley’s expectations.

At times, preschool directors and senior pastors can have unrealistic expectations of each other, but communication can help them find common ground and establish a strategy together to help promote the collaborative and healthy relationship they want to see between the preschool and the church. A healthy and collaborative relationship between the preschool and the church

begins with a healthy and collaborative personal relationship between the senior pastor and the preschool director.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

This study should be used as a resource for the development of healthy and collaborative relationships between preschools and churches. The study included 12 preschool ministries, providing a good sampling from which to learn. Each preschool and church relationship had its own setting and organization, yet shared a common goal of being in ministry to children and their families. If the findings in this study are applied to preschool ministries, the relationships will become healthier and more collaborative over time. Most of the recommendations and findings in this study can be implemented with enough time, staff buy-in and organization to produce long term results.

This study could also serve to spark discussions among existing preschool directors and church staff as to how to better connect preschool teachers with the ministry team so that they do not feel so isolated and underappreciated. The study made me wonder if preschool teachers are ever truly asked and/or given the opportunity to share what some of their views are about the preschool ministry, the church ministry, and the families they serve. Preschool directors and church staff reviewing the findings in this study would do well to pay attention to this important connection, or rather misconnection, with their general staff. Some preschool directors also alluded to a possible similar disconnect on the church staff side, in the sense that some church staff do not see a connection between their ministry area and the ministry of the preschool and therefore don't take an interest in this ministry.

This study informs the practice of ministry in that the study brings to light some aspects of the preschool and church relationship that don't seem to be covered very extensively in the

literature. In fact, a lot of the articles about preschool ministry that I found had to do with curriculum, accreditation, history, organization, and structure of the program and the school day, but very little has recently been written, that I could find in journal articles, regarding the relationship between the preschool and the church as partners in ministry. The literature review showed that there is a lot of information regarding education and preschool education; there is information about the theological foundation for preschool ministries and other collaborative ministries that benefit society as a whole, but there are not enough resources on “how to make it work” collaboratively over the long-term for churches and preschools looking to improve their relationship.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in United Methodist Churches with preschools in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference. The general findings from the study should be translatable and applicable to other churches in other denominations and geographical locations engaged in preschool ministries. However, some of the assumptions of policy, theology, and missional understanding of these ministries might vary with different denominations and require consideration. The study approaches the research questions from a distinctly United Methodist theological, historical, and organizational point of view that might not be suitable or applicable to other denominations that don't share our doctrine, history, or polity. The findings, however, could be applied fairly broadly in any preschool/church setting where the preschool ministry was seen as a part of the church ministry.

Preschool and church ministry are affected greatly by the context and community they serve. In that regard, this study will be more easily applied to suburban settings, like those of the churches and preschools that took part in the study, mainly churches and preschools large

enough to have at least 3 classes of different age levels from K2-K5 (two to five-year-old).

Atlanta is a diverse area, and though the principles learned from this project might work in other settings, there might be socio-economic and cultural factors that shape the relationships between preschools/churches in other areas which are not covered in this study. Another limitation of the study is that, even though churches of varying sizes were invited to participate in the study, most of the 12 churches that did partake in the study were larger churches with over 1001+ members and with a multi-church staff. This means that some smaller churches with, for example, a smaller staff and smaller membership, might find parts of the study not applicable to their setting.

This study was done with established churches and preschools, so it might not be applicable in its entirety to the mission field where flexibility of relationship, organization, and resource allocation might be necessary. This project also sought to study relationships that, for the most part, had been in existence for several years, so some of its findings might not be as applicable to a brand-new preschool/church relationship.

This study interviewed only staff and in doing so did not gather data from church members and preschool families or people in the community, which might be useful information to have in developing collaborative and healthy relationships between preschools and churches. Including preschool families and church members in a follow-up study could prove extremely beneficial to completing the picture of the relationship and providing a more well-rounded view of the relationship and a more comprehensive understanding of what helps, hinders, or promotes the relationship.

I was hoping to have more churches participate in the study but the response rate to the Discovery Survey was very low. The timing of the study in January through March after

Christmas might have played a role in the low response rate. It would have been useful to have more participation with a larger sampling of churches and preschools from the district in the study, including churches of smaller membership who have a preschool.

Unexpected Observations

One of the unexpected observations from the study was that some churches have moved away from the traditional model of having a preschool director and a separate children's minister or children's coordinator. These churches have combined the positions into one, eliminating some of the issues of communication between the two positions and providing greater accountability and connection between their preschool ministry and the children's church ministry. People in these positions interestingly talked about the preschool ministry as just another ministry of the church, instead of a separate ministry outside of the general church ministry and vision.

Another unanticipated observation was how important location can be to the relationship between the preschool and the church staff. There was a marked difference in the relationship where the preschool and church staff were physically separated into different floors or buildings. In sites with this physical separation, where the relationship was healthy and collaborative, according to the surveys and interviews, there were practices and policies in place, as pointed out in under the findings, to ensure that the relationship was not just maintained but nurtured.

A sad observation was how underappreciated and misunderstood preschool teachers feel. Some of the surveys reflected a disconnect between the preschool teachers and the director and/or the church staff. Even though almost every preschool director and church staff person expressed appreciation for each other, the teachers in some of the preschools clearly did not feel that the church appreciated their work with the children or felt that it wasn't considered ministry

in the way other activities at the church were viewed. Given that the teachers have the most interaction with children and their families on a regular basis, lack of attention to the relationship with the teachers will be detrimental to the preschool/church relationship in most cases.

A very hopeful observation from the study was that there are several senior pastors serving some of these larger churches that realize how vital preschool ministry is to their overall ministry to the community. These pastors and church staff members in positions of influence and power are using their positions to promote the preschool and church relationship and maximize the effectiveness of this ministry as an evangelistic tool to reach the community for Jesus Christ. They are also providing intentional opportunities for church members and preschool families to be in mission and ministry together outside of the preschool ministry by preparing school lunches, collecting supplies to donate for missions, and engaging them in projects to better the physical facilities of the church and preschool.

Recommendations

Intentionality in the Relationship

The key recommendation I would make as a result of conducting this study is that preschools and churches should plan to be intentional about developing their relationship with each other, the greater community, and other similar programs. Since communication has been identified as the number one factor in helping these relationships be healthy and collaborative, policies and practices that promote communication and coordination between the preschool and church should be among the top priorities. The relationship between the preschool and church staff should be developed over time and should include more than just the occasional appreciation gift or meal. Relationships are not built overnight so these relationships should be developed progressively and consistently. Every effort should be made to promote the interaction

between the two groups, and informal as well as formal methods of communication between the two should be promoted.

My suggestion for the development of an intentional plan to develop the relationship between the church and preschool staff would include the sharing of staff lunches, Christmas parties, mission opportunities, and even retreats so that the staff could relate socially with each other while being engaged in activities that promote a unity of vision and purpose. Engaging in service opportunities together where the preschool and church staff serve side by side in missions, for example, would promote needed collaboration skills and would help the staff to get to know each other over time. A great way to connect the preschool ministry to the local school would be to have both staff prepare lunches for children on the free and reduced lunch program. Even a Saturday retreat at a relaxing location with a relaxed agenda with plenty of times for preschool and church staff to spend time together would help to build camaraderie and promote relationships that could develop into friendships around common interests.

Another way of bringing the staff closer together in their relationship would be to have some visioning and planning sessions around the preschool and church ministry relationship at least once a year. This could be an opportunity for teachers to share their input about how they see the preschool ministry and for church staff to share the ways in which they see themselves as connecting or collaborating.

Likeminded Staff on the Same Page

The second recommendation would be to find the likeminded staff to engage in preschool ministry. This means finding like-minded individuals who buy into the ministry, values, and beliefs of the church while also buying into the importance of being engaged in preschool programs as a ministry with children in the community who might not attend the church. The

preschool staff needs to understand their work as ministry and as an extension of the overall mission of the church, and the church needs to understand that they are called to be in ministry with children and that the preschool is a natural progression of that ministry. Having people in the preschool director's position and church staff position who are on the same page regarding the vision for the preschool ministry, and who support each other, will not only improve communication but will also have a unifying effect upon the ministry of the preschool and the church. In the ideal scenario, the preschool staff should be able to view the church staff as an extension of itself, and the church staff should be able to view the preschool staff as an extension of itself. This begins at the top when the leadership models true partnership in ministry and works together collaboratively.

Discipleship of Preschool Families

In the future, a study of effective practices to incorporate preschool families into the church would be useful. This seems to be one of the struggles shared by all the preschool ministries in this study. Most of the church staff interviewed expressed frustration at the low numbers of preschool families joining the church and at the low number of church families utilizing the preschool for their children's education. From the interviews, I gathered that there really is no discipleship model in place at these churches to take preschool families and make them a part of the church membership.

A simple discipleship model for preschool families could start with a simple survey given at the beginning of the year to become familiar with the family, their hobbies, interests, and religious affiliation if any. This information could then be used to identify preschool families who do not have an active participation in a faith community. The discipleship model could involve developing ministries that are related to their interest and hobbies or that address their

family's needs. For example, if the survey revealed that many parents were struggling with potty training, the church children's ministry in conjunction with the preschool could put together potty-training tricks and tips, or short classes or videos to be offered to any interested parents in the church, the preschool, and the general community. Another possible direction that could be taken to disciple these families into the church would be to hold community-wide fall festivals, yard sales, or activities that would bring them together with church families for a day of faith, fun, and fellowship. The key would be to develop an intentional plan to build the preschool family and church relationship to the point that families want to become a part of the church and are introduced to the Christian faith if they do not already know it from prior experience or through their preschool children attending the school.

Incorporating Church Members into the Preschool Ministry

I think in the same or in a separate study, exploring ways to involve church families in the preschool ministry would be equally valuable. Preschool staff also expressed a desire to have more general church membership involvement in the preschool. Finding out what the factors are that hinder these two constituents from interacting more with each other could prove very beneficial to making the relationship between the preschool and the church more symbiotic and healthier. Some church members might not be able to be physically present to volunteer at the preschool during regular school hours because of job and family commitments, so finding activities and opportunities for them to support the preschool ministry outside of school hours would be important.

Integration of Ministry

The findings in this study could be used to enhance the relationships between existing preschools and the churches that they are housed in and to help them become more integrated as

partners in ministry. There are clearly simple steps that can be taken to further the relationship and become more intentional about being collaborative as illustrated by the findings and data of this study. Some of these could be easily overlooked, especially in a site where the relationship has been around for a while and each ministry has settled into familiarity. Hopefully, this study will shed some light in those areas and spark some conversations among preschool directors and church staff about steps they can take to improve their ministries together. Integrating the preschool and church ministry as much as possible is one of the keys to having healthy and collaborative relationships.

Postscript

Preschool ministry done with excellence and as a full ministry of the church can be one of the most vital outreach and evangelistic ministries of the church. I have truly enjoyed getting to know preschool directors, pastors and church staff engaged in this ministry and see all the wonderful work they are doing to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with these children and their families. In conducting this study, I have also become painfully aware of the disconnect that exists between some churches and their preschool ministries. I wish there was an opportunity for preschool directors and their church staff counterparts to come together periodically to evaluate their relationships, learn from people in other settings doing preschool ministry, and to share ideas with each other about how to bring their constituents together as closer partners in ministry.

We live in a time where it is getting harder and harder to reach new people through the regular ministries of the church. Preschool ministry is one of those areas where the general community still sees value and relevance in the church. For that reason, I believe it is important that the church not only do an excellent job educating children in their care but also in providing a witness to the community about what it means to be collaborative in helping these children

grow, develop, and mature into productive members of society. Reaching these families not just for the sake of numbers but for their sake would be an amazing testimony. Most of these families are young families who have so much to gain from a church environment that can help them learn to parent in a Christ-centered biblical way. The church and preschool can help teach these children and families about God's great love in Jesus Christ and in doing so help transform their lives.

Preschool ministry, as an evangelistic and outreach ministry, remains one of the most untapped ministries for the church of the twenty-first century. The potential is there for the church and the preschool to become not only the place the children call school, but the place they consider their spiritual home and the place where they experience the love of God. With such low numbers of preschool families becoming members of the church, more needs to be done to disciple preschool families and to strengthen the bond between the preschool and the church. Priority must be given to ministries such as this that touch the lives of those in the community in such a significant way at such an early age.

In closing, I just want to express my appreciation to the churches where I have served that are engaged in preschool ministries. In each of them I have seen a desire to truly love and serve children and their families. I am grateful for preschool teachers, directors, and staff who work tirelessly to meet the needs of preschool families and for the church staff who continue to bring this vital ministry to the forefront of their church's vision and mission. I am also grateful for my family who has supported me throughout this project and this time of personal growth and learning. Without their support, this would not have been possible. Finally, I want to thank Asbury Theological Seminary and the Beeson Scholarship for giving me the opportunity to

pursue this project and degree. I hope that others will learn from this project's findings and be more fruitful in their preschool and church ministries as they seek to be partners in ministry.

APPENDIX A

Discovery Survey (DS)

*** 1. You are invited to be in a research study being done by Rev. Miguel A. Vélez, a Doctor of Ministry student at Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because of your role with the preschool ministry of a church in the Atlanta Emory District of the United Methodist Church. The purpose of this study is to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out this online survey. The survey will ask for some demographic information and take approximately 7 minutes. The preschool director or equivalent and/or the church staff person or volunteer for the preschool will know that you are participating in the study but will not know your responses. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. The researcher will know your identity but will use coded names in the actual writing of the dissertation. If something makes you feel bad while you are in the study, please tell Miguel A. Vélez (404) 403-4688. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want. By selecting Yes below you agree to take part in this survey and to the terms above.**

(Select one option)

Yes

No

2. What is your church membership? (Select one option)

0-100

101-200

201-500

501-1000

1001+

3. How would you describe the community where your church is located? (Select one option)

Urban

Suburban

Rural

*** 4. Does your church have a preschool ministry or share facilities with a preschool or early education program with at least one K3, K4, and K5 class?**

(Select one option)

Yes

No

*** 5. Has your preschool or early education program been in existence for over 1 year? (Select one option)**

*** Required Information**

Yes

No

*** 6. Who is in charge of your preschool or early education ministry (preschool director or top staff person for the preschool or equivalent)? Please provide their name, email, and phone number (this information will be used to contact them to obtain their permission to conduct the study with them and their lead teachers and to set up a time to take the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview).**

*** 7. Who is in charge of your preschool or early education ministry on the church side (church staff or volunteer in charge of the relationship with the preschool)? Please provide their name, email, and phone number (this information will be used to contact them to invite them to take part in the study and to set up a time to take the Preschool and Church Leadership Interview),**

APPENDIX B

Preschool and Church Staff Survey (PCSS)

*** 1. You are invited to be in a research study being done by Rev. Miguel A. Vélez, a Doctor of Ministry student at Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because of your role with the preschool ministry of a church in the Atlanta Emory District of the United Methodist Church. The purpose of this study is to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and**

their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out this online survey about the relationship of the preschool

and the church. The survey will ask for some demographic information and take approximately 15 minutes. The preschool director or equivalent and/or the church staff person or volunteer for the preschool will know that

you are participating in the study but will not know your responses. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. The researcher will know your identity but will use coded names in the actual writing of the dissertation. If something makes you feel bad while

you are in the study, please tell Miguel A. Vélez (404) 403-4688. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want. By selecting Yes below, you agree to take part in this survey and to the terms above. (Select one option)

Yes

No

*** 2. What is your job role? (Select one option)**

Preschool director or equivalent

Church Staff or volunteer

K2 Teacher

K3 Teacher

K4 Teacher

K5 Teacher

*** 3. What preschool or church do you work for? (Please abbreviate UMC after church name for uniformity, if listing a preschool enter Preschool name at church name.)**

4. What is your age? (Select one option)

18-24

25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

5. What is your gender? (Select one option.)

*** Required Information**

Male
Female

6. Would you consider the relationship between the preschool and church collaborative? (Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

7. Would you say that the preschool and church have good communication?

(Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

8. Would you say that the preschool and church share common values? (Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

9. Would you say that the preschool and church coordinate well their use of space? (Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

10. Would you say that the preschool and church constituents are given opportunities to interact on a regular basis? (Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree

Disagree
Strongly disagree

11. Would you say that the preschool and church have a healthy relationship?

(Select one option.)

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

12. What would you consider the most important factor contributing to a collaborative preschool and church relationship? (Select one option.)

Communication
Common Values
Sharing of Space
Staff Support
Financial Arrangement
Other (Please specify) _____

13. What would you say is the factor that most hinders a collaborative and healthy relationship between the preschool and the church?

(Select one option.)

Lack of Communication
Differing Values
Competition for Space
Lack of Staff Support
Financial Arrangement
Other (Please specify) _____

14. Please share any additional comments regarding the relationship between the preschool and the church. What do you feel is helpful or hinders the relationship from either side.

APPENDIX C

Preschool and Church Leadership Interview (PCLI)

Consent Statement: Thank you for agreeing to this interview today. Our conversation will seek to better understand the existing relationship between the preschool and the church. This conversation will be recorded and parts of it will likely be integrated into this project that is aimed at helping develop best practices for preschool ministries. You are encouraged to be open in your responses and to speak freely about the topics discussed. You can take time to clarify statements when needed or to qualify your answer with examples. Your answers will not be shared with the church or preschool in any way that can be identified as coming from you. Do you have any questions about the interview process? Do you agree to continue the interview?

1. What is your role and involvement with the preschool and/or the church? How did you come to be in your current position?
Probes: What are your day to day responsibilities with the preschool program?
2. What beliefs or values do the church and the preschool share and how are they reflected or communicated?
Probes: Which of the shared values or beliefs do you consider important to the preschool ministry and how are they helpful?
3. How would you describe the relationship between the preschool and the church?
Probes: What in the relationship made you define it in this way?
4. What factors can you identify that contribute to the collaboration and relationship of the preschool and the church? Which factors do you see that hinder the relationship?
Probes: Can you give an example of how the factors hindered or helped collaboration?
5. In what ways is communication shared between the preschool and the church? What type of information is shared?
Probes: Can you identify any formal communication channels that exist? Informal ones?
6. How do the preschool and church share facilities and how is the sharing of space worked out?
Probes: Is there any space used exclusively by the preschool?
7. What do the preschool and church do to promote their relationship?
Probes: Are there any specific yearly or regular events, meetings, or activities that promote the relationship?
8. If you could improve one aspect of the relationship between the preschool and church, what would it be and why?
Probes: What would you be willing to do in your position to improve this aspect?

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Rev. Miguel A. Vélez-Andújar
3188 Galangale Way
Atlanta, Georgia 30340 (404)403-4688

Preschool Ministries and Churches that House Them:

A Study to Develop Best Practices to Promote Healthy Collaborative Relationships

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Rev. Miguel A. Vélez, a Doctor of Ministry student at Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because of your role with the preschool ministry of a church in the Atlanta Emory District of the United Methodist Church.

The purpose of this study is to determine factors that both promote and hinder the development of healthy and cooperative relationships between preschool ministries and their host churches in the Atlanta Emory District of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church in order to identify best practices for these partnerships.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out an online survey about the relationship of the preschool and the church. The survey will ask for some demographic information, include a statement regarding confidentiality, and your consent for the use of your responses in the study, and take approximately 15 minutes.

The preschool director or equivalent and the church staff person or volunteer for the preschool will know that you are participating in the study but will not know your responses. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. By signing this letter, you indicate that you understand that the researcher will know your identity but will use coded names in the actual writing of the dissertation. If something makes you feel bad while you are in the study, please tell Miguel A. Vélez. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want.

You can ask Miguel A. Vélez questions any time about anything in this study

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

Date Signed

APPENDIX E

Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches

*“God begins his
work in children”*

— John Wesley



2014-2015, VOLUME 2



Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches Developed by Lynne Paredes, Gayle Callis, and Melanie C. Gordon
Copyright ©2014 General Board of Discipleship. All Rights Reserved.
Permission is granted to make copies of this material for use by local congregations and weekday preschool ministry programs of The United Methodist Church.

General Board Of Discipleship
1908 Grand Avenue
P.O. Box 340003
Nashville, TN 37203

“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*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of Guidelines	4.....
Philosophy	5.....
Administrative	6 - 11.....
Program	6.....
Staff	8.....
Qualities of Early Childhood Staff	8.....
Management	9.....
Church and Preschool Relationship	10.....
Children	12.....
Partnering with Parents	13.....
Classroom Management.....	15.....
Class Size	15.....
Staff Interactions	15 - 17.....
Staff to Child	15.....
Staff to Parents	16.....
Staff to Staff	16.....
Curriculum	18.....
Health and Safety	19 - 22 ..
Policies and Licensing	19.....
Physical Environment	20 - 21.....
Insurance	20.....
Outdoor Play Space	20.....
Indoor Space	20.....
Indoor Administrative and Storage Space	21.....
Classroom Space	21.....
Christian Education	23.....

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.ⁱ 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.”*ⁱⁱ

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*.ⁱⁱⁱ

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

— 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.

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.

"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 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

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.^{iv}

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.

The 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

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.^v

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

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.^{vi} [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.^{vii}

___ / 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*.^{viii}

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:

The word “parents” refers to all legal custodial caregivers

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: ix

_____	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

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]_x

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

Developmentally appropriate activities and materials are used._{xi}

_ _ _ /21 = Curriculum Total

_ _ _ ÷ 21 = _ _ _ /100%

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policies and Licensing

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

INSURANCE

Appropriate liability and child accident insurance is currently in effect.^{xii}

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.^{xiii} The preschool follows *The Dirty Dozen Checklist* found at www.nrpa.org.^{xiv}

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*^{xv} 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.

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.

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*

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.^{xvi}

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

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

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

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 ©

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

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.

Council for Professional Recognition

Child Development Associate [CDA]

This is the National Credentialing Program.

Appendix Two - Director Self-Evaluation

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:

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:

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:

I feel that my strengths are:

My professional goals for next year are:

The goals for the school for next year are:

My reflections on the past year are:

Signature

Date

SINGLE REVIEWER

Reviewed by

Date

Results will be reviewed with director on:

GROUP REVIEW

Reviewed by

Date

Reviewed by

Date

Reviewed by

Date

Results will be reviewed with director on:

Appendix Three - Staff Self-Evaluation

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:

I feel that my strengths are:

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

My goals for next year are:

My suggestions for our school are:

My reflections on the past year are:

Signature

Date

Appendix Four - Parent Evaluation

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?

Have you seen anything that you disliked? Please explain.

How has your child's teacher helped you most?

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.

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

What are your dreams for your child?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MethodistInsurance.org



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

The Ministry Protection Memo (MPM) series is offered as an educational tool in support of United Methodist Insurance's property and casualty insurance program to help you develop loss control and ministry protection procedures. United Methodist Insurance does not, with these MPMs, seek to establish a particular standard of care or to provide legal advice. Church leaders are encouraged to consult competent attorneys with regard to the church's specific needs. United Methodist Insurance encourages reproduction and distribution of this MPM within the United Methodist denomination. Others may contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center, via telephone at 1-800-975-5442 for permission to reproduce MPM.

United Methodist Insurance is an all-lines property and casualty (including Workers' Compensation) nonprofit captive reinsurer owned by its member Annual Conference and agency insureds. The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) fulfills its Book of Discipline fiduciary oversight through its membership on the Board of Directors of United Methodist Insurance. For more information, contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center or go to our website www.unitedmethodistinsurance.org.

The United Methodist Insurance Service Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time. You may contact the Service Center at 1-800-975-5442.

Appendix Eleven - Managing Risks in Child Care Centers

MINISTRY PROTECTION MEMO | www.UnitedMethodistInsurance.org



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.

The Ministry Protection Memo (MPM) series is offered as an educational tool in support of United Methodist Insurance's property and casualty insurance program to help you develop loss control and ministry protection procedures. United Methodist Insurance does not, with these MPMs, seek to establish a particular standard of care or to provide legal advice. Church leaders are encouraged to consult competent attorneys with regard to the church's specific needs. United Methodist Insurance encourages reproduction and distribution of this MPM within the United Methodist denomination. Others may contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center, via telephone at 1-800-975-5442 for permission to reproduce MPM.

United Methodist Insurance is an all-lines property and casualty (including Workers' Compensation) nonprofit captive reinsurer owned by its member Annual Conference and agency insureds. The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) fulfills its Book of Discipline fiduciary oversight through its membership on the Board of Directors of United Methodist Insurance. For more information, contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center or go to our website www.unitedmethodistinsurance.org.

The United Methodist Insurance Service Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time. You may contact the Service Center at 1-800-975-5442.

Appendix Twelve - Screening Workers

dMethodistInsurance.org



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

United Methodist Insurance Ministry Protection Memo - 1

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).

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.

The Ministry Protection Memo (MPM) series is offered as an educational tool in support of United Methodist Insurance's property and casualty insurance program to help you develop loss control and ministry protection procedures. United Methodist Insurance does not, with these MPMS, seek to establish a particular standard of care or to provide legal advice. Church leaders are encouraged to consult competent attorneys with regard to the church's specific needs. United Methodist Insurance encourages reproduction and distribution of this MPM within the United Methodist denomination. Others may contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center, via telephone at 1-800-975-5442 for permission to reproduce MPM.

United Methodist Insurance is an all-lines property and casualty (including Workers' Compensation) nonprofit captive reinsurer owned by its member Annual Conference and agency insureds. The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) fulfills its Book of Discipline fiduciary oversight through its membership on the Board of Directors of United Methodist Insurance. For more information, contact the United Methodist Insurance Service Center or go to our website www.unitedmethodistinsurance.org.

The United Methodist Insurance Service Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time. You may contact the Service Center at 1-800-975-5442.

Appendix Thirteen - Weekday Preschool Book List

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. Joesse
- *Papa Do You Love Me* by Barbara M. Joesse
- *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/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- i Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs are defined as any licensed or unlicensed program that works with birth through pre-kindergarten age children. This includes Parents' Day Out, Part-time and Full-time childcare programs.
- ii "Childcare and the Church," The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, 2012. Copyright 2012 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Resolution #63. Used by permission.
- iii "Childcare and the Church," The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, 2012. Copyright 2008 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Resolution #63. Used by permission.
- iv Copple & Bredekemp. Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8. Third Edition. Washington, DC: NAYEC, 2009.
- v "The Economic Community", The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2008. Copyright 2008 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Social Principles, paragraph 163.C. Used by permission.
"Living Wage Model", The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, 2008. Copyright 2012 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Resolution #4101. Used by permission.
- vi "Shared Space", Melanie Gordon, General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church.
- vii United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust. Resources. <http://theumpact.org/education/> . May 2011.
- viii U.S. Department of Justice. "Child Care Centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act". <http://www.ada.gov/childq%26a.htm> . May 2011.
- ix United Methodist Association of Preschools-Florida. Gold Seal Accreditation Standards. www.umapfl.com . April 2011.
- x "What Children Need to Know". General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. Available August 2011
- xi Copple & Bredekemp. Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8. Third Edition. Washington, DC: NAYEC, 2009.
- xii Contact your Annual Conference office or the United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust <http://theumpact.org/ministry-protection/> . May 2011.
- xiii U.S. Consumer Product Safety Committee. "Is Your Playground a Safe Place to Play". <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/Pg1.pdf> . May 2011.

^{xiv} National Playground Safety Institute. “The Dirty Dozen: 12 Playground Hazards”. http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore_Parks_and_Recreation/Project_Initiatives/DirtyDozen_Final.pdf . May 2011.

^{xv} U. S. Department of Justice. “2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design”. http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm . May 2011.

^{xvi} General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. GBOD Children’s booklist. <http://ministrywithchildren.wordpress.com/childrens-books/> . March 2011

WORKS CITED

- Alonso Terme, Rosa Maria. "The Order of Love in Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas Aquinas." *Landas*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2015, pp. 51–85.
- Ansari, Arya. "The Persistence of Preschool Effects from Early Childhood through Adolescence." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 110, no. 7, Oct. 2018, pp. 952–73. American Psychological Association. Journals Department, 750 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20002. Tel: 800-374-2721; Tel: 202-336-5510; Fax: 202-336-5502; e-mail: order@apa.org; Web site: <http://www.apa.org>.
- Baggini, Julian. "Plato V Aristotle 2,300 Years and We're Still Arguing about It." *TES: Times Educational Supplement*, no. 4618, Jan. 2005, p. 6.
- Baker, Frank. "Susanna Wesley: Puritan, Parent, Pastor, Protagonist, Pattern." *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition, Vol 2*, 1982, pp. 112–31.
- Bassok, Daphna, et al. "Are There Differences in Parents' Preferences and Search Processes across Preschool Types? Evidence from Louisiana." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 20180701, 20180701, pp. 43–54.
- Benoit, William L. "Isocrates and Plato on Rhetoric and Rhetorical Education." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1991, pp. 60–71.
- Bernard, H. Russell. *Research Methods in Anthropology : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Vol. 5th ed, AltaMira Press, 2011. *EBSCOhost*, <http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=364189&site=eds-live>.

- . *Social Research Methods : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications, c2000., 2000.
- Body, Alfred H. *John Wesley and Education*. First Edition, The Epworth Press, 1936.
- Burchinal, M. R., et al. "Relating Quality of Center-Based Child Care to Early Cognitive and Language Development Longitudinally." *Child Development*, vol. 71, no. 2, Apr. 2000, pp. 339–57. 10834469.
- Campbell, F. A., et al. "The Development of Cognitive and Academic Abilities: Growth Curves From an Early Childhood Educational Experiment." *DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY*, no. 2, 2001, p. 231.
- Carter, Margie, and Deb Curtis. *The Visionary Director: A Handbook for Dreaming, Organizing, and Improvising in Your Center*. 2nd ed, Redleaf Press, 2010.
- Conn, Walter E. "Personal Identity and Creative Self-Understanding: Contributions of Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson to the Psychological Foundations of Theology." *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1977, pp. 34–39.
- Council of State Governments. "Preschool Study Finds Long-Term Benefits." *State News (Council of State Governments)*, vol. 48, no. 2, Feb. 2005, p. 9.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed, SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Creswell, John W., and Gary A. Miller. "Research Methodologies and the Doctoral Process." *New Directions for Higher Education*, vol. 1997, no. 99, Fall 1997, p. 33.

DeFranzo, Susan E. "Why Use Demographic Questions in Surveys?" *Snap Surveys Blog*, 12 Mar. 2012, <https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/demographics-questions-surveys/>.

Discipleship Ministries. *Recommendations for Hiring a Weekday Preschool Ministry Director - Umcdiscipleship.Org*. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/recommendations-for-hiring-a-weekday-preschool-ministry-director>. Accessed 22 Oct. 2018.

Eastern Christian School. "The Value of a Christian Preschool and Elementary Education." *Eastern Christian School*, 22 May 2014, <https://www.easternchristian.org/2014/05/22/value-christian-elementary-education-interview-sandy-bottge/>.

Eavey, Charles Benton. *History of Christian Education*. Moody Press, 1964.

Elias, John L. *A History of Christian Education: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Perspectives*. Krieger, 2002.

Evans, et al. *Day Care*. Beacon, 1971.

Fernandez, Norma. *Early Childhood Education: The Sustainability of the Benefits of Preschool Participation in Abbott Districts*. 2009. Seton Hall University, EdD dissertation.

Foster, James D., and Glenn T. Moran. "Piaget and Parables: The Convergence of Secular and Scriptural Views of Learning." *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1985, pp. 97–103.

Fredericksburg Christian School. "Why Choose Christian Preschool for Your Child."

Fredericksburg Christian School, 8 Feb. 2016,

<https://fredericksburgchristian.com/blog/2016/02/08/why-christian-preschool/>.

Gangel, Kenneth O., and Warren S. Benson. *Christian Education: Its History and*

Philosophy. Moody Press, 1983.

Guralnick, Michael J., and Forrest C. Bennett. *The Effectiveness of Early Intervention for*

At-Risk and Handicapped Children. Academic Press, 1987.

Hatch, J. Amos, editor. *Qualitative Research in Early Childhood Settings*. Praeger, 1995.

Hauge, Matthew Ryan, and Andrew W. Pitts. *Ancient Education and Early Christianity*.

T&T Clark (February 11, 2016), 2016, /ip/Ancient-Education-and-Early-Christianity/717695239.

Krych, Margaret A., editor. *The Ministry of Children's Education: Foundations,*

Contexts, and Practices. Fortress Press, 2004.

Lascarides, V. Celia, and Blythe Simone Farb Hinitz. *History of Early Childhood*

Education: V. Celia Lascarides and Blythe F. Hinitz. Falmer Press, 2000.

Lazar, Irving, et al. "Lasting Effects of Early Education: A Report from the Consortium

for Longitudinal Studies." *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child*

Development, vol. 47, no. 2/3, Feb. 1982, p. 1.

Little, Lawrence C. *Foundations for a Philosophy of Christian Education*. Abingdon

Press, 1962.

Mashburn, Andrew J. *Preschool Quality and Cognitive Development of Preschoolers in*

Georgia. Georgia State University, PhD dissertation.

Matthew 28 Bible Commentary - Matthew Henry (Complete)

<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mh&b=40&c=28>.

Accessed 11 Apr. 2019.

Matthews, H. F. *Methodism and the Education of the People 1791-1851*. Epworth Press, 1949.

McGolerick, Elizabeth Weiss. "What Is Montessori Preschool? Finally, Montessori Explained." *SheKnows*, 22 May 2017,

<https://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/1006195/what-is-a-montessori-preschool>.

McKey, Ruth Hubbell, et al. *The Impact of Head Start on Children, Families and Communities. Final Report of the Head Start Evaluation, Synthesis and*

Utilization Project. Superintendent of Documents, U, 1985. *ERIC*,

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED263984>.

Montessori. *MONTESSORI, The Official International Montessori Site for Theory and Teacher Trainings Information*. <http://www.montessori.edu/>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2018.

Morgan, Harry. *Early Childhood Education : History, Theory, and Practice*. 2nd ed,

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011. *EBSCOhost*,

<http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=482930&site=eds-live>.

Muir, James R. "The History of Educational Ideas and the Credibility of Philosophy of Education." *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, vol. 30, no. 1, Apr. 1998, p. 7.

a9h.

Munro, Harry C., and Erwin L. Shaver. *Christian Education in Your Church*. Printed for the Leadership Training Pub. Association by the Bethany Press, 1933.

Natsiopoulou, Triantafyllia, and Michael Vitoulis. "Criteria of Parents for Choosing Preschool Centers during the Period of Economic Crisis in Greece." *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 3, Sept. 2015, pp. 698–708.

Newton, John. *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism*. Epworth Press, 1968.

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. "Child-Care Structure -> Process -> Outcome: Direct and Indirect Effects of Child-Care Quality on Young Children's Development." *Psychological Science*, vol. 13, no. 3, May 2002, pp. 199–206.

Nutbrown, Cathy, Peter Clough, and Philip Selbie. *Early Childhood Education: History, Philosophy, Experience*. SAGE, 2008.

Office of Headstart. "Head Start Programs.", US Department of Health and Human Services <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/about/head-start>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2018.

Oppenheim, Jerrold, and Theo MacGregor. *The Economics of Education: Public Benefits of High-Quality Preschool Education for Low-Income Children. Building Communities for Change*. 1 Nov. 2002.

Our Play-Based Curriculum | The Goddard School.

<https://www.goddardschool.com/philosophy/curriculum>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2018.

Paredes, Lynne, Gayle Callis, and Melanie C. Gordon. *Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches*. General Board of Discipleship, 2014.

- Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed., Sage Publications, 2002.
- Peisner-Feinberg, Ellen S., et al. "The Relation of Preschool Child-Care Quality to Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Trajectories through Second Grade." *Child Development*, no. 5, 2001, p. 1534.
- Percy, Susan. "Choosing a Preschool Program." *Georgia Trend*, vol. 30, no. 2, Oct. 2014, p. 38.
- Piaget, Jean, and Bärbel Inhelder. *The Psychology of the Child*. Basic Books, 2000. *Open WorldCat*, https://archive.org/details/psychologyofchil00piag_0.
- Pullen, Barksdale McPherson, III. *Decision-Making Process of Parents Choosing a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program*. Trinity International University, 2012. *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/docview/1294086903/abstract/CBB4697645314F1DPQ/1>.
- Rack, Henry D. *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. 2nd ed, Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Ramey, Craig T., Donna M. Bryant, and Tanya M. Suarez. "Preschool Compensatory Education and the Modifiability of Intelligence: A Critical Review." *Current Topics in Human Intelligence*, vol. 1, 1985, pp. 247–96. 1987-23341-001.
- Rock, Amanda. "Importance of Preschool Accreditation." *Verywell Family*, 28 June 2018, <https://www.verywellfamily.com/accreditation-2764973>.

- Schlager, Bernard. "Saints Basil and John Chrysostom on the Education of Christian Children." *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1991, pp. 37–55.
- Schweinhart, Lawrence J., David P. Weikart, and Mary B. Larner. "Consequences of Three Preschool Curriculum Models through Age 15." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, vol. 1, 1986, pp. 15–45.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.
- Setran, David P. "Exploring the History and the Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the Twenty-First Century." *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp. 202–06.
- Sisemore, John T., editor. *The Ministry of Religious Education*. Broadman Press, 1978.
- Teti, Douglas M., editor. *Handbook of Research Methods in Developmental Science*. 1st ed, Blackwell Pub, 2005.
- The Wesley Center Online: Sermon 95 - On The Education Of Children by John Wesley*. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-95-on-the-education-of-children>. Accessed 12 Apr. 2019.
- Tobey, Kathrene McLandress. *The Church Plans for Kindergarten Children*. Westminster Press, 1970.
- Tonias, Demetrios E. "What Does America Have to Do with Antioch?: John Chrysostom and the Contemporary Relevance of Patristics." *Currents in Theology and Mission*, vol. 43, no. 4, Oct. 2016, pp. 16–21.

- Ulich, Robert. *A History of Religious Education: Documents and Interpretations from the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*. New York University Press, 1968.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Georgia Head Start." *Benefits.Gov*, <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1905>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2018.
- Van Vleet, Carmella. "How to Pick a Preschool." *Parenting*, vol. 17, no. 1, Feb. 2003, p. 148.
- Vandell, Deborah Lowe, et al. "Do Effects of Early Child Care Extend to Age 15 Years? Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development." *Child Development*, vol. 81, no. 3, May 2010, pp. 737–56. 2010-09856-007, *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01431.x.
- White, Karl, and Glendon Casto. "An Integrative Review of Early Intervention Efficacy Studies with At-Risk Children: Implications for the Handicapped." *Analysis & Intervention in Developmental Disabilities*, vol. 5, no. 1–2, 1985, pp. 7–31. 1986-06976-001, *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1016/S0270-4684(85)80003-3.
- Willhauck, Susan. *John Wesley's View of Children: Foundations for Contemporary Christian Education*. The Catholic University of America, 1992.
- Zaslow, Martha, et al. "I. Quality Thresholds, Features, and Dosage in Early Care and Education: Introduction and Literature Review." *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, vol. 81, no. 2, June 2016, pp. 7–26. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1111/mono.12236.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Barber, Lucie W. "Are We Ready to Take Preschool Religious Education Seriously?" *Religious Education*, vol. 86, no. 1, 1991, pp. 62–72.
- . "Ministry to Parents of Little Children." *Religious Education*, vol. 74, no. 3, May 1979, pp. 263–69.
- . "Ministry with Parents of Infants and Preschool Children." *Religious Education*, vol. 69, no. 2, Mar. 1974, pp. 192–97.
- . *The Religious Education of Preschool Children*. Religious Education Pr, 1981.
- Benz, Carolyn R., and Isadore Newman. *Mixed Methods Research: Exploring the Interactive Continuum*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2008.
- Blazer, Doris A., and James W. Fowler, editors. *Faith Development in Early Childhood*. Sheed & Ward, 1989.
- Copple, Carol, and Sue Bredekamp, editors. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. 3rd ed, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009.
- Devitt, Patrick M. *That You May Believe: A Brief History of Religious Education*. Dominican Publications, 1992.
- Gleason, Fr Joseph. "Christian Education in the Early Church – Part 1." *The Orthodox Life*, 21 Oct. 2011, <https://theorthodoxlife.wordpress.com/2011/10/21/christian-education-in-the-early-church-part-1/>.
- Harrelson, Peggy O. "Handbook of Preschool Religious Education." *Religious Education*, vol. 85, no. 1, 1990, pp. 149–51.

- Harris, Doris. “‘Preschool Partners’: Birmingham, AL.” *Journal of Family Ministry*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1996, pp. 34–36.
- Hart, Craig H., and Diane C. Burts, and Rosalind Charlesworth, editors. *Integrated Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Birth to Age Eight*. State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Howe, Reuel L. “The Need for a Ministry to the Pre-School Child.” *Religious Education*, vol. 45, no. 3, May 1950, pp. 148–51.
- Isbell, Rebecca, and Sonia Akiko Yoshizawa, *Nurturing Creativity: An Essential Mindset for Young Children’s Learning*. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2016.
- Lewis, Lawrence T. “The Development of a Safe and Secure Preschool Department at Reidland Baptist Church.” *Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN): Theses & Dissertations*, Jan. 2002, pp. 1–224.
- Linam, Gail. “The Minister of Preschool Education.” *Ministry of Religious Education*, Broadman Pr, 1978, pp. 231–39.
- Munro, Harry C., and Erwin L. Shaver. *Christian Education in Your Church*. Printed for the Leadership Training Pub. Association by the Bethany Press, 1944.
- Pickard, Stephen K. *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry*. Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 2009.
- Prochner, Laurence Wayne. *A History of Early Childhood Education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*. UBC Press, 2009. EBSCOhost, <http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=383193&site=eds-live>.

Roberts, D.Bruce. "Religious Education: A Perspective." *Encounter*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1985, pp. 127–38.

Sanner, A. Elwood, and A. F. Harper, editors. *Exploring Christian Education*. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978.

Schomaker, L. "The Religious Education of Preschool Children." *Religious Education*, vol. 76, no. 6, Nov. 1981, pp. 677–78.

"Type of Child Care and Children's Development at 54 Months." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2004, pp. 203–30. 2004-17109-002, *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2004.04.002.

Wharton, Ann. "Early Childhood Education." *Fundamentalist Journal*, vol. 6, no. 7, July 1987, pp. 60–61.

Wise, F. Franklyn. "Christian Education of Preschool Children; Children; Youth; Adults." *Exploring Christian Education*, Baker Book House, 1978, pp. 215–309.