

## **REPORT TO CHURCH COUNCIL of FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTA ROSA, CA**

**Date:** September 14, 2019      **Name of Commission/Committee/Group:** FUMC Preschool Board of Directors

**Members of the Commission/Committee/Group:** Jacob Faircloth (President, P); Cathy Wieschendorff (Vice President, C). Nick Jeffrey (Treasurer, P); Anne Bishop (P), Fran Byrn (C), Janin Comiskey (C), Eleanor Grogan (P), Nancy Harvey (C); Gwen Neary (C), Diane Wikse (Director, C).      *(Note: C-Church Member, P-Preschool Parent)*

**Meetings are held:** On the second Wednesday of the month, at 6:30 pm.

### **Purpose of the Commission/Committee/Group:**

- FUMC Preschool Board oversees all policies and the fiscal management of the Preschool.
- FUMC Preschool Board also directs, supports, and supervises the Director of the Preschool along with the Senior Pastor. The Director oversees the day-to-day operations of the school.
- FUMC Preschool is an outreach ministry to the families in our community with young children.

### **How does the purpose help fulfill the mission of FUMC?**

Our teachers welcome the children with Christian love, respect, and dignity. We offer a relationship-based approach (Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky – see handout). We welcome families of all different backgrounds, we offer scholarships, and we accept state-funding for several students. We are dedicated to keeping the best teacher/child ratios for a quality educational environment. CA Licensing requires 1:12 student-teacher ratios. We offer 1:6 to 1:8 ratios to ensure that children receive the loving care they need.

### **What are your activities/ programs/ ministries/ accomplishments for the last year?**

Our Board worked with the FUMC Task Force to review and update the Preschool By-Laws. The Board also oversaw our major annual fundraiser, the Pasta Dinner and Silent Auction. In addition, the Board oversaw the following at the Preschool:

- We served 54 children and their families over the past year, from 2 part days/week to 5 full days/week, depending on parent's work schedules.
- Open from 7:30am-5:30pm M-F, we taught and cared for 20-35 children a day throughout the year. [We closed one week in August for cleaning and preparations, and 7 days for Christmas break.]
- We practiced Christian fellowship in our daily routines: praying before snack/lunch, sharing what we are thankful for, and breaking bread together. We also read Bible stories and learned about Noah's Ark.
- We offered opportunities for community building: at our All-School Events, families have had time to get to know one another. Some of these relationships last many years.
- We sang together twice a week with Darlene Bradley throughout the year. Darlene chose songs to accompany the themes the teachers were using, and she included at least one "God song" every week. We sang two concerts under her direction: a Christmas Concert and a Spring Concert.
- We offered traditional preschool curriculum (e.g., seasons, holidays, transportation, community workers, ocean/luau, dinosaurs, etc.) as well as science activities, gardening, literacy development activities and the "Handwriting Without Tears" writing curriculum for school preparation.
- We offered "Art with Ms. Shirley" classes, with Shirley Cheal. Shirley then displayed the art in the FUMC Library for everyone to enjoy!
- We offered Spanish with Ms. Lupe.

### **What are your goals and plans for the next year?**

We hope to work on our Marketing strategies and establish better signs on campus. And we hope to begin to develop the yard next to the Play Yard, so that it will be open to church members and preschool children to use.

### **What goals or benchmarks have you set to measure success/effectiveness?**

We know we are doing all right when families recommend us and when they return to enroll younger siblings.

Diane Wikse, Director



## **Child Development Theory in Practice**

Perhaps the three main models of child development we use as our framework are based on the work of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Erik Erikson.

Jean Piaget: The child learns by experimenting with objects in the environment.

The child explores the environment, as an individual. Piaget posited that children construct theories in their minds while they explore their environment. One of our responsibilities as educators is to set up the environment so that it is rich in opportunities for exploration and theory-development (sensory, scientific, literacy, pretend, etc.) Examples: rocks can be heavy, and some things are too big to fit into the sand pails!

Lev Vygotsky: The child learns with the help of someone who has already mastered the skills.

The child becomes a better problem solver in relationship, one-on-one, with a more accomplished problem-solver, according to Vygotsky. Sometimes we help one another with puzzles, or with fixing things, or in trying new challenges together. As teachers, we need to be ready and available for these opportunities to assist a child, so that the child becomes more adept over time. We also recognize the importance of letting older children assist the younger ones.

Erik Erikson: The child learns relational skills within a consistent, loving social environment.

In learning about self in relation to others, children feel their way through stages of accomplishment of some big themes, Erikson believed. The Preschooler is mastering the following concepts:

Trust (vs. mis-trust),

As educators, our responsibility is to create a relationship with each child (and parent) where he/she knows what to expect from us – to know that we will treat one another with kindness and respect all throughout the day, no matter what the situation or circumstance.

Autonomy (vs. shame/doubt),

We work a lot on helping children become more self-reliant – washing their hands, putting their shoes back on, helping to put away toys, etc. We also help children with their potty training. Children like to be challenged and learn competence in self-help skills (“I do it myself!”)

Initiative (vs. guilt).

On initiative, we are ready all throughout our days here to help children learn to assert themselves – to ask another child for a turn (“can I have that toy in 2 minutes?”), to ask another child to stop doing something that he/she doesn’t like, etc. And we nurture leadership in many ways. And in all the time for pretend play, our children learn how to lead new games, and to negotiate new roles for themselves.

Our teachers’ role is to make sure these social interactions are respectful for everyone.

Diane Wikse, Director