

PARENT HANDBOOK



Trinity UMC Preschool

www.TrinityUMCPreschool.com

A Letter From Our Director, Claudia Myers

Dear Parents,

I want to welcome each and every one of you to the 38th year of Trinity United Methodist Church Preschool! By attending Trinity, you and your children become part of our family. We hope to make your years with us a positive and growing experience, which will be filled with love. Our program strives to build a child's self-confidence, by unlocking the key to discovery and helping the child to believe in his or herself.

Our classes will include a balance of guided play activities, creative art work, music, outdoor play, conversation, story times, dramatic play, reading, and group activities. Each child will be helped to grow in independence, social development, spiritual development, and the development of his or her talents and abilities.

In our children we wish to enable each child to view his or her differences as a positive factor. We hope each of our children realize that they are individuals with special talents and characteristics that belong only to them.

I wish to thank each of you for allowing your child to be a part of our lives, and us a part of theirs. I'm sure that the 2018-2019 school year will be wonderful!

Sincerely,

Claudia Myers

Director of Trinity UMC Preschool

For more information please call the Preschool Office at 704-399-1684 ext. 23

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 am and 12:30 pm

Contact Claudia Myers Directly at 704-421-4507 or email

claudia@trinityumcofcharlotte.com

A Letter From Our Pastor, Wade Ogle

As pastor of Trinity United Methodist, I would like to welcome you to Trinity Preschool. The staff of Trinity church, along with the Preschool staff, is honored that you would allow us to be part of your child's life. Children have a special place in our hearts.

Our heart for children follows the example of Jesus. For Jesus, children were always special. He welcomed children into his life and ministry, because that they are important to God. On several occasions he pointed to children as examples of those to whom the Kingdom of God belonged. In Luke 18:16, Jesus tells his disciples, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. In Matthew 18:4 Jesus tells the disciples that children are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven). Trinity Church is open not only to your child during Preschool, but to minister to your family. If you do not have a church home, I invite you to "give Trinity a try."

Thank you again for sharing your child with us.

Grace and Peace

Wade Ogle

Pastor of Trinity UMC

Our Mission

The Purpose and Mission of Trinity UMC - "FEED MY SHEEP"

"Jesus has called upon His disciples to take over the feeding and shepherding of His sheep. Through the ministries at Trinity United Methodist Church, Jesus will find the lost, Minister to all and send the renewed out into the world."

The Mission Statement of Trinity UMC Preschool

"Let the children come to me," Jesus says in Matthew 19:14. As an outreach ministry of Trinity United Methodist Church, the Preschool is missioned to serve children and parents in a learning environment that is centered on the love and teachings of Christ. Christian teachers will offer learning programs that are focused on spiritual, social, mental, emotional, and physical development.

Gifts from God

There are different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them.
There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same God who is served.
God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purpose through them all.
Each one is given a gift by the Spirit, to use for the common good.
Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of Him.
(Adapted from 1 Cor. 12)

We Believe

When a child begins our program, the first thing we ask is that you trust us with your children. We know it isn't easy. We do not want you to trust us only because of our experience and reputation. We want you to know our philosophy of teaching our children.

- We believe children deserve respect.
- We believe children should not be humiliated, hurt, or embarrassed.
- We believe a child's self-esteem should be treated with **TLC**.
- We believe a child's natural learning comes through play.

We do not want children to be good for us, for our love, or because we are more powerful than they are. We want children to be good because they are happy, they feel loved, and they are enjoying themselves.

Trinity UMC Preschool Policies

Registration Fee – (non-refundable) to cover insurance, start up supplies, etc.

- A. First child enrolled from a family - \$75.00
- B. Second child in family - \$25.00
- C. Additional children - \$15.00
- D. Registration Fee must be paid at the time of registration.
- E. Space will be reserved for your child when we have received the completed application form and registration fee.

Monthly Fees for Children whose birthday falls after August 31, 2018

- A. \$80.00 per month for one day per week program
- B. \$155.00 per month for two days per week program
- C. \$225.00 per month for three days per week program
- D. \$290.00 per month for four days per week program
- E. \$365.00 per month for five days per week program

Monthly Fees for Children who are One and Two Year Olds by August 31, 2018

- A. \$75.00 per month for one day per week program
- B. \$145.00 per month for two days per week program
- C. \$215.00 per month for three days per week program
- D. \$285.00 per month for four days per week program
- E. \$360.00 per month for five days per week program

Monthly Fees for Children who are Three and Four Year Olds by August 31, 2018

- A. \$135.00 per month for two day per week program
- B. \$200.00 per month for three day per week program
- C. \$265.00 per month for four day per week program
- D. \$310.00 per month for five day per week program

Monthly Fees for Children in Transitional Kindergarten

- A. \$310.00 per month for five day per week program

Drop-In Day

- A. If you would like your child to attend school on a day they aren't scheduled, please first check with your child's teacher to confirm that space is available.
- B. If the space is available, please fill out the Drop-In Day Form, found in the Preschool Office and place into the Payment Box outside the office. The cost is \$25 per day.

Sibling Discount

Siblings of children attending preschool will receive a \$5 discount for each day of the week he or she is enrolled. The discount is taken off of the tuition of the child who attends the fewest days of the week.

Payment of Tuition

- A. Monthly tuition payments will be due on the first day of each month.
- B. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to any account, which has not paid their monthly fee by the 15th of the month.
- C. Preschool tuition is based on a yearly tuition, which is divided into monthly payments. To keep your child's space, monthly payments must be made, irrespective of the actual days your child attends.
- D. Any accounts delinquent for more than 30 days must be referred to the Preschool Director and the Trinity UMC Preschool Board.
- E. Checks should be made payable to Trinity UMC Preschool, with the **CHILD'S NAME NOTED ON THE CHECK MEMO LINE.**
- F. There will be a \$15.00 fee added to any account with a returned check.
- G. As per our policy, only checks or money orders will be accepted.
- H. All payments are to go to the Financial Coordinator. If the Financial Coordinator is unavailable, please leave your payment in the drop box outside the Preschool Office.

Ages of Children Served

- A. Date of birth between 03/01/18 and 09/01/14
- B. We accept children whose birthdays come before 09/01/14, if parents have decided to wait one year before starting public school.

Summer Sessions

- A. Summer Sessions are made up of two consecutive, four-week sessions.
- B. Children may be enrolled in one or both sessions, or weekly.
- C. There is a \$30.00 Registration fee per family.
- D. Cost of each Summer Session:
 - a. One day per week - \$75.00
 - b. Two days per week - \$145.00
 - c. Three days per week - \$215.00
- E. Classes are available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- F. Children must be two years old by June 1st through rising 6th graders.
- G. No sibling discounts will be given during the Summer Sessions.
- H. Drop-In days for the Summer Session will be \$25.00.

Hours and Days of Operation

- A. We adhere to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System calendar during our school year. Please refer to the Preschool Calendar to be sure of our closings!
- B. Opening day for Preschool will be September 5th.
- C. The last day of Preschool will be the Thursday before Memorial Day (May 24th).
- D. End of the Year Programs will be during the last week of Preschool.
- E. We are open Monday through Friday.
- F. Hours are 9:00 AM until 12:30 PM.
- G. **Children are not to enter the classrooms before 8:55 AM** (teachers are using the time prior to this to make final preparations for your child to have a successful day).
- H. Be prompt at picking your child up at the appropriate hour. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged after five minutes. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged at 15 minutes with a \$1.00 additional charge per minute after that.

Inclement Weather

- A. In case of bad weather, we will close if/when the CMS System closes. Be sure to check the news for updates on closings or delays. **You may also call 704-399-1684 ext. 23 for confirmation.**
- B. If, during the regular Preschool hours, snow or ice begins to form, please come immediately. Do not let the roads get bad while waiting for an announcement from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.
- C. If Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools have more than a two hour delay, Trinity UMC Preschool will be closed. If there is a two hour delay the preschool will open at 10:00 AM. If there is a one hour delay the preschool will open at the regular time of 9:00 AM.
- D. We do not make up snow days.

Vacation, Illness, and Withdrawal

- A. If your child is absent from school due to a vacation or illness, these days cannot be substituted, made-up, or refunded.
- B. If a child is withdrawn from the program, **two weeks notice is required; otherwise we will expect payment of the current month's tuition.**

Snacks

- A. To keep down the cost of tuition, we ask parents to provide snacks. Your teacher will give you suggestions to the types of snacks the children enjoy and you will be made aware of any allergies in the classroom.
- B. The school provides water, cups, and napkins.

Birthdays

- A. Birthdays are special and we celebrate ours at **morning snack time** (around 10:30).
- B. You may bring party cookies or cupcakes. No gifts, please.
- C. In regards to bringing party favors, please check with your child's teacher for classroom policy.
- D. It is a policy of the school that **no birthday invitations** may be handed out for private parties, unless each child in the class is being invited.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

- A. Each child should bring a complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, underclothes, and socks) to be left at school. These items should be placed in a large zip lock bag and marked clearly with your child's name. Each item of clothing should also have your child's name inside.
- B. Clothing should be durable and allow children freedom of movement.
- C. We also require children to wear tennis shoes as opposed to sandals and slip-on type shoes.
- D. Please dress your child to enjoy outdoor weather. We go outside each day (weather permitting), even in the winter months.
- E. **Children's personal toys should not be brought to school**, with the exception of Show and Tell days.
- F. The no toy rule, does not apply to children under three who are attached to security blankets, a special stuffed animal, or pacifier.

Newsletters

- A. You will receive a Monthly Newsletter from the Preschool Director via email. It will be sent to the email you have provided. We will also post several hard copies on the bulletin board outside the Director's Office.
- B. We will also be posting the newsletters on our website at:
<http://www.TrinityUMCPreschool.com>

Website and Facebook

- A. Please visit our website at [TrinityUMCPreschool.com](http://www.TrinityUMCPreschool.com) for additional information.
- B. Via our website, you will find some general information about our school, the academic calendar, current and past newsletters, staff pictures, and registration forms.
- C. Be sure to **LIKE** our Facebook page that can be found under Trinity UMC Preschool. Once you have "liked" the page, select "See First" under following to ensure that you will see our updates in your News Feed.
- D. We also have an Alumni Facebook Group - Trinity UMC Preschool Alumni. This is a closed group that was created to bring together everyone that has been associated with Trinity UMC Preschool during the last 38 years. If you would like to join the group, please let someone in the Preschool Office know.

Health and Safety

- A. No child should attend Trinity UMC Preschool when visibly ill. If your child should become ill while at Preschool, we will contact you. If no one can be reached, your child will be isolated and cared for until regular pick up time. If we deem it an emergency, we will pursue the emergency numbers you have provided on the enrollment form.
- B. Call when your child will be absent and report all communicable diseases immediately.
- C. **Do not bring your child if he or she has any of the following:** A temperature more than 99 degrees within the last 24 hours; a rash that you cannot identify or that a doctor has not diagnosed as non-contagious; Impetigo, a skin infection that consists of small blisters surrounded by red areas; Conjunctivitis, commonly known as Pink Eye; a severe cold with fever, sneezing, and nose drainage; or vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- D. No child will be released to an unauthorized person. We must know (in writing or in the case of an emergency, a phone call to the Director) any changes from the usual person authorized to pick up your child. **For the wellbeing of your child, persons coming for pickup may be asked to show identification if someone on staff is not able to identify him/her.**
- E. If your child is to be given medicine at school, the following information must be given in writing: child's name, name of medicine, amount to be given, date and time to be given, and any possible side effects.
- F. Children should be walked into their classroom each morning.
- G. Younger children should never be left unattended in a car. If your younger child is sleeping, another parent will be glad to walk your older child to class.
- H. When leaving the school, please do not allow your child to enter the parking lot ahead of you.

Lunches

- A. Children will eat lunch with their teacher and classmates each day.
- B. If you need suggestions on what to pack your child for lunch, please talk to your child's teacher or a member of our staff.
- C. Please be aware that the teacher will not be able to leave the class to microwave a meal or retrieve it from a refrigerator. Plan to pack hot/cold meals accordingly.

Potty Training

- A. It is our policy to work closely with parents during potty training and use the same methods that you use at home.
- B. Children will never be held back in an age level because they have not been potty trained.
- C. While a child may do quite well at home, it may take longer to not have accidents in a classroom setting.
- D. While we do know that occasional accidents are part of potty training, children are required to wear pull ups to class as long as they are having accidents 25% of the days that they attend.
- E. We feel that this requirement will not make a child regress in the potty training process if it is handled correctly.
- F. Explain to your child that you understand it may be harder not to have accidents when they are with their friends at school.
- G. Explain that the pull ups will be worn only during preschool hours, but are to be treated just like they have on underwear and try to always go to the bathroom and not have accidents.
- H. Praise them when they keep their pull ups dry at school, because it is not an easy feat when they are so busy doing fun things at school.
- I. When accidents become few and far between throw away the pull ups and have a family celebration. You deserve it!

Discipline

- A. It is our philosophy that positive methods of guidance contribute more to the development of self-discipline and self control, than negative ones.
- B. Preschool offers a relaxed atmosphere, where rules are few and clearly defined and continually reinforced by the teachers.
- C. Rules for the classrooms are set based upon the maturity of the children to define acceptable behavior.
- D. Our main rule is the Golden Rule, to do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.
- E. The following steps are taken if a rule is broken:
 - a. Re-directing children to other areas of the room and other activities.
 - b. Time out: Children will sit down for a calm down time no longer than one minute for each year of life. Example: Two-Year-old class - two minutes.
 - c. Teachers will closely monitor when the behavior problem is occurring and see if the problem is a room environment problem or a scheduling problem. The preschool day strives to be designed in a way, that the children will feel safe, happy and content and have little time or desire to misbehave.
- F. The following methods of discipline are never allowed at Trinity Preschool:
 - a. Physical punishment such as slapping or spanking.
 - b. Embarrassing a child.
 - c. Withholding snacks as punishment.

Suspected Child Abuse / or Neglect

By law the state of North Carolina requires all professionals (including doctors, teachers, day care workers, etc.) to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, the Director will call the Department of Social Services and report the suspicion to a case manager. The case manager will investigate the report within twenty-four hours. The Director will also be required to report the situation to the Preschool Board.

Protection of Your Child

Trinity Preschool has very little turn over in staff. Most teachers have been with the program for many years and we expect the newer teachers that we have hired to continue for many years. We do not advertise for our staff. Each staff member is someone that we are very familiar with their background before they ever begin working here. We also have an open door policy where parents are encouraged to stop by at any time. Please remember, while your child is at Trinity UMC Preschool, that any and all questions concerning your child's safety or well-being will be taken very seriously by our staff. If you have a concern, voice it. Also remember to always talk with your child about their day. In the event a problem develops, make an appointment to talk with the teacher. **AS A GENERAL RULE, SEE THE TEACHER FIRST.** If this does not seem to help, then contact the Director and arrange for a joint conference with the teacher and the director.

Conferences

Please remember that the teacher's first responsibility is to the children. Arrival and dismissal times are not good times for serious conferences. The Director or Teachers will be more than happy to setup a time outside of school hours for a personal conference. If our staff feels the need for a conference, the Director or your child's teacher will reach out to make an appointment with you directly.

When Additional Help is Needed:

We adore all of our children at Trinity UMC Preschool and believe each child was created perfectly by God. Sometimes it appears that a child could use additional services. Trinity is in partnership with the very best therapists from CMS, Thompson, and private agencies. Sometimes the child needs a helping hand to be successful in the classroom setting. We have a wonderful on site shadow program here at Trinity made up of Trinity Staff. A shadow is a staff member that gives one on one attention during the classroom setting. The following referral process outlines the details we use for acquiring extra help.

Referral Process

Trinity UMC Preschool shall use the following procedures for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational, and medical services for their child should the center staff feel that an assessment for such additional services be a benefit to the child. Whenever ANY staff member is concerned about a child's development or behavior, and feel that further evaluation should be performed, they should report it to the child's Lead Teacher who will review concerns with the Director. If the Director agrees, the Lead Teacher is requested to complete an observation report and review the child's record prior to making a referral.

Referral Meeting with Parents

The Director schedules a meeting with parents to notify them of the center's concern and prepares a current list of possible referral resources. At the meeting, the Director and Lead Teacher will provide to the parent(s) a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the center's observations related to the referral and any efforts Trinity may have made to accommodate the child's needs. The Director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral. Parents will be encouraged to call or request in writing an evaluation. If parents need extra support, the Director of Trinity Preschool, with written parental consent, will contact the referral agency for them.

Follow-Up to the Referral

The Director will, with parental permission, contact the agency or service provider who evaluated the child for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at Trinity UMC Preschool. If it is determined that the child is not in need of service from this agency, or is ineligible to receive services, the staff of Trinity UMC Preschool shall review the child's progress at the center every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Record of Referrals

The Director/Lead Teacher will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results. A referral checklist will be kept in the child's record at school.

At Trinity UMC Preschool, we believe that Play is the Work of a Child!

When you look in our classrooms, you will see your child playing! During this time they are:

- Meeting Friends
- Playing with Toys
- Exploring How Things Work
- Looking at Books
- Listening to Music
- Learning How To Share
- Pouring and Measuring in the Sandbox
- Developing and Expanding their Language Abilities
- Having Creative Art Experiences
- Having Cooperative Play Experiences
- Learning to Share Adult's Attention
- Learning Social Skills Needed to Learn and Play Games
- Building with Materials that may not be Available at Home
- Using "Messy" Art Materials in a Space Provided for Experimentation
- Trying on Different Personalities with Different Clothing
- Becoming Independent
- Comparing and Contrasting Different Experiences
- Learning from others while Broadening their Horizons

SO YOU SEE, WHAT LOOKS LIKE PLAY IS REALLY HARD WORK!

Statement of Curriculum Philosophy

God created his children in many different colors, shapes and sizes. He placed them in many different cultures and lands. What all these children have in common is play. The children of the world play, and that has been going on since the beginning of time. As Christians we strive to trust God in His ability to take care of us and make the world run smoothly. If we can trust Him to keep the stars in the sky and the oceans in

their places, we need to trust Him and in the way He made all children. We need to realize that:

“The Work of the Child is Play”

Our curriculum at Trinity Preschool has been designed so that the child may develop a feeling of confidence in themselves. We would all agree that feeling competent is as important as being competent. All of us have known someone in our life that is very capable but does not feel capable and does not succeed. At Trinity our children learn through play. Experts have defined play as intrinsically motivated, freely chosen, process oriented as opposed to goal – oriented, enjoyable, and ordered, just pretend behavior. Play is real. It is vital. It helps children learn about their world naturally. Children use play to test ideas, discover relationships, abstract information, express their feelings and ideas, define themselves, and develop peer relationships.

In our two year old class, you may see the children stringing beads. This is what is happening: small motor development (so they may later cut with scissors or write their name), mobility of thought, choice making, visual discrimination, patterning, classification, counting, color recognition, number sense and one-to-one correspondence. Finger Painting, through the finger paint they are experiencing large motor development. Children then decide to make a picture of their choosing from the paint and they experience concept development, mobility of thought and choice making. The teacher may ask the child to paint a certain thing or a picture from a favorite story and problem solving skills occur. As the children play with the different colors of finger paint, combining colors to make new colors, they experience discovery learning, color recognition and problem solving.

Free play is one of the most important time periods in our day. During this time the child is free to choose from different centers. The centers are set up by the teachers to stimulate learning. One center is the *Block Center*. Light weight blocks are introduced to our children, as young as the one year old class. Generalizations about balance, gravity and space are understood long before their names enter the growth of scientific thinking about inquiry, invention and discovery. Almost all aspects of a child’s development can be enhanced through the use of blocks. Because blocks are designed in mathematical units, children playing with them develop a concrete understanding of concepts essential to logical thinking. They learn

about sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length and weight as they select, build and clean up blocks. Physical development of both large and small muscles is enhanced through the use of blocks. Language and social development take place in the Block center. As children build together, they solve problems and learn to cooperate with and respect the work of others. Another important center is the *Home Living Center*. In this center children are provided with props and child size versions of home appliances. There are dolls and dress up clothes for children to use in representing various families and community members. In this area children can participate in all sorts of dramatic play – creating environments as strange and exciting as a space station or as typical as a shoe store or family kitchen. Dramatic play is important to the child because it offers the child a forum where they can safely act out fears and relive life experiences. Through dramatic play children can take on roles they fear and learn to control them. To illustrate a child that has to go to the hospital for an operation can pretend to be a doctor in charge. By assuming the doctor’s role, the child experiences the “other side” and attempts to gain control over very real fears. Another center is the *Table Toy Center* that includes games, manipulatives, and puzzles. Table toys offer children a rich means for working on physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills. For example, by completing a puzzle, children can practice hand –eye coordination, learn how to match objects, and experience the satisfaction of successfully completing a task.

The Art Center or the Cut and Paste Table offers many different art mediums from crayons and makers, scrap paper of all colors and weights, scissors, glue and all types of collage materials. These items provide children endless opportunities for creativity. For the preschool child, it is the process of creating that is important, not the product. Through their art children express how they feel, think and view the world. Art is an outlet that allows the child to convey what they are not able to say in words. Using art materials also encourage children to make choices, try out new ideas, plan and experiment. They learn to examine the properties of an art material and discover, through trial and error, what the material can do or how it can be used. Art thus enables the child to learn at the same time that they are expressing themselves and having fun.

Together Time is another time slot used in our day at Trinity. During this time the teacher acts as a facilitator, as the class discusses that day’s topic within a group of their peers. Benefits to language development are immeasurable. Children gain knowledge about their outside world that is an important key to reading readiness. Children cannot read about Firefighters, for example and comprehend what they are reading in later years, if they have no subsequent experiences with Firefighters. Children gain confidence as they learn or express their feelings to peers with words, instead of actions.

Music Time at preschool is used daily for sheer enjoyment and a learning experience. Just about everyone learns their alphabet through the familiar tune used to sing the alphabet. We carry that concept farther at the playschool. Songs are used for learning the days of the week, counting, Bible verses and so on and so on. The sky is the limit, when teaching through music. People have always wondered why their children do not know their times’ tables but know every jingle ever discovered. Now educators are seeing the value of music to stimulate learning, rather than depending on rote memory. Time tables are being put to tunes. Try teaching your preschooler their address or phone number. If that information is put to a tune, learning happens much more rapidly.

Special Weekly Music is offered for all classes each week. "Music for Little Mozarts" is a music and movement curriculum specifically designed for preschoolers. The course centers on the adventures of Mozart Mouse and Beethoven Bear as they learn about music. As their adventures unfold throughout each lesson, they introduce the students to new musical concepts while having fun. Learning to play rhythm instruments is also integrated into all age groups.

Reading Readiness, Trinity UMC is one of two pilot programs for *Making Great Readers*. This program was developed by a Wallace Howard who has 27 year's experience as a school teacher. This program uses the method of "see the sound-think the letter." Making Great Readers is a process of phonics that makes the sound of the letter more important than the letter name that creates the process of "See the Sound-Think the Letter" For example, for the short /a/, model by pointing to the front of the neck and say, "Touch here." Say /a/. Make the sound and the signal 3 times. This program begins with our older two program and progresses all the way to our T-K Program, where the finish with blended sounds. For more information google Making Great Readers.

Story Time is used daily in each age class. During the preschool years nothing is as important for developing good readers as being read to. When children are read to regularly and encouraged to look through books on their own, to listen to story tapes, watch story videos, and to make up their own stories, they develop not only the motivation to want to read but also many of the reading readiness skills they will need to become successful readers. DO WE TEACH READING AND WRITING HERE AT TRINITY PRESCHOOL? Why yes we do, but reading and writing are properly taught in developmental stages. A clearer definition of what we do at Trinity is, we set the environment and allow the child to learn reading and writing. We protect the children's rights to learn by mastering these natural stages at their own pace and to NEVER skip stages:

Developmental Steps in Using Books

In the first stage children simply explore books. Copying their parents and older children, they like to "play" at reading. They also ask to have books read to them. This frequently involves multiple readings of the same story book at one sitting. Children like to hear the same story read over and over because they like to anticipate what is going to happen next and it gives them a feeling of power to know the answer.

In the second stage of development, children begin to understand the sequencing of a story. They start to realize that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. After a good many readings, children proudly retell the stories in their books. Adults are often amazed at a child's ability to recite a storybook nearly verbatim. Sometimes, the adult confuses this with reading. Details are especially fascinating to children at this stage.

During the next stage, children learn to relate the stories contained in pictures and the words on the page. Children become aware that printed words have a different function than pictures. Gradually, children become aware that the written words are symbols for ideas and thoughts.

The fourth stage of development involves matching words with the printed text. At this stage, many preschoolers like to run their fingers along the text as the book is being read. They

may also point to individual words as a story is being read to them. Even though their choice of a word is typically not the one being read, this behavior lets adults know that they are beginning to understand that printed words represent specific words.

In the final stage of development, children focus more on the text. At this stage, they become very curious about the meanings of words. They may ask questions such as “What does this say?” or “Where does it say that?” During this stage, children may start to develop what is known as sight vocabulary – the ability to recognize printed words. Children may start seeing printed words from their favorite books in real life settings and excitedly point them out. Joyful recognition of the printed word STOP, for example, is a hallmark of this developmental stage.

Most important to a child’s ability to learn to read and to love reading is the early enjoyment of books. Thus, regardless of the child’s developmental stage, the teacher’s and parents primary responsibility is to help young children use and enjoy books.

Children love to use pencils, pens, crayons, markers and other writing tools to imitate adult writing. These early attempts at writing are part of the first developmental stage through which children pass. Although, their writing at this stage looks more like scribbling than anything else, it takes on a definite form. In the child’s mind, beginning attempts at writing are quite different from beginning attempts at drawing.

In the second stage of development, scribbles transform into recognizable letters. This transition is a gradual one and should not be pushed by adults in any way. Many times, a recognizable letter will suddenly emerge from a row of unrecognizable marks. With practice, though, recognizable letters begin to outnumber unrecognizable marks.

By the end of preschool years, children’s writing generally shows increased organization. Children learn that letter’s cannot just appear randomly on a page. To make sense, their grouped into words that go from left to right across the page.

As with reading readiness, the most important factor’s in a child’s developing ability to write are an interest in and understanding of the purpose of writing. When young children experience firsthand the value of writing – by making signs for their buildings, having their words captured on a picture they have drawn as they tell the teacher about the picture, and experimenting with writing (dictating) their own stories – they are motivated to learn to write.

Trinity UMC Preschool is a pilot program for “Making Great Readers”. You can find information on this program at our website, TrinityUMCPreschool.com. The three and four year olds will begin working with this program immediately and the beginning of the school year, but we introduce it to the two year olds just after Christmas break. The main objective of “Making Great Readers” is to see the shape and think of the phonetic sound more so than the letter name. Our oldest children who have been through the program at Trinity are in Middle School and are all excellent readers.

Outdoor time is an important part of the preschooler day. We go outside unless temperatures are around freezing or it is raining. The outdoors provides children with healthy release from the quieter activities of the classroom. Being outside allows children to stretch their muscles, breathe in fresh air, and enjoy the freedom of space. Science comes alive when

nature can be observed firsthand. The outdoors is an environment, where children use all their five senses to learn. They can see leaves change color, taste rainwater falling, touch the bark of a tree, hear birds sing, and smell the air after a shower. For each outdoor activity children go through two stages, EXPLORATION and EXPERIMENTATION. During the first stage, children find out as much as they can about the environment. For example, a child that is new to the sandbox will sift the sand, experiencing what it feels like, how it separates, and how it falls. The child will sit in it, jump in it in order to get to know what it can and cannot do. The second stage of development is an outgrowth of the first. Once the child has acquired some experience with the sand the child feels free to experiment and takes risks. The child may dump a pail of sand upside down to see if a tower forms. Excitement and imagination lead children to make endless new discoveries outdoors. Outdoors also offers endless opportunities to work on their large motor skills.

At Trinity, we believe the most important learning experience is Spiritual Development. Beginning in the one and two year old classes, our children are taught the teachings of Jesus throughout the day. Children are taught all of the basic concepts such as “Jesus Loves Me”, etc... but we also teach them to use Christian ideas for problem solving and development. A wonderful example of this is the song, “Love One Another”. Some even begin singing it before the teacher does. In our three and four year old class, a story such as Zaccheus is taught by reading from the Preschool Bible and other story books. From that point, children learn about the story of Zaccheus through art, song and dramatic play. Also, our children are taught to respect their school as “God’s House”. In every way we interact with the children, we wish to instill in them that they are loved by us and loved by God.

Sources:

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The Block Book. National Association for the Education of the Young Child. Hirsch, Elizabeth S.

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Weekday Ministries. Thomas, Gloria