



**Weekday**



**Early**



**Education**

**Administrative**



**Guide**

Bob Couch and Lois Gamble



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# Contents

Chapter 1: Biblical Foundations. . . . .	5
Chapter 2: God’s Design for Human Growth. . . . .	11
Chapter 3: Beginning a Program . . . . .	15
Chapter 4: Policies and Guidelines. . . . .	27
Chapter 5: Relationships . . . . .	41
Chapter 6: You, the Director . . . . .	49
Chapter 7: Management . . . . .	57
Chapter 8: Personnel Issues. . . . .	65
Chapter 9: Financing the Program . . . . .	81
Chapter 10: Curriculum . . . . .	87
Chapter 11: Space, Furnishings, and Teaching Materials. . . . .	99
Chapter 12: Safety, Security, Health, and Hygiene . . . . .	105
Chapter 13: Evaluation. . . . .	115
Chapter 14: Forms . . . . .	121
Personal Learning Activities . . . . .	145

# A Word to the Director

**W**hen you awake each morning, do you think about the opportunities that are waiting for you in a new day? As director of a weekday early education program, you have a significant role. Your work directly affects the lives of boys and girls who are entrusted to your care. Your work uniquely impacts their parents as they leave their children under your supervision knowing that they will be properly cared for, nurtured, and motivated through a biblically based, age-appropriate learning environment. Your work touches the larger community as people develop an impression of the program and its ministry.

But more importantly, your work not only allows you to touch the future but eternity as well. As a director of a Christian weekday early education program, you will be providing opportunities for young children to build their first impressions of who God is, how special His world is, and how much God loves each of us.

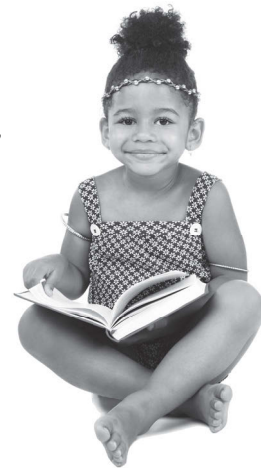
As director of the program, you also touch the lives of your staff. Each teacher and staff member in the program will take their professional cues from you. In many ways your attitude will shape theirs. The standards you set for yourself will be adopted by them.

Much of your work is establishing and following policies and procedures. But underneath it all, there must be a heart and a vision for the ministry in which God has placed you. The quality of the program will not exceed your dreams and vision.

The chapters in this resource are designed to guide you in the varied tasks that your work requires. From planning a budget to hiring staff, each chapter provides practical guidance for your journey as director. Sample policies and procedures are provided as a starting point. Your application of these procedures will directly reflect the unique needs of and guidelines established for the weekday early education program you direct.

Whether you are directing a program in a church or in a Christian school, the needs of the boys and girls are the same. If you are in a church setting, you will work closely with the weekday early education committee. If you are in a Christian school, you will work with administrators, teachers, and board members representing a variety of grade levels. In either setting, ministry opportunities will be unlimited.

May this resource provide the insight and information that you need for your important task. May each new day bring new opportunities for ministering to parents, encouraging teachers and staff, and helping shape the lives of preschoolers to become all that God wants them to be. May you, through your personal relationship with God, find meaning and purpose for each day's work and strength for each day's tasks.



## Chapter 1

# Biblical Foundations

A child is a gift to parents, directly from the hand of God. “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalm 127:3 NKJV). The statement “children are a heritage from the Lord” can be paraphrased “children are God’s homework assignment to parents.” With that assignment comes parental responsibility for the care, education, and most importantly, spiritual guidance of each child. God’s Word emphasizes the priority of this assignment in Psalm 78:3-4 where the psalmist writes, “We will not hide them from the children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (NKJV).

In fulfilling God’s assignment to bring up and biblically educate their children, parents often call on churches and Christian schools to support them in this important work. Parents, and those who support them, must never lose sight of biblical foundations, measuring everything that is done by the principles found in Scripture.

In this chapter we will see how God’s Word provides specific guidance on how children should be raised based on sound educational principles and developmental models. This guidance has direct application for those involved in Christian weekday early education programs.

Glen Schultz, in his book *Kingdom Education*,<sup>1</sup> relates that “The Bible provides us with specific principles that shape and mold every aspect of kingdom education. It also provides us with the basis of all truth on which every subject taught must rest.”

Every Christian weekday early education program must develop a clear, biblically based philosophy from which it will operate. This philosophy must serve as the driving force behind everything that takes place in your program. The principles outlined in *Kingdom Education* provide parents, church leaders, and Christian educators with a thorough understanding of God’s plan for educating future generations.

Hopefully, the Christian weekday early education program will demonstrate to its families the necessity for their child’s total education to be Bible-based and Christ-centered. This will require every

aspect of a Christian weekday early education program to be based on certain key biblical principles. These principles must be consistently applied to a child's total education in the home, church, and school. The following principles are provided as a guide for the development of a biblical philosophy of education for any Christian weekday early education program:

### **Biblical Principles on the Education of Young Children**

1. The education of young children is the primary responsibility of parents. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Psalm 78:1-7; Psalm 127:3; Proverbs 22:6; Malachi 2:13-16; Ephesians 6:4*)
2. The education of young children is a 24-hour-per-day, 7-day-per-week process that continues from birth till maturity. (*Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; Proverbs 22:6*)
3. The education of young children must have as its primary goals the salvation of and discipleship of the next generation. (*Psalm 78:6-7; Matthew 28:19-20*)
4. The education of young children must be based on God's Word as absolute truth. (*Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119*)
5. The education of young children must hold Christ as preeminent in all of life. (*Colossians 2:3, 6-10*)
6. The education of young children must not hinder the spiritual and moral development of the next generation. (*Matthew 18:6; 19:13-14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17*)
7. The education of young children, if and when delegated to others by parents, must be done so with utmost care to ensure that all teachers follow these principles. (*Exodus 18:21; 1 Samuel 1:27-28; 3:1-10*)
8. The education of young children results in the formation of a belief system or worldview that will be patterned after the belief systems or worldviews of the person's teachers. (*Luke 6:40*)

The Bible also provides principles concerning early childhood development. The principles in the following chart are based on Jesus as the model and the Bible as the authority for guiding young children. The following principles, together with those previously stated, should form the foundation for building an effective Christian weekday early education program.

# Biblical Guidance for Early Childhood Development

Scripture Passage	Interpretation in the Context of the Larger Passage	Application of the Passage As It Relates to Young Children
<p><b>VALUE</b>  <i>“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”</i>  <i>—Genesis 1:31</i></p> <p><b>TEACH</b>  <i>“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”</i>  <i>—Deuteronomy 6:6-9, NIV</i></p> <p><b>TRAIN</b>  <i>“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”</i>  <i>—Proverbs 22:6</i></p>	<p><b>VALUE</b>            Genesis 1 is a record of the six days of creation. After each of the first five days is the statement “and God saw that it was good.” After the sixth day when God had made man “in His own image” the Scripture records, “it was <i>very</i> good.” Everything made was good; however, people were the only part of creation that God made in His own image.</p> <p><b>TEACH</b>            A young child learns best through repetition while involved in various activities, not through rote memory.</p> <p><b>TRAIN</b>            This text affirms that children should be taught in a fashion that speaks to their level of understanding and development. The writer stresses that understanding biblical truths in the first years of life is critical to making right choices for the rest of life.</p>	<p><b>VALUE</b>            Each child is a unique gift from God. Each is to be respected and taught as an individual.</p> <p><b>TEACH</b>            A young child learns to eat, walk, and talk through everyday activities. She also learns social skills, values, and truths about God through daily opportunities to observe others and to practice these skills in a variety of ways.</p> <p><b>TRAIN</b>            When provided with a variety of activities and materials from which to choose, each young child learns and develops his own God-given uniqueness. He is not to be put into a group where all will be taught the same thing, at the same time, and in the same order. Nor can he be expected to act the same way as other children of the same age.</p>
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## Biblical Guidance for Early Childhood Development

Scripture Passage	Interpretation in the Context of the Larger Passage	Application of the Passage As It Relates to Young Children
<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b>  <i>“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”</i>  <i>—Psalm 122:1</i></p> <p><b>MODEL</b>  <i>“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”</i>  <i>—Luke 2:52</i></p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT</b>  <i>“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”</i>  <i>—1 Corinthians 13:11</i></p> <p><i>“Brothers, stop thinking like children . . . but in your thinking be adults.”</i>  <i>—1 Corinthians 14:20, NIV</i></p>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b>            God’s people look forward to going to a house of worship.</p> <p><b>MODEL</b>            Luke provides a summary of what happened during Jesus’ childhood. The emphasis is that Jesus grew in all areas of human development.</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT</b>            A child talks, understands, and thinks differently from an adult. While a child thinks only concretely, an adult is also capable of thinking in the abstract. A young child can learn many literal, concrete foundational truths from the Bible. Abstract Bible truths that relate to salvation and a person’s relationship to God — such as repentance, belief, and trust — can be understood by the child after a foundation of concrete truths is formed.</p>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b>            The home, church, and school should be safe, happy places where children grow and learn about God, Jesus, and the Bible.</p> <p><b>MODEL</b>            Each child progresses through the stages of mental, physical, moral/spiritual, social, and emotional development in the same sequence as Jesus did. Therefore, each child needs age-appropriate activities and guidance during each of these stages.</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT</b>            A child needs hands-on experiences to which she can relate with her five senses (hearing, sight, taste, touch, smell). As her brain develops in relationship to her experiences, abstract capabilities begin to develop. Choosing Scripture that relates to a child’s developmental stage in life is an important consideration for teachers of preschoolers.</p>
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# Biblical Guidance for Early Childhood Development

Scripture Passage	Interpretation in the Context of the Larger Passage	Application of the Passage As It Relates to Young Children
<p><b>RELATION TO GOD</b>  <i>“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” . . . And he took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.”</i>  <i>–Mark 10:13-14, 16, NIV</i></p>	<p><b>RELATION TO GOD</b>            Parents wanted a great teacher to touch, bless, and pray for their young children. The disciples scolded the parents. Jesus invited the children to physically come to Him. He touched them, blessed them, and sent them on their way.</p>	<p><b>RELATION TO GOD</b>            Jesus emphasized the importance of teaching children about God and Himself throughout their growing-up experiences. From infancy, children need to learn about Jesus through Bible verses, stories and songs. Teaching them in this way lays a foundation for leading them into a personal relationship with God. A young child is under God’s grace and will be able to come to know Jesus as his/her personal Savior when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He/she can personally relate to God in his/her own thinking in order to understand the basics of the gospel:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God loves us</li> <li>• God sent His Son who died and was resurrected for our sin</li> <li>• Those who repent and trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord will be saved.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• He/she is led by the Holy Spirit to repent and trust Jesus.</li> </ul>

An effective Christian weekday early education program will look to Jesus as the model and the Bible as the authority for guiding a young child's spiritual development. When a young child asks questions about becoming a Christian, being baptized, or joining a church, the wise teacher avoids asking questions that can be answered yes or no. The wise teacher knows that her role is to use age-appropriate Bible stories, verses, songs, pictures, activities, and conversation to lay foundations of faith. Wise teachers know to respond to the young child's questions with statements such as: "I'm glad you are interested. Tell me what that means to you." The teacher can discern whether the child is giving a concrete answer "thinking like a child," or simply repeating phrases that they have heard adults say. If the answer is concrete or the child obviously does not understand the words or phrases he is using, the teacher must wait until the child shows further interest. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

A study of Scripture and a study of the child provide an understanding of God's supernatural design of His highest creation. When we study Scripture and observe a child, we learn more about the development of the child. Our observations, together with what we glean from others who have studied young children, teach us not only more about the child, but more about the greatness of God.