

## 2. The Parent's Role in the Preschool

Cordova Bay Preschool is owned by the member parents and is organized as a democratic non-profit society. Parent participation means parents are encouraged to become involved in the administration of the preschool by contributing ideas and helping with specific tasks. Ongoing input and suggestions are both encouraged and welcomed.

Our **Constitution** (located in the last section of this portfolio) describes our Bylaws and Policies. It is important that all members become familiar with it as expectations of the administration, parents and E.C.E. are outlined. Information regarding orientation, meetings, fees, withdrawals and the role of the Personnel Committee are also contained here.

The **Monthly General Meeting** is held on the second Wednesday of each month and has two parts: a parent education portion consisting of a guest speaker with a short question period; and a business meeting to discuss the daily and future planning for the preschool. A short coffee break divides the two sections and we all try to remember to bring our own cup in an effort to avoid using Styrofoam.

The **Parent Education** portion takes about one hour. The Community Care Facilities Licensing Board requires that we include regular parent education to allow parent helpers to assist the E.C.E. in the preschool program. The topics are varied; giving us new awareness in the areas of interest that parenting creates. Guest speakers provide information and ideas for us to consider and to use whatever fits best for our family, while allowing us to develop respect for other family's points of view. Input into topic ideas is encouraged. Our Parent Education Library is always available and new books are added each year.

**Business Matters** of the preschool are conducted during the second half of the General Meeting. The President chairs this portion when members of the Executive report on their area of responsibility. All members are given an agenda and are invited to join in the discussion, voting and decision making. We hope parents will make a special effort to raise issues, which are of concern to them, and to speak out at General Meetings so the Executive can ensure that everyone's opinions are considered. You are expected to attend all General Meetings as this is a parent-owned preschool and in order to make informed decisions regarding its administration; your voice and vote are needed.

**The Board of Directors** (executive) meets monthly before each General Meeting to plan the agenda. Executive members can be approached at school, reached by phone or a note can be left in their "mailbox." Please bear in mind that we are all parent/volunteers like you. Few of us have had a lot of experience doing this sort of thing and we will need your understanding, your help and sometimes your encouragement as we do our jobs.

Elections for the new Executive are held at the April General Meeting. There are no prerequisites to serving on our Executive—in other words, we don't care if you have

never served in an Executive in any other organization. We want people who share a genuine interest in the well being of our children. A list of executive positions and a short list of duties is contained in this portfolio.

**Fundraising** is vital to meeting the budget of each school year. Suggestions for and help with events are always appreciated. With direction from the Fundraising Committee; the entire membership participates in events throughout the year. These events are fun and an opportunity to work together for the benefit of our children. By sharing the workload, we can all share in the spirit of cooperation.

A thorough clean-up of the preschool is done twice each year. You will be assigned to help with this task once during the year and **everyone** participates in the year-end clean-up.

Once a year **Standard Evaluation Forms** are handed out. These are written evaluations that invite comments on how the school was run during the year and how things might be improved. These forms are reviewed, summarized and then discussed at the next meeting. Recommendations and suggestions for change are decided on by the membership as a whole.

**If you have a concern** at any time, please take it to the E.C.E. or any member of the Executive. Any issue, which cannot be solved through the constitution, is handled with discretion by the Personnel Committee, enabling the membership to function smoothly and effectively. Clear communication is essential in the operation of the preschool and the bulletin board and website Blogs keep us informed between meetings.

When you enter the preschool you will be asked to sign a [Parent Agreement Form](#) which confirms that you understand all aspects of a cooperative preschool and agree to undertake the special parent responsibilities involved. As a member of the Cordova Bay Preschool, a minimum commitment of parent helper days, doing your job to the best of your ability, and attendance at all General Meetings is expected, but we hope for more. From time to time we will ask for help baking, fundraising or committee work. We hope you feel welcome to do as much as you are comfortable with. Everyone's circumstances are different and some people will be able to spend more time on preschool affairs than others will, but there are many ways to become further involved and all your efforts are appreciated.

However you choose to participate, enjoy the things you and your child will learn together and your family will have a very successful and worthwhile year.

## **Discussing Children's Art Work**

Try to get into the habit of discussing the artistic elements of the artwork and the child's feelings about the experience rather than complimenting, judging, describing what you like or asking what it is.

Some ideas to help you:

- I see you covered the paper today. You must have had fun doing that.
- You have used lots of shapes in your painting.
- You used a lot of green in your painting. Is that a color you like?
- I see three long lines, all different colors.
- I see small shapes and big shapes.
- What a colorful picture.
- You worked hard on this painting today.
- You spent a lot of time making so many shapes.
- You must be very proud of this painting.
- I see you used yellow at the top and green on the sides and lots of blue in the middle.
- This must have taken you a long time. I can tell you enjoyed doing this.

With collage and sculpture work you can discuss textures, shapes, patterns and space as well as color and line.

- Those squares feel very bumpy. How do the long strips feel?
- I think you made a pattern like a spider web pattern.
- That looks slimy, how does it feel?