

National Lutheran School Accreditation

Overview of Self-Study Report for Lutheran Early Childhood Centers

Revised September 2018

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MISSION, PURPOSE, VISION and VALUES

Mission

NLSA encourages and recognizes schools that provide quality, Christian education and engage in continuous improvement.

Purpose

- Help all Lutheran schools improve.
- Help all Lutheran schools evaluate themselves based on their unique purposes.
- Assure a level of quality for accredited Lutheran schools based on national standards.
- Give appropriate recognition to those schools that complete the process successfully.

Vision

The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Go and make disciples,” includes ministering to children. He also encourages, “Let the children come to Me.” Lutheran schools serve children and families by providing God-pleasing, quality learning experiences, adult-child relationships and nurturing environments.

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) provides a service that empowers schools to develop and improve high-quality, Christ-centered education through a voluntary process.

Values

- Lutheran Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Continuing Improvement
- Innovation

PREFACE

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) requires that Lutheran early childhood centers evaluate themselves based on ten Standards. The word “standard” originates from the French word *estandard*, which was the flag of the leader around which his followers rallied. Such a standard raised in battle provided leadership, a goal and a sense of working together. So it is today. The ten Standards challenge Lutheran early childhood centers to improve the quality of their programs. They are not meant to reflect what every center is like, but rather to give each center an indication of worthy goals to achieve.

The accreditation process was designed specifically for LCMS early childhood centers and is intended to serve as a measure of the quality of their programs. The Self-Study process outlined in this document allows a school to thoroughly evaluate its programs and procedures develop a School Action Plan and report progress annually in a Cumulative Annual Report (CAR). The CAR reports a process of ongoing improvement that benefits the school in the interest of the children it serves. Accreditation is valid for five (5) years pending submission and acceptance of the Cumulative Annual Report by the District Accreditation Commissioner and the district office.

Reaccreditation requires application, completion of the Self-Study Report, a successful Validation Team Visit by four or more peer professional reviewers, a positive recommendation from the District Accreditation Commission and approval by the National Accreditation Commission.

The process is based upon three assumptions. First, a high-quality program is required to be good stewards of the blessings given by God. Second, each center willingly cooperates with local governmental agencies unless such cooperation inhibits the free sharing of the Gospel. Third, the early childhood center strives to meet or exceed all local, state and federal guidelines related to early childhood education.

We pray that the accreditation process serves to raise the level of quality in centers choosing to participate in NLSA. As a result, centers will better serve the community with the opportunity to tell many more children about the love of their Savior, Jesus.



Dr. Rebecca Schmidt
Interim Director, National Lutheran School Accreditation

THE SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT

STANDARD 1: PURPOSE

The school is driven by its Christian mission.

Note: Standard 1 is divided into two categories: mission and ministry and philosophy. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for each of the two sections.

STANDARD 1A: MISSION AND MINISTRY

Overview

Schools develop mission, ministry, purpose and vision statements to communicate and serve as the basis for forming school goals, learner outcomes and action plans as well as determining direction for all activities of the school. For clarity in this accreditation process, these statements are referred to as “Mission and Ministry Statements.”

The Lutheran early childhood program must be an integral part of the congregation’s ministry to young children and their families. As such, it concerns itself with the ministry of the whole church to fulfill its purpose as a Christ-centered early childhood program. The command of God is made clear to us in Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV): “Therefore go 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 I have commanded you.”

Mission outreach is an essential part of an early childhood program. Some families are active members of Lutheran or other Christian churches. Other families may be unchurched, inactive members of a church or practicing other religions. For these families, the early childhood program may be their only contact with a Christian environment and their first introduction to Jesus. The pastor and the early childhood staff minister to families daily, as well as in times of need. The early childhood program provides the opportunity to witness the love of Christ and build a strong, Christ-centered relationship with families. It is important that the congregation has ownership in the early childhood program as it carries out God’s command of ministry to meet the needs of families.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
1A	Describe how the early childhood center reflects a mission outreach purpose in its community.
1A	List the communication methods used to share the Mission and Ministry Statement with the governing authority, staff, parents/guardians and congregation.
1A	Describe how the Mission and Ministry Statement is implemented by the governing authority, staff, parents/guardians and congregation.
1A	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
1A	Congregation's Mission and Ministry Statement
1A	Mission and Ministry Statement for the early childhood program

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
1A:01*	The early childhood program has a Mission and Ministry Statement designed specifically for the center that reflects the congregational Mission and Ministry Statement.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
1A:02	The Mission and Ministry Statement of the center is intentionally communicated to the congregation as well as to the early childhood staff and parents/guardians.
1A:03	The Mission and Ministry Statement is reviewed annually by congregation leaders and the early childhood administration.
1A:04	The congregation is involved in the early childhood program in a variety of ways.
1A:05	A relationship exists between the school, the congregation and the community. The mission and ministry of the congregation and early childhood program is shared with the community.

STANDARD 1B: PHILOSOPHY

Overview

An early childhood program philosophy is a cooperatively formed statement of belief that reflect every aspect of the program. Practices of the program align with the Mission and Ministry Statements of the church and school. The Philosophy Statement is Gospel-oriented and begins with a statement of faith. Additionally, the statement includes a discussion of the early childhood environment, curriculum design, parent / guardian relationships and an expression of how children’s developmental needs are met with an emphasis on the importance of play. Reflection and review of the philosophy is an on-going process.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school’s learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
1B	Describe the communication of the Philosophy Statement to stakeholders.
1B	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
1B	Early childhood program’s Philosophy Statement
1B	Documents where the Philosophy Statement is present (i.e. handbook, brochure)

Required Indicators of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicators of Success
1B:06*	The written philosophy is Bible-based and reflects a Christ-centered approach to learning.
1B:07*	The written philosophy includes reference to spiritual, social/emotional, cognitive, physical and creative development of young children with an emphasis on the importance of play.

General Indicators of Success

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Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

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Standard	General Indicators of Success
1B:08	The Philosophy Statement is formally approved and / or adopted by the governing authority.
1B:09	The school reviews its Philosophy Statement annually and revises, as needed.
1B:10	The school’s Philosophy Statement is communicated to staff, parents/guardians and the operating congregation(s).

STANDARD 2: RELATIONSHIPS

The school demonstrates its Christian mission through relationships with congregation, community, staff, students and families.

STANDARD 2A: HOME / FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Overview

Ministry in the Lutheran early childhood program is directed toward young children and their families. Parents / guardians are the first and foremost educators of their children. The early childhood program employs strategies for teaming with them and engaging families through effective communication, active parent involvement and parent education.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
2A	List family education programs presented during the past 12 months.
2A	List special programs for families. (i.e. Christmas service, Family Night, Literacy Festivals, service projects)
2A	Describe orientation methods for welcoming and engaging new families.
2A	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
2A	Five (5) forms of communication used to share information with parents / guardians (i.e. school newsletter, classroom newsletter, emails, blogs, personal notes)
2A	A copy of the written NLSA Family Survey questions
2A	NLSA Family Survey summary
2A	Family handbook

2A	Enrollment forms
2A	Forms used to notify parents / guardians of accidents, illnesses, behavioral concerns, etc.

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
2A:01*	A Statement of Nondiscrimination is evident in school printed materials and assures that students are admitted without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

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Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
2A:02	The school provides a variety of education opportunities for families throughout the year.
2A:03	The school uses orientation methods for new families.
2A:04	The school communicates center activities to families.
2A:05	Parents / guardians are welcome to visit the center.
2A:06	Parents / guardians are given opportunities to volunteer and support the school.
2A:07	Parents / guardians are annually asked to evaluate the program based on purpose, goals and objectives.
2A:08	Teachers communicate with parents / guardians about physical, cognitive, behavioral, social or emotional changes observed in children. If needed, a plan is formulated for children with special needs.

2A:09	State and local resources are utilized to further the program's ability to meet the diverse needs and interests of children and families.
2A:10	All communication regarding a student is kept confidential.
2A:11	Conferences are held with parents / guardians at least once each year and additionally as needed / requested or required by state licensing agencies.
2A:12	Parents / guardians are provided with opportunities to be included and involved in the church community.
2A:13	Resources and materials are available to families to further the faith and general development of young children in the home.
2A:14	Parents / guardians are informed of the yearly calendar, themes and special activities.
2A:15	Curricular goals and objectives are shared with parents / guardians.
2A:16	Written information given to parents / guardians in a handbook or other publications includes: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
2A:17	Teachers and parents / guardians form a partnership to establish and maintain two-way communication to enhance the Christian education experience and ensure that children's needs are met.

STANDARD 2B: CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Overview

The Lutheran early childhood program is an integral part of the congregation's ministry to young children and their families. The early childhood program commits itself to participate in the ministry of the whole church to fulfill its purpose as a Christ-centered early childhood program. The administrator/director is an integral part of the ministry team of the church.

The early childhood program has opportunities to strengthen relationships with its local congregation and community. The administration supports and participates in appropriate activities within its LCMS district and the LCMS.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
2B	List the ways children and families participate in congregational activities and ministries.
2B	List the ways the congregation participates in activities and ministries of the center.
2B	List the ways the director functions as a member of the congregational administrative team.
2B	List the ways the congregation supports the early childhood program. (i.e. regular prayer, tuition sponsorship, reading buddies, fundraising)
2B	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
2B	Written copy of the evangelism approach (i.e. activities, strategies, methods) used by the congregation with early childhood families
2B	Completed NLSA Church Ministry Staff Survey(s)
2B	Current budget(s) for the congregation and the early childhood program

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
2B:18*	The school is operated by one or more congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) or maintains an active Registered Service Organization (RSO) status with the Synod.

General Indicators of Success

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Standard	General Indicators of Success
2B:19	The school provides opportunities for congregational involvement to promote its mission and ministry.
2B:20	A team ministry exists between the pastor and other church / school staff by supporting each other spiritually, personally and professionally.
2B:21	The center and congregation work collaboratively to develop and effectively implement an evangelism approach (i.e. activities, strategies, methods) for families who do not have an identified church home or attend church regularly.
2B:22	Families are made aware of church programs and activities.
2B:23	The center provides age-appropriate chapel services to foster faith development.
2B:24	All early childhood staff members participate in various activities of the sponsoring congregation.
2B:25	Everyone employed by the center is actively involved in worship and the congregational life of his / her home church.
2B:26	The pastor and other ministry leaders are visible in the center and provide spiritual guidance.
2B:27	The pastor participates in early childhood center activities.

2B:28	The pastor expands his knowledge of early childhood practices to become better able to communicate with young children and families.
2B:29	The congregation provides spiritual support for the staff, students and their families.
2B:30	The congregation provides financial support for the center.
2B:31	The congregation has a plan for financial assistance to families with limited financial resources.

STANDARD 2C: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL to EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Note: Standard 2C applies to early childhood centers that are part of schools that include grade levels above kindergarten. Freestanding early childhood centers mark N/A for Indicators 2:32-2:39.

Overview

When congregations or associations operate Lutheran schools that include early childhood plus additional grade levels, the school is one entity. A close relationship between the early childhood level and additional levels of the school is vital. The early childhood director and school administrator(s) work together closely to carry out the shared vision. This connection is important for the Lutheran school to effectively carry out its role as part of the mission and ministry of the congregation.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
2C	List school-wide parent education programs and activities.
2C	Comment on the ways the shared vision is evidenced in the staff, school, church and community-at-large.
2C	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
2C	Agendas for meetings that include administrators from all school levels

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
2C:32*	The school’s mission and ministry statement reflects a unified school.

General Indicators of Success

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Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
2C:33	The governing authority of the school includes representation from all educational levels and maintains a unified school ministry.
2C:34	The director and elementary school administrator(s) meet regularly to coordinate shared aspects of the school ministry.
2C:35	All-staff fellowship opportunities are offered throughout the year.
2C:36	Combined educational programs and/or activities are planned annually for all age groups.
2C:37	The early childhood and kindergarten teachers work together and share information regarding children’s readiness and indicators for school success (i.e. screenings, records, portfolios, assessments).
2C:38	The early childhood and kindergarten teachers work cooperatively to provide a smooth transition for children and their families.
2C:39	School criteria for student placement is defined and shared with parents / guardians.

STANDARD 3: LEADERSHIP

The school is governed and administered effectively according to written policy.

Note: Standard 3 is divided into two sections: The Early Childhood Governing Authority and The Early Childhood Administrator/Director. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for each of the two sections.

STANDARD 3A: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNING AUTHORITY

Overview

Leadership of the school is a critical factor in the successful development, implementation and evaluation of the school. Two primary leadership components are the board or governing authority and the appointed administrator(s). The governing authority guides, steers, directs and oversees the strategic direction of the early childhood center, although some schools may function effectively without a school board by reporting to a supervisor who works with the governing authority. In both governance models, the governing authority and leadership of the school work together to promote family involvement and support the spiritual, social / emotional, cognitive, physical and creative development of students.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
3A	List the major decisions the governing authority and / or direct supervisor has established for the early childhood program during the past three years.
3A	Describe the process used by the governing authority and / or direct supervisor for systematic needs assessment and development of short and long-term goals.
3A	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
3A	Diagram of the governing structure of the early childhood / school / church
3A	Governing authority policy manual
3A	Governing authority grievance and due-process resolution procedures
3A	Governing authority minutes from the past three meetings
3A	Short- and long-range goals for the program
3A	Evaluation form used to assess the director
3A	Director's Supervisor Survey, if applicable

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
3A:01*	The operating organization designates the governing authority and has written policies clearly defining lines of governing authority, responsibilities, limitations of the governing authority and membership.

General Indicators of Success

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Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

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Standard	General Indicators of Success
3A:02	The governing authority meets and minutes are kept for each meeting.
3A:03	The governing authority receives reports from the director at each meeting.
3A:04	Governance policies are determined at official meetings and recorded in the minutes.
3A:05	The governing authority has established policies that set forth rules and expectations by which the governing authority completes its tasks.

3A:06	The governing authority has clearly defined policies regarding open attendance at meetings and executive sessions.
3A:07	Governing authority policies are collected into a policy manual, separate from the minutes.
3A:08	No conflict of interest exists between members of the governing authority and the early childhood staff.
3A:09	Neither the governing authority nor its individual members involve themselves in the day-to-day operations and management of the center as defined by written policies.
3A:10	The governing authority monitors itself for adherence to policies.
3A:11	The governing authority makes appropriate reports to the operating organization(s).
3A:12	The governing authority has adopted comprehensive job descriptions for the director and staff.
3A:13	The governing authority provides for the annual evaluation of the director based on job description.
3A:14	The governing authority has written policies or position descriptions clearly delineating supervisory relationships for all staff.
3A:15	The governing authority has approved a process for the supervision and evaluation of staff members that is implemented by the director annually.
3A:16	The governing authority provides adequate paid time for the director to perform administrative duties. If the director is teaching, adequate release time is provided for administrative duties.
3A:17	The governing authority ensures that lead teachers are provided weekly paid planning time away from responsibility of children.
3A:18	The governing body ensures that staff is provided with a separate break area and adult restrooms. Staff members have ways of taking breaks at times of high stress.
3A:19	The governing authority provides opportunities for ongoing professional growth for all staff.
3A:20	The governing authority has a needs assessment process in place for evaluating the effectiveness of the school.
3A:21	The governing authority uses needs assessment process information for school-wide, long-term, systematic planning.
3A:22	The governing authority establishes written short-range and long-range goals for the early childhood program to effectively implement the program's vision and mission.
3A:23	The governing authority communicates staff and parent grievance and due-process resolution procedures in writing.
3A:24	The governing authority members actively serve as advocates for the early childhood program.
3A:25	The governing authority establishes policies that provide for annual budget planning.
3A:26	The governing authority and director are responsible for coordinating the school's financial plan with the operating congregation's financial plan.
3A:27	The governing authority and director ensure that sources of income and expenditures reflect the school philosophy and promote student growth.

3A:28	Salaries and remuneration reflect the current LCMS district recommended salary scale and salaries are reviewed annually.
3A:29	The governing authority provides a benefit package for full-time workers and compensation packages for all employees as required by state and federal regulations.
3A:30	The governing authority ensures that liability insurance is maintained for the school.

STANDARD 3B: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATOR / DIRECTOR

Overview

The administrator / director assures that the early childhood education program is distinctively Christian and developmentally appropriate. He / she understands the mission and ministry of the congregation and is responsible to staff, children and families for the day-to-day operation of the program.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
3B	Summarize the ways the administrator uses leadership skills in the congregation, community and professional organizations.
3B	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
3B	Administrator completed profile form(s)
3B	Administrator diplomas and proof of professional organization membership
3B	Administrator proof of early childhood coursework
3B	Administrator job description
3B	Administrator evaluation form used by the staff
3B	Most recent statistical report submitted to the National office.
3B	Orientation checklist used with new staff members
3B	Policy for ensuring adequate staff / child ratios at all times
3B	Profile of each class showing the staff / child ratio with the age, number of children and number of adults
3B	Enrollment materials (i.e. written admission procedures, waiting list process)
3B	Completed Director's Survey

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
3B:31*	The director demonstrates a personal Christian faith, a commitment to Lutheran education and a dedication to the teaching ministry.

General Indicators of Success

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Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
3B:32	The director implements policies as established by the governing authority and develops procedures to effectively manage the day-to-day operation of the program.
3B:33	The director’s personal profile and qualifications fulfill the job description requirements which include a minimum age of 21.
3B:34	The director has at least a bachelor’s degree with no less than 18 semester hours in early childhood education or is actively working toward accomplishing this requirement.
3B:35	The director is involved in worship in his / her home church and is supportive of the sponsoring congregation’s ministries.
3B:36	The director completes a minimum of 15 clock hours of job-related continuing education each year or follows the requirements of state licensing for each year (whichever has a higher requirement).
3B:37	The director participates in district-sponsored conferences and events.
3B:38	The director submits information and statistics to the district and the synod annually.
3B:39	The director is a member of at least one professional organization and remains current in early childhood education trends and practices.
3B:40	The director interacts with other early childhood professionals.
3B:41	The director consults with the pastor(s) of the sponsoring congregation.

3B:42	The director provides spiritual leadership for the staff and school community.
3B:43	The director or governing authority assures that levels of responsibility and accountability are clearly defined for applicable support staff. (i.e. secretarial, maintenance, cafeteria, transportation)
3B:44	The director provides adequate orientation and training for new teaching staff members and substitutes in the following areas: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
3B:45	The director meets with teaching staff members individually and collectively.
3B:46	The director provides an ongoing program of staff supervision that includes informal and formal observations, individual meetings, self-evaluations by staff members and a formal written evaluation.
3B:47	The director oversees a professional development plan for each teaching staff member based on job description, self-evaluation and evaluation by director.
3B:48	The director ensures that accurate confidential files for staff members and students are kept in an organized manner in accordance with licensing regulations.
3B:49	The director provides leadership in establishing developmentally appropriate curriculum and resources.
3B:50	The director provides in-service opportunities for staff.
3B:51	The director works with the governing authority to assure handbooks and manuals are updated with appropriate policies and procedures. The updates are regularly communicated to staff and parents, as applicable.
3B:52	The director reviews all public relations and printed materials used to market the program.
3B:53	The director implements the policies and decisions of the governing authority.
3B:54	The director manages the approved budget and finances according to the clearly defined responsibilities and limitations set forth by the governing authority.
3B:55	The director plans and implements a health and safety program that includes the necessary state requirements.
3B:56	The director limits group size appropriate for the age and level of the students and ensures optimal student growth. The limits set forth below are in effect in all classrooms. (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
3B:57	The director admits students according to established written admission criteria.
3B:58	The director designates a qualified individual to be in charge in his / her absence and posts the information.

STANDARD 4: PERSONNEL

A qualified and competent Christian staff serves the center.

Overview

A qualified and competent Christian staff is essential to a quality Lutheran early childhood center. The cohesive school ministry team embodies the shared vision of the early childhood program.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
4	List compensation package(s) paid to staff (i.e. salary scale, health care, vacation, sick leave, tuition assistance)
4	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
4	Staff profiles
4	Schedule of staff meetings and three meeting agendas
4	Description and / or checklist used for new teaching staff orientation
4	Job descriptions, personnel policies, calls or contract agreements
4	Current salary and benefit scale
4	In-service training program / schedule provided by the center in the last 12 months
4	Staff Survey for Teachers and Assistant Teachers Summary
4	Support Staff Survey for Non-Teaching Members Summary
4	Employee handbook
4	Biblically-based code of ethics for staff

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicators of Success
4:01*	All staff members demonstrate agreement in writing with the stated school mission.
4:02*	All staff members in licensed and license-exempt centers meet the state’s requirements for criminal record checks including documentation regarding any history of substantiated child abuse, neglect or physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect a child’s health or safety.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
4:03	Lead teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or state recognized equivalent and are at least 18 years of age (21 years of age if working with infants and toddlers) or follow the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement.)
4:04	Each lead teacher is a member of an early childhood professional organization.
4:05	Assistant teachers have a minimum of a high school diploma or Graduate Equivalent Degree (GED) and are at least 18 years of age (21 years of age if working with infants and toddlers) or follow the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement).
4:06	Each teaching staff member completes a minimum of 12 clock hours of continuing education each year or follows the requirements of state licensing. (whichever has a higher requirement).
4:07	Each teaching staff member has responsibility for developing relationships with a specific group of children.

4:08	Each staff member demonstrates a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
4:09	Each staff member adheres to a biblically-based code of ethical behavior that has been developed and approved by the congregation.
4:10	Each staff member attends regularly scheduled staff meetings, work days and staff events appropriate to his/her position.
4:11	Each staff member completes a Staff Survey for Teachers and Assistant Teachers.
4:12	Each staff member respects confidentiality of information shared by parents and information gained by interactions with children and families.
4:13	Each staff member demonstrates a commitment to the mission and ministry of the school.
4:14	The director and staff members plan and consult frequently about the program, children and families.

STANDARD 5: STAFF / CHILD INTERACTIONS

Staff members relate appropriately and effectively with all children.

Overview

The Lutheran early childhood center is a community of people, redeemed by God through Jesus Christ, in which all are affirmed because of their forgiveness through Him. Christ's love motivates each staff member to develop a warm and loving environment where each child is nurtured to develop positive relationships with others and reach his / her full potential. Teaching staff members recognize and provide opportunities for young children to develop an understanding of self and others. These interactions are characterized by warmth, Christ-centered relationships, respect, positive support and responsiveness.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
5	Identify the progressive steps followed by teachers and parents / guardians to address the needs of students who exhibit ongoing behavioral or developmental concerns.
5	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
5	Early childhood discipline policy

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicators of Success
5:01*	The school promotes positive, Christ-centered relationships among all children and adults.
5:02*	Staff members provide a safe and nurturing environment free from negative verbal interaction, physical punishment, psychological abuse, coercion and threats as forms of discipline.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
5:03	Staff members treat adults and children with dignity and respect through speech and actions.
5:04	Teachers initiate activities and discussions that build a positive, Christ-centered self-identity and respect for and acceptance of others.
5:05	Teachers encourage children to become self-reliant in routine activities.
5:06	Teachers communicate with children at the child’s eye-level, listening and responding to children’s conversations and encouraging them to use language.
5:07	Teachers provide empathy, comfort, kindness, patience and care to distressed, sad and crying children.
5:08	Teachers support and help parents / guardians and children with separation anxiety.
5:09	Teachers provide children of both genders equal opportunity to participate in activities.
5:10	Teachers model and promote positive social interaction in the classroom.
5:11	Teachers assess the needs of children and, in partnership with parents/guardian, involve appropriate community resources.

5:12	Teachers recognize and respect each family's culture, practices and language.
5:13	Teachers engage children in meaningful conversation at meal times and throughout the day.
5:14	Teachers intentionally share their faith in Jesus with young children.
5:15	Teachers encourage children to use words to solve problems when dealing with emotions.
5:16	Teachers follow the written discipline plan which includes: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
5:17	Teachers follow the written discipline plan for protecting student's personal rights. Students are free from: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
5:18	The written discipline plan incorporates a due process for children and parents / guardians.

STANDARD 6: FACILITIES

The center maintains a safe environment that supports student learning.

Overview

The school maintains facilities, services and equipment to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for all children and staff. The building, grounds and equipment are designed to provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which young children work, play, explore and learn.

When the early childhood facility is shared with other congregational programs, it is important that specific guidelines are developed to assist the various programs in coordinating use of equipment, materials and space.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
6	List the individuals / group responsible for the overall care and maintenance of the school and grounds.
6	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
6	Floor plan of the early childhood facility, including indoor and outdoor areas and square footage of each area used by students
6	Plans for further development of the early childhood facility
6	Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning / maintenance plan

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
6:01*	The center complies with all federal, state and local building, health, safety and disaster preparedness facility requirements and maintains documentation of the requirements including certificates, licenses and records of violations or deficiencies with documentation of resolution.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
6:02	The physical environment reflects the Christian philosophy of the program.
6:03	Buildings, grounds and equipment are safe, clean, attractive and developmentally appropriate for the age and number of children.
6:04	Reasonable facility accommodations are made to be inclusive of all children, including children with identified disabilities and special learning / developmental needs.
6:05	A minimum of thirty-five square feet of indoor space per child is provided for individual, small group and large group activities.
6:06	Individual spaces are provided for children to store their personal belongings.
6:07	All rooms are well-lit and ventilated, and the temperature is comfortable.
6:08	Furniture and equipment is age-appropriate, sturdy and safe.
6:09	A variety of well-maintained materials are organized on low storage shelves to encourage independent use by children. Materials are rotated frequently to promote learning and extend children’s play opportunities.
6:10	Materials are developmentally appropriate and adequate in number to ensure choice and variety.

6:11	Learning environments include the following areas: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
6:12	Classroom areas are arranged so that traffic patterns do not interfere with activities.
6:13	The following materials are included in learning environments: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
6:14	A print-rich environment supports learning by offering materials and activities throughout the classroom that encourage reading, writing and talking. (i.e. functional labeling, daily schedules, alphabet chart, lunch menu, rotation of books, magazines, posted poems, song charts, children’s work with their writing or dictation, weather graphs, a variety of props and play materials for vocabulary development and role play)
6:15	Classroom décor is child-centered and includes original artwork and writing from students with minimal commercial products.
6:16	Visual displays reflect the activities and interests of the children.
6:17	Young children’s writing and art is displayed at their eye level whenever possible.
6:18	The learning environment is orderly and kept clean and safe as children use the facility.
6:19	Toilets, drinking water and hand-washing facilities are easily accessible to children.
6:20	Classroom windows are screened when open.
6:21	A minimum of seventy-five square feet of outdoor play space per child exists that includes shade, as well as a variety of surfaces.
6:22	The outdoor play area, surfaces and equipment: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
6:23	Cushioning (i.e. mats, pea gravel, sand, wood chips) material exists under all play equipment.

STANDARD 7: WELLNESS

The school implements a wellness plan, based on best practices, and assures that children learn healthy habits.

Note: Standard 7 is divided into two sections: Health and Safety and Food and Nutrition. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for each of the two sections.

STANDARD 7A: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Overview

The school maintains facilities, services and equipment to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for all staff and children. Children receive healthy snacks / meals, participate in physical activity and are introduced to healthy practices.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
7A	Describe how the indoor / outdoor facility is made secure against intruders.
7A	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
7A	Written policy for storing and dispensing children's medications
7A	Written communicable disease policy
7A	Written accident and injury policy
7A	Written policies regarding smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs and drug testing
7A	Written procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children
7A	Written disaster and evacuation procedures

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
7A:01*	The center complies with all federal, state and local building, health, safety and disaster preparedness requirements.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
7A:02	Each staff member is at least 18 years old (21 years old if working with infants / toddlers) and has a high school diploma or equivalency or follows the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement).
7A:03	Teachers position themselves to observe and monitor all children in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, lunchroom, gym, playground and sanctuary.
7A:04	Two qualified staff members are on site at all times when children are present.
7A:05	One person with training in pediatric Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid is on site at all times when children are present.
7A:06	Staff members meet Occupational Safety & Hazard Administration (OSHA – Universal Precautions) requirements for blood-borne pathogens.
7A:07	Teachers are trained to recognize symptoms of child abuse and neglect and the reporting requirements.
7A:08	Teachers identify and remove all choking hazards for children (including food).
7A:09	Teachers are aware of, take measures to accommodate and adjust curriculum to include all children with environmental, pet and food allergies.
7A:10	Provision is made for the safe drop-off and pick-up of children.
7A:11	Electrical outlets are covered.

7A:12	Cleaning supplies and other toxic materials are properly labeled, stored and kept out of children's reach.
7A:13	The facility and grounds are smoke-free.
7A:14	First-aid supplies are available in every classroom and in the outdoor area. The first aid kit's location is marked for easy identification.
7A:15	Stairs and hallways are well-lighted and have additional emergency lighting.
7A:16	Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are installed, tagged and serviced annually.
7A:17	Teachers maintain an emergency file for all children and adults in their classroom. The file is taken along whenever the class leaves the classroom. Files are updated regularly and contain: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
7A:18	The program has written disaster and evacuation procedures.
7A:19	Evacuation routes and alternate routes are posted in offices, hallways, classrooms, kitchen and other areas used by staff members and children. (Routes must not pass through restrooms, kitchens or storage areas.)
7A:20	A "safe house"/ alternate shelter is identified in the event the site needs to be evacuated.
7A:21	Fire drills are conducted and recorded once per month. Teachers take written attendance records and emergency information with them and account for all children.
7A:22	Tornado, hurricane, earthquake and / or other drills are conducted and recorded per state licensing requirements.
7A:23	Written records of emergency drills and evacuations are kept on file.
7A:24	In consultation with local first responders, a lock-down plan is developed and drills are conducted.
7A:25	Parents / guardians and staff members are notified when the center closes in an emergency because conditions have arisen that make the building unsafe. (i.e. structural damage, no water / electricity / heat, sewage problems, gas leaks)
7A:26	All families are notified when an infectious disease is reported to the school.
7A:27	Staff members / children with infectious diseases are excluded from attendance in accordance with a physician's or the health department's directive.
7A:28	A separate area is available for sick children. Children are supervised until a parent / guardian arrives.
7A:29	Minor injuries are documented in writing and parents are notified.
7A:30	Major injuries (including head injuries) are communicated to the parent / guardian immediately. Appropriate emergency procedures are followed and the injury is documented in writing and kept on file.
7A:31	All staff members wear disposable protective gloves when coming in contact with body fluids, toileting accidents, injury and illness.
7A:32	Health records document that children are current for routine screenings and immunizations.
7A:33	Written policy protects the rights and privacy of children and parents / guardians in the areas of personal information, health and medical history and other pertinent information. Staff members adhere to the confidentiality of such information.

7A:34	Medication is administered to children according to state licensing rules and the written procedures of the school.
7A:35	All staff members wash their hands with liquid soap and running water: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
7A:36	All children wash hands using liquid soap and running water: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
7A:37	The facility is secure against strangers interacting with young children.
7A:38	The playground area is protected and secured by a fence.
7A:39	All staff members wear disposable protective gloves when diapering or helping children with toileting and dispose of contaminated items in marked disposal containers.
7A:40	Containers holding soiled diapers and diapering materials are not accessible to children and have lids that open and close tightly.
7A:41	Diaper areas and changing tables are sanitized after each child is changed.
7A:42	Bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized daily.
7A:43	Teachers and staff ensure privacy for children when changing clothes.
7A:44	A daily rest period is provided for all children four and under who are enrolled in programs more than four hours per day or follow the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement).
7A:45	Children are provided with cots / mats per state licensing guidelines.
7A:46	Cots / mats do not block doorways or walkways.
7A:47	Napping equipment (cots / mats) is sanitized regularly (daily if used by different children weekly if used by the same child and after contamination with bodily fluids.)
7A:48	Children's bedding is stored individually and labeled for each student.
7A:49	Children's bedding is laundered weekly or promptly, if soiled.
7A:50	Napping equipment is stored safely.
7A:51	Teachers provide a restful environment during nap time.
7A:52	Teachers provide supervised activities for non-sleeping children after 30 minutes.
7A:53	Teachers supervise sleeping children and never leave them unattended.
7A:54	Written permission from the parent / guardian is obtained for each field trip.
7A:55	Teacher / child ratios are maintained during field trips.
7A:56	Teachers account for all children before, during and after each field trip.
7A:57	Emergency information for children / teachers and a first aid kit are taken on every field trip.
7A:58	School transportation vehicles are equipped with: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
7A:59	Adults providing transportation: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)

STANDARD 7B: FOOD AND NUTRITION

Overview

The school provides children with snacks and meals that adequately meet their dietary needs. Menus are reviewed and approved. Kitchen facilities are inspected by the health department.

Please indicate if food is:

- Prepared on site
- Vended
- Brought from home

Required Responses – ALL SCHOOLS

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
7B	Explain the meal / snack delivery system. Who is responsible? What procedures and protocols are in place?
7B	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence – ALL SCHOOLS

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
7B	Written policies related to food storage and food service
7B	Health inspections
7B	Food service license or license exempt documentation
7B	Food preparation area / kitchen cleaning schedule

Required Evidence – FOOD PREPARED ON SITE OR VENDED

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
7B	Name of the individual who participates in food service training and a copy of the current certificate, according to state licensing
7B	Menus
7B	Vendor contract (if applicable) assuring that the business, food handlers and premises are inspected and approved by the local health department

Required Indicator of Success – ALL SCHOOLS

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
7B:60*	The center complies with all local and state food safety requirements and inspection records are kept on file.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
7B:61	Tables are washed with soapy water and sanitized with an approved sanitation solution before and after meals / snacks.
7B:62	Routines are developed to provide minimal wait time for children to begin eating.
7B:63	Teachers sit, eat and converse with children while modeling appropriate behaviors.
7B:64	Children are encouraged to converse freely during snacks / meals.

7B:65	Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
7B:66	Any food item that is shared with the class is brought in unopened packages listing the contents of the food items.
7B:67	The following foods are not served to children under four years old: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
7B:68	The program promotes good nutrition by educating families and ensuring that students are provided with healthy snacks, meals and celebration foods.
7B:69	Food preparation and storage areas are cleaned according to a posted written schedule.
7B:70	All refrigerators / freezers used to store food / meals have an accurate thermometer inside.
7B:71	Food allergies and special diets are posted where food is prepared / served.
7B:72	A plan is in place to provide snacks / meals to children who arrive without snacks / meals from home.
7B:73	The kitchen is approved for dishwashing or disposable / single use dishware is used.
7B:74	Written weekly menus (snacks / meals) are posted in the kitchen and in classrooms.
7B:75	Vended food is transported in sanitizable, insulated containers.
7B:76	Correct food temperatures are maintained for all food served to children and daily documentation is kept (hot foods: 140 degrees or above; cold foods: 41 degrees or below).
7B:77	Food is covered during transport from the kitchen.
7B:78	Food handlers / servers wear gloves.
7B:79	Staff members supervise children who handle or serve food, replacing contaminated food and utensils, as needed, during family-style dining.
7B:80	Staff members discard any food brought from the kitchen that remains after the meal.
7B:81	Food containers brought from home are labeled with the child's name and date.
7B:82	Meals from home are stored in a clean, sanitary refrigerator at 41 degrees or below.

STANDARD 8: CURRICULUM

The center has a written curriculum that integrates the faith, is developmentally appropriate and is supported by age-appropriate materials and resources.

Overview

The curriculum of the Lutheran early childhood center reflects its philosophy and consists of appropriate learning experiences. It is the organized framework that delineates the following: content that children are to learn, processes through which children achieve curricular goals, teaching practices to help children achieve goals and the context in which teaching and learning occur. The school's curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and support the spiritual, social / emotional, cognitive, physical and creative growth and development of young children.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
8	Describe how the curriculum supports and reflects the philosophy of the program.
8	Describe how often the curriculum is evaluated and share who is engaged in the process.
8	Describe how the curriculum meets the anti-bias / cultural / social / economic needs of the church and community.
8	Describe the type of curriculum used for faith development of children.
8	Describe the methods of assessing children's growth and individual needs.
8	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
8	One week of lesson plans for each classroom
8	Center's written curriculum guide, goals and early learning state standards
8	Daily and weekly class schedules from each teacher
8	Forms used for student assessments

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
8:01*	The center implements a Christian curriculum that promotes learning and development in each of the following domains: spiritual, social / emotional, cognitive, physical and creative growth.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the "Comments" section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
8:02	The curriculum focuses on the faith-development of young children. Through the Word and Spirit of God, teachers nurture the spiritual development of children throughout the day by: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:03	The curriculum is based on state standards and reflects a developmentally appropriate philosophy.

8:04	Learning experiences and materials used in the implementation of the curriculum reflect the early childhood program philosophy.
8:05	The curriculum supports and values child-paced play as the avenue for learning. Child-initiated, self-selected play is included in large, uninterrupted portions of the daily schedule.
8:06	Experiences and educational materials are concrete and age-appropriate, addressing various learning styles.
8:07	Classroom schedules provide a routine and predictable framework.
8:08	The daily schedule provides a balance of: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:09	The daily schedule provides for smooth and unhurried transitions from one activity to another.
8:10	Teachers adapt teaching strategies to meet children’s individual spiritual, social / emotional, cognitive, physical and creative needs and interests.
8:11	The curriculum provides opportunities and materials for children to learn through exploration and use of their five senses.
8:12	The curriculum supports opportunities for all children to explore, experiment, question and discover through: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:13	The curriculum supports language and literacy through teacher-directed activities including: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:14	The curriculum fosters self-identity and understanding and acceptance of other cultures.
8:15	The curriculum includes culturally responsive teaching practices that reflect the social / economic / cultural community in which the children live.
8:16	The curriculum provides children with daily opportunities to develop socially through interaction with peers and adults.
8:17	The curriculum supports creativity through daily experiences in art, music and dramatic play.
8:18	The curriculum supports physical development through: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:19	The curriculum supports the development of safety, wellness and healthy living.
8:20	Visual media in the classroom is evaluated by administrators or teachers for educational value and contributes to a child’s understanding and learning.
8:21	The curriculum limits the use of passive visual media (PVM) in favor of developmental learning activities designed to engage children. Teachers are actively involved with children during viewing time and other activities are available to children when PVM is used. (PVM is not used in classrooms with children under age 24 months.)
8:22	The curriculum supports comprehensive child assessment that uses a variety of instruments and multiple data sources including: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
8:23	Teachers conduct scheduled student assessments and share results with parents / guardians.

8:24	Teachers provide families with individualized learning goals based on assessment results and input from parents / guardians.
8:25	The written curriculum is evaluated annually and appropriate changes are made to ensure student growth.

STANDARD 9: INFANTS / TODDLERS

Staff members partner with parents to cooperatively work toward developing the full potential of each infant and toddler.

Overview

Research in early brain development and cognition provides clear evidence that early experiences establish the ability to learn throughout life. Experiences and materials are intentionally selected to support learning in all developmental domains: spiritual, cognitive, social / emotional, physical and creative. The adult-child relationships are caring, nurturing and responsive to the needs of each child.

Please indicate if the center serves infants and toddlers:

Infants: Children 0 – 12 months old

Toddler: Children 12 – 24 months old

*If center **SERVES** infants and/or toddlers, **COMPLETE** this Standard.

*If center **DOES NOT SERVE** infants or toddlers, **DO NOT COMPLETE** this Standard.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
9	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
9	Forms used to communicate with families
9	Curriculum framework
9	Daily schedules

9	Assessment materials
9	Diaper changing procedure
9	Documentation that staff working with infants / toddlers are trained in “safe sleep” practices and “shaken baby syndrome”
9	Child care license / certificate indicating the program is certified to provide infant / toddler care in accordance with state licensing regulations
9	Policies regarding sanitation

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicators of Success
9:01*	Teaching staff members supervise infants and toddlers by sight and sound at all times.
9:02*	To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, infants are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface that meets the standard of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, unless otherwise ordered by a physician.
9:03*	At least one teaching staff member who has a certificate showing satisfactory completion of pediatric first aid training and satisfactory completion of pediatric CPR is always present with each group of children.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the criteria below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every Indicator in the “Comments” section.

Met in Full (2) — The General Indicator of Success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Partially Met (1) — The General Indicator of Success is moderately accomplished but additional detail, depth and written documentation is needed to meet the Indicator in full.

Not Presently Met (0) — The General Indicator of Success is not present or is emerging (minimally present).

Standard	General Indicators of Success
9:04	Lead teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or state recognized equivalent and are at least 21 years of age or follow the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement).

9:05	Assistant teachers have a minimum high school diploma or GED and are at least 21 years of age or follow the requirements of state licensing (whichever has a higher requirement).
9:06	Teachers have a means of communicating with other staff members without leaving children unattended.
9:07	Teachers develop trusting relationships with children and families.
9:08	Teachers work in partnership with families to establish developmentally appropriate caregiving routines that meet the needs of each child.
9:09	Teachers are sensitive and understanding of family concerns, family culture and family structure.
9:10	Teachers greet and communicate with parents / guardians on a daily basis (in person or in writing) regarding activities, developmental milestones, shared caregiving issues and other information that affects the well-being and development of each child.
9:11	Centers devise a daily record chart for each infant / toddler. The record includes: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:12	Centers maintain continuity of care. The center makes every effort to keep infants, toddlers and their teachers together for a minimum of 9 months.
9:13	A primary teacher is assigned to each infant and toddler.
9:14	Teachers express warmth through physical affection, eye contact, tone of voice and smiles.
9:15	Teachers engage infants and toddlers in frequent, face-to-face social interactions throughout the day. (i.e. talking, singing, playing peek-a-boo)
9:16	Teachers give infants one-on-one attention when engaging in caregiving routines and engage toddlers in many one-on-one, face-to-face conversations.
9:17	Teachers quickly respond to signs of distress by providing physical comfort and needed care.
9:18	Teachers seek to actively understand children's needs and desires by recognizing and responding to non-verbal cues.
9:19	Teachers facilitate social interaction by playing, interacting, caring, responding and showing interest in each child.
9:20	Teachers facilitate interaction between infants and toddlers while they are looking, touching or verbalizing with each other.
9:21	Teachers support the development of friendships among infants and toddlers by providing opportunities to play and learn from others.
9:22	Teachers intentionally teach children social, communication and emotional regulation skills, and model positive interactions.
9:23	Teachers assist toddlers in resolving conflict by identifying feelings, describing problems and trying alternative solutions.
9:24	Teachers work in partnership with families (and professionals, if needed) to develop individualized plans to address challenging behaviors.
9:25	Quilts, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed animals and other soft items are not placed in cribs.

9:26	Children who are awake are not placed in cribs except for a short time before sleeping or after waking.
9:27	The sides of infants' cribs are in a locked position when in use.
9:28	Mesh cribs, mesh playpens, cradles, bean bag chairs and bassinets are prohibited.
9:29	All staff members wear disposable protective gloves when diapering or helping children with toileting and dispose of contaminated items in marked disposal containers.
9:30	Containers holding soiled diapers and diapering materials are not accessible to children and have lids that open and close tightly.
9:31	In the diaper changing area, teachers post and follow diaper changing procedures including: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:32	Diaper areas and changing tables are sanitized after each child is changed.
9:33	Bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized daily.
9:34	Pacifiers are sanitized when contaminated.
9:35	All articles used by infants and toddlers are sanitizable.
9:36	Toys placed in a child's mouth, or otherwise contaminated, are washed by hand with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried or are washed in a mechanical dishwasher before being used by another child.
9:37	Highchairs are washed with soapy water and sanitized before and after each use.
9:38	Equipment and play materials are durable and free from hazards.
9:39	Furniture that can be pulled over is not accessible to infants and toddlers.
9:40	Rooms include durable, safe, age-appropriate materials that stimulate learning, growth, health and development. The following materials and equipment are available to infants and toddlers: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:41	Toddler rooms are equipped with: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:42	Infant and toddler materials and equipment encourage: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:43	Infant and toddler toys are situated on stable, low shelves and are reachable without assistance.
9:44	Teachers arrange space so children can enjoy quiet play and freely explore the environment.
9:45	Individual storage spaces for supplies and personal belongings are used for all infants and toddlers.
9:46	The center provides a crib for each infant and a cot or mat for each toddler.
9:47	A shatterproof mirror is available where children play.
9:48	Gliders and rocking chairs meet requirements of state licensing.
9:49	Pacifiers, if used, are not attached around a child's neck.
9:50	Car seats and diaper bags from home are not stored in classrooms.
9:51	Teachers identify choking hazards and remove them from the proximity of infants and toddlers.
9:52	Electrical cords are inaccessible.

9:53	Infant and toddler indoor and outdoor play areas are separate from those of older children.
9:54	Infants and toddlers do not have access to containers / wading pools that contain liquids.
9:55	Bathrooms have barriers to prevent entry by unattended infants and toddlers.
9:56	Baby walkers are not used in the center.
9:57	Parents / guardians share infant feeding plans with teachers (kind and amount of food, formula and breast milk and the times they are to be offered). The feeding plans are posted.
9:58	The center supports breast feeding by: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:59	Except for breast milk, staff members prepare (according to the manufacturer's instructions) and serve formula and infant foods that come in factory-sealed containers.
9:60	Bottle sanitizing procedures are posted and followed.
9:61	Formula or breast milk is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit and for no longer than 5 minutes. At no time is breast milk, formula or food warmed in a microwave.
9:62	Teachers feed infants whenever the infant seems hungry. Feeding is not used in lieu of other forms of comforting.
9:63	Teachers wash their hands before between feedings of individual children.
9:64	Infants are held during feedings.
9:65	Formula or breast milk that has been served, but not consumed or refrigerated within one hour, is discarded.
9:66	Clean, sanitized cups are offered to toddlers.
9:67	The following foods are not served to children under four years old: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:68	Staff members cut food into pieces no larger than ¼ inch square for infants; ½ inch square for toddlers.
9:69	Time schedules with regard to eating, sleeping and diapering are flexible, dictated more by children's needs than by adult's convenience.
9:70	Daily activities include music, songs / finger plays and stories.
9:71	Many opportunities for active / large motor play are available indoors and outdoors.
9:72	A written curriculum framework guides staff in planning and implementing learning opportunities for children.
9:73	Curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:74	Curriculum for toddlers incorporates content, concepts and activities that encourage spiritual, cognitive, social / emotional, physical and creative development.
9:75	Use of television and other visual media is prohibited.
9:76	Decorations in the room are placed at children's eye level.
9:77	Teachers use the needs, interests and curiosity of children to influence schedule, routines and learning experiences.

9:78	Teachers encourage infants and toddlers to develop language and literacy skills by: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:79	Teachers encourage physical development of infants and toddlers by providing: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
9:80	Infants and toddlers showing interest or pleasure in an activity are encouraged and supported in prolonging that activity.
9:81	Teachers use a variety of assessment methods. (i.e. observations, check lists, rating scales).
9:82	Curriculum goals guide ongoing assessment of children's progress.
9:83	Assessments obtain information on all areas of children's development: spiritual, cognitive, social / emotional, physical and creative development.
9:84	Written assessments are shared with parents and are used to identify individual goals.
9:85	Parent-teacher conferences are offered at least once every 3 months for infants and at least once every 6 months for toddlers, or more often, as needed.

STANDARD 10: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The school uses data to guide continuous improvement.

Overview

The school's improvement planning process is data-driven and ensures the implementation of the school's purpose, the achievement of learning expectations for children and the provision of high-quality services.

Required Responses

Written narrative responses are required for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of children. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

Standard	Required Responses
10	Describe the processes used for collecting, analyzing and using data from staff, parents / guardians, director and governing authority to identify needed program improvements.
10	Identify program goals based on parent / guardian, staff and governing authority input and student assessment data.
10	List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report. The attached Required Evidence is used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success.

Standard	Required Evidence
10	NLSA surveys used to solicit input from stakeholders about the overall early childhood program

Required Indicator of Success

Required Indicators of Success must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

Standard	Required Indicator of Success
10:01*	The center collects and analyzes data from stakeholders (i.e. parents, staff, congregation members and leaders).

General Indicators of Success

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Standard	General Indicators of Success
10:02	Data and information collected annually from stakeholders include input about: (Specifics are Indicated in the NLSA Early Childhood Self-Study Report)
10:03	A variety of student assessment methods are used to collect data that drive program improvement. (i.e. observation and curriculum-based check lists)
10:04	The annually collected data from stakeholders is used to identify goals for continuous improvement and the School Action Plan.
10:05	Professional development, quality assurance activities and improvement in policy and operations are included in the School Action Plan.
10:06	The School Action Plan includes measurable objectives and specific strategies and activities.
10:07	A timeline for completion and the assignment of responsible parties for the goals are established in the School Action Plan.
10:08	The School Action Plan is reviewed by center staff and church leadership annually.
10:09	The School Action Plan is shared with staff members, families and the congregation and is the basis for innovation and improvement.
10:10	The center annually reviews and updates the School Action Plan.