

Early Childhood Curriculum Guide for Messiah Lutheran School Weldon Spring, Missouri



Forward/Introduction:

One of the pieces of the National Lutheran School Accreditation process is the development, adoption, and implementation for a written curriculum. This guide, which is based on state standards and several others resources, will provide a documented approach to what is taught and shared in the Early Childhood Program (Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten classes) at Messiah Lutheran School in Weldon Spring, Missouri.

Teachers will use this document, as well as the Missouri Early Learning Goals, to provide a Christ-Centered, developmentally appropriate environment for all learners. Learning will take place through all curricular areas, which are often woven together in order to provide a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning.

Below are research-based statements/principles that serve as the basis for any excellent early childhood program.

1. Children learn best when they have developed the social and emotional components that define the behaviors and attitudes that enable them to function productively and collaboratively in school and society. (California Preschool Learning Foundation, 2008)
2. Children are best prepared when early childhood education focuses on the whole child, covering all domains: spiritual, emotional, cognitive, physical, and social. (National Research Council, 2008)
3. The “how-to’s” of teaching young children include setting up the environment, supporting a child’s self-initiated play, selecting appropriate materials, and planning and implementing teacher-guided learning activities. Two major considerations underlie the “how” of teaching. First, teachers can effectively foster early learning by thoughtfully considering the preschool learning foundations as they plan environments and activities. Secondly, during every step in the planning for young children’s learning, teachers tap into their own prominent role of play. Teachers can best support young children by encouraging the rich learning that occurs in children’s self-initiated plan and introducing purposeful instructional activities that playfully engage preschoolers in learning. (California Preschool Learning Foundation, 2008)
4. Purposeful play promotes active involvement in learning and provides children with opportunities to practice language, math, science, and other skills in context (a natural setting). Additionally, through play, children develop social-interaction skills, extend and expand their understanding of the world, and acquire critical cognitive skills including problem-solving and decision-making. As children grow, they expand their “executive functions” to include the ability to focus and ignore distractions, retain and use new information, plan and revise actions as needed, and inhibit impulsive behaviors. (Miller and Almon, 2009)

5. Most importantly, we know that young children are gifts from God, created by Him. As a faith-based Lutheran school, our primary goal is to provide the spiritual development necessary to serve as a strong foundation for a child's entire life. With prayer, the work of the Holy Spirit, and dedicated teacher/parent partnerships, God can do amazing things in the faith-building of children.

In keeping with these stated principles, the following Curriculum Guide and outcomes are set forth as integral to the development of a complete guide that leads all curricular areas and addresses the needs of the whole child. While these outcomes are grouped in domains, early childhood educators understand the essential premise that children do not learn in isolation, but rather through integration. Therefore, these domains are interrelated and should be considered components of the entire curriculum.

Updated, April 2014

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is the cornerstone of a Lutheran early childhood program. Therefore, the spiritual domain is presented first, in keeping with the mission and ministry of our Lutheran early childhood programs to share the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ with young children and their families.

Through all curricular areas and daily interactions, children will:

1. Know God, especially His seeking and forgiving love in Christ
2. Respond in faith and grow up into Christian maturity
3. See themselves as the reconciled, redeemed children of God and individual members of Christ's body – The Church
4. Live happily in peace with God, themselves, and their fellow human beings
5. Express their joy in worship of God and in loving service to others
6. Value all of God's creative work in His world and church
7. Witness openly to Christ as the Savior of all people
8. Participate actively in God's mission to the church and world
9. Live in Christian hope

Additionally, children will learn:

1. The Bible is God's true Word
2. God loves and cares for His people
3. Jesus is their best friend
4. Prayer is talking to God
5. Worship and praise is something we do as a Christian response to what God has already done for us

Through their personal experiences, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the children will expand their understanding of the Triune God:

- GOD – Father, Creator, Giver of all good things; Loves all people and provides all we need to live
JESUS – Savior, Redeemer, true Son of GOD, forgives all my sin; Giver of grace and mercy

HOLY SPIRIT – Sanctifies and Motivator of our faith; Empowers us to live as disciples; Counselor who prays on our behalf

Sample examples of learning and participation in Spiritual Learning Goals/Standards

1. Participation in Jesus Time
2. Participation in Chapel
3. Classroom worship opportunities
4. Meaningful, faith-based conversations with others

Social Emotional Learning Goals/Standards

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Self Awareness
 - a. Identification of body parts
 - b. Identification to a variety of feelings (happy, sad, angry, etc.)
 - c. Use of words to describe one's own feelings
 - d. Begin to develop a positive self-image
 - e. Being to develop an awareness of one's own abilities
2. Interpersonal Awareness
 - a. Begin to understand similarities and differences in people
 - b. Begin to understand the feelings of others
 - c. Begin to understand the role of teachers and other caregivers
3. Self-Regulation
 - a. Take care of personal needs
 - b. Understand and follow social and classroom rules
 - c. Accept responsibility for and consequences of one's own actions
 - d. Follow directions and redirections from teachers and caregivers
 - e. Accept changes in the environment (transitions, substitutes, etc.)
 - f. Completes a task
4. Self-Expression
 - a. Communicates preferences
 - b. Makes choices
5. Communication
 - a. Ask for help when needed
 - b. Uses verbal and nonverbal communication effectively
 - c. Develop age-appropriate attention span
 - d. Follow age-appropriate directions
6. Social Interactions

- a. Participate appropriately in group situations
 - b. Share and take turns
 - c. Resolve peer conflicts appropriately
7. Stages of Play
- a. Actively engage in playful, appropriate activities, including games
 - b. Initiate plan and assume leadership roles
 - c. Play with a common purpose

How to incorporate these goals/standards into everyday activities in the early childhood classroom:

1. Participation in Circle Time
2. Participation in Center Time
3. Meaningful conversations with others
4. Finger-plays
5. Using vocabulary words to convey meaning in a variety of different ways

Language Arts/Literacy Learning Goals/Standards

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

Foundational Skills

1. Print Concepts – demonstrate understanding of basic print concepts
 - a. Follow print from left to right and top to bottom
 - b. Distinguish between and letter and word
 - c. Begin to recognize letters, both uppercase and lowercase
2. Phonological Awareness – demonstrate a beginning understanding of spoken words, syllables, and individual sounds
 - a. Recognize rhyming words
 - b. Produce rhyming words
 - c. Being to use word and sound substitutions
3. Phonics and Word Recognition
 - a. Recognize own name and simple words in print
 - b. Associate sounds with letters

Literature

1. Key Ideas and Details
 - a. Express and recall key details from narrative pictures
 - b. Recall key ideas from narrative text
 - c. Retell a favorite narrative text
 - d. Sequence events in pictures
 - e. Sequence events in a favorite narrative text
 - f. Answer questions regarding characters and events of a favorite text
2. Craft and Structure
 - a. Identify the meaning of words in a text
 - b. Identify the components of a book (front cover, back cover, title page, etc.)
3. Range of Reading/Level of Text Complexity

- a. Engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding
- b. Develop a life-long love of reading

Informational Text

1. Key Ideas and Details
 - a. Recall key ideas from informational pictures
 - b. Recall ideas from an informational text
 - c. Answer questions regarding key details from informational text
2. Craft and Structure
 - a. Understand the meaning of words in informational text
 - b. Identify common forms of informational texts (calendars, schedules, etc.)
3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - a. Compare and contrast key details from informational text
 - b. Use words to appropriately share a working understanding of an informational text
4. Range of Reading/Level of Complexity Text
 - a. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding
 - b. Demonstrate a working knowledge of discussions shared in group settings regarding an informational text

Writing

1. Text Types and Purposes
 - a. Use appropriate grip for increased control in writing and drawing/coloring
 - b. Draws pictures to represent writing
 - c. Participate in shared writing opportunities
 - d. Trace and copy letters and environmental print
 - e. Write own name

Speaking and Listening

1. Comprehension and Collaboration
 - a. Develop acceptable norms for discussion (taking turns, listening to others, etc.)
 - b. Ask and answer appropriate questions to gather information, get help, etc.
 - c. Use appropriate language for different situations
2. Presentation of Ideas

- a. Speak in complete sentences using age-appropriate language
- b. Recall and recite simple poems, rhymes, and songs

Language

1. Conventions of Standard English
 - a. Understand and use age-appropriate grammar
 - b. Understand and use question words (who, what, when, where, how, why)
 - c. Use frequently occurring prepositions (in-out, up-down, over-under, etc.)
2. Vocabulary Acquisition
 - a. Understand and use increasingly complex words to express meaning
 - b. Understand and use accepted words for everyday activities

How to incorporate these goals/standards into everyday activities in the early childhood classroom:

Foundational Skills

1. Children learn about print concepts through quality children's literature and informational text, environmental print, dictation, and classroom libraries
2. Children learn phonological awareness through sound discrimination, rhyming, word awareness, and phonemic awareness
3. Children learn phonics and word recognition through letter identification, environmental print, and name recognition

Literature

1. Children learn comprehension through Story Time experiences, recalling, sequencing, prediction, meaningful conversations, and following directions
2. Children build literacy interest through participation in the classroom library, individual and group story time, and take-home libraries

Informational Text

1. Children learn print concepts through activities which include information text details, calendars, environmental print, dictation, and graphing

Writing

1. Children learn a variety of types of text through experiences at the Writing Center, environmental print, dictation, letter formation, inventive (developmental) spelling, and sharing writing

Speaking and Listening

1. Children learn comprehension and collaboration through experiences in Story Time, meaningful conversations, dictation, dramatic play, and singing songs
2. Children learn to present ideas through experiences in Story Time, meaningful conversations, dictation, sharing ideas with others, and dramatic play

For those children who are English language learners, additional opportunities happen through the following:

Listening

1. Children will learn understanding through meaningful conversations, environmental print in dual languages, and classroom learning centers
2. Children will learn beginning words through environmental print, classroom word walls, modeling, and direct instruction
3. Children will learn requests and directions through direct instruction, meaningful conversations, and modeling
4. Children will learn concepts through direct instruction, modeling, and meaningful conversations.

Speaking

1. Children will learn verbal and non-verbal speaking strategies through gestures, meaningful conversations, listening skills, and classroom story times
2. Children will learn communication of needs through gestures and modeling
3. Children will learn to communicate with others through modeling, meaningful conversations, use of questions, and listening opportunities
4. Children will learn social conventions through modeling, meaningful conversations, and classroom story times

Reading

1. Children will learn conventions of reading through classroom story times, questioning responses, and counting with others

2. Children will show an interest in books through opportunities to explore books, as well as participation in the classroom library
3. Children will learn story structure by sequencing with pictures
4. Children will learn print conventions by correctly handling a book, as well as viewing left-to-right progression
5. Children will learn that print carries meaning by utilizing environmental print in dual languages, as well as name recognition
6. Children will learn alphabetic knowledge through letter awareness and letter recognition
7. Children will learn phonological awareness through rhyming, initial sounds, and sound differences in home language and English

Writing

1. Children will learn communication concepts through environmental print
2. Children will learn writing strategies through participation in the classroom writing center, letter formation, and shared writing experiences

Math Standards/Goals

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Counting and Number Sense
 - a. Count from 1 to 30
 - b. Understand the relationship between numbers and quantity
 - c. Represent a number of objects with a written numeral, 0-10
 - d. Identify the number of objects in a group, using one-to-one correspondence
2. Operations and Algebraic Thinking
 - a. Represent addition and subtraction using objects and situations
 - b. Solve simple addition and subtraction real-life problems
3. Measurement and Data
 - a. Compare and classify objects by a specific attribute (length, capacity, etc.)
 - b. Sort and classify objects into a given category
 - c. Name the days of the week and months of the year
 - d. Demonstrate concepts of time (morning, lunchtime, afternoon, nighttime, etc.)
4. Geometry
 - a. Identify, describe, and build common two-dimensional objects (square, circle, etc.)
 - b. Describe the relative positions of objects (above, below, on, etc.)
 - c. Recognize, describe, and create a repeating pattern

Sample examples of learning and participation in Mathematical Learning Goals/Standards

Counting and Number Sense

1. Counting
2. Calendar
3. One-to-one correspondence, awareness of numbers in everyday life (addresses, phone numbers, etc.)

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

1. Classifying and sorting
2. Patterns
3. Problem solving
4. One-to-one correspondence
5. Vocabulary and concept development

Measurement and Data

1. Comparisons
2. Order
3. Estimation

Geometry

1. Shapes
2. Positions
3. Blocks
4. Patterning

Science Standards/Goals

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Physical Science
 - a. Describe objects in terms of the materials they are made of (wood, metal, plastic, etc.)
 - b. Identify common physical properties of objects (size, color, shape, etc.)
 - c. Explore heat, sound, light, and movement
 - d. Sort and classify objects by their common physical properties
2. Life Science
 - a. Name common plants and animals
 - b. Identify plants and animals as living objects
 - c. Describe the stages of life (birth, growth, death)
 - d. Explore the structures of plants and animals
3. Earth Science
 - a. Identify and describe the four seasons
 - b. Identify and describe types of weather
 - c. Explore objects in the solar system
4. Investigation and Experimentation
 - a. Use the five senses to explore the environment and make observations
 - b. Communicate observations both orally and visually

Sample examples of learning and participation in Science Learning Goals/Standards

Physical Science

1. Learning centers
2. Field trips and outdoor learning experiences
3. Science read-alouds

Life Science

1. Learning centers
2. Field trips and outdoor learning experiences
3. Science read-alouds

Earth Science

1. Learning Centers
2. Field trips and outdoor learning experiences
3. Science read-alouds

Investigation and Experimentation

1. Hypotheses
2. Predicting
3. Experimenting with materials

Social Studies Standards/Goals

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Citizenship
 - a. Identify traits of a good citizen (responsibility, honesty, cooperation, etc.)
 - b. Identify models of good citizenship (Jesus, Martin Luther King Jr, etc.)
 - c. Connect being a good citizen in the classroom with being a good citizen in the community
 - d. Identify and explain common jobs in their school and community
2. Geography
 - a. Identify the relative locations of places (home, school, church, park, etc.)
 - b. Compare and contrast maps and globes
 - c. Create a map of the classroom and other familiar locations
3. History
 - a. Categorize time increments (minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, etc.)
 - b. Demonstrate an understanding of past, present, and future in relation to personal events (yesterday, last week, next week, upcoming birthday, etc.)
 - c. Explain meaning of common holidays

Sample examples of learning and participation in Social Studies Learning Goals/Standards

Citizenship

1. Family
2. Classroom
3. Community
4. Nation
5. Occupations

Geography

1. Map activities

2. Learning and discussion of geographical features

History

1. Time frames (minutes, hours, days, etc.)
2. Historical heritage
3. Relationship of past events to present day

Physical Education Standards/Goals

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Safety
 - a. Use of materials appropriately
 - b. Practice emergency drills
2. Fine Motor
 - a. Use tools for their intended purpose
 - b. Build and construct with a variety of materials
 - c. Squeeze, pinch, button, zip, snap, stir, etc.
 - d. Cut shapes, objects, and lines
 - e. Use appropriate grasp for writing, drawing, and coloring
 - f. Trace and write letters
 - g. Use dominant hand most of the time
3. Gross Motor
 - a. Ability to balance
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to run, jump, hop, skip, and climb
 - c. Move forward, backward, and side-to-side
 - d. Throw and catch
 - e. Pour from containers
4. Physical Activities
 - a. Understand directionality (under, over, behind, next to, etc.)
 - b. Distinguish between left and right
 - c. Begin to understand and respect personal space
 - d. Participate in individual and group physical activities
5. Health
 - a. Identify healthy foods
 - b. Understand and explain the need for rest and exercise
 - c. Develop endurance in physical activities

Sample examples of learning and participation in Physical Learning Goals/Standards

Safety

1. Proper use of equipment

Fine Motor

1. Cutting
2. Drawing
3. Use of glue
4. Playdough

Gross Motor

1. Running
2. Jumping
3. Skipping
4. Hopping
5. Balancing

Physical Activities

1. Games
2. Developmentally appropriate exercise activities

Health

1. Healthy foods
2. Hygiene
3. Importance of rest

Fine Arts Standards/Goals

Children will be exposed to and learn a variety of concepts that include:

1. Visual Art
 - a. Name a common art material
 - b. Name primary and secondary colors
 - c. Use two-dimensional shapes to create works of art
 - d. Represent objects, people, and events in works of art
 - e. Identify objects in own works of art
 - f. Express self through art
2. Music
 - a. Identify and describe elements of music (tempo, rhythm, etc.)
 - b. Use movements to demonstrate an awareness of tempo and rhythm
 - c. Use singing to demonstrate an awareness of tempo, rhythm, and pitch
 - d. Sing age-appropriate songs from memory
 - e. Demonstrate appropriate performer audience skills
3. Drama
 - a. Identify and differentiate between real and imaginary characters
 - b. Perform imitative moves (freeze, statues, etc.)
 - c. Engage in pretend play with others
 - d. Act out assigned roles
 - e. Create and act out new roles
- 4.