

Standards for WELS Early Childhood Directors

The purpose of these standards is to guide the development and implementation of the training of WELS Early Childhood Directors. There are four major domains: (I) Spiritual Leadership, (II) Instructional Leadership, (III) Administrative Leadership, and (IV) Community Leadership. Major themes across all domains are the establishment of a Christ-centered vision for the child care center, the use of high quality developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood, and the focus on a whole child approach to learning. In practice these standards should nurture the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of the child, develop the spiritual and professional growth of the staff, and provide the necessary support for families to ensure the whole child development of their children.

Domain I: Spiritual Leadership

STANDARD ONE: An effective Lutheran early childhood director is a person of faith.

- a. Understands and follows doctrines of the Bible
- b. Accepts the Bible as the absolute truth in matters of faith and life
- c. Models faith both personally and professionally
- d. Displays Christ-like love for all
- e. Is a spiritual leader to faculty, staff, students, families, and, if applicable, within the associated congregation
- f. Acts with integrity, fairness, and ethics

STANDARD TWO: An effective Lutheran early childhood director establishes a clear, Christ-centered vision for an environment that supports the whole child, families, and staff.

- a. Collaboratively develops and implements a shared vision and mission
- b. Articulates, implements, and guards the vision
- c. Creates and implements plans to achieve goals
- d. Promotes continuous and sustainable improvement
- e. Monitors and evaluates progress and revises plans
- f. Collects and uses data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning

Domain II: Instructional Leadership

STANDARD THREE: An effective Lutheran early childhood director knows how to teach young children.

- a. Understands and utilizes the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod (WELS) Teaching Standards
- b. Understands the developmental needs of children ages 0-8
- c. Designs and implements differentiated instruction and culturally relevant pedagogy to meet learner needs
- d. Has command of a variety of learning theories and instructional methods
- e. Employs positive interactions that enhance young children's development
- f. Plans and organizes systematic instruction to meet students' diverse needs and accomplish learning outcomes
- g. Uses a variety of assessment strategies that are developmentally appropriate

STANDARD FOUR: An effective Lutheran early childhood director fosters a culture of student spiritual growth and development of the whole child.

- a. Creates a climate in which all reflect Christ's love and strive for excellence in using his gifts
- b. Develops, monitors, and sustains a high-quality, Christ-centered educational program together with the faculty
- c. Encourages quality adult-child interactions throughout the day
- d. Advocates for and fosters affirmation, respect, and inclusion of a diverse student body
- e. Promotes the use of developmentally appropriate strategies and materials that support teaching and learning

STANDARD FIVE: An effective Lutheran early childhood director enables, supports, and coaches teachers and staff to faithfully serve God's people through the growth and use of their gifts.

- a. Builds teacher, staff, and volunteer capacity to carry out a Christ-centered vision and curricular goals through planned programs of collaborative, sustained, and job-embedded professional development
- b. Guides the development of beginning teachers
- c. Uses formative supervision to guide teacher, staff, and volunteer performance toward improved student growth
- d. Communicates teacher and staff performance through summative evaluations
- e. Works collaboratively with teachers, staff, and volunteers to design comprehensive professional growth plans that align with state and/or local requirements
- f. Develops, models, and maintains a shared Christian culture of trust, collaboration, reflection, and professionalism for student growth

Domain III: Administrative Leadership

STANDARD SIX: An effective Lutheran early childhood director wisely manages the school facilities and resources for a safe, efficient, organized, and effective learning environment.

- a. Organizes the environment to support quality instruction and student growth
- b. Monitors building operations, upholding state and/or local regulations
- c. Obtains, allocates, aligns, and efficiently utilizes human, fiscal, and technological resources
- d. Promotes and protects the welfare and safety of students and staff
- e. Uses distributive leadership strategies that recognize and utilize the many gifts God gives to his church
- f. Supervises all business operations as defined by the congregation's governing board
- g. Supports and works closely with the congregation's governing board

Domain IV: Community Leadership

STANDARD SEVEN: An effective Lutheran early childhood director engages the school, congregation, synod, and local community.

- a. Builds and sustains Christ-centered relationships with students, families, caregivers, congregation, and community
- b. Engages families and the local congregation in early childhood ministry decision making as appropriate
- c. Collects and analyzes data and information to understand and to respond to the needs of the early childhood ministry's environment

- d. Utilizes community, state, national, and synodical resources to carry out the early childhood ministry's mission
- e. Promotes the early childhood ministry among school families and within the congregation and community
- f. Builds a connection between the ECM and the LES when one exists in the congregation
- g. Promotes understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources
- h. Works cooperatively with synod agencies
- i. Participates in district and synodical responsibilities

STANDARD EIGHT: An effective Lutheran early childhood director understands both the local and broader context in which the school exists.

- a. Serves as an advocate for children, families, and caregivers
- b. Seeks to build awareness of synodical, community, state, and national early childhood organizations and resources
- c. Acts to influence congregational, synodical, local, state, and national decisions affecting student learning in Lutheran education
- d. Assesses, analyzes, and anticipates emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies for the early childhood ministry