



# NLSA

## National Lutheran School Accreditation

### Getting Ready for National Lutheran School Accreditation (Early Childhood Accreditation)

There is an expectation that schools will have the following required documents and evidence in place at the time of the Validation Team Visit. Use the lists below as a helpful guide before you begin your Self-Study process to determine your existing level of preparation. A more detailed description of the NLSA process can be found in the *NLSA EC Administrator Manual* found on LuthEd.org.

#### Required Indicators of Success

| Standard     | Required Indicators of Success   |
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| <b>1A:01</b> | The early childhood program has a Mission and Ministry Statement designed specifically for the center that reflects the congregational Mission and Ministry Statement.   |
| <b>1B:06</b> | The written philosophy is Bible-based and reflects a Christ-centered approach to learning.   |
| <b>1B:07</b> | 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.   |
| <b>2A:01</b> | 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.   |
| <b>2B:18</b> | 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.  |
| <b>2C:32</b> | The school’s mission and ministry statement reflects a unified school.   |
| <b>3A:01</b> | 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.   |
| <b>3B:31</b> | The director demonstrates a personal Christian faith, a commitment to Lutheran education and a dedication to the teaching ministry.  |
| <b>4:01</b>  | All staff members demonstrate agreement in writing with the stated school mission.   |
| <b>4:02</b>  | 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. |

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| <b>5:01</b>  | The school promotes positive, Christ-centered relationships among all children and adults.  |
| <b>5:02</b>  | Staff members provide a safe and nurturing environment free from negative verbal interaction, physical punishment, psychological abuse, coercion and threats as forms of discipline.  |
| <b>6:01</b>  | 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. |
| <b>7A:01</b> | The center complies with all federal, state and local building, health, safety and disaster preparedness requirements.  |
| <b>7B:60</b> | The center complies with all local and state food safety requirements and inspection records are kept on file.  |
| <b>8:01</b>  | 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.   |
| <b>9:01</b>  | Teaching staff members supervise infants and toddlers by sight and sound at all times.  |
| <b>9:02</b>  | 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.  |
| <b>9:03</b>  | 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.  |
| <b>10:01</b> | The center collects and analyzes data from stakeholders (i.e. parents, staff, congregation members and leaders).  |

## Required Responses

| Standard 1: Purpose                             |   |
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| 1A: Mission and Ministry                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how the early childhood center reflects a mission outreach purpose in its community.</li> <li>• List the communication methods used to share the Mission and Ministry Statement with the governing authority, staff, parents/guardians and congregation.</li> <li>• Describe how the Mission and Ministry Statement is implemented by the governing authority, staff, parents/guardians and congregation.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| 1B: Philosophy                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the communication of the Philosophy Statement to stakeholders.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard 2: Relationships                       |   |
| 2A: Home / Family Relationships                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List family education programs presented during the past 12 months.</li> <li>• List special programs for families. (i.e. Christmas service, Family Night, Literacy Festivals, service projects)</li> <li>• Describe orientation methods for welcoming and engaging new families.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| 2B: Congregational Relationships                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List the ways children and families participate in congregational activities and ministries.</li> <li>• List the ways the congregation participates in activities and ministries of the center.</li> <li>• List the ways the director functions as a member of the congregational administrative team.</li> <li>• List the ways the congregation supports the early childhood program. (i.e. regular prayer, tuition sponsorship, reading buddies, fundraising)</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul> |
| 2C: Elementary School to Early Childhood Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List school-wide parent education programs and activities.</li> <li>• Comment on the ways the shared vision is evidenced in the staff, school, church and community-at-large.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |

| Standard 3: Leadership                           |   |
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| 3A: The Early Childhood Governing Authority      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the major decisions the governing authority and / or direct supervisor has established for the early childhood program during the past three years.</li> <li>Describe the process used by the governing authority and / or direct supervisor for systematic needs assessment and development of short and long-term goals.</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul> |
| 3B: The Early Childhood Administrator / Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize the ways the administrator uses leadership skills in the congregation, community and professional organizations.</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| Standard 4: Personnel                            |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List compensation package(s) paid to staff (i.e. salary scale, health care, vacation, sick leave, tuition assistance)</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard 5: Staff / Child Interactions           |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the progressive steps followed by teachers and parents / guardians to address the needs of students who exhibit ongoing behavioral or developmental concerns.</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| Standard 6: Facilities                           |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the individuals / group responsible for the overall care and maintenance of the school and grounds.</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| Standard 7: Wellness                             |   |
| 7A: Health and Safety                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how the indoor / outdoor facility is made secure against intruders.</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>  |
| 7B: Food and Nutrition                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the meal / snack delivery system. Who is responsible? What procedures and protocols are in place?</li> <li>List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |

| Standard 8: Curriculum              |  |
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|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how the curriculum supports and reflects the philosophy of the program.</li> <li>• Describe how often the curriculum is evaluated and share who is engaged in the process.</li> <li>• Describe how the curriculum meets the anti-bias / cultural / social / economic needs of the church and community.</li> <li>• Describe the type of curriculum used for faith development of children.</li> <li>• Describe the methods of assessing children’s growth and individual needs.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul> |
| Standard 9: Infants / Toddlers      |  |
|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard 10: Continuous Improvement |  |
|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the processes used for collecting, analyzing and using data from staff, parents / guardians, director and governing authority to identify needed program improvements.</li> <li>• Identify program goals based on parent / guardian, staff and governing authority input and student assessment data.</li> <li>• List the significant changes that have been made by the school in this area during the past three years.</li> </ul>   |

## Required Evidence

| Standard 1: Purpose                              |  |
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| 1A: Mission and Ministry                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congregation's Mission and Ministry Statement</li> <li>• Mission and Ministry Statement for the early childhood program</li> </ul>  |
| 1B: Philosophy                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood program's Philosophy Statement</li> <li>• Documents where the Philosophy Statement is present (i.e. handbook, brochure)</li> </ul>  |
| Standard 2: Relationships                        |  |
| 2A: Home / Family Relationships                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five (5) forms of communication used to share information with parents / guardians (i.e. school newsletter, classroom newsletter, emails, blogs, personal notes)</li> <li>• A copy of the written NLSA Family Survey questions</li> <li>• NLSA Family Survey summary</li> <li>• Family handbook</li> </ul>  |
| 2B: Congregational Relationships                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written copy of the evangelism approach (i.e. activities, strategies, methods) used by the congregation with early childhood families</li> <li>• Completed NLSA Church Ministry Staff Survey(s)</li> <li>• Current budget(s) for the congregation and the early childhood program</li> </ul>  |
| 2C: Elementary School to Early Childhood Center  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agendas for meetings that include administrators from all school levels</li> </ul>  |
| Standard 3: Leadership                           |  |
| 3A: The Early Childhood Governing Authority      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagram of the governing structure of the early childhood / school / church</li> <li>• Governing authority policy manual</li> <li>• Governing authority grievance and due-process resolution procedures</li> <li>• Governing authority minutes from the past three meetings</li> <li>• Short- and long-range goals for the program</li> <li>• Evaluation form used to assess the director</li> <li>• Director's Supervisor Survey, if applicable</li> </ul> |
| 3B: The Early Childhood Administrator / Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator completed profile form(s)</li> <li>• Administrator diplomas and proof of professional organization membership</li> <li>• Administrator proof of early childhood coursework</li> <li>• Administrator job description</li> <li>• Administrator evaluation form used by the staff</li> <li>• Most recent statistical report submitted to the National office.</li> <li>• Orientation checklist used with new staff members</li> </ul>            |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for ensuring adequate staff / child ratios at all times</li> <li>• Profile of each class showing the staff / child ratio with the age, number of children and number of adults</li> <li>• Enrollment materials (i.e. written admission procedures, waiting list process)</li> <li>• Completed Director’s Survey</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Standard 4: Personnel</b>                  |  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff profiles</li> <li>• Schedule of staff meetings and three meeting agendas</li> <li>• Description and / or checklist used for new teaching staff orientation</li> <li>• Job descriptions, personnel policies, calls or contract agreements</li> <li>• Current salary and benefit scale</li> <li>• In-service training program / schedule provided by the center in the last 12 months</li> <li>• Staff Survey for Teachers and Assistant Teachers Summary</li> <li>• Support Staff Survey for Non-Teaching Members Summary</li> <li>• Employee handbook</li> <li>• Biblically-based code of ethics for staff</li> </ul> |
| <b>Standard 5: Staff / Child Interactions</b> |  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood discipline policy</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Standard 6: Facilities</b>                 |  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floor plan of the early childhood facility, including indoor and outdoor areas and square footage of each area used by students</li> <li>• Plans for further development of the early childhood facility</li> <li>• Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning / maintenance plan</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Standard 7: Wellness</b>                   |  |
| 7A: Health and Safety                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written policy for storing and dispensing children’s medications</li> <li>• Written communicable disease policy</li> <li>• Written accident and injury policy</li> <li>• Written policies regarding smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs and drug testing</li> <li>• Written procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children</li> <li>• Written disaster and evacuation procedures</li> </ul>  |
| 7B: Food and Nutrition<br>(ALL SCHOOLS)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written policies related to food storage and food service</li> <li>• Health inspections</li> <li>• Food service license or license exempt documentation</li> <li>• Food preparation area / kitchen cleaning schedule</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>7B: Food and Nutrition<br/>(FOOD PREPARED ON SITE<br/>OR VENDED)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of the individual who participates in food service training and a copy of the current certificate, according to state licensing</li> <li>• Menus</li> <li>• Vendor contract (if applicable) assuring that the business, food handlers and premises are inspected and approved by the local health department</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Standard 8: Curriculum</p>   |   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One week of lesson plans for each classroom</li> <li>• Center’s written curriculum guide, goals and early learning state standards</li> <li>• Daily and weekly class schedules from each teacher</li> <li>• Forms used for student assessments</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Standard 9: Infants / Toddlers</p>                                   |   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms used to communicate with families</li> <li>• Curriculum framework</li> <li>• Daily schedules</li> <li>• Assessment materials</li> <li>• Diaper changing procedure</li> <li>• Documentation that staff working with infants / toddlers are trained in “safe sleep” practices and “shaken baby syndrome”</li> <li>• Child care license / certificate indicating the program is certified to provide infant / toddler care in accordance with state licensing regulations</li> <li>• Policies regarding sanitation</li> </ul> |
| <p>Standard 10: Continuous Improvement</p>                              |   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NLSA surveys used to solicit input from stakeholders about the overall early childhood program</li> </ul>  |