

# **Missouri Nonpublic School Accrediting Association**

## **Early Childhood (6/23/26)**

An Early Childhood standalone program as defined for MNSAA accreditation is an educational program that is separate from an elementary program and/or includes infants, toddlers, or two-year-old students.

### **STANDARD I. Mission and Philosophy**

The mission statement is a clear, concise expression that references the identity and purpose of the center, its commitment to a quality education, and unique elements and special features of the center.

The philosophy is a statement of beliefs and values that provides direction for the entire educational effort of the center.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 1A The center has a written mission that is a clear, concise expression which reflects the shared understanding of the center community.
- 1B The policies, procedures and actions of the center community are consistent with the written mission statement and philosophy of the center.
- 1C The mission statement and philosophy are consistent with sound educational and psychological principles reflecting how all children learn, grow, and develop.
- 1D The philosophy reflects family participation in educational planning for their students.
- 1E Formation of the mission statement and philosophy of the center is completed within the School Evaluation cycle and involves various stakeholders.
- 1F The mission statement and philosophy of the school are communicated annually to current staff, board members, other stakeholders, students, and families.

## **STANDARD II. Climate**

The Center maintains a climate that is productive, peaceful, respectful, safe, orderly, and conducive to the processes of effective learning and teaching.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 2A The school has specific programs and policies that promote respect and dignity for each person.
- 2B The center has an established written discipline policy that positively reinforces accepted behavior and promotes self-discipline.
- 2C The center handbook includes a statement that requires school personnel to report to the Missouri Division of Family Services, if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a student known to them may be abused or neglected.
- 2D Programs and activities are in place that support families in their role as the primary educator of their children and encourage home-center relationships (i.e. home and center organizations, family nights, and newsletters).
- 2E The center guides students in the development of skills in decision making, problem solving, and conflict management.
- 2F Center handbooks include guidelines that facilitate communication and interaction among members of the school community, especially directives for the use of social media.
- 2G The center cooperates with other programs within their community.
- 2H The center has implemented harassment/bullying prevention policies and programs for students and personnel.
- 2I The center has a process in place to respond to student / family crises.
- 2J The center has a system in place to teach children to protect themselves from sexual abuse with age-appropriate information at each level.
- 2K Teachers have been informed how to identify and respond to suicide indicators within the center community.
- 2L The center has a system in place for educating families on how to access community resources, such as counseling.
- 2M The center has resources in place to strengthen students' social and emotional development.

- 2N New students and parents are given orientation into the educational program when they enroll in the center and as they move from early childhood to the elementary level.
- 2O The administration fosters communication with the receiving center regarding the needs of students transferring from their present center to another educational program.

### **STANDARD III. Leadership**

The governing authority of the center provides leadership in setting policy. A qualified administrator ensures the successful functioning of the center in all phases of the program.

#### **Membership Indicators**

- 3A The center has a local board/advisory committee/governing authority that is responsible for reviewing the policies of the school.
- 3B Members of the local board/advisory committee/governing authority are oriented to their roles and responsibilities.
- 3C The local board/advisory committee/governing authority operates out of written constitution/guidelines.
- 3D Written minutes are kept for meetings of the local board/advisory committee/governing authority.
- 3E The local board/advisory committee/governing authority has a policy manual.
- 3F A process is in place to evaluate the administrator at least every three years.
- 3G The administrator is responsible for implementing center policies.
- 3H The administrator possesses a bachelor's degree and:
- has at least 34 credit-bearing hours of specialized college-level course work in early childhood education, child development, elementary education, or early childhood special education that encompasses child development and children's learning from birth through kindergarten; family and community relationships; the practices of observing, documenting, and assessing young children; teaching and learning processes; and professional practices and development.
  - and
  - has at least 9 credit-bearing hours, or content hours of specialized course work in administration, business management (which can be in school administration, business management, communication, technology, early childhood management or administration, or some combination of these areas.)
  - or
  - a written plan approved by the sponsoring agency.
- 3I The administrator understands and is committed to the mission and philosophy of the center.
- 3J The necessary qualifications and the job description of the administrator are clearly stated.

- 3K The administrator is involved in the selection, assessment, evaluation, retention, and dismissal of professional and support personnel for the center.
- 3L The administrator provides training for professional and support staff regarding laws pertaining to the reporting of child abuse.
- 3M The local board/advisory committee/governing authority annually evaluates the effectiveness of its roles and responsibilities.
- 3N The administrator has an ongoing personal plan for at least 12 clock hours of professional and spiritual (if appropriate) development annually with evidence of a commitment to life-long learning.
- 3O The administrator has appropriate non-teaching time to carry out administrative responsibilities (recommended 1/4 of the day per 50 students).
- 3P Administrator is a member of at least one professional Early Childhood organization.
- 3Q Administrator is registered with OPEN. (Missouri's Professional Development Initiative for Early Childhood and School-Age/After-School Professionals <https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/MOPD>)

## **STANDARD IV. Personnel**

Personnel are committed, qualified individuals who support the mission and philosophy of the school. The staff is adequate in number and diversity to provide for the educational needs of all students with focus on the whole child.

### **Membership Indicators**

4A All teachers have a minimum of:

- an AA in Early Childhood.  
or
- a BA in another field with a minimum of 12 credits in Early Childhood.  
or
- ten years of experience in an Early Childhood or Education Setting.  
or
- a written plan approved by the sponsoring agency.

4B All full-time assistant teachers/teacher's aides have either:

- a Child Development Associate (CDA) or 12 credit hours in Early Childhood Education.  
or
- five years of experience in an Early Childhood or Education Setting.  
or
- a written plan approved by the sponsoring agency.

4C Background checks and child abuse and neglect screening are completed for all personnel and volunteers who work with students. This screening is done upon initial service and periodically thereafter.

4D All personnel have current health records of medical examination and tuberculosis testing, as required by the local health department.

4E All teachers are evaluated regularly.

4F All staff participate for a minimum of 12 clock hours annually (not including CPR/First Aid training) in ongoing professional development and in-service opportunities which are developed in light of:

- best practices in professional development.
- staff identified needs.
- needs of learners and the center.

4G An orientation and mentoring program is in place for new staff.

4H Each teacher or aide has a written plan for ongoing professional development on file with the administrator.

- 4I Non-discriminatory practices regarding race, ethnic background, or sex are used in hiring of center personnel. In church-affiliated schools, preference may be given to members of that faith.
- 4J The school provides any required mentoring, professional evaluation, record keeping/reporting, and any other procedures necessary for certified teachers to maintain their Missouri certification.
- 4K Staff understands, and are committed to, the mission, philosophy, and goals of the center.
- 4L At least one staff member on duty has current certification in first aid and/or CPR.
- 4M A minimum of two staff members are on-site when children are present in program.
- 4N All teaching staff are registered with OPEN (Missouri's Professional Development Initiative for Early Childhood and School-Age/After-School Professionals  
<https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/MOPD>)

## **STANDARD V. Curriculum**

The center provides a research-based curriculum that includes all concepts, skills, and values representative of identified student needs. Curriculum addresses the needs of children at all ages, from infant, to toddler, through PreK.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 5A A written curriculum clearly defines and guides the actions, assessment, and educational goals of the center.
- 5B The curriculum directs teachers to incorporate content, concepts, and activities that foster:
- social development
  - emotional development
  - physical development
  - language development
  - cognitive development
- 5C The curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the following: religion (where applicable), language arts (including literacy), science, mathematics, social studies, technology, physical education, health and safety, music, creative expression and fine arts.
- 5D The center regularly conducts formal and informal assessment and gathers data from all facets of the program for annual evaluation.
- 5E The curriculum is regularly evaluated and revised.
- 5F The curriculum drives development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet responsive to individual needs of children. Schedule includes time indoors and outdoors, small and large group activities and time for children to engage with the environment (play).
- 5G Lesson plans reflect curriculum used by the program as well as the individual needs of children.
- 5H Classroom arrangement and material selection support the learning goals of the curriculum and engage the interest of the children.
- 5I Use of passive media (TV, video, DVD...) is limited to short amounts of time and to educational programming (developmentally appropriate programming).
- 5J At least 1/3 of the time children are in the program is set aside for child engagement with the environment (individual or small group play).

**In a program with infants, toddlers, or two-year-old students:**

5K Materials and equipment used to implement the curriculum for infants, toddlers, or two-year-old students encourage:

- exploration, experimentation, and discovery.
- sensory and motor learning.
- developing physical skills through self-initiated movement.

5L Infants, toddlers or two-year-old students are provided an environment that allows them to move freely and achieve mastery of their bodies through self-initiated movement (coordination, movement, balance opportunities, and perceptual-motor integration).

## **STANDARD VI. Instruction**

The center uses instructional methods that deliver the curriculum to facilitate a child's growth and development from infants through pre-kindergarten.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 6A Teaching staff evaluate and change their instruction based on individual needs, and vary their interactions to be sensitive and responsive to:
- differing abilities
  - temperaments
  - activity levels
  - cognitive and social development
- 6B Teaching staff, in a climate of mutual respect, develops individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.
- 6C Teaching staff encourages children's development of friendships and provides opportunities for children to play with and learn from each other.
- 6D Materials and equipment used to implement the curriculum reflect the lives of the children and families.
- 6E Materials and equipment:
- provide for children's safety while being appropriately challenging;
  - encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery;
  - promote action and interaction;
  - are organized to support independent use;
  - are rotated to reflect changing curriculum and accommodate new interests and skill levels of children;
  - are rich in variety.
- 6F Teaching staff creates and maintains a setting in which children of differing abilities can progress, with guidance, toward increasing levels of:
- autonomy
  - responsibility
  - empathy
- 6G Teachers use children's interest in and curiosity about the world to engage them with new content and developmental skills.

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- 6H Teaching staff individualize routine care by incorporating family practices whenever possible and by respecting the home culture and the family’s preferred language.
- 6I Teachers provide opportunities to develop the classroom community through participation in decision making about classroom:
- guidelines
  - plans
  - activities
- 6J For children with persistent and challenging behavior, the teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success and:
- provides for the safety of the child;
  - provides for the safety of others in the classroom;
  - provides a calm and respectful environment;
  - provides the child with information on acceptable behavior.

**In a program with infants, toddlers, and two-year-old students:**

- 6K Teaching staff gives one-to-one attention to infants when engaging in caregiving routines.
- 6L Teaching staff creates a climate of respect for infants by looking for, as well as listening and responding to, verbal and nonverbal cues.
- 6M Teaching staff engages infants in frequent face-to-face social interactions each day. These include both verbal behaviors (e.g., talking, cooing, repeating infant sounds, singing) and nonverbal behaviors (e.g., smiling, touching, holding).
- 6N Toddlers and two-year-old students are provided varied opportunities and materials to:
- develop understanding of concepts such as more and less and big and small;
  - see and touch different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns;
  - build number awareness, using objects in the environment;
  - read books.

## **STANDARD VII. Services**

The center provides a variety of quality services to meet the needs of the whole child.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 7A The school maintains and securely stores cumulative permanent academic records for each student.
- 7B The center has a crisis management plan that is communicated, tested, and updated annually.
- 7C Requirements for safety are met:
- fire, tornado, intruder, and other drills are conducted and recorded;
  - a plan to deal with blood-borne pathogens;
  - CPR and first aid training;
  - training in administration of medication.
- 7D Initial and on-going child abuse and neglect screening is completed for volunteers who work with students on a regular basis.
- 7E Provisions are made for the safety of students when being transported by the center.
- 7F Procedures for safety are in place for children at arrival and dismissal.
- 7G Teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, if teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in a library area, or who are napping).
- 7H If a food program is provided, adequate and qualified personnel are available to plan and serve a variety of well-balanced, wholesome meals in full accordance with appropriate local, state, and federal regulations.
- 7I Technology “Acceptable Use” policies for children and staff have been developed, communicated, and implemented.
- 7J The center maintains up-to-date health records in a safe and secure location.
- 7K The center adheres to communicable disease, immunization, and screening requirements from the state and local health departments.
- 7L The center follows established policies for the administration of medication, for guidance refer to CFOC National Health and Safety Performance Standards [3.6.3.1: Medication Administration](#), [3.6.3.2: Labeling, Storage, and Disposal of Medications](#), [3.6.3.3: Training of Caregivers/Teachers to Administer Medication](#), [9.2.3.9: Written Policy on Use of Medications](#) and [the Medication Administration Packet](#) .

7M Cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces in the facility are routinely done and follow CFOC National Health and Safety Performance Standard 3.3 - [3.3.0.1 Routine Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting](#), [3.3.0.2 Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys](#), [3.3.0.3: Cleaning and Sanitizing Objects Intended for the Mouth](#),

7N The center follows hand-washing practices outlined in CFOC National Health and Safety Performance Standard 3.2 - [3.2.2.1 Hand Hygiene](#), [3.2.2.2 Hand Washing Procedures](#), [3.2.2.3 Assisting Children with Hand Washing](#), [3.2.2.4: Training and Monitoring for Hand Hygiene](#), [3.2.2.5 Hand Sanitizers](#)

**In a program with infants, toddlers, and two-year-old students:**

7O Before walking on surfaces that infants use specifically for play, adults and children should remove, replace, or cover with clean foot coverings any shoes they have worn outside that play area. If children or staff are barefoot in such areas, their feet should be visibly clean.

7P Staff follow CFOC National Health and Safety Performance Standard 3.2.1 for guidelines on diapering, specifically [3.2.1.3: Checking For the Need to Change Diapers](#) and [3.2.1.4: Diaper Changing Procedure](#).

7Q Teaching staff supervises infants, toddlers and two-year-old students by sight and sound at all times and follow CFOC National Health and Safety Performance [Standard 2.2.0.1: Methods of Supervision of Children](#).

7R The Center should follow CFOC National Health and Safety Performance [Standard 3.1.4.1: for Safe Sleep Practices and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death \(SUID\)/SIDS Risk Reduction](#)

7S The Center should follow CFOC National Health and Safety Performance [Standard 4.3.1: Nutrition for Infants](#) for feeding infants and toddlers.

\* The CFOC National Health and Safety Performance Standards were established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety. The most up to date standards can be found at [www.nrckids.org](http://www.nrckids.org)

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*. 4th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2019

## **STANDARD VIII. Facilities**

The facilities are adequate and well-maintained to achieve the purposes of the center.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 8A The location, center grounds, and physical plant support an instructional program that is consistent with the center's mission, philosophy, purposes, and needs of the students.
- 8B Housekeeping provides a safe, sanitary, and attractive environment for learning.
- 8C The physical plant and grounds are in good repair and meet the local and federal regulations for heating, ventilation, illumination, room size and capacity, etc.
- 8D The center is in compliance with asbestos regulations.
- 8E Regularly inspected fire extinguishers are placed throughout the building as required by local regulations.
- 8F Exit routes are described and copies posted in each room.
- 8G A warning system is maintained for fire, tornado, earthquake, etc.
- 8H The center's building is locked and access is controlled during the school day.
- 8I The kitchen and dining areas used by the center meet health and safety regulations.
- 8J The center is in compliance with insurance regulations.
- 8K Inspection of the physical plant and grounds to identify safety hazards is made regularly, with the center taking steps to remedy any identified deficiencies.
- 8L The center provides for the safety of students on playgrounds/athletic fields.
- 8M Technological equipment, internet access, and bandwidth are made available to Administrator and teaching staff to support student learning needs.
- 8N Supervisors must meet adult-child and group size ratios.
  - Adult-child ratio:
    - weeks-2 years, 1:4
    - 2 years, 1:8
    - 3 years-5 years, 1:10
  - Group size:
    - 6 weeks-2 years, 8 maximum
    - 2 years, 16 maximum
    - 3 years-5 years, 20 maximum

8O State standards are met for classroom square footage, a minimum of 45 sq feet/per child for infants and 35 sq feet/per child for all others.

8P Playground needs:

- Is fully fenced;
- A minimum of 75 sq. ft. per child;
- Appropriate fall zones and a 6" deep resilient surface;
- Regular safety inspections to ensure good repair;
- Safety inspection reports kept on file.

8Q Toilets and sinks are appropriate for student use (added steps, lowered sinks, or child-sized bathroom fixtures).

8R Furniture is child-sized and adequate for the number of children served.

8S Administrator regularly checks the [Consumer Product Safety Commission recall list](#) and takes action.

8T A plan is in place to enhance the center's facilities in order to meet emerging instructional needs and the overall needs of the center's community, including accessibility for children or adults with special needs.

8U The center's facilities plan is annually reviewed.

## **STANDARD IX. Finance and Planning**

The center employs effective financial management and accountability in the use of its resources. Strategic planning is in place to insure the viability of the center.

### **Membership Indicators**

- 9A The center operates by means of a carefully planned and regularly monitored annual budget.
- 9B The center's mission, philosophy, and priorities are reviewed as a part of the budget process.
- 9C The budget is planned through collaboration of boards/committees, director, and pastor (in a sectarian center).
- 9D Resources are available to implement a quality instructional program and maintain financial viability.
- 9E The center engages in short-term and long-term planning as a part of the improvement process.
- 9F The center documents annual progress of short term and long-term goals within the Plan of Action on annual report form.
- 9G The annual plan for improvement is formulated and updated by appropriate constituencies.
- 9H Annual funding is allocated for staff development activities/programs.
- 9I The center has strategies and resources to assure its ongoing operation.
- 9J Development activities, marketing, and advancement activities are in place and evaluated yearly.