



An education you can have faith in^e
CATHOLIC
Schools

Early Childhood Policy and Information Advisory

August, 2015



August 13, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

Two years ago, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee embarked on an initiative designed to improve the quality and consistency of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming in our Catholic schools and to ensure that all ECE programs are aligned with the mission of the Office for Schools:

Schools in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are committed to educational excellence, student diversity and the fostering of a Catholic culture of faith, service, and personal responsibility, all in the name of Jesus.

An ECE Advisory Committee was formed, along with working committees to review materials. These committees included representatives from higher education, principals, and archdiocesan early childhood teachers. We are deeply indebted to the many experts who served as consultants, resources, and advisors for this effort.

The following guidebook is intended to provide direction for principals, teachers, and support staff members in the implementation, development, and improvement of ECE programs throughout the ten counties of our archdiocese.

As educational leaders in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, we are committed to developing and requiring the same high quality programming for Early Childhood Education as we are for every other grade level in the archdiocese. Most importantly, we expect that students of all ages in our Catholic schools will be meaningfully taught and formed in the faith.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to Catholic education and, especially, to teaching and loving the “little ones” as Jesus did.

Gratefully,

Kathleen A. Cepelka, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Virtue-Based Early Childhood in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Guiding Principles

The Virtue Based Early Childhood Program in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to providing all children enrolled in their 3 year old, 4 year old, and 5 year old Kindergartens a strong religious and academic foundation for all future learning environments. We hope to foster, through hands on experiences and intentional play-based curriculum, a sense of wonder and curiosity aimed at developing the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of the whole child.

The schools will engage each child in:

- Higher ordered thinking in a creative environment using sound, developmentally and age-appropriate practice and curriculum based on sound research
- Intentional age appropriate faith formation.
- An environment in which the Catholic Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Love are taught, demonstrated and modeled.
- Relevant and meaningful play that stimulates the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of the whole child.

Vision

Catholic schools transform our local and global communities into centers of faith, hope and charity by providing quality Catholic education to all people.

Mission

Schools in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are committed to educational excellence, student diversity and the fostering of a Catholic culture of faith, service and personal responsibility, all in the name of Jesus.

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BASIC REQUIREMENTS

What are the basic requirements for implementing a 3K, 4K, or 5K program?

The primary requirements are summarized below and addressed in more detail throughout this document.

- The 3K, 4K, and 5-year old Kindergarten programs must be under the supervision of the school principal.
- The 3K, 4K and 5K must provide a minimum of 437 hours of instruction per school year.
- The school must ensure that each child is taught by an appropriately licensed teacher.
- The school must ensure that all applicable Archdiocesan standards are met.

Catholic schools should not operate an unlicensed child care program under the auspices of the school/parish 501(c)(3). Parishes and schools are expected to follow all guidelines of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and the Risk Management Requirements for Parish Operated Day Care Programs.

ADMISSION, ELIGIBILITY, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

At what age may a child enter kindergarten?

State law [Wis. Stats. § 118.14(1)(a)] specifies that children are eligible for kindergarten based on their age. Age of eligibility for admissions to Kindergarten and first grade is as follows:

- No child may be admitted to 3 year old kindergarten unless he or she is 3 years old on or before September 1 in the year he or she proposes to enter school.
- No child may be admitted to 4 year old kindergarten unless he or she is 4 years old on or before September 1 in the year he or she proposes to enter school.
- No child may be admitted to 5 year old kindergarten unless he or she is 5 years old on or before September 1 in the year he or she proposes to enter school.
- No child may be admitted to the 1st grade unless he or she is 6 years old on or before September 1 in the year he or she proposes to enter school. Completion of 5-year-old kindergarten is a prerequisite to enrollment in first grade unless certain exemptions apply. Each school shall establish procedures, conditions and standards for exempting a child from the requirement to complete kindergarten prior to admission to first grade.

Are there suggested guidelines for early admission policies?

In accordance with state law, the school may have an early admission policy to allow for early admission of special cases into kindergarten and first grade. Schools should develop local written policies that relate to whether such early entrance will be considered and if so when and how parents are to apply for early consideration.

Children who have reached age requirements are given priority for admittance into first grade or kindergarten before consideration is given to underage children. It should be understood that only parents with children whose birthdays fall prior to December 1st but after September 1st may apply for early admission.

The procedures for admission of underage children are as follows:

1. The parent applies to the principal. An interview is held to determine reasons for requesting early admission to first grade or kindergarten.
2. If the school has determined by local policy that they will accept such candidates, a locally devised screen and/or assessment program shall be used to further determine the school readiness of the candidates.
3. The principal informs the parent of the acceptance or denial of enrollment decision.
4. Admission to first grade or kindergarten is considered to be on a trial basis. If within a reasonable period of time the child does not adjust to the school situations, the principal may request that the parents withdraw the child and enroll him or her at the regular age.

Note: Students in the Choice program must meet the legal age requirements and may not be admitted early into 4K, 5K or first grade.

Are we required to admit students with exceptional educational needs?

Not all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese are able to offer Special Education Programs for children with Exceptional Educational Needs. Whenever a student seeks enrollment into the Catholic school, the school shall inquire as to whether the student has a history of or is presently eligible for a special education and related services available under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The admission, instruction, and retention of students with disabilities or special needs shall be determined on an individual basis by the administrator in consultation with the Learning Support Team. A student eligible for placement under IDEA should be enrolled in the Catholic school only if a program and resources are available to meet the student's special needs.

Whenever the local plan for the identification and intervention of special needs students indicates that a child may have an Exceptional Educational Need, the child should be referred to the local public school to determine whether the child is eligible for services.

What documentation and health records are required for kindergarten entrance?

Typically, the school will provide health and vision report forms that can be completed by the child's physician to indicate that a child is up-to-date with immunizations and vision and hearing screenings. The form may also be used to indicate any special health care needs of the child.

Requirements for health records are guided by statutory language.

- Schools are required to develop and implement a plan to encourage compliance with state immunization laws.
- Parents must provide verification of the child's age. This can be through a birth certificate, passport, or other document that the school district has indicated as acceptable. **Note:** Wisconsin law prohibits schools from photocopying a birth certificate or keeping a copy of a birth certificate in a student's file. A school staff member may view a birth certificate to verify and record the child's date of birth on a school admission form.
- Parents are required to present written evidence that their child has received specific vaccinations. Parents may claim waivers based on personal conviction or religious belief, or a physician may sign a health waiver if the immunization is harmful to the health of the student [Wis. Stats. § 120.12(16)].
- Children in 3K and 4K are required to meet the age requirements for immunizations rather than the grade requirements and should be marked in the "Pre-Kindergarten" section of the School Immunization Report to the Local Health Department.
- Schools are required to encourage parents to obtain an eye exam for their child from a licensed practitioner prior to kindergarten entrance (Wis. Stats. § 118.135).

Note that neither physical nor dental examinations are required by state statute or code. Catholic schools shall follow the regulations of the local public school regarding physicals.

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) website at <http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/childhood.htm> has information including the State Immunization Program requirements, the Student Immunization Record, and the School Immunization Report to the Local Health Department. Parents and legal guardians may look up their child's immunization record in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) by logging on to registry at <https://www.dhfwir.org/>.

Does a child have to be tested in order to enter kindergarten?

No, entrance to kindergarten is based on age and not on a child's ability.

Some schools screen incoming students to assess the skills of the children so they are better able to determine needed support services, as well as develop an educational program that meets the needs of the children.

If a child is age-eligible for kindergarten, may a parent “hold their child out” for one year?

Wisconsin law establishes compulsory school age as 6 years of age (Wis. Stats. § 118.15). Legally, parents may wait until their child is 6 before sending him or her to school. Some parents have concerns about their child being among the youngest in the class or not socially mature enough for kindergarten. In these instances, the parents should discuss their concerns with the district staff to learn more about the program and how they can work together for a quality experience for their child. Some issues to discuss include:

- The characteristics of the child that cause concern about readiness for kindergarten;
- The school’s expectations regarding readiness and the school’s kindergarten screening procedures;
- The nature of the kindergarten program, such as class size and organization. Lower class size and “learning center” organization can accommodate greater developmental ranges among children in the class; and,
- What would the parents do to enhance their children’s learning if not in kindergarten.

Can a child who has completed a 4-year-year old kindergarten be “held back” or “retained” by the school at that grade for another year prior to moving into the next grade level.

School administrators have the authority to “retain” a pupil who has not made progress in a prescribed program, based on established school policy. However, children who are not making developmental progress should be addressed through an accommodations plan and/or referral for special education evaluation well before the end of the year.

Schools should reject the use of retention in 3 and 4 year olds and limit the use of retention with 5 year olds. Retention in Kindergarten is controversial and should be done judiciously as a final option after considering the developmental nature of early learners.

Can a school refuse enrollment to an age eligible child who is not toilet trained?

Not all Catholic schools are able to reasonably accommodate students in 3K, 4K, and 5K who are not toilet trained. The school may work in several ways to address the issue:

- Check with the family regarding medical needs: work with the child’s physician to make a referral for a special education evaluation if medical needs are not an issue.
- Develop a plan for toilet training:
- Work with the parent to supply clean clothes and changing supplies.
- Depending on the circumstances, the parent may be asked to come to school to assist.

- A child should not be required to change/bag their own clothes.

Do any national practices or principles exist for kindergarten entry and placement?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists/State Departments of Education have developed principles for kindergarten entry and placement: <http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements>

TEACHER LICENSURE

What license must a teacher have?

Teachers of 3K, 4K, and 5K students must hold a prekindergarten or kindergarten license (#080 prekindergarten; #090 PK-K; #083 PK-3; #100 kindergarten; #103 K-3; #086 PK-6; #106 K-6; #088 PK-8; #108 K-8; 70-777 Regular Education – Early Childhood level; 71-777 Regular Education –Early Childhood-Middle Childhood level; etc.).

TEACHER-CHILD RATIOS AND CLASS SIZE

What are appropriate teacher-child ratios and class sizes?

There are no state regulations directing the teacher-child ratio for 4K. Class size is a local policy determined by the school board. As schools develop teacher ratio and class size polices, they may consider best practices in other programs such as the following:

Age of Children	Minimum Number of teachers to Children	Maximum Number of Children in a Group
3 Years to 4 Years	1:10	20
4 Years to 5 Years	1:13	24
5 Years to 6 Years	1:17	32
6 Years and Over	1:18	32

When 8 or fewer children are present, there shall be a second adult available within 5 minutes for emergencies. The center shall maintain a signed and dated statement from that person, including address and telephone number, certifying that the person is available and agrees to serve if needed.

Maximum group size does not apply to field trips, outdoor play areas, pools and areas of the center reserved exclusively for eating, but staff-to-child ratios shall be maintained in those settings.

Adult-to-child ratios shall be maintained in the center during naptime. Maximum group size requirements do not apply to napping groups.

Support staff such as cooks, clerical staff, custodians or the center director may be counted in the adult-to-child ratios during naptime providing the staff person is aware that they may be called upon, has been oriented to his/her responsibilities and agrees to be available during that time.

1:10 with a maximum class size of 20 as defined for quality benchmarks by the National Institute on Early Education Research (NIEER);

1:13 with a maximum group size of 24 as required in state child care licensing regulations;

1:15 ratio required by the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class size reduction program and early childhood special education inclusion models; or 2 teachers working with groups of 16 to 20 as advised by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

NAPPING GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been provided for the implementation of rest or quiet time in 3K through 5K classrooms. Rest or quiet time may include relaxation, quiet reading with adequate lighting or other appropriate quiet activities. While periodically a child may come to school needing some additional sleep, this situation should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Allowing children to generally sleep or nap is not part of this recommendation.

Three-Year-Old Classrooms:

- Half-Day Programs: No quiet time
- Full-Day Programs: A maximum of one hour a day

Four-Year-Old Classrooms:

- Half-Day Programs: No quiet time
- Full-Day Programs: A maximum of 45 minutes a day in first semester
- A maximum of 30 minutes a day in second semester

Five-Year-Old Classrooms:

- Full-Day Programs: Up to 30 minutes a day in first semester
- To be phased out in second semester to prepare for first grade

ATTENDANCE

Are truancy notices to parents required for 3K, 4K, and 5K students who do not attend or are withdrawn?

Schools are required to notify parents or legal guardians if their 3, 4, and 5-year old Kindergarten student is absent without an acceptable or legal excuse following the same procedures as other students for truancy and habitual truancy.

It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students to develop desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. Students are expected to attend school regularly in compliance with the law for compulsory attendance. A pupil who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days on which school is held per semester is considered habitually truant. In compliance with Wisconsin State Statute 118.15, a child may not be excused from school by a parent for more than ten days in a school year.

Absences are sometimes necessary due to illness, death in the family, a doctor or dental appointment, or whenever the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the pupil. All absences, excused and unexcused, must be recorded in the legal attendance records.

Principals are authorized to require satisfactory explanation from the legal/custodial parent or guardian for the absence of a pupil for all or any part of the school day. The explanation may be obtained in person, by telephone, or in writing. Pupils continually absent or tardy without sufficient cause should be referred to the school nurse, social worker, or persons assigned to the responsibility. There is no legal number of absences, which if exceeded, leads to automatic retention.

CLASSROOM REQUIREMENTS

What is the required square footage for kindergarten classrooms?

No minimum square footage requirements specifically apply for kindergarten classrooms. However, for safety and building design purposes, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce (WDOC) has adopted the International Building Code which specifies 20 square feet per occupant of open floor space, assuming a self-contained classroom with one exit. This standard does not suggest this is the optimal room size for an education program. In considering space for educational programming, a school administrator may look for guidance to the Head Start and child care requirement of no less than 35 square feet of usable floor space and 75 square feet of outdoor play space for each child.

TRANSPORTATION

Must the public school district provide transportation to private school pupils enrolled in four year-old kindergarten programs?

Yes. Under sec. 115.01(2), Wisconsin Statutes, "kindergarten" refers to both 4 year-old and 5 year-old kindergarten unless otherwise specified. Since the law requiring school districts to provide transportation to eligible private school students does not refer specifically to 5-year-old pupils, transportation to 4-year-old kindergarten programs is also required. The school district's obligation to provide transportation to private school pupils is **not** dependent on whether or not the school district offers a 4 year-old kindergarten program. School districts have the option of providing transportation by any of the methods authorized under sec. 121.55, including parent contracts.

May a district contract with parents in order to meet transportation requirements?

Yes, the district may contract with parents to provide transportation for their children to and/from 4K. The amount of compensation provided to the parent under such a contract would be negotiated between the parent and the district. The parent of a child enrolled in a public school program cannot be forced to accept a parent contract in lieu of school-provided transportation. .

May a school district provide transportation for children to after-school child care?

Yes, for students who are required by law to be transported, the resident school district has the option of providing transportation to/from child care instead of to/from home [Wis. Stats. § 121.54(2)(am)]. If the district chooses to honor a parent's request to pick up/drop off a student at the child care provider, the district cannot charge a fee for this service as this is prohibited under Wis. Stats. § 121.54(8).

However, if the particular child is not required by law to be transported (i.e., the child lives within 2 miles of the school; the district has chosen to use the "city option"; or perhaps the child is attending a school outside of the designated attendance area), then the district could provide the transportation to/from child care and charge a fee (Wis. Stats. § 121.545(2)). The law allows the fee to be waived; the district receives no state transportation aid on behalf of that child.

Are there laws or policies about adults meeting the bus?

State law does not require a parent or other responsible person to meet a kindergarten child at the bus stop. However, individual school boards may adopt policies regarding bus pick-up and drop-off procedures for kindergarten students. The DPI agrees with the following resolution passed by the Wisconsin School Bus Association in 2006:

In the interest of safety of our youngest riders, the Wisconsin School Bus Association recommends to the Department of Public Instruction and to local school districts that a policy be adopted that a parent or responsible person be present to receive a kindergartner or younger student from the school bus stop.

How do laws regarding the use of safety seats for transporting young children apply to schools?

Yellow school buses are exempt from the child safety seat requirements that apply to child care programs. The safety seat rules enacted in 2006 only apply when children are transported in vehicles other than school buses. Wisconsin 2005 Act 106 imposes age and weight/height requirements for child safety seats and applies to the transportation of children by any individual or agency, including schools, child care providers, and Head Start. The Department of Transportation web site has information on this law at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/vehicle/child/laws.htm>.

Must the public school district provide transportation during the noon hour to private school pupils enrolled in half-day kindergarten programs?

Yes. Because the law requiring transportation of eligible private school pupils refers to transportation "to **and** from school," the school district is responsible for noon hour transportation to and from half-day programs. As is the case with transportation to 4 year-old kindergarten pupils, the obligation to provide transportation at the noon hour is not dependent on whether the school district offers half-day or full-day kindergarten programs. School districts have the option of providing transportation by any of the methods authorized under sec. 121.55, including parent contracts.

Must a public school district provide transportation to private school pupils on days the public school is not in session?

An opinion from the Attorney General, 61 O.A.G. 240, 244 (1972), stated that a public school board **is required** to provide transportation for private school pupils attending school on days when the public school district is not in session. The Wisconsin Court of Appeals confirmed that position in Hahner v. Board of Education, Wisconsin Rapids, 89 Wis. 2d 180 (1979). It is beneficial to both the public and private school(s) in the same school district to have school calendars which are as consistent as possible.

Can a school district charge a fee to transport pupils to private school?

If a private school pupil is eligible for transportation, the school district is not permitted to charge any part of the cost of such transportation to the pupil or the pupil's parents or guardians. However, a fee may be charged to the parent/guardian of a pupil whom the school district is not required to transport if such transportation is requested by the pupil's parent/guardian.

FUNDING

How are early childhood programs funded?

Potential Funding Sources for Early Childhood Programs



CHOICE

A pupil enrolled in 4-year-old or 5-year-old kindergarten may be eligible for a voucher through one of Wisconsin's Choice programs provided that the family meets the income eligibility and residency requirements and if the pupil attains the age required under s. 118.14, Stats., for kindergarten admission. A kindergarten pupil shall be counted as one-half pupil except that:

- A pupil enrolled in a 5-year-old kindergarten program requiring full-day attendance for 5 days a week for an entire school year shall be counted as one pupil.
- A pupil enrolled in a 4-year-old kindergarten program that provides the required number of hours of direct pupil instruction under s. 121.02 (1) (f) 2., Stats., shall be counted as a 0.6 pupil if the program annually provides at least 87.5 additional hours of outreach activities.

The private school, on behalf of the pupil's parent or guardian, receives a state aide payment for each eligible student.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – FUNDING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

What funding can be used to support community approaches?

Parishes and schools are finding ways to bring a wide range of funding streams together to provide new approaches to serve early learners and their families. Community funding can include, but is not limited to child care and Head Start. Several examples of blended funding are described below:

When schools use community-based child care approaches, child care funding (such as Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program funding from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Child Care Section) provides subsidies for eligible parents in approved activities to support the full-day operation of the program.

Communities may find new approaches through partnerships between 4K and Head Start that expand the number of hours and services to children and families.

For more details see the DPI's "Financing Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in Community Approaches" that can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/funding>.

May community partnerships exist between the Catholic school and the local public district?

Partnerships can occur between public and Catholic schools with certain assurances. The community partnership 4K program must be open to all eligible children whose parents want the program. The local public district must ensure a non-sectarian environment, curriculum, and program for all students during the "4K" part of the day. The program must be open to any district child without faith-based requirements. Interagency agreements or contracts must define these assurances and define how the district will oversee the program to assure compliance (see question 58 for more information on the content of these agreements or contracts).

Funds received from the public school partner cannot be used for any religious purpose and must only be for 4K purposes.

If the school is implementing a public-private community partnership program, how much oversight does the public school district have over the program?

In 4K programs using community approaches, 4K is considered part of the local school district's 4K program. School districts are not relieved of their obligations for oversight of programs conducted with community partners. The school district must assure that the required components of 4K are implemented in all of their settings. There should also be contracts between the participating provider(s). These agreements should address the district fiscal contribution and clarify service delivery models, child care licensing, hiring, teacher inservice, planning time, curriculum and program practices, and other roles and responsibilities. The school district holds the authority and obligation to supervise the program for compliance with contract, district, and state requirements.

GRANTS

May a partnership exist between the Catholic school and a Head Start program?

Head Start is a Federal program for preschool children from low-income families. In Wisconsin, non-profit organizations, schools, community action commissions or other local grantees operate the Head Start program. These grantees may choose to form partnerships with public or private schools to serve children enrolled in 3K or 4K programs. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They also receive free medical and dental care. They are served healthy meals and snacks. Their parents are partners in the program and have a wide array of social services available as needed.

Are private school child care programs eligible to receive reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program?

Wisconsin Shares is a work support child care subsidy program that helps Wisconsin families pay for child care. Private school child care programs are eligible to receive subsidies from the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program if the child care program is licensed by the DCF or, if the program cares for 3 or fewer children under age 7, certified by the county in which the care is provided.

Participation in Youngstar is a requirement for a child care program to receive Wisconsin Shares funding for eligible children and families. For more information on YoungStar go to the Q&A document at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/>

How are early childhood programs related to YoungStar?

The Department of Children and Families created YoungStar to assist ECE and school-age providers in the assessment and improvement of the level of quality in services they offer. YoungStar is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) built on the foundation of regulatory compliance with State of Wisconsin licensing and certification statutes and rules. YoungStar offers incentives to participants to encourage awareness of, and increase focus on, levels of quality exceeding the minimum requirements set by regulatory compliance standards. The program has been developed based on research and other states' experiences to establish criteria that are research-based, objective, and verifiable on a regular basis.

Why are kindergarten statutes and program requirements different from child care, Head Start, and Youngstar?

Each entity is subject to the rules of a different federal and state governmental agency. Catholic schools must meet requirements from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Department of Public Instruction. Head Start is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Youngstar is a program under the guidance of the Department of Children and Families.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

Can children participating in a 3K, 4K and 5K programs receive reimbursable meals under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs?

The USDA provides financial reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children in schools and non-school programs.

School Programs: Children enrolled in schools are eligible to participate in USDA and state funded child nutrition programs offered by schools. Reimbursement is based on the number of meals served to children eligible for free, reduced price, and non-needy meals. Programs available to schools include the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Milk Program, the Afterschool Snack Program, and the Wisconsin School Day Milk Program.

CURRICULUM, STANDARDS, SUBJECT AREAS, AND ASSESSMENT

What learning standards guide kindergarten?

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) provide a shared framework for understanding and communicating developmentally appropriate expectations for young children from birth to first grade (mandatory school age). The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards provide a framework for the development of program, curriculum, and assessment practices. As a result, young children will have more opportunities for positive development and learning. The standards are a guide for parents, professionals, and policymakers, all of whom share responsibility for the well-being of young children. Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards promote beneficial connections between early childhood and K-12 educational experiences. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards can be found at: <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-documents.php>

What are the content subject area requirements for kindergarten?

Archdiocesan early childhood programs will reflect and integrate the essential religious mission and values of the Catholic faith into the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of early learners.

Wis.Stats. 121.02(1) defines subject areas at each grade level include: reading and language arts; mathematics; social studies; science; health; physical education; art; music; environmental education; computer literacy.

The subject area requirements are the same for all grade levels including 3, 4 and 5-year-old kindergarten. Curriculum across these levels should be developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate for all young children. Best practices for the kindergarten levels should reflect an integrated, authentic, experiential, hands-on and meaningful curriculum that also accounts for child development across the five domains (health/physical; social/emotional, language/communication; approaches to learning; cognitive). (NAEYC, 2009; WMELS, 2013)

Play is a crucial part of the kindergarten experience and is particularly important for concept development (Fleer, 2011). Likewise particular attention to language and language development is critical for later literacy and learning (NAEYC, 2009).

The required subjects should not be taught separately because integration is an important element to quality EC curriculum. An appropriate curriculum incorporates concepts from across the required subject areas. For example, the teacher can engage in movement (physical education), singing (music), and counting (math) simultaneously. The DPI statutes do not specify the amount of time needed to address these subject areas.

Established Archdiocesan and DPI practices suggest that the subject areas' fulfill the following proportions:

- Religion should be approximately ten percent of the curriculum.
- Reading and language arts activities should be approximately thirty percent of the curriculum.
- Math, social studies, science, health, physical education, art, and music should be approximately ten percent each of the teacher-directed curriculum activities for a total of seventy percent of the curriculum.
- Up to one-third of each day should be spent in play-based, student self-directed activities.

Appendix A:

Catholic Mutual Risk Management Requirements for Parish Operated Day Care Programs

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee Protected Self-Insurance Program provides liability coverage for parish run day care operations, and before/after school care programs. Risk management operational guidelines are as follows:

1. Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 48.65, a public or parochial school in Wisconsin does not need to be licensed to operate a full day or before/after school day care. An unlicensed operation, however, is not eligible to receive government aid, such as meal programs and reimbursement for W2 clients. Although licensing is not mandated, most state licensing and operating requirements should be followed by parishes as they set the standard for care to which a parish will be held by their clients. Questions on licensing guidelines should be directed to State of Wisconsin, Health & Family Services, Department of Child and Family Services, Bureau of Regulation and Licensing. Extensive information is available on the web at www.dhfs.state.wi.us/programs. Follow prompts under Child/Youth Services.
2. Proper enrollment, health history, medication authorization, and accident report forms must be completed and retained in individual files. We strongly recommend use of DHFS forms for this requirement. The forms can be accessed through the DHFS website under Forms and Publications.
3. If setting up a day care program outside of the school (eg. Rectory, convent, or dwelling) request a walk-through by the fire department to ascertain whether the facility meets life safety codes for a day care operation.
4. Use systematic and careful screening methods to hire employees, and utilize these same screening methods for volunteers, students, and other individuals who will be working in and around the childcare center. Criminal background checks need to be performed prior to hire and every two years thereafter. A probationary period should also be utilized for all staff, volunteers, students, and other individuals.
5. The day care director should be at least 21 years of age and have appropriate experience and education. The day care workers must be at least eighteen years of age.
6. The day care director must be aware of all laws and procedures for handling suspected child abuse, child neglect, or molestation cases.
7. The appropriate law enforcement and/or governmental agency must be contacted if a day care worker reasonably suspects that one of the children has been abused.
8. The ratio of childcare workers to children must be adhered to at all times. Refer to Table 46.05-D of Department of Child and Family Services, Bureau of Regulation and Licensing, HFS 46 Group Day Care Manual. There must always be at least two caregivers present, regardless of minimum program participants.
9. An incident log must be kept by the day care. The incident log should record any accidents or incidents that occur during day care hours. If an accident does occur, an accident report should be completed and mailed to Catholic Mutual.
10. Prepare written operating procedures, policies, and personnel requirements.

11. All staff should participate in training programs, such as first aid, child CPR, and child abuse prevention.
12. Allow parent visitation at any time.
13. Electrical outlet safety caps or safety outlets must be in place throughout the facility.
14. Toys and equipment used in the day care must be inspected for safety and appropriateness for the age of the children. Toys and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
15. No coffee pots or other hot appliances should be in a room occupied by children.
16. No pointed scissors or sharp objects should be kept in the day care area or in a location accessible to the children.
17. Cleaning supplies and chemicals must be kept in a locked room or storage cabinet.
18. Exits should be well defined and clearly marked and emergency lighting with battery backup should be present.
19. Conduct fire drills on a regular basis and document these drills.
20. The facility must be equipped with an appropriate number of 5lb ABC rated fire extinguishers, properly tagged and mounted, annually inspected, and easily accessible to staff.
21. There must be a smoke detection system and fire alarm system approved by the local fire department.