

## **Mission Statement**

St. John Lutheran School equips children through excellent Christian education to courageously serve Christ in a changing world.

## **Accreditations**

St. John Lutheran Early Childhood is accredited by:  
National Lutheran School Association (NLSA)

## **Philosophy for Early Childhood**

### ***We Believe***

Each child is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3) and it is our endeavor to treat each child as a unique, God given individual. We encourage individuality whereby each child may find identity, purpose, and power for his/her life in Christ by living in grace and in the knowledge of Christ as Lord and Savior.

### ***We Believe***

The young child learns best about God's world through experimentation and exploration. Therefore it is necessary to provide a flexible program that enables each child to learn at his/her own developmental pattern. Play is an integral part of the program; as it is through play a child unveils the world around them.

### ***We Believe***

Teachers and parents form a partnership in carrying out the responsibilities of nurturing and educating each child (Proverbs 22:6). Together we want to teach children what it means to put their trust in Jesus as their Savior and friend.

### ***We Believe***

Education provides a warm and loving Christ-centered environment where each child can develop to his/her potential aesthetically, emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually.

## **Curriculum Framework Based on Project Construct**

Young children in their quest for knowledge are very active learners. In this light, our curriculum goals are geared toward active learning experiences. Through a variety of group and individual experiences, we hope to empower each child to:

- \* think for oneself
- \* decide between right and wrong
- \* solve realistic problems
- \* become critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers
- \* develop cooperative and collaborative skills
- \* develop a love of learning

Project Construct curriculum is shaped by the belief that student success depends both on a solid foundation of content knowledge and the ability to apply it to real problems and new situations.

**St. John Lutheran Early Childhood**  
**Project Construct Domains, Areas, and Goals for Students**

**SPIRITUAL DOMAIN**

*Area: Spiritual Development*

*Goals:* Develop a personal relationship with Jesus  
Develop a faith and prayer life  
Build worship foundations  
Recognize and understand servanthood

**SOCIOMORAL DOMAIN**

*Area: Social Development*

*Goals:* Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults  
Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with peers  
Consider the perspectives of others  
Cooperate and collaborate as a member of a community

*Area: Personal Development*

*Goals:* Be inquisitive, confident, inventive, and reflective  
Take initiative

**COGNITIVE DOMAIN**

*Area: Mathematical Thinking*

*Goals:* Develop logical thinking  
Develop numerical thinking  
Develop geometric, spatial, and temporal thinking  
Analyze data  
Exchange mathematical ideas

*Area: Scientific Thinking*

*Goals:* Increase knowledge of the physical world  
Develop and apply scientific thinking  
Exchange scientific ideas

**REPRESENTATIONAL DOMAIN**

*Area: Language Development*

*Goals:* Develop effective listening and speaking abilities  
Develop as a reader  
Develop as a writer  
Use language to communicate in a variety of ways  
Gather and comprehend information from a variety of sources

*Area: Symbolic Expression*

*Goals:* Represent ideas and feelings through pretend play,  
music and movement, and art and construction  
Recognize that symbolic expression has social, cultural and  
historical contexts

**PHYSICAL DOMAIN**

*Area: Motor Skills*

*Goals:* Develop motor skills for personally meaningful purposes

*Area: Health and Safety*

*Goals:* Develop healthy living practices

### **Curriculum Philosophy:**

The Project Construct Curriculum, based on the Department of Missouri Education, is utilized in our program. This curriculum is process-orientated and is based on the premise that children learn best when they are actively involved in experiences that are meaningful to them. Teachers provide a learning environment where children can achieve their God-given potential by following their own interests. Children need both time and opportunity to act on the environment by experimenting, creating, and imagining. We do not spend time filling in workbooks, drilling facts, or filling in worksheets. By concentrating on what children already know, we find out what else they want to discover and allow them to develop curiosity, creativity, confidence, and initiative. We give the children a chance to make choices and let them construct experiences. This allows the children to develop compassion towards others and develop higher level critical thinking skills.

### **Flexible Daily Schedule:**

Following a daily schedule helps the children to feel secure and independent. Children are able to move from one activity to another easily and confidently. Activities are balanced to include active and quiet, large group, small group, individual, teacher directed, and child directed. Following the same schedule every day allows the children to know what is coming next.

### **Daily Schedule:**

Arrival and Choice Time

Class Meeting

- Greetings
- Discuss Choices and Plans for the Day
- Math/Language Activities

Small Group Work Time

- Ongoing Projects
- Center Exploration

Snack (encourage socialization)

Jesus Stories/Music and Movement

Outdoor Play

Dismissal

### **Class Meetings/Large Group:**

Class meetings and large group discussions promote social relationships and language development. Children participate in a natural process of dialogue rather than just listening to lectures and direct instruction.

These experiences strengthen children's abilities to communicate and to problem solve. Some examples include: developing project ideas, negotiating classroom rules, discussing issues, planning for special events, discussing books, biblical concepts, etc.

### **SPIRITUAL DOMAIN**

Children formulate a relationship with Jesus as their personal Savior and friend. They learn about Jesus' love through His Word, the Bible. For example: Old Testament stories, Jesus' Birthday, Jesus growing up, New Testament stories, miracles, Jesus' death and resurrection, and His Promises. Children also develop personal character by modeling the Lord; thus expressing behaviors in a Christ-like manner using respect, responsibility, cooperation, and compassion.

### **SOCIOMORAL DOMAIN**

Children construct a deep sense of themselves, their family, and the community around them. They do so by initiating interactions, establishing and maintaining friendships, recognizing and accepting individual differences, expressing their own ideas and feelings, and negotiating and resolving conflict.

### **COGNITIVE DOMAIN**

*Mathematical Thinking:* Children develop an awareness of math in the world by interacting with interesting collections of objects. Children learn concepts relating to one-to-one correspondence, size, shape, sorting, classifying, identifying and writing numbers, counting, measuring, and understanding simple addition and subtraction through these activities.

*Scientific Thinking:* Children learn to apply reason to their thoughts by questioning, experimenting, and finding solutions. Experimenting allows children the opportunity to collect and sort, explore properties of objects that sink and float, take objects apart and reassemble them, make predications, describe how things work, and create drawings and models. These experiences foster initiative, curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

### **REPRESENTATIONAL DOMAIN**

*Language Development:* Children increase their vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. They begin to understand the conventions of print and develop a reading and writing vocabulary. Language is promoted through children's conversations, dramatic play, singing, journal writing and illustrating, message writing, and computer programs.

*Symbolic Expression:* Children learn to express their thoughts and ideas through music, drama, and two and three dimensional representation. These explorations may include drawing, painting, using wire or clay, singing, using instruments, playing dress-up, and creating dramas.

### **PHYSICAL DOMAIN**

Children develop motor skills, spatial awareness, attention spans, listening skills, self-control, and social growth through group or individual games and effective body movement. Exercise promotes healthy living practices and enables children to refine their motor skills.

## **Methodology:**

Projects can occur over a moment, several hours, several days, or more. These projects are formulated by the student's interests where they apply cognitive and expressive skills by formulating a hypothesis, experimenting, finding a solution, using questions, researching in-depth, communicating with others, and unveiling ideas and thoughts.

### **What is a Project?**

The teachers overheard several students talking about cars, trucks, construction vehicles, etc. After a class meeting we decided to begin a project on transportation.

#### *Beginning Sketch*



#### *Toys-r-us*

One of the class meeting discussions revolved around where we buy transportation vehicles. The teachers were under the assumption that we would talk about some sort of a dealership for vehicles. To our surprise, the students talked about buying toy vehicles at Toys-r-us. As a class, we decided to create a Toys-r-us in the classroom for the students to sell transportation vehicles. This process allowed the students to work with pretend money, sorting, counting, communication skills, etc.



#### *Architect Visit*

The students decided they wanted to create their own vehicles. We talked about how it was important to draw a plan first. In this process, we invited an architect into the classroom to show us how plans are drawn.

#### *Transportation System*

We began the transportation system outdoors by setting up a construction site; but because of the cold weather we decided to move it inside and thus elaborating on the system. The students designed roads, highways, railroad tracks, ramps, bridges, and traffic signs for their vehicles to utilize. This system was created using various materials such as masking tape, cardboard, markers, etc.

## **Assessment:**

Documentation of student's work includes photographs, student drawings, student dialogue, and teacher reflections. Documentation is included in daily journals, student portfolios, weekly newsletters, and panel compositions.