



The Early Childhood Encourager

Northwest District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—1700 NE Knott Street—Portland—Oregon 97212—503-288-8383

The Early Childhood Encourager is a publication of the LCMS Northwest District Education Department for the betterment of the early childhood teachers and directors as well as Pastors and DCE's of the preschools and early childhood centers the Northwest District.



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How is Your Q?

From the LCMS Department of Children's Ministry:

Excellence in early childhood education within the context of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is found in the contribution made to children in the name of Jesus. QUALITY then is measured in terms of how effectively we work toward connecting children to Jesus and exemplifying his grace. Consider the quality of your center in light of the extent or degree to which the following dimensions occur:

- ◆ Centered in Christ—Christian education is expressed as an indispensable, integral part of the environment and curriculum, and processes are in place for staff to assist one another to critically reflect on practice and experience in light of Christian faith and life.
- ◆ Collegiality—Staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another.
- ◆ Professional Growth—Emphasis is placed on personal and professional growth, and opportunities available to increase professional competence.
- ◆ Supervisor Support—Facilitative leadership provides encouragement, support, and clear expectations.
- ◆ Clarity—Policies, procedures, and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated.
- ◆ Reward System—Fairness and equity exist in the distribution of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- ◆ Decision Making Structure—Autonomy is given to staff, and staff is involved in making center-wide decisions.
- ◆ Goal Consensus—Staff agrees on the goals and objectives of the center.
- ◆ Task Orientation—Emphasis is placed on good planning, efficiency, and getting the job done.
- ◆ Physical Setting—Spatial arrangement of the center helps staff in carrying out their responsibilities.
- ◆ Innovativeness—The center adapts to change and encourages staff to find creative ways to solve problems.

Adapted from the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey. Resource: NAEYC Accreditation: A Decade of Learning and the Years Ahead, S. Bredekamp & B.A. Willer, Editors, ©1996, NAEYC.

Think your Q might need some help or interested in learning more? Check out "Improving Your Q" on page 8.

District Support

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Reaching Out in Pullman, WA

Pastor Dudley is the favorite.

I wish I could say that my preschoolers hold me up as their favorite person at preschool. I am their teacher, but favorite is not a position I can rightly claim. That prestigious position belongs to Pastor Dudley. The preschoolers at Concordia Lutheran Preschool can't seem to get enough of him! When October came around we were ready to let Pastor Dudley know just how much we like him!



October is clergy appreciation month, the perfect time to throw a party in Dudley's honor. Preschoolers love a good party, so we went to work. Each preschooler drew a special picture to be part of Dudley's card. The pictures were backed with scrapbook paper and tied together to make a small book to serve as the card. Several days prior to the party, we made a garden stone. Each child chose several gems to place on the stone and we added the words "We Love Pastor Dudley." The children enjoyed having a special part to play in his gift.

The day of the party arrived. Preschoolers decorated the room with streamers and the tables were set with bright plates and napkins. Cake was waiting to be served. The preschoolers sat at the tables and in unison called out for Pastor Dudley. As he entered the classroom, the children squealed with delight and yelled "Surprise!" We gave him his special gift, ate yummy cake, and let him know just how important he is.

Pastor Dudley makes each child feel special and important. He lets each child know that they are loved by God, and loved by him. He values the children and they love him in return. I'm glad I was able to help my preschoolers let our Pastor know that he is important and appreciated, because he is!

-Becky Krantz, Director, Concordia Lutheran Preschool, Pullman, WA



From Pastor Nolting:

Everyone likes to be appreciated and pastors are certainly no exception. But when it comes from the hearts and mouths of preschoolers it is golden. Little can compare with a "thank you pastor Dud-d-ley" from the lips of a four-year old. I know they are grateful for our preschool, their teachers, Becky and Rebecca, their Reading Buddies, myself and the M & M's I have in my office. All in all we are blessed beyond words.

-Rev. Dudley Nolting, Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church, Pullman, WA

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Early Childhood Leadership Seminars

You are invited to join us toll free for our one hour leadership conference calls with guest speakers of various topics. Reminder postcards are mailed to each preschool / early childhood center prior to each month's scheduled conference call with call-in number information.

The following are the Conference call sessions we have scheduled for 2009 (all are 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. PT):



Tuesday, March 10, 2009— "Integrating the Faith" with Denise Pacilli

Denise Pacilli is Director of New Hope Lutheran Preschool, Pacific, WA, as well as Sunbeams Lutheran Preschool, Kent, WA. Denise will help the group understand that sharing the love of Jesus with children and families is one of the most significant opportunities we have in our Lutheran schools. For many of the families who attend our schools in the Northwest District, "CHRISTIAN FAITH" has not yet been experienced or is not yet understood. What is the best way to do this? How can we tie this into all that we do in our classrooms each day? Join us to discuss ways to share the gift of faith and integrate it into our classrooms daily.

Tuesday, April 14, 2009 — "Church and School Relations" with Rev. Dr. Warren Schumacher and Dick Weniger

Rev. Dr. Warren Schumacher is President of the LCMS Northwest District and Dick Weniger is Director of Educational Services for the Northwest District. Warren and Dick will share insights regarding church and school relations and will lead the group in discussion about how to connect your church AND school to best share the love of Christ with the children we serve!

Administrator's Conference: A New Look



**Northwest District Early Childhood Director's Conference
Portland, Oregon**

Beginning at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, April 24

Ending at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 25



This year there will be a new look to Administrator's Conference - a new location and a new time schedule. Arrangements are currently being finalized for a location near the Portland airport. This will allow more cost effective transportation to the conference.

The conference will be held in two sections to accommodate increased numbers and specific topics for the group of Administrators and group of Early Childhood Directors. First, elementary and high school administrators will meet. Their main topic will be the Murdock Grant for the Development of Sustainable Lutheran Schools, which applies only to elementary and secondary schools.

Immediately following will be a conference especially for Early Childhood Directors. Friday afternoon Dick Weniger and Bob Fowls will update you on plans for supporting early childhood centers. On Saturday, Kathy Schamber will be our presenter. She is an Early Childhood educator at Baton Rouge Lutheran School in Louisiana and the Early Childhood Consultant for the Southern District. Kathy has much to share with us about ministry to children and their families. So mark your calendar and join us in April in Portland.

Further details will arrive with the registration information.



Outreach to Children & Their Families

The following is what has been found that "works" for successful outreach: The pastor must be visible and involved, the professional school staff will do what they have always done in providing a Christian education for the children so that they will have "Jesus in their heart", and the lay people of the congregation must develop relationships with the families that are relevant and lasting.

The compiled list presented here is a "beginning" of ideas that we at the District have gathered from conference calls, director's sharing, etc. Most important, though, are the ideas that you, your staff, pastor, and congregations develop for your school and congregation. Please share with us.



IDEAS THAT HAVE BEEN TRIED:

- ◆ Morning Coffee—once a month coffee and treats are served by congregation members to parents of the school.
- ◆ Prayer Project—on a bulletin board visible to all is a photograph of each student with a self portrait drawn by a child and the child's first name. Folks in the congregation take these sticky tabs and pray for the child and family.
- ◆ Kids in Church—each month there is something special from the kids of the school in church: singing, art display, making of book marks for the members, etc.
- ◆ Thank You—at the end of the school year the children write thank you notes to the congregation telling what they have learned during the year and how much they appreciate the congregation having their school.
- ◆ Annual church and Preschool BBQ hosted by the preschool on the playground.
- ◆ Preschool families invited personally to all congregation fellowship events.
- ◆ Veggie Tale Movie nights for preschool church and neighborhood—pizza, popcorn, and ice cream served.
- ◆ Preschoolers paint windows in fellowship hall with seasonal handprints.
- ◆ Group of people from congregation come regularly to clean toys and take care of equipment.
- ◆ A special room provided for parents in which to stay and wait with others interacting and building relationships. Often the teachers leave projects that need to be done.
- ◆ Family Night—three times a year—a family book is made at each event. In each classroom an activity is done that would be a page for the book. Use congregational members to help.
- ◆ Teachers serve appreciation breakfast for volunteers at the end of the year.
- ◆ Provide a large picture wall where families can see what is happening in school and congregation.
- ◆ Congregation Shut-ins—class has contact four times a year—same teacher has same shut-in each year.
- ◆ Prayer cards (first names)—ask pastor to have silent prayer each week in church for students and their families.
- ◆ Staff Devotions—Pray for a child and their family each day. Send home a card that tells the family they were prayed for that day.
- ◆ Praying for a school somewhere else. Let the school know you are praying for them.
- ◆ Home visits—develops lasting relationships with child and family.
- ◆ Random phone calls to families throughout the school year intentional in praising the child.
- ◆ Develop a creative note to send to families. A positive statement that shares your passion for serving their child.
- ◆ Memory Book—create a memory book for each child with positive samples of the child's work. Take photographs of the class and individual child (with permission). Have an "almost end of the year" contact with each family and give them the memory book.
- ◆ Email pictures to parents after special events throughout the year.
- ◆ Develop a creative note for parents at the beginning of summer. Share your passion for serving them. Leave them with a benediction and wish them well. Collect an email address to stay in touch.
- ◆ Family worship event for preschool families, congregation, and community. Block parties, community celebrations, and sharing the church facility with the community.
- ◆ Provide classes for families.
- ◆ At events with parents Pastor and Director role play how to do a family devotion in a bedtime ritual presentation.
- ◆ Use a rolling chalkboard in narthex to present children's work to all who enter. Other side could have information about the school.
- ◆ Class picture included with thank you notes. Also Christmas card with class picture as done at Wal-Mart, etc.



Early Childhood Program Director Training

DIRECTed

Early Childhood
Program Director
Training



Helping LCMS early childhood
program directors become
better equipped to lead
Lutheran ministries.

DIRECTed, the LCMS Early Childhood Program Director Training Project, equips administrators of early childhood programs to be effective leaders of Lutheran learning communities. Assisting early childhood program directors through six workshops to grow in their leadership capacity is the goal of **DIRECTed**. A professional instructor with expertise in the subject area will facilitate each workshop using weekly conference calls, electronic mail, and websites. Telephone conferencing will be the main means of interaction between the instructor and the students. Recommended readings, videos, and hands-on tasks relevant to early childhood ministry will be suggested to gain the most from the professional learning community experience.

Workshop Schedule:

- Leadership/Strategic Planning—February 2, 9, 16, 23
- Staff Development and Outreach—March 2, 9, 16, 23
- Child Development—March 30; April 6, 13
- Family Systems/Outreach—April 20, 27; May 4
- Lutheran Teachings—May 11, 18; June 1
- Business Management/Development—June 8, 15, 22



Costs: \$100 for four week workshops; \$75 for three week workshops. The Northwest District will pay for one half of your workshop fee upon completion of the workshop.

To register for workshops: go to www.lcms.org/children and click on **DIRECTed**.

Need more information: email patti.borghardt@lcms.org or call 1-800-248-1930 ext. 1269.

Early Childhood Opportunities

LUTHERAN SCHOOL PORTAL: The Lutheran School Portal is a web based resource for Lutheran Educators around the world. Within the secure setting of the Lutheran School Portal, users will find the latest information and resources from the LCMS School Ministry national office. They also find information from their regional district office and have access to resources posted by schools across the nation. The Portal provides teaching resources as well as technology tools to help you with your day to day ministry. It is a tool for encouraging, connecting, and informing. The Northwest District will pay for one half of your yearly fee and your renewal fee each year.

2008-2009 Lutheran School Portal rates for free-standing early childhood centers:

< 50 students	\$70.00	District rebates to you \$35.00
51-100 students	\$110.00	District rebates to you \$55.00
101-200 students	\$150.00	District rebates to you \$75.00
201+ students	\$185.00	District rebates to you \$92.50



Lutheran School Portal
Encouraging, Connecting, and Informing Lutheran Schools

With the Portal subscription, free standing early childhood centers will be able to download the Early Childhood Mailing at no additional cost. You can view information about the Portal, Lutheran Schools in general, as well as other helpful information at www.lportal.net.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING: An opportunity offered through LCMS Children's Ministry for volunteers and professionals in effectiveness as they engage in ministries with and to children and their families. Each workshop is four weeks in length. Each four week workshop is \$100.00 per person plus material. The Northwest District will pay for one half of your workshop fee upon completion of the workshop. More information can be found at www.lcms.org/children and click on Children's Ministry Leadership Training.

Notes from the 2008 Leadership Series Phone Conference Calls

September: Starting a Child Care Ministry

Lenetta Colbert, Director of Open Arms Child Development Center, Fairbanks, AK

"Let the little children come unto me...for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven!" Mark 10:14

Child care Ministry is :

- An outreach to children and families who do not know Jesus as Lord
- Probably the only ministry where the unchurched pay us to tell their children about Jesus
- A service for your community/church
- A business
- Hard work



Childcare Ministry is not:

- A quick way to add new members to the church
- Babysitting for working moms
- A good way to help finance a new church or help finance an existing one
- A ministry that can be supported mostly with volunteers
- A small business that is easy to run
- Not much different than a preschool

Topics covered in presentation:

- Pray, Plan, Pray!
- The planning committee
- Be the Best we can be—accreditation
- People to talk to
- Don't re-invent the wheel
- Be meticulous in planning

Imagine-----"How many people will be marching into heaven someday because they learned about Jesus at your early childhood center!!"

Lenetta Colbert, Director, Open Arms Child Development Center, Fairbanks, Alaska
Phone: 907-455-9466, openarmsdir@gci.net



October: Creative, Unstructured Play

Mary Widenhofer, Preschool Director, Early 5's Teacher, and Adjunct Instructor for Indiana/Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN

SPONTANEOUS (PURE) PLAY INVOLVES:

- Intrinsic motivation
- No time limits
- Process orientation not end product
- Enjoyment and fun
- Creativity
- No adult rules
- Free choices and empowerment
- Elements of fantasy or pretend



INTRINSIC... coming from within. It is children using their creative imaginations to pretend, mimic, plan, choose pantomime and invent, while at the same time they interpret, question, predict, problem solve, change course, discover and make choices all during play. These are all skills they will need throughout life....

CONTINUED: Creative, Unstructured Play

Mary Widenhofer, Preschool Director, Early 5's Teacher, and Adjunct Instructor for Indiana/Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN

Topics as developed:

- Where do we find this creativity?
- Simple materials and play setting
- Convenience and quantity of materials
- Exploring materials in pretend play
- Imaginative play can be...
- Benefits of Imaginative play
- How to Identify Imaginative play
- So.... Set out the materials
- Strike up the Space!
- Bring out the play prop boxes...

".....and play, imagine, construct, reenact and create!"

"Shouldn't we all play and imagine more through our play?"



Contact information: Mary Widenhofer, maryzwi@verizon.net

November: Law and Grace in Classroom Discipline

Kim Marxhausen, Adjunct Professor and Doctoral Student in Early Childhood, Concordia University Seward, NE

As administrators ask yourselves the following questions: How much of your parent/student handbook is Law and how much is Grace? Is it an accurate reflection of the climate at your center? For a school, Grace would be seen in the form of what is given to the student and family. What aspects of Grace do you promise your families? Do you make a point of communicating this or is it implied? If you require your parents to sign an agreement form for your handbook, does that form include items of Grace? And finally, what about the way your board deals with teachers and parents? Do their policies include both Law and Grace?

It is from these questions that Kim directed her seminar.

The following is that outline:

- Obedience teaches Self-regulation
- Lack of Self-regulation
- Benefits of Self-regulation
- Law or Grace?
- Law
- Grace
- Grace in the classroom
- Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation
- Learning to obey requires both Law and Grace

Questions for discussion:

- How is it possible to be academically intelligent but not have self-regulation skills?
- How does the secular world fight your efforts to teach self-regulation skills?
- What self-regulation skills do you expect your students to know coming into your class?
- What do they need to go onto the next class?
- What are some examples of Grace in your classroom discipline?



An assignment:

- List the things you use in discipline that are Law.
- List the things you use in discipline that are Grace.
- How much of your day is spent in Law?
- How much of your day is spent in Grace?
- What changes to you need to make?

Seeking the Faith Quotient

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Stepping Out in Faith

<http://kim.marxhausen.net/blog>



Calendar of Events

March 1-7, 2009

LCMS NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

The theme is "Securing Each Child's Future — for Eternity" with theme verse John 3:16.

March 10, 2009

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP SEMINAR CONFERENCE CALL

"Integrating the Faith" with Denise Pacilli.

April 14, 2009

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP SEMINAR CONFERENCE CALL

"Church and School Relations" with Rev. Dr. Warren Schumacher and Dick Weniger.

April 22-24, 2009

2009 NORTHWEST DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE, Portland, OR

(exact location TBA). The session specifically for Early Childhood Directors begins at 12:00 p.m. Friday, April 24 and ends at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. More information is available on page 3.

October 14-16, 2009

2009 NORTHWEST DISTRICT TEACHERS CONFERENCE, Seaside, OR



Improving Your Q

Improving your early childhood center's Q (quality) can effectively be accomplished through the accreditation process. Why would an Early Childhood Center want to pursue National Lutheran School Accreditation?

Through your involvement with NLSA, you will demonstrate to your congregation and community members that young children are important. The process enables an early childhood center to evaluate the effectiveness of its ministry and programs. Your early childhood community will be energized as it plans for the future by establishing short- and long-range goals for self-improvement. Your Early Childhood Center will be recognized as a quality service provider of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod through its involvement with one of the largest, most prestigious accrediting agencies for religious schools. Parents will be assured that your center provides the highest quality programs and service.

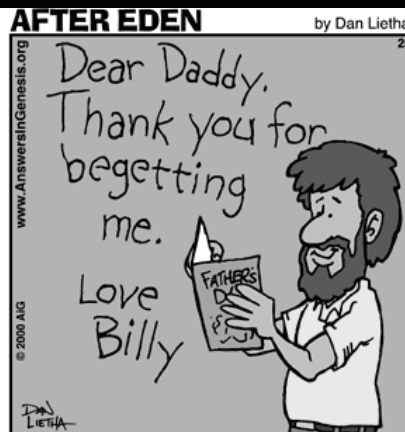
NLSA is a challenging process that requires the cooperative and collaborative efforts of staff, school board and parents, but the benefits accrued through the process make the effort worthwhile. Take the first step toward improving your center's Q.

Contact Terry.Schmidt@lcms.org or call 1-800-248-1930 ext. 1292 for more information.

Little Blessings



Sally was sure that IF there had been forbidden VEGETABLES in the Garden of Eden instead of forbidden fruit, Adam & Eve wouldn't have eaten them.



George was thankful for a son who not only honors his father, but also pays attention even when the family Bible reading goes through the genealogies.



Little Edmund had to keep reminding himself that broccoli was originally created "very good".