



The Florida Catholic Conference
Early Education Program Standards, Benchmarks, and Indicators
2015



The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program standards address four domains: Mission and Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality. These are based on the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools written by the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness, School of Education, Loyola University Chicago, in partnership with the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

The benchmarks used in this document are specific to the early education programs. The benchmarks address federal, state, and diocesan requirements, as well as national and local accreditation requirements. Some benchmarks are very similar to those used in the elementary schools. An early education program that is an integral part of a Catholic elementary school will follow the benchmarks for elementary schools and the shaded benchmarks in this document.

MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY
STANDARD 1: An excellent Catholic early education program is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.
<p>1.1 The director ensures that the mission statement includes a commitment to Catholic Identity. Met – The mission statement clearly states the Catholic identity of the program. Not Met – The mission statement does not mention the Catholic identity of the program. Evidence – Mission Statement</p>
<p>1.2 The director uses the mission statement as the foundation for all planning. Met – The mission statement is reviewed or referred to during budgeting, curriculum planning, writing policies, etc. Not Met – The mission statement is not used when documents are prepared. Evidence – Agendas, Minutes</p>
<p>1.3 The director regularly clarifies and reviews the mission statement, gathering input from stakeholders. Met – The mission statement is reviewed on an annual basis, updating it as needed. Not Met – The mission statement is rarely reviewed for content. Evidence – Agenda, Minutes, Calendar, Flyer/Letter</p>
<p>1.4 The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents. Met – The mission statement is in the posted in all classrooms, reception areas, the website, brochures, and newsletters. Not Met – The mission statement is not posted or only posted in a few locations. Evidence – Observable/Pictures</p>
<p>1.5 All stakeholders understand the mission statement. Met – Staff members, parents, and children (where applicable) know the mission state and can articulate the meaning. Not Met – Stakeholders are unaware of the mission statement. Evidence – Survey/Focus group results</p>
<p>1.6 The written philosophy regarding the care and/or education of young children is based on current research and “best practices” in the field and is consistent with the program’s mission statement. Met – The philosophy statement is based on research and reflects the program’s mission and vision. Not Met – The program does not have a written philosophy statement. Evidence – Philosophy statement</p>

STANDARD 2: An excellent Catholic early education program adhering to mission provides a developmentally appropriate program for faith formation and academic growth.

2.1 Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the diocese.

Met – The program uses the diocesan required standards and materials for religious education.

Not Met – The program does not use the diocesan required standards and materials for religious education.

Evidence – Plans, Observable

2.2 Religious instruction is an appropriate part of the program.

Met – The Catholic faith is taught and referenced throughout the day.

Not Met – Any reference to the Catholic faith is not evident.

Evidence – Plans, Observable

2.3 Staff members who teach religion meet diocesan requirements for catechetical preparation.

Met – Staff members have taken the appropriate classes and hold the necessary documentation.

Not Met – Staff members have not taken the classes.

Evidence – Documentation in personnel file

2.4 Catholic culture and faith are expressed through a variety of learning experiences.

Met – Programs, toys, books, art, and materials with a Catholic nature are evident in the program.

Not Met – The program has few items of Catholic nature.

Evidence – Plans, Observable/Pictures

2.5 The church’s social teachings are developmentally appropriate elements of the program.

Met – Plans indicate the use of social teachings.

Not Met – Social teachings are not referenced in plans.

Evidence – Plans, pictures, newsletters

STANDARD 3: An excellent Catholic early education program adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.

3.1 Children are offered regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer.

Met – Prayer is a part of every day with the children.

Not Met – Prayer is not evident.

Evidence – Schedule, plans, observation

3.2 The early education program participates in Christian service programs to promote the understanding of service and social justice.

Met – The stakeholders are invited to participate in Christian service projects to benefit global or local need.

Not Met – The early education program does not offer Christian service projects.

Evidence – Flyers, newsletters, pictures

3.3 Every student experiences role models of faith and service among the staff. Staff treats colleagues, children and their families with equal respect and consideration regardless of race, religion, family background, or culture.

Met – The staff handbook and evaluation includes evidence that respectful relationships exists.

Not Met – The staff handbook provides no evidence that respectful relationships are a condition of successful employment.

Evidence – Staff handbook, observation, evaluation form

STANDARD 4: An excellent Catholic early education program adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation through participation in the program’s programs and activities.

4.1 The parish provides spiritual experiences for the staff on a regular basis.

Met – The parish, school, or program offer staff members spiritual experiences for their personal faith life.

Not Met – Spiritual experiences for staff members are not evident.

Evidence – Retreat booklet, calendar

4.2 The early education program staff assists parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in the faith.

Met – Parents are offered resources to assist them in teaching their children about the Catholic faith.

Not Met – Parents are not offered resources regarding the Catholic faith.

Evidence – Resources, newsletters

4.3 Every staff member visibly supports the faith life of the early education program community.
 Met – Staff members participate in the spiritual offerings of the program, school (where available), or parish.
 Not Met – Staff members are not involved in the spiritual life of the program or parish.
 Evidence – List of involvement

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

STANDARD 5: An excellent Catholic early education program has a collaborative director for development and oversight of the early education program’s fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

5.1 The program has a clearly defined governance structure.
 Met – Job descriptions or other documents include the chain of command and indicate the decision makers.
 Not Met – The governance structure is understood, but not documented.
 Evidence – Handbook, job descriptions, chart

5.2 The director systematizes the policies of the early education program’s operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.
 Met – The program has well defined and up to date written policies in all areas.
 Not Met – The program only has some policies and handbooks written.
 Evidence – Handbooks, files

5.3 The director maintains a constructive relationship with the pastor (and school principal, where applicable), the diocesan education office and the bishop.
 Met – The director meets with the pastor (and principal if the program is associated with a school). The director attends meetings with the superintendent and education office personnel. The director follows the directives of the bishop.
 Not Met – The director meets with some, but not all of the people mentioned.
 Evidence – Calendar, agendas, conversations

5.4 The pastor (or school principal, where applicable) ensures an annual evaluation of the early education program’s director.
 Met – An evaluation form used to annually evaluate the director is evident.
 Not Met – Evidence of an annual evaluation is not available.
 Evidence – Completed evaluation

STANDARD 6: An excellent Catholic early education program has a qualified director to realize and implement the early education program’s mission and vision.

6.1 The Director meets state and diocesan requirements for early education program leadership preparation and licensing. The Director:

- a. Is a minimum of 21 years age
- b. Holds a director’s credential from Florida DCF
- c. Has obtained a minimum of 9 credit hours of college course work in administration, leadership or management
- d. Has obtained a minimum of 24 credit hours of specialized college course work in early education, child development, elementary education or special education.
- e. Has experience working directly with children whose ages are represented in the early education program for which the director has oversight.
- f. Obtains a minimum of 45 clock hours during the first year of employment, especially as it relates to Florida requirements.
- g. Obtains an additional 10 clock hours per year of continuing professional development, provided by a qualified entity in such areas as approved by the diocese.

Met – The personnel file contains evidence of each requirement listed in 6.1.
 Not Met – The personnel file is missing evidence of the 6.1 requirements.
 Evidence – Personnel file

6.2 The director assumes responsibility of the day to day operations of the program, maintains program policies, and monitors the program’s compliance with applicable requirements.
 Met – A current job description for the director delineates the above-mentioned responsibilities of the director.
 Not Met – The job description for the director does not mention these items.
 Evidence – Written job description, schedule

<p>6.3 The director takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including hiring, professional growth, faith formation and formal assessment of staff in compliance with diocesan policy.</p> <p>Met – A current job description for the director delineates the above-mentioned responsibilities of the director.</p> <p>Not Met – The job description for the director does not mention these items.</p> <p>Evidence – Written job description, schedule</p>
<p>6.4 The director has plans in place for the use of qualified substitute teachers to ensure the integrity of the program.</p> <p>Met – A current and sufficient list of qualified substitutes is available, and evidence is clear that the integrity of the program is maintained during teacher absences.</p> <p>Not Met – A plan to obtain substitutes is not in place, and a list of qualified substitutes is not available.</p> <p>Evidence – List of substitutes with qualifications</p>
<p>6.5 The director designates a qualified person to assume leadership and responsibility of the early education program in the event of the Director’s absence. The person shall be at least 21 years of age.</p> <p>Met – A qualified person is the designated leader in the absence of the director.</p> <p>Not Met – There is no specific person designated to assume the responsibilities of the director when the director is absent.</p> <p>Evidence – Written policy, personnel file</p>
<p>6.6 The director holds regular staff meetings to support the professional development plan, to build strong relationships, to promote communication, and for the operational vitality of the program.</p> <p>Met – The calendar indicates the dates of regular staff meetings and agendas are kept.</p> <p>Not Met – The program does not schedule regular staff meetings.</p> <p>Evidence – Calendar, agenda</p>
<p>6.7 The director engages in ongoing training and self-evaluation to ensure the continued execution of his or her responsibilities.</p> <p>Met – The director has a professional development plan that includes goals; classes, workshops, or webinars; and self-evaluations.</p> <p>Not Met – The director does not have a plan for professional development.</p> <p>Evidence – Professional development plan, course certificate</p>



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

STANDARD 7: An excellent Catholic early education program has a clearly articulated program with curriculum aligned with relevant standards, and implemented through effective instruction. Curriculum is enhanced as appropriate with gospel values and Catholic identity.

<p>7.1 The curriculum meets diocesan requirements and follows the standards in the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five and the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four Year Old from the Office of Early Learning.</p> <p>Met – The curriculum used by the program has been approved by the diocese.</p> <p>Not Met – The program has not been approved by the diocese.</p> <p>Evidence – Curriculum, diocesan approval</p>
<p>7.2 The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that provides time and support for transitions, includes both indoor and outdoor experiences and is responsive to child’s need to rest or be active.</p> <p>Met – A written schedule is used and adapted, as needed. It includes indoor and outdoor activity and rest, as appropriate.</p> <p>Not Met – A current schedule is not evident.</p> <p>Evidence – Schedule</p>
<p>7.3 Instruction is designed to engage and motivate all children, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student and accommodating children with special needs as fully as possible. Media (i.e. TV, film or technology) is used to extend learning and enrich the curriculum according to the Florida requirements.</p> <p>Met – Individual instructional needs are met through a variety of methods.</p> <p>Not Met – Individualized attention is not evident.</p> <p>Evidence – Plans, observation, survey results</p>

<p>7.4 Staff create classroom environments that help children extend their learning and includes the display of recent children’s works. Classrooms and classroom materials are arranged to stimulate learning and to encourage exploration and experimentation by both large and small groups of children. The daily routine encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility.</p> <p>Met – Classrooms are set up with space for groups and individuals to use. Plans show independent work and exploration. Children’s work is displayed.</p> <p>Not Met – The classrooms are not conducive to appropriate exploration and use by various sized groups.</p> <p>Evidence – Observable/pictures, plans</p>
<p>7.5 Daily plans for each class age group reflect the goals and objectives of the Florida developmentally appropriate standards.</p> <p>Met – Plans are written, implemented, and adapted as appropriate.</p> <p>Not Met – Plans are not written or do not follow the standards.</p> <p>Evidence – Examples of plans from each age group.</p>
<p>7.6 The director directs the development and continuous improvement of the curriculum and instruction.</p> <p>Met – The director reviews plans, observes instruction, and meets with staff to make improvements.</p> <p>Not Met – Plans are not reviewed or classrooms are not observed.</p> <p>Evidence – Observation notes, handbook, plan review schedule</p>
<p>7.7 The instructional and support staff meets diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for early education program employment, preparation, and credentials. Each staff member:</p>
<p>a. is at least 18 years of age</p>
<p>b. has appropriate training and experience to carry out his/her role in the early education program</p>
<p>c. maintains at least the minimum number of required clock hours of continuing education or professional development in areas approved by the diocese</p> <p>Met – Every staff member meets each requirement.</p> <p>Not met – A staff member does not meet one or more requirements.</p> <p>Evidence – Documentation in personnel file.</p>
<p>7.8 If the program has children with special needs, individualized plans have been developed.</p> <p>Met – Individualized written plans are used for each child with special needs. These are reviewed at least twice a year.</p> <p>Not met – Individualized plans are not implemented or are not reviewed.</p> <p>Evidence – Copy of individualized plans</p>
<p>STANDARD 8: An excellent Catholic early education program uses developmentally appropriate assessment methods to screen for the development of the child, document student learning and to review program effectiveness.</p>
<p>8.1 Age appropriate research based screening and assessment is used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.</p> <p>Met – A variety of screening tools and assessments.</p> <p>Not Met – Assessments are not used.</p> <p>Evidence – Screening and assessment tools, results, analysis</p>
<p>8.2 Ongoing assessment of children’s progress takes place and is used to plan activities for individual children and for groups of children.</p> <p>Met – A variety of screening tools and assessments.</p> <p>Not Met – Assessments are not used.</p> <p>Evidence – Screening and assessment tools, results, analysis</p>
<p>8.3 Parents of the children in the program receive communication regarding their child’s developmental progress at least twice per year. Parent conferences are held at least twice a year. Summaries of the results of child observation forms used during scheduled observations of the child are shared with parents, and parents are encouraged to participate in the goal-setting process for the child.</p> <p>Met – Parents receive information regarding their child’s progress and conference with the teacher at least twice a year.</p> <p>Not Met – Parents do not receive information regarding their child’s progress or do not have the opportunity to conference with the teacher.</p> <p>Evidence – Reports, calendar</p>

8.4 Significant changes in a child’s pattern of behavior and/or physical condition are reported to the parents, documented, and placed in the child’s file.

Met – Staff document changes in behavior or condition. Reports are given to parents.

Not Met – Staff does not document or report behavior.

Evidence – Forms, child’s file

STANDARD 9: An excellent Catholic early education program provides opportunities and services aligned with the mission which enrich the program and support the development of student and family life.

9.1 The director plans and implements regularly scheduled parent programs.

Met – A variety of programs are offered for parents or information about local or web-based programs are provided.

Not Met – Programs are not offered.

Evidence – Calendar, flyer, pictures

9.2 The early education program has written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of children at all times and is consistent with diocesan and DCF field trip policy (including the Florida Administrative Code specific requirements for children).

Met – The handbook contains information about field trips and procedures.

Not Met – The policies and procedures are not written or detailed.

Evidence – Handbook

9.3 The director oversees interaction between staff and children, as well as staff and parents. This includes the implementation of the discipline policy and procedures.

Met – A discipline policy is implemented. The director observes classrooms on a daily basis.

Not Met – The discipline policy is not written. The director is not visible in the classrooms each day.

Evidence – Handbook, observation and survey results

9.4 The director communicates disciplinary policies and procedures with parents. Corporal punishment or legally questionable practices are prohibited.

Met – The discipline policy is included in the parent handbook or is given to parents as a separate document.

Not Met – The discipline policy is not written or not available to parents.

Evidence – Handbook

9.5 The director and staff communicate with the parents in a variety of ways on a regular basis, daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events, or through electronic means.

Met – Parents receive communication regarding day to day happenings in the classroom, special events, etc.

Not Met – Parents do not receive general information from the program.

Evidence – Samples of communications sent to parents

OPERATIONAL VITALITY

STANDARD 10: A parish with an excellent Catholic early education program provides a feasible three to five year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets.

10.1 The pastor, in collaboration with the parish finance committee, and the director (and the principal, where applicable) ensures oversight and review of the financial position of the program to ensure stability.

Met – The finances are reviewed on a monthly basis.

Not Met – The finances are not reviewed regularly.

Evidence – Agendas, financial statements

10.2 The pastor and the director (and the principal, where applicable) ensures the review of the program’s financial records are consistent with the diocesan parish review program.

Met – Financial records follow the diocesan policy.

Not Met – Financial records do not follow the diocesan policy.

Evidence – Approval from the diocese

10.3 Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement and other planned projects.

Met – The budget contains the appropriate line items.

Not Met – The budget does not delineate appropriate line items.

Evidence – Budget

<p>10.4 Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.</p> <p>Met – The budget contains the appropriate line items. Not Met – The budget does not delineate appropriate line items. Evidence – Budget</p>
<p>10.5 Published financial reports include information on the operation of the early education program.</p> <p>Met – Parents receive information about the tuition, fees, and the cost to run the program. Not Met – Parents only receive information about the tuition and fees. Evidence – Fee schedule, tuition forms, registration forms</p>
<p>10.6 The director provides families access to information about appropriate state and local programs that assist parents with early education costs.</p> <p>Met – Parents receive information from any state agencies or local organizations that offer assistance. Not Met – The director does not provide tuition or fees assistance information to parents. Evidence – Tuition or fees assistance paperwork</p>
<p>10.7 The director, in collaboration with the pastor (and the principal, where applicable), ensures that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.</p> <p>Met – The finance committee or an appropriate professional planner reviews the budget. Not Met – Outside assistance is not used in preparing financial plans. Evidence – Agendas, notes from meetings</p>
<p>10.8 The parish maintains adequate liability and accident insurance including insurance on any vehicle that transports children.</p> <p>Met – The program is covered under liability and accident insurance. Not Met – The program does not have insurance. Evidence – Proof of insurance</p>
<p>STANDARD 11: An excellent Catholic early education program operates in accord with published human resources/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.</p>
<p>11.1 The director ensures that the early education program is in compliance with the diocesan human resources policies and the DCF policies regarding appropriate staffing.</p> <p>Met – The human resources and staffing requirements are in the handbook and implemented. Not Met – The program is not implementing all of the human resources policies and staffing requirements. Evidence - Handbook</p>
<p>11.2 The early education program complies with diocesan human resource standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.</p> <p>Met – Written job descriptions are used. Not Met – The program does not have written job descriptions. Evidence – Job descriptions</p>
<p>11.3 The early education program complies with diocesan human resource standards and ensures that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.</p> <p>Met – Salaries and benefits meet diocesan standards. Not Met – Salaries and / or benefits do not meet diocesan standards. Evidence – Salary and benefit information</p>
<p>11.4 The early education program complies with diocesan human resource standards and ensures that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care, and retirement as appropriate.</p> <p>Met – Health care and retirement are offered as appropriate. Not Met – Health care and retirement are not offered. Evidence – Health care and retirement documents</p>

<p>11.5 The director maintains a confidential file on each employee according to diocesan and DCF policies. Met – Personnel files are maintained in a secure location. Not Met – The program does not have personnel files. Evidence – Personnel files</p>
<p>11.6 The director ensures evaluation of employees is consistent with diocesan policy. Met – Employees are evaluated each year, according to diocesan policy. Not Met – Employees are not evaluated. Evidence – Evaluations</p>
<p>11.7 All staff members receive a copy of the employee handbook and written policies. Receipt of these by staff members has been documented. The staff members are instructed at least annually on employee policies. New staff members are provided with an orientation. Met – Staff members have a handbook and written policies and have reviewed them. Not Met – Staff members do not have a handbook. Evidence – Handbook, receipts, agenda</p>
<p>STANDARD 12: An excellent Catholic early education program develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the early education program.</p>
<p>12.1 The early education program’s facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the early education program and accessibility for all children.</p>
<p>a. The physical environment of the program provides sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature. Met – Lighting, ventilation, and temperature are appropriate. Not Met – Lighting, ventilation, or temperature is insufficient. Evidence – Maintenance inspections, observable, survey responses</p>
<p>b. Classrooms are suitable for the age and activities of the children in the program. For programs built after 1992, floor space meets or exceeds a minimum thirty-five square feet of usable space per child. Met – Each classroom has 35 sq. ft. of usable space per child. Not Met – Each classroom does not have sufficient space. Evidence – Classroom sketch with dimensions, observable</p>
<p>c. Classrooms, equipment, and toys are clean, sanitized and well maintained. Met – Classrooms and equipment are cleaned on a regular basis. Not Met – Classrooms or equipment are not cleaned on a regular basis. Evidence – Cleaning schedule, observable, survey responses</p>
<p>d. Children are provided with individual spaces, such as cubbies, in which they can store their work and personal belongings. Met – Students have individual storage areas. Not Met – Students do not have assigned storage areas. Evidence – Observable/pictures</p>
<p>e. The facilities include appropriate office space, area for staff meetings, and suitable storage space. Met – Offices, meeting area, and storage spaces are separate from classrooms. Not Met – Office space, meeting area, or storage spaces are insufficient. Evidence – Map of building layout, observable</p>
<p>f. To accommodate the children’s various play activities, the outdoor physical environment includes seventy-five square feet per child on the playground at any given time. Playground equipment is varied and sufficient for the number of children on the playground at the same time. The playground is designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children. Met – The playground has 75 sq. ft. per child at any given time. Not Met – The playground does not have sufficient space. Evidence – Playground sketch with dimensions, observable</p>

<p>12.2 The early education program’s budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.</p> <p>Met – The budget contains line items for the maintenance and improvement of facilities, equipment, technology, and capital improvements.</p> <p>Not Met – The budget does not allow for the upkeep of the facility and equipment.</p> <p>Evidence – Budget</p>
<p>12.3 The early education program’s purchasing, and physical and technological improvements are, by design, done in alignment with the mission and the early education program’s planning and curricular goals, and consistent with environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Met – A written plan is developed and followed in the purchasing of equipment and technology.</p> <p>Not Met – Items are purchased in a reactionary way.</p> <p>Evidence – Purchasing plan</p>
<p>STANDARD 13: An excellent Catholic early education program enacts a plan for advancement based on their mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management and development.</p>
<p>13.1 The communications/marketing plan includes the implementation of contemporary marketing strategies designed to reach targeted audiences.</p> <p>Met – The program implements its written marketing plan.</p> <p>Not Met – The program has a list of activities, but not a plan.</p> <p>Evidence – Marketing plan</p>
<p>13.2 The director reviews and analyzes the enrollment management plan annually.</p> <p>Met – The program implements its written enrollment management plan.</p> <p>Not Met – The program has a list of activities, but not a plan.</p> <p>Evidence – Marketing plan</p>
<p>13.3 Parents of the children in the program receive a parent handbook that includes but is not limited to (1) the philosophy statement regarding the care and education of young children attending the program, including what discipline techniques will be used (2) policies regarding holidays, illnesses, hours of operation, fees, refunds, enrollment, and termination procedures; and (3) an explanation of the program’s day-to-day functioning. Parents/guardian sign a statement acknowledging that they understand and support the program’s policies as outlined in the parent handbook.</p> <p>Met – The program distributes a well written handbook each year.</p> <p>Not Met – The handbook does not include everything mentioned in this benchmark.</p> <p>Evidence – Handbook, signed parental acknowledgements</p>
<p>13.4 Clear admissions policies and procedures are stated in writing.</p> <p>Met – Written admission policies indicate who is eligible for enrollment, how acceptance into the program happens, waiting list procedures, etc.</p> <p>Not Met – The admission policy is not evident.</p> <p>Evidence – Admission policy</p>
<p>13.5 Policies regarding the enrollment and termination of children protect children’s rights as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p> <p>Met – The program follows accepted protocols when enrolling and dismissing children.</p> <p>Not Met – The program does not have a protocol in place to dismiss children from the program.</p> <p>Evidence – Written procedures for enrollment and dismissal</p>
<p>STANDARD 14: An excellent Catholic early education program operates in compliance with all diocesan and applicable state, and local policies.</p>
<p>14.1 The early education program shall develop a written plan for mandated diocesan, county, and state health procedures; provide a safe and secure environment to prevent illness, accidents, threats or abuse; deal with emergencies should they occur; and educate children concerning safe and healthy practices.</p> <p>a. The early education has a written safety and security plan which shall include a section on emergency procedures to address such matters as natural disasters, environmental hazards, dangerous weather, violent incidents, and evidence of evacuation drills.</p> <p>Met – The program has a formal written safety and security plan.</p> <p>Not Met – The program’s plan is not written.</p> <p>Evidence – Safety and security plan</p>

<p>b. The early education program is in compliance with provincial and diocesan safe environmental policies. All volunteers and staff members undergo Level II background screening, fingerprinting and training. Volunteers work under the supervision of qualified staff members. Met – Evidence of screening, fingerprinting, and training is in each staff member’s file. Not Met – Not all pieces of evidence are in the files. Evidence – Personnel files, lists of training.</p>
<p>c. The early education program is in compliance with the Florida Department of Children and Families Health and Safety Checklist for Non-public Schools and the Florida Catholic Conference Health and Safety Checklist. Met – The program has completed the checklists and posted them. Not Met – The school has not completed the checklists. Evidence – Completed checklists, observations</p>
<p>d. The early education program has a written policy that complies with the requirements of civil authorities for administering and storing medications. It has been distributed to the parents of the children in the program. A detailed medical log is maintained that includes a record of all medications given to children, the time the medication was given, and the person administering the medication. Met – The program has a written policy and keeps a detailed log of any administration of medication. Not Met – The program does not have a written policy or has not given it to parents or does not keep a log. Evidence – Handbook, policy, medication log</p>
<p>e. The program makes visual, auditory, speech, language development, physical development, cognitive development, and other health screening assessments available to the children, having the consent of their parent, in the program at least annually. Met – Screening assessments are available at least once a year. Not Met – Screening assessments are not available on a regular basis. Evidence – Notices, files</p>
<p>f. At least one credentialed staff member per 20 children is present at all times. Met – Credentialed staff members are present at all times. Not Met – Credentialed staff members are not always present. Evidence – Rosters, staff list of assignments</p>
<p>g. The minimum staff student ratio is maintained at all times: Under 12 months – 1:4 12 months to 23 months – 1:6 24 months to 35 months – 1:11 36 months to 47 months – 1:15 48 months to 59 months – 1:20 Five years and older – 1:25 Met – The ratios are maintained at all times. Not Met – The ratios are not followed in some rooms. Evidence – Rosters, staff list of assignments</p>
<p>h. When mixed age groups of infants and toddlers are in the same room, the child-staff ratio is maintained according to the youngest child in the room. Met – Ratios are maintained at all times. Not Met – Ratios are not followed with mixed age groups. Evidence – Rosters, staff lists of assignments</p>
<p>i. If food is prepared on the premises, the program must be in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities for food storage, preparation, and service. Food may be prepared at an approved facility and transported to the program in approved containers and at approved temperatures. Met – The program follows the food storage, preparation, and service requirements. Not Met – The program does not follow the requirements. Evidence – Inspection reports</p>

<p>j. The meals and/or snacks provided for the children meet the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities that are age appropriate for the children, as suggested by the Child Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Met – The program follows the USDA guidelines. Not Met – The program does not have guidelines for meals or snacks. Evidence – Handbook, guidelines used</p>
<p>14.2 The early education program maintains health records that include immunization data, any screenings, and early education program-entry medical examinations in accordance with the policies of the State of Florida, the diocese, and DCF. Current emergency information is maintained for each child enrolled in the program, including expected attendance, parent contact information, people authorized to take the child off the premises, allergies, and other important health information. Met – The program has both health records and emergency information for each child. Not Met – The program does not have health records or does not have emergency records for each child. Evidence – Health files, emergency forms</p>
<p>14.3 The early education program shall publish, implement, and display statements of nondiscrimination of children and personnel in accordance with federal law and regulations. Met – Nondiscrimination statements are displayed in the facility and in the handbook. Not Met – Nondiscrimination statements do not exist or are not displayed. Evidence – Handbook, observable/pictures</p>
<p>14.4 The early education program shall develop an academic calendar and supporting attendance policies that are sufficient to the operation of a quality instructional program where applicable. Met – An academic calendar / schedule is used by the program and given to parents. Not Met – An academic calendar or schedule is not used. Evidence – Academic calendar / schedule</p>
<p>14.5 The age of the child is the primary appropriate entrance requirement for prekindergarten 3 and 4. The child must be age 3 or 4, respectively, on or before September 1 of the entering school year. Met – Children meet with prekindergarten 3 and 4 age requirement. Not Met – Children do not meet the age requirement. Evidence – Copies of birth certificates or proof of birthdates</p>
<p>14.6 The early education program shall maintain records for children containing information, procedures, and confidentiality as required by law and as necessary for the operation of a quality educational program. (Closed early education programs will follow diocesan procedures regarding these records.) Met – Children’s confidential records are maintained in a secure area of the office. Not Met – The program does not have records. Or the confidential records are not secured. Evidence – Secure area, files</p>
<p>14.7 The program has an open-door policy regarding visits by parents on the program’s premises including in their child’s classroom. Policies concerning parent involvement (e.g., visiting, observing, and volunteering) are in place to ensure the partnership between home and program is maintained. Visitation must be in compliance with diocesan security policies for schools. Met – Parents follow sign in procedures (in accord with diocesan policy) and visit classrooms, volunteer, or meet with staff members as they request. Not Met – Parents are rarely, if at all involved in the program. Evidence – Sign in documents, volunteer rosters, pictures, survey results</p>
<p>14.8 The director is familiar with community services and resources regarding children with specific needs and provides this information to parents. The director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed. Met – Parents receive information regarding services and resources available to assist their child with special needs. Not Met – Information regarding these services is not given to the parents. Evidence – Letters, brochures</p>