



EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Educare Winnebago Winnebago, NE



To design the ideal Educare School for the Winnebago Tribe, our Early Education team immersed themselves with the Ho-Chunk people. Discovery through culture, history books, museums and, most importantly, communication with the community and its

elders helped develop a design concept that is sensitive and reflective of the tribe and its history.

Through this exploration, two influential themes emerged: path and earth. Path signifies the Winnebago tribe's split from the other Siouan tribes and the beginning of a new journey as a single tribe. Earth represents respect for and dependence upon the earth, as it became vital to the existence of the Ho-Chunk people. The themes of earth and path evolved into concepts specific to the Educare Winnebago project: "EarthPath" and "Nurture through Nature".

Through the importance of earth and path, nature became an element through which the school was defined and a program delineated. A physical pathway through the site and school is defined by nature and framed through the building architecture. As child development and nurturing is the focus of both the early education program and its built environment, planning for Educare Winnebago included careful consideration of the design approach and the school's placement with regard to purposeful engagement with the earth.

Surrounded by sculpted earthwork, the pathway trails through the site to a compressed

entry, leading visitors into a welcoming and naturally illuminated atrium of the school. The atrium becomes the communal hearth, adorned with cultural artwork representing the tribe and Ho-Chunk culture. Providing education nearly 200 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, Educare Winnebago has also become a destination for the community to gather in learning and share more about their culture.



New Construction/Addition

Early education center

RDG Planning & Design

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DESIGN TEAM

Sampson Construction, General Contractor
Performance Engineering, Structural
Ehrhart Griffin & Associates, Civil
Alvine Engineering, Mechanical, Electrical, and
Plumbing
RDG Planning & Design, Landscape Design

OWNER/CLIENT

Educare Winnebago
Winnebago, NE
Amy LaPointe, Co-Director
402/878-4370

KEY STATS

Grades Served: Ages: 6 weeks - Age 5
Capacity: 190 students
Size of Site: 10.35 acres
Building Area: 31,950 gsf
Space per Student: 168 sq. ft.
Cost per Student: \$55,263
Square Foot Cost: \$328.63
Project Cost: \$10,500,000
Completion Date: July 2014

PHOTOGRAPHY: TOM KESSLER