



Early Learning Center

Des Plaines, IL

New Construction/Addition Entire school/campus building

Wight & Company
2500 North Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561, USA
www.wightco.com
Craig Siepka
630/969-7000

DESIGN TEAM

Craig Siepka, AIA, LEED AP, PK-12
Design Leader
Paul Sorci, LEED AP, Senior Project
Architect
Steve Shearer, AIA, LEED AP, Project
Architect
Ray Prokop, DBIA, LEED AP BD+C, Vice
President, Director of Construction
Byron Wynn, Director, Land Development

OWNER/CLIENT

Des Plaines Community Consolidated
School District 62
Des Plaines, IL
Dr. Jane L. Westerhold, Superintendent
847/824-1178

KEY STATS

Grades Served: 3-5 year olds
Capacity: 585 students (two, separate
half-day programs)
Size of Site: 10 acres (shared, existing
site redevelopment)
Building Area: 51,350 sq. ft.
Space per Student: 212 sq. ft.
Cost per Student: \$52,893
Square Foot Cost: \$249
Construction Cost: \$12,800,000
Project Cost: \$13,700,000
Completion Date: August 2011

PHOTOGRAPHY: ©2011 LAMBROS PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.;
©2011 ROBERT SIEPKA PHOTOGRAPHY

The new Early Learning Center (ELC), coupled with an attached elementary school renovation, was part of the overall building program. The new ELC consolidates educational professionals and over 585 children, ages 3-5, with varying developmental limitations, while offering parent-funded preschool and school-age programs.

There were two programming challenges. The first challenge was to take two schools serving students of differing program needs and age groups and combine them under one roof while maintaining distinct identities and operations. The design solution centered on a site development plan and building orientation that allowed the separation of vehicular traffic, building entrances and an architectural solution that gave each school its own identity. The second challenge was to create a welcoming and nurturing environment for ELC students while fostering the efficiency and benefits of shared equipment and support spaces.

Educational opportunities are integrated throughout the facility. Every usable square foot of the building is maximized for instructional activities with emphasis on elements at a height of 4 feet down to ground level. Windows are positioned with respect to the



©2011 LAMBROS PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

height of the students, creating transparency between spaces and contribute to the open plan feel.

Corridors are lined with floor-to-ceiling tackable surfaces to display student art work.



©2011 LAMBROS PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.



©2011 ROBERT SIEPKA PHOTOGRAPHY