

Niagara Region Child Care Centres Program Statement

Parent Handbook Insert

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014

The Ministry of Education has required all licensed child care programs to develop and implement a Program Statement, which guides the day-to-day beliefs, values and best practices of our program. The How Does Learning Happen? Document is to be used for the purpose of guiding our licensed child care.

Niagara Region Children's Services licensed child care programs recognize that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

We provide learning environments where educators act as co-learners and facilitators to children's learning by planning for play opportunities to explore, investigate and nurture authentic relationships through adult supported provocations/invitations and children initiated interests.

We document children's learning to enable us to reflect on each child's unique development and to share heartfelt experiences to the child and families within our programs.

We support Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) in providing open ended materials, and flexibility within the day that maintains safety and allows children to engage in complex exploration incorporating their natural curiosity.

We value and support the families we serve and recognize them as partners in their children's learning as we believe they are their first educators. RECEs are true professionals who build relationships with children and their families and connect with organizations within their community recognizing that "it takes a village to raise a child".

We encourage our RECEs to recognize the importance of self-reflective practice and on-going professional learning opportunities to provide nurturing, responsive learning environments.

This program statement aligns with our local Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) initiative which provides educators with the tools and training to ensure that all children can experience the maximum developmental benefit of all learning opportunities.

We provide an environment that supports the diverse needs of all children and families in the Niagara Region. We strive to be accepting of all exceptionalities and we adjust our environment to meet the needs of each unique child.

Our Approaches are as follows:

A) Promote the health and safety, nutrition and well-being of children.

Our Approach:

Your child's health and well-being is our top priority. Our Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) provide safe and appropriate supervision of children based on age, development and environment.

Every child will be supervised by an employee at all times.

Staff will consider the following factors when supervising children:

- Transition Periods
- Ensuring that there is effective, supportive and responsive communication.
- That hazards are identified in the physical environment
- Know the children in their practice; their temperaments, interests and needs.
- Be aware of any challenges and/or stressors for children in their care

Our child care centres provide nutritional meals and snacks daily that align with Canada's Food Guide. Our menus/recipes are developed by our dietary staff and are approved by a Public Health dietician. All of our staff who prepare snacks and meals for the children have obtained their Safe Food Handlers certificate. We are committed to purchasing local food and supporting our community while providing well balanced, home cooked meals.

Every child will be given the opportunity to wash hands before every meal.

Every child will be given the opportunity to serve themselves to support their growth and independence. Children may serve themselves from the table, from additional serving bowls or from a buffet unless restrictions apply due to Public Health measures (example: outbreak). We provide environments that are safe and clean for children to play in. Our facilities are maintained by regular cleaning staff, RECEs and dietary staff. We use appropriate and clean equipment to maintain our facilities.

Every child will be given the opportunity to participate in activities and provocations in a clean and sanitary environment. Logs will be kept recordings the disinfection of the toys, equipment, cots, washrooms.

B) Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff.

Our Approach:

Our services are built on a strength based approach which strives to support families and staff. We offer varied learning opportunities for children, their families and staff through training. Our RECEs provide ongoing feedback to families during drop off times or at the end of the day.

You will see displayed, throughout our child care centres, your child's play and work. We have Resource Consultants at each centre that offer guidance and support with our children with special needs, families and RECEs. Our RECEs develop positive relationships with the children through the programs they implement. They provide a nurturing environment by providing invitations and activities that align with interests of the children and that will provide opportunities for your child to achieve their developmental milestones. Our educators continue their learning through workshops and learning sessions that are offered both internally and externally.

All families will be engaged by staff through positive experiences. RECEs will meet and greet the parents by their first name and make them feel comfortable. We will ensure all parents are always welcome and feel a sense of belonging. Staff will invite families to view their child's individual portfolio and the group How Does Learning Happen Documentation binder.

- C) Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.

Our Approach:

Our RECEs support a language rich learning environment for children and model positive interactions. We model and support strategies that assist children in developing self-regulation skills such as engagement (through hugs, warm touches, genuine interactions) and belonging (strong relationships, children's comfort levels at arrival/departure and during the program). We encourage children to problem solve and offer guidance when needed. Educators adjust the environment and activities to meet the needs of the children, while encouraging critical thinking and providing choices to all children.

Staff will take time to stop and listen and be present in the moment in order to build authentic relationships with children. This will occur during meal times, transition times, washroom, cloakroom and rest routines as well as arrivals and departures.

- D) Foster the Children's exploration, play and inquiry.

Our Approach:

Our program builds on children's interests. RECEs create learning environments which offer invitations based on children's interests where children can participate, explore, discover and learn, giving them the opportunity to express themselves. Our educators align activities with your child's interests and consider your child's developmental stages. You will notice that in

our environments we have authentic, “real items”, for children to explore and play with which encourages real interactions and builds on skills that can be used at home. We encourage children to be engaged, and to think about what they are playing with as they problem solve, think creatively and have the opportunity to be innovative. Our RECEs ensure that your child will have the materials and experiences to build on the development of their play, as they are ready.

We will trust the child’s abilities to show us what they are capable of learning through their interests, working with them in their play and aligning provocations which are developmentally challenging. We will ask questions that promote higher order thinking in both the RECE and the child.

E) Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.

Our Approach:

Learning environments are offered in all aspects of our program to support children’s interests and development throughout the day. RECEs create the learning environments through observation and discussion with the children. Our educators take the time to know your child’s likes and dislikes; this enables them to create learning invitations which support and build on your child’s interest. Your child’s interests and learning are documented, where you can see their interests, the activities they had the opportunity to participate in and the outcome of the learning that took place from their play. RECEs encourage children to expand their play into different areas (i.e. bringing dolls into the cozy area or water from the sensory table to the dramatic area). RECEs are co-learners with your child as they explore and engage together. Staff will demonstrate flexibility in supporting children in their expansion of play and the use of play materials. We will act on teachable moments throughout the day during indoor and outdoor activities to expand children’s interest and knowledge.

F) Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development will be supported.

Our Approach:

Our educators offer learning environments which build on children’s interests and are developmentally appropriate and challenging to the children who are in each group.

They have an extensive understanding of child development and know the development of the children in their care. They strive to build strong relationships with your child, supporting your child emotionally as they connect and bond. This creates a sense of belonging for your child. Staff will support positive learning environments and experiences through the use of Quality Child Care Niagara tools, which might include the Caregiver Interaction Scale, Developmental

Preschool Screen, Environmental Rating Scales, Parent Surveys, Behaviour C.A.R.E. Checklist and Speech and Language Developmental Checklist.

- G) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care.

Our Approach:

Our programs offer a selection of activities for the children to participate in where natural elements and nature are introduced into your child's play environment. Our environments are considered a "third teacher" where learning opportunities are provided in all aspects of your child's day. Invitations and experiences are offered throughout the day that encourages exploration, imagination and creativity. We utilize supportive resources to our program that offer additional opportunities for your child (i.e. CATCH/SeeSaw, Daily Physical Activity). Our RECEs make adaptations to the program to meet the needs of the children in their care. We will provide a flexible plan (regardless of weather) throughout the day of learning invitations which encourages participation in: indoor and outdoor activities, incorporating rest, meal and snack times and quiet play which support children's individual needs.

- H) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.

Our Approach:

We value parents as our partners and work with them through various activities and communication modes. We build relationships with families by sharing information about your child, and receiving information about your child from you. We attempt to have conversation with families daily and welcome you to share information with us that will aid us ensuring that your child's stay with us is positive. A Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS) will be administered, with your permission, approximately six weeks after your child begins care with a Regional child care centre.

We will provide documentation through artwork and photos to assist families in understanding where their child's interests lies and where they are developmentally. We will provide written documentation (stories) that aligns with the photos and the artwork.

- I) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.

Our Approach:

Our child care centres work closely with the community to offer new opportunities within our programs to enrich our services. We value community partnerships within our services which

will enhance the lives of children, families and staff. We collaborate with various professional services in Niagara to support families in care such as; Speech Services Niagara, Bethesda, Pathstones Mental Health and Public Health etc.... We maintain important neighbourhood relationships to better serve children, families and staff such as; community programs (Rykert playgroup), school boards and local food purchases. We work closely with Regional Departments as we recognize their expertise and resources they offer to our teams such as; Seniors Department, Public Health, Facilities Department and Social Assistance and Employment Opportunity Department. We are also committed to work closely with student placements at our child care centres from high schools, colleges or universities, mentoring and promoting those who are entering the ECE profession.

We will establish an intergenerational connection with Niagara Region Senior Services Homes. This will occur through visits to the Senior Homes and or Senior visits to the Child Care Centre unless Public Health measures are in place (example: outbreak).

- J) Support staff, home child care providers or others who interact with the children at a child care centre or home child care premises in relation to continuous professional learning.

Our Approach:

All staff participates in continuous learning in their respective employment that is offered both internally and externally.

RECEs will participate in continuous professional learning by, but not limited to, participating in internal and external professional development. We will supply RECEs with Continuous Professional Learning binders for all RECEs to document their learning as they meet the CECE's CPL expectations.

- K) Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) for the children and their families.

Our Approach:

We document, measure, review/revise our practices and policies on a regular basis, taking into consideration the direction of the Ministry of Education, *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*, *The College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and Public Health recommendations. We strive for continuous improvement which supports our best practices in all our services. We welcome input from our families.

We conduct and share the results of parent surveys yearly to secure feedback and suggestions regarding our program and the service we provide.