

# Andrew Fleck Children's Services



## Overbrook Program Statement

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This statement sets forth our Program Goals and Approaches to plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences that support the learning and development of the children attending our program. We are confident in the quality of our programs and our ability to ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to your children's learning, development, health and well-being. Our program is structured to be responsive to each individual child's development. We view each child as being competent, curious and capable of complex thinking. We provide a supportive environment that encourages positive social interactions and an understanding of each child's uniqueness.

Our program promotes inquiry-based learning by reflecting on the interests and ideas of the children as well as the Educators. Our Early Childhood Educators plan the environment to guide the children's learning, enhance their knowledge, and meet their individual developmental needs while ensuring that children and families have a sense of:

- Belonging
- Well-being
- Engagement
- Expression

These are the four foundations identified in '[How Does Learning Happen?](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html)' Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. For more information regarding '*How Does Learning Happen?*' please see the following website.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

### **1. To promote the health, safety, and well-being of the children.**

Understanding that children's present and future well-being is influenced by their ability to self-regulate, our programs focus on supporting child development through self-regulation. We arrange our environments to reduce the factors that may be causing stress for children and encourage children to engage in activities that enhance calmness and involve an element of manageable risk (appropriate for children's varied capabilities.)

We emphasize exploration and play that engages the body, mind and senses by being active and engaged participants in the child's explorations and learning. We have established strong partnerships with various stakeholders to better support the mental health and well-being of families and children.

### **2. To promote responsibility for self and others by encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive manner and support their ability to self-regulate and support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff.**

The emotional and physical well-being of children in our care is a priority of Andrew Fleck Children's Services. Developing relationships of mutual respect and trust that are positive, responsive, and nurturing is of paramount importance. Understanding that not all communication is verbal, we support the children to communicate in different forms. We create and maintain a language rich environment by providing opportunities for children to explore literacy, music and other symbolic languages to support self-expression.

Educators get down to the child's level, use active listening skills and recognize the child's attempt to communicate while valuing their input. We identify what the child is feeling and let them know that they are being heard and assist with expression by labelling emotions and/or expressions. Educators refrain from using 'directive' language, and instead consciously use joint dialogue.

The use of visuals within our programs assists the children in understanding the routines and expectations of the program. When needed we will include the use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System).

Only forms of positive behaviour guidance with emphasis on discussion, encouragement and positive reinforcement are used by the staff. The intention must always be, in partnership with parents to assist children in being successful in all interactions. We support our children in developing skills for self-regulation, self-confidence and ultimately, self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others.

Educators respond empathetically to all children and try to identify and decrease the stressors that a child may be feeling. We use a collaborative approach with the children to identify the children's emotions while providing supportive options to solve a problem. The desired behaviour will be stated clearly and positively, and open communication will be encouraged and supported.

If a child continues to experience difficulty, the Educators may redirect him/her to another area to play. If the child is still requiring support, he/she may be encouraged to use the calm down area with staff support to regain self-control. Our calm down area is a space where children may go to have a quiet moment to read a book, use self-regulating equipment (i.e. squeeze balls, noise reduction head phones), or any other items that may support the child's ability to self-regulate.

All staff work within the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics as put forth by the College of ECE and the AFCS 'Statements of Practice and Guiding Principles'. Staff "interact with colleagues and other professionals in ways that demonstrate respect, trust and integrity. Through their conduct, Our Early Childhood Educators strive to enhance the status of the profession in their workplaces and in the wider community."

### **3. To create environments that foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry and plan for positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported ensuring that both child-initiated and adult-supported experiences are available.**

When designing our environments, the educators are co-planners with the children, supporting decision making and inquiry base learning, curiosity and risk taking. Educators are actively engaged in the play with children and provide opportunities for the children to ask questions, solve problems, test, revise and communicate their theories.

We are purposefully curious rather than acting as the expert and focus on what the child is 'doing' rather than the object they are using, to determine what it is they are trying to understand and what they are investigating. We use thought provoking questions such as, why and how to explore cause and affect with the children. We support and encourage children's choices through following their leads, interests and value their voice. We support the children's inquiries by providing enough materials allowing a sufficient amount for all children. The materials are easily rotated, accessible and the children can move them freely from one play area to another. Materials are open-ended such as loose parts and support the children's investigation and support the learning and development of each child.

Educators and children work together to expand on investigations. We complete and post pedagogical documentation: pictures, written observations identifying the ongoing learning that is occurring, using videos, audio recordings etc. and share these with the children and families.

We have developed daily schedules that have a minimum amount of transitions and interruptions, allowing for longer periods of uninterrupted play. We understand that the environment is the third teacher. We develop environments for children to thrive in, which invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems, and make meaning from their experiences and support children's growing autonomy and independence.

At different times throughout the year there may be interests /inquiries that are occurring when a child may want to share their own items from home. We encourage the sharing of these items based upon the inquiry taking place. We support items being brought into the centre as long as they are supporting the learning and inquiry that is occurring. However please be note that we cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged items and items must be restricted to non-violent, cooperative type toys: war toys, weapons, etc. are strictly prohibited.

#### **4. To offer flexible, responsive programming which incorporates 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.**

Respecting that each child will have their own unique skills and attributes, our Early Childhood Educators nurture and foster the growth of maturity and independence by providing opportunities for each child to contribute to his/her learning and an appreciation of and respect for our natural environment. We are committed to establishing natural outdoor play spaces that support the development of sensory, motor and cognitive skills in all children and are active outdoor participants with the children in exploring the environment.

We encourage the children to explore and take risks, ensuring that we are assessing all risks, by group discussions. As described in *'How Does Learning Happen?'* "research suggests that allowing children to actively explore and investigate what they are naturally curious about, to test their limits, take manageable risks appropriate for their age and abilities, and engage in creative problem-solving is critical for children's physical and mental health and well-being."

As per the *Child Care and Early Years Act* children who are in care for 6 hours or longer must have at least 2 hours (AM & PM) of outdoor play daily, weather permitting. As an agency, we support the following Position Statement on active outdoor play <https://www.haloresearch.ca/outdoorplay/>.

Our School-Age Program is required to go out for minimum of 30mins before and/or after school. We take into account the humidex and wind chill temperatures when planning for outdoor play and strive to provide as many opportunities as possible for children to experience nature to enhance their sense of wonder and joy in the world around them. During the summer if the temperature is over 30°C we do not go out and during the winter if the wind chill is below -20°C we do not go out. For our younger toddler age children if the humidity is over 30°C we do not go out and in the winter if it is -17°C with the wind chill we do not go out, unless it is a nice sunny day and then we may try to get out for a little while. The School-Age children will not go out if it is -22 °C with wind chill. Our Outdoor Play is also dependent on the UV Index and Air Quality that is occurring on that day.

Quiet rest time is important for children's health and ability to develop self-regulation skills. For children who are in care for more than 6 hours per day, a 1 hour rest period is required. The children may sleep up to 2 hours if needed. Each child will be assigned their own cot /mat and it will be labelled with their name. All cots/mats are disinfected weekly. Any changes in the child's sleeping patterns or behaviours will be communicated with parents. Any sleep preferences that are identified at intake or communicated by parents will be documented in daily log book. Children can bring in a blanket, and a cuddly toy from home for this period. Written permission by parent is required for use of a pillow.

Understanding that some of the children do not require an actual 'nap' we encourage 'quiet time' where children can rest quietly on their cots and be provided with books or other quiet activities. There is an early waker's program for the children.

To ensure the safety of the children, ratios are maintained at all times during outdoor play and during the day, other than at sleep time for 2 hours, 90 minutes at the beginning of the day and 1 hour before the end of the day. During these hours we are allowed to use 2/3 ratios.

## **5. To build supportive partnerships with children and families; fostering the engagement of ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.**

Families play an integral part in their child's learning and one of the guiding principles at Andrew Fleck Children's Services-Overbrook site is engaging families as partners in their child's early learning. Our program has an open-door approach for parents, and they are welcome to visit at any time during program hours. Families are welcome to participate to our healthy breakfast as this provides a wonderful opportunity to connect and be engaged with other families from the community.

We provide an orientation period for all new children and families. This will ensure a positive and engaged integration period for children and families and support our families to gain a better understanding of the program. For new Toddler and Preschool children, the first couple of days should only be half days for your child so that they may have a slow integration. It is recommended that the parent stay with their child on the first two days. It is also a time for you to meet with your child's primary Educator to review your child and family history. Each child will adapt at their own speed and some children may need their parents staying for a little while each day to offer encouragement and security. Please plan on spending a few minutes in the morning to settle your child before leaving for the day. Always check in with a staff member in the morning and remember to say goodbye to your child and reassure them that you will be back.

During your child's integration period, Educators will provide regular verbal updates regarding your child. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have with a staff member at any time. Educators are part of a team, however, a Primary RECE is assigned to each new family, providing families with a set of intake forms, and ongoing meetings are organized, during the year to share the learning that is occurring.

We value that parents are their child's primary caregiver and we are committed to a mutually respectful relationship with all families and welcome your questions at any time. Please do not hesitate to approach us to schedule a mutually convenient time to discuss your questions or concerns.

To easily record and document your child's learning, and to provide you with the opportunity to experience and engage more in your child's day, we utilize an on line tool called Story Park.

Story Park provides an overview of the children's learning that invites families to enjoy in the events of the day and encourages interactions and engages them in their child's learning. All parents will sign an agreement of understand for the use of Story Park. To learn more, you can go to [www.storypark.com](http://www.storypark.com) We urge parents to keep informed of Centre activities and news by reading the Centre newsletters as well as notices posted on our parent bulletin boards and the Story Park Community page.

## **6. To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.**

Encouraging and developing community partnerships strengthens our abilities to meet the needs of all of our children and families. Our Program supports any needed collaboration with community partners for the benefit of all children.

Our children with special needs are supported through Children's Integrations Support Services. The Resource Consultant provides consultative support on an ongoing basis to our programs by suggesting strategies for adapting activities and providing training to ensure a positive inclusion experience for everyone. Using a team approach, the Resource Consultant facilitates the development of a functional Team Service Plan. The child's individual plan will be implemented through the team in order to meet the expectations and goals as set forth by the program.

Nature walks in the neighbourhood build community knowledge and maintain the children's physical well-being. Our children have the opportunity to walk around the day care premises and observe the nature around them. In the summer months, the Pre-school and School-Age programs walk to the community splash pad. Our Toddler program has strollers to take the children around viewing their surroundings. We have an ongoing partnership with the local library, Police, and firefighters to come to visit the children. Our School-Age Program takes part in the community garden in the summer at the Overbrook Community Centre. They walk over on a weekly basis to maintain the garden and continue to learn about and network with the neighbourhood. By growing their own crops children are also learning the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Overbrook has a great partnership with Queen Mary Public School which allows our programs to make use of the gym, giving the children a sense of well-being. Our cook shares recipes from the day care in our quarterly newsletter to all our parents. We are fortunate to partner with the Tamir Foundation volunteers who help with light housekeeping on a weekly basis.

We support our families to connect with community resources such as Best Start, Family Literacy Program, The Snowsuit Fund, free dental screening clinic, Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, First Words, Public Health and others as needed. Information on these services are posted on our parent bulletin boards.

## **7. To support continuous professional learning.**

Our Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice. Our group care staff of Andrew Fleck meets bi-annually for professional learning opportunities. Each program (Toddler, Pres-school, and School-Age) team meets on a bi-weekly basis to review how their program implementation is meeting the children's needs.

The staff continually takes advantage of workshops, courses and other opportunities in order to upgrade their skills and develop new areas of expertise. Internal Module Trainings through Children Integration Services have been developed to support staff in their professional development and to meet their personal Continuous Professional Learning Plan as required by the College of ECE's. Our staff is very committed to the welfare and development of children, and is always available for consultation, information, and resources.

As per the regulations set forth in the *Child Care and Early Years Act (2014)* we must document and review our strategies, to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the children and families within our care.

To meet this requirement, we will:

- Develop and circulate an annual parent survey, to all parents whose children are enrolled in our program.
- Registered Early Childhood Educators will solicit feedback at parent / teacher meetings held twice per year.
- Bi-annually at Program Team meetings, strategies will be reviewed and documented by the program staff.
- Cook will meet with other cooks to network ideas. The cook will meet with staff twice a year to get the children's feedback.

All staff, supply staff, students and volunteers are expected to review the program statement prior to interacting with the children and implement the approaches set out in the statement. All staff will review the Program Statement annually and at any time when the program statement is modified.

All Andrew Fleck Children's Services programs share a philosophy that supports the right of every child and family to expect and receive the highest quality of child care that we can offer. We are committed to providing a high quality, diverse and inclusive early learning program for all children.

On behalf of Andrew Fleck Children's Services, we would like to welcome you and your child to our program.