

Andrew Fleck Children's Services



Overbrook Program Statement

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Welcome to Overbrook

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>

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.

Program Goals

1. To promote the health and well-being of the children.

The physical and emotional well-being of children in our care is the utmost priority of Andrew Fleck Children's Services. Understanding that the well-being of children is greatly influenced by their environment, we strive to promote balanced nutrition and offer children the opportunity to develop self-help skills. To support the nutrition of all children, our chef Ferial and her assistant work hard to provide a menu that follows Canada's food guide (<https://food-guide.canada.ca>) Meals are prepared daily, avoiding processed foods, added salt, and sugar. Our menu is pork-free and all meat provided is halal to accommodate all our families. The children are also provided with an individual water cup or bottle that they have access to throughout the day. To ensure the emotional well-being of all children, we continuously adapt our learning space to reduce excessive stimuli like noise level, bright lights and crowded play areas. Further, we are providing ample opportunities for children to

practice self-help skills like pouring their own milk and serving their own snack to encourage positive self-esteem and autonomy.

Recognizing that quiet rest time is crucial to a child's health and ability to develop emotional self-regulation, all children who are in care for more than 6 hours per day are mandated by the ministry to have a minimum of 1 hour of rest time. Children in our programs are provided with two hours of rest time, during which many choose to nap. Understanding that not all children require a nap, our staff encourage quiet time for children during which they may read books or engage in a restful activity. An early-wakers program is opened for these children after an hour, during which they can engage in quiet play like puzzles or calm sensory activities.

To ensure the safety of children, ratios mandated by the ministry are maintained at all times. During quiet rest time, during periods of arrival (90 minute), and periods of departure (60 minutes) ratios are reduced to 2/3.

2. To promote responsibility for self, compassion, and empathy by modelling and encouraging positive, nurturing and respectful relationships with children, parents and staff.

Knowing that children learn from observing the adults and role models that surround them, we believe developing relationships of mutual respect and trust that are positive, responsive, and nurturing is of paramount importance. These relationships start by greeting all parents and children warmly, inviting them to share input on the program, and most of all, to feel safe seeking support from all staff. We strive to be a key support for all families and believe that the child and families best interests should be the centre of our practice.

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

During play, educators get down to the child's level, use active listening skills and recognize the child's attempt to communicate while valuing their input. As role models, educators communicate in a warm and respectful manner, often modelling language for peer-group entry, problem-solving and empathy.

Only forms of positive behaviour guidance with emphasis on discussion, encouragement and positive reinforcement are used by the staff. 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 their 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 the child is still requiring support, he/she may be encouraged to use the calm down area with staff support. Our calm down area is a space where children may go to have a quiet moment to read a book, use self-regulating equipment (ie. squeeze balls, fidget toys,) or any other items that may support the child's ability to self-regulate.

3. To create environments that foster the children’s exploration, play, and inquiry by designing positive learning environments and plan for positive learning environments that support each child’s needs.

Understanding that children are most invested in play and learning when it reflects their interests, the input of the children in our care is at the forefront of our environmental planning. Children are co-planners in the programming, supporting decision making and providing the inquiries on which each learning experience is planned. To support and encourage the children’s role in planning our program, educators provide materials that reflect their interests and encourage further exploration and questioning. These materials are often open-ended and multi-purpose, encouraging problem-solving, creativity and innovation in their play.

With a mix of child-initiated and adult-supported activities, 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. As the children engage in investigating their interests, the educators focus on being curious alongside them, working together to expand on these investigations. Pedagogical documentation like photos, stories, and quotes of the children’s play is also posted throughout the program so that they can reflect on their past inquiries.

Knowing that children experience the best learning when they have time to engage in their play, the educators develop daily schedules that have a minimum of transitions, allowing for longer periods of uninterrupted play. The schedule is also designed to be adaptable based on the needs of the group. For example, if a group of children is heavily engaged in play outdoors, the educators may extend outdoor play so that the children can get the most out of their activity.

4. To offer flexible, responsive programming which considers the individual needs of every child.

Respecting that each child has their own unique skills, attributes, strengths and struggles, our Early Childhood Educators nurture and foster seek to offer programming that is adaptable and responsive. Our programs seek to foster growth and independence by providing opportunities for each child to contribute their enthusiasm and curiosity.

Keeping in mind that all children’s interests vary and change, our program rooms offer many experiences. For example, our educators provide ample space for gross motor play, quiet areas for calm, reflective activities, and dramatic play materials geared towards the current interests of the group. They also offer activities that encourage creativity and artistic expression.

Understanding that outdoor play is a critical component of a child’s development, our staff are committed to offer programming within our natural outdoor play spaces that encourages exploration and inquiry. Outside of our play spaces, all our programs take advantage of the many green spaces in our community by going on walks and fieldtrips that put emphasis on outdoor exploration. As per the *Child Care and Early Years Act (2014)* children who are in care for 6 hours or longer must have a minimum of 2 hours of outdoor play daily for all children. Our School-Age Program spends a minimum of 30mins before and/or after school.

Inclement weather may limit our ability to spend time outdoors. Muddy buddies are therefore provided for each child in the toddler and preschool programs so that rain and mud do not impede our ability to play outside. To ensure the safety and well-being, while maintaining a high quality of programming, our staff rely on UV index and weather alerts to determine if/when to stay indoors.

As stated in *'How Does Learning Happen?'* research suggests that allowing children to actively explore and investigate what they are naturally curious about while taking manageable risks is critical for children's physical and mental health and well-being. It allows them to test their limits, engage in creative problem-solving, and work collaboratively with their educators in assessing the risks and benefits of their play. In conversation with each other, with the children and with parents, our educators work to ensure that risky play at Overbrook remains safe and beneficial for the children in their care.

5. To build supportive partnerships with children and families, engaging them as partners in their child's learning.

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 environment. Our staff strive to create a sense of belonging for all children in the program and their families.

Upon enrolment, our staff provide an integration period for all new families. For the first few days of attendance, we invite parents to spend some time with their child in the program. This is a great opportunity for parents and children to get to know the educators in the program, creating secure relationships is important to your child's transition. It's also a great opportunity for educators to discuss the goals parents have for their child and share the program's educational philosophy. It is recommended for new toddler and preschool children to spend a half-day at first, and slowly extend hours of attendance in the program. Always remember to check in with staff when dropping off and picking up your child. During this crucial integration period, educators can offer advice, support and important updates from your child's day. Our staff are committed to a mutually respectful relationship with all families, and they welcome questions at any time. Please do not hesitate to approach staff to schedule a convenient and appropriate time to discuss any questions or concerns.

Recognizing the importance of family involvement in a child's learning, our staff seek various ways to incorporate parent feedback and ideas into the program. Throughout the year, staff organize centre-wide family breakfasts. These are a great opportunity for parents to get to know each other, share ideas with educators, as well as continue to build relationships with the staff in their child's program. Parents are, of course, always invited to spend time with their child in the program at any time. Many choose to occasionally spend morning snack with their child at drop-off. Others choose to volunteer on field trips with their child, becoming an active partner in their engagement, excitement and learning.

One of the ways our staff communicate with parents and share their child's learning milestones is through the online tool StoryPark. At least once a month, educators will share a learning story for your child. These are written records, accompanied by photos, showing parents a snapshot of their child's interests and learning. StoryPark is also a great tool for parents. They can keep up to date on important information about the centre by reading community posts and newsletters posted by staff, as well as share their own

stories of their child from home. All parents will sign an agreement of understand for the use of Story Park. To learn more, parents are invited to visit www.storypark.com

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

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

Through Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS), the children in our program are supported in various ways. Resource Consultants provide consultative support for the educators and families of children with special needs. They suggest strategies for adapting programming and provide training to ensure a positive inclusion for each child. They also support the educators in developing Individual Support Plans that meet the specific developmental needs and goals of specific children.

In partnership with Queen Mary Public School our programs have weekly access to the gymnasium. This gives all the children the chance for some awesome gross motor play in a huge open space. The many activities we do in the gym benefit children's well-being and all aspects of their development.

Understanding that outdoor play is critical to a child's development, Andrew Fleck Children's Services has partnered with the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. They provide training for our educators in Forest and Nature School practices, and support our staff in prioritizing conscious outdoor exploration, risky play and a respectful relationship with the land we share.

We have ongoing partnership with librarians at the Ottawa Public Library to sing songs and read stories with our programs. We also invite Ottawa police officers and firefighters to the centre for fun and informational workshops. We are also fortunate to have a partnership with the Tamir foundation. Their volunteers help with light housekeeping tasks on a weekly basis.

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 as mandated by the College of ECEs (Continuous Professional Learning Plan). Our staff continually take advantage of workshops, courses and other opportunities to upgrade their skills and develop new areas of expertise. Our partners at Children's Inclusion Support Services have developed Internal Module Trainings to support staff in their professional development. All staff working in licensed child care centres at Andrew Fleck meet bi-monthly for professional learning opportunities. Each program team (Toddler, Pres-school, and School-Age) also meets on a bi weekly basis to review how their

program implementation is meeting the children's needs. 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 attend one program.

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