

Andrew Fleck Children's Services Intergenerational Early Learning Centre at Perley Health's Program Statement



Our program statement confirms our program goals and approaches as we plan and create positive early learning experiences that support the learning and development of the children attending our intergenerational program.

We believe children are capable, competent, and curious beings, and that their sense of agency should be cultivated and encouraged to develop their voice and practice decision-making in matters that impact them.

Our Early Childhood Educators team plan the environment to guide the children's learning while meeting individual developmental needs, ensuring that children and families have a sense of **belonging, well-being, engagement and expression**. These are the four Foundations identified in 'How Does Learning *Happen?*' Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.

Goals that guide our program

1. **Promote the health, safety, and well-being of the children and foster exploration, play and inquiry**

We foster this by:

- Prioritizing the emotional and physical well-being of all children in our care.
- Emphasizing play throughout the day!
- Encouraging adventurous and risky play, so children build competence and awareness of their strengths
- Assessing for hazards and danger and encourage children to also recognize what makes them/keeps them safe.
- Promoting opportunities and role model strategies for children to learn how to self-regulate
- Providing calm areas in each room, and calming/self-regulation tools are taught daily
- Creating a child-led and inquiry-based program, which means that the children's natural interests, curiosity and current skills determine and influence the learning and activities.
- Being co-learners with the children
- Working 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.'

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

We foster this by:

- Developing relationships of mutual respect and trust that are caring, responsive, and nurturing with each other (children, employees and families).
- Encouraging and inviting children to communicate in different formats (verbal and non-verbal) and nurturing a language-rich environment.
- Educators getting down to the child's level, practice active listening skills and value the child's input.
- Using visuals within our program to assist the children
- Using positive behaviour guidance with emphasis on discussion, encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Collaborating with families to support children in being successful.
- Educators responding empathically to all children and try to identify and decrease the stressors that a child may be feeling.
- When children are having a difficult time, we may redirect to another activity or a calm-down area where the child can use self-regulating materials or equipment.

3. 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.

We foster this by:

- Being co-planners with the children and intentionally seeking their voices when planning the spaces and the activities.
- Providing a variety of materials, including loose parts, to support their inquiries and creativity and ensure they are accessible to them.
- Encouraging children's decision-making by offering choices.
- Supporting inquiry-based learning by encouraging children to ask questions.
- Cultivating curiosity and risk-taking while being a support when needed.
- Intentionally listening to children's verbal and nonverbal communication
- Using thought-provoking questions; *how, what, why, when* questions, to explore cause & effect with children.
- Inviting children to move freely from one play area to another.
- Providing a schedule and activities that are flexible and consider children's diverse abilities, interests and dispositions.
- Ensuring our programming is inclusive of all abilities, and that it can be adjusted so that everyone can meaningfully participate.
- Fostering children's autonomy and independence by offering opportunities for them to dress, care for themselves, and eat independently, providing support as needed.

4. 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.

We foster this by:

- Respecting and nurturing each child's unique skills and attributes by creating opportunities for them to successfully take on challenges.
- Establishing indoor and outdoor play spaces that support the development of sensory, motor and cognitive skills in all children
- Being active outdoor participants with the children in exploring the environment.
- Incorporating both group and solo activities into the day and letting children make choices as to what and how they participate.
- Encouraging the children to actively explore what they are naturally curious about, take age-appropriate risks that match their abilities, while ensuring that we are always assessing for safety and hazards
- Prioritizing outdoor play for at least 2 hours a day in all seasons, weather permitting (We consider the humidex, wind chill temperatures, as well as UV index and air quality).
- Providing muddy buddies and sun shirts to all children to facilitate outdoor play.
- Planning calm activities and spaces within the program, in addition to a rest period after lunch.
- Ensuring adult/child ratios are always maintained during outdoor play and during the day, excluding sleep time for 1 hour and up to 2 hours during periods of arrival and departure of children, which is at a 2/3 ratios as per the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

5. Build supportive partnerships with children and families, fostering the engagement of parents within the program and ensuring ongoing communication about the program and their children.

We foster this by:

- Recognizing that all families are unique
- Recognizing that families are children's primary caregivers and building mutually respectful relationships with all families is the first step to successfully supporting children.
- Providing an orientation plan for all new children and families to ensure a positive and successful integration period, and to support our families to gain a better understanding of the program.
- Having an open-door approach for families; they are welcome to visit at any time during program hours.
- Ensuring Educators are available for meetings to share the learning that is occurring or discuss any questions they may have regarding their child's development
- Soliciting formal feedback once a year through a survey, as well as during our twice-a-year parent advisory meetings. Of course, feedback is welcome at any time.
- Utilizing an online tool (Storypark) so that we can share children's learning documentation between the program & home. This tool is in addition to the daily communication that occurs at drop-off and pick-up.
- Creating and posting Pedagogical Documentation, which is shared with children and families through different mediums (pictures, notes or written observations, video or audio recordings, etc.).
- Posting community resources online in our parent app or in the programs to create awareness of what is available to families and children in their community.

6. Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and employees.

We foster this by:

- Adopting the principles of mutuality and reciprocity with partners so that activities offer meaningful benefits to *all* involved.
- Ensuring the intergenerational programming will be planned so that both children and older adults find meaningful learning from one another.
- Providing daily opportunities for engagement with the older adults in our community through planned and unplanned activities (This could be inviting a grand friend to read stories or taking a walk at the park together).
- Inviting visitors to our programs so that children can learn about their community, such as first responders (police, firefighters, paramedics, military personnel, etc).
- Accessing appropriate resources that support the children's needs (CISS, CHEO, First Words, and others as needed)

7. Support continuous professional learning.

We foster this by:

- Providing an annual professional development day for all employees to come together and learn and discuss multiple topics of learning.
- Regularly sharing and promoting resources, webinars, and certifications with all employees to provide equitable access to professional development.
- Staying current on the latest early childhood research and best practices as well as collaborating and participating in research with local, provincial and national universities and colleges.
- Scheduling weekly non-contact time for educators to step away from the children so they can stay current on practices and information needed as professionals.
- Encouraging and facilitating employees to participate in workshops, courses, and other learning opportunities to strengthen their skills and expand their expertise.
- Providing weekly team meeting time during the day so that educators can reflect on children's learning, goals and interests together
- Offering a mentorship program to those interested in pursuing leadership skills.
- Ensuring all employees, supply staff, students, and volunteers review policies, procedures and the program statement prior to interacting with the children and again annually

On behalf of Andrew Fleck Children's Services, we welcome you and your child to the Andrew Fleck Children's Services Intergenerational Program at Perley Health and appreciate that you have chosen our program for your child. Should you ever have any questions, please feel contact Tina McLean, the Program Coordinator at tmclean@afchildrensservices.ca or Kathy Knight Robinson, Director of Early Learning at kkrobinson@afchildrensservices.ca