

PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR WITHROW CHILDCARE CENTRE

This Program Statement document captures the philosophy and goals that guide our program for our children. It describes the strategies we use to realize these goals, the plans of action to execute the strategies, and the practices to implement, monitor, and evaluate those action plans, and to continually improve our performance.

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WCC Program Statement Framework

Our Program Statement describes the following:

- The philosophy which captures our goals
- The strategies which are our approaches to realize our goals
- The plans of action which execute these strategies
- The practices we use to implement, monitor and evaluate our plans and to continually improve our performance



Our Philosophy (Goals)

Withrow Childcare Centre (WCC or the Centre) believes that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. We believe in providing an inclusive enriched childcare environment, which honours and respects all children's beliefs, culture, language and experiences acquired from their family and community.

The goal of WCC is to support positive and responsive interactions among the children, families and staff that help foster anti-bias values, attitudes and practices. Partnership between families and the child care is essential for the optimal growth and development of all children. We believe that children's play is fostered through exploration and inquiry through a creative, positive and nurturing environment.

Staff will support each child's ability to self-regulate, with the goal of children feeling comfortable and confident in the learning environment. We strive to provide a stimulating program that offers services to children, families, and the community within the framework of the *Child Care and Early Years Act* and ideologies in Ontario's Ministry of Education's *How Does Learning Happen* and *Early Learning for Every Child Today*.

Our emergent curriculum is organized around the following five areas of development:

1. **Physical** – gross and fine motor skills
2. **Social** – awareness, respect, ability to share and cooperate
3. **Communication** – verbal and non-verbal
4. **Self-esteem** – self-awareness and positive self-image
5. **Cognitive** – comprehension, problem-solving and skill acquisition

We believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children. We welcome involvement and ongoing discussions with parents and caregivers about their child's progress and their daily life at the Centre.

WCC staff are knowledgeable, empathetic, professional and caring educators who provide observation based curriculum of the children's ongoing play and interactions. Staff believe in being honest, open-minded, caring and current within the profession. The staff at Withrow Childcare Centre has an ongoing commitment to professional growth and learning.

The Centre supports the **mission statement of Withrow Avenue Junior Public School** that states:

- We accept the challenge of working for positive change
- We foster an inclusive environment where the contributions of all are encouraged
- We take responsibility for our actions, interactions and learning
- We seek ways to become confident decision makers and socially responsible citizens.

We are committed to providing excellent care and supporting children, parents and staff. We strive to achieve a Centre that is inclusive and does not discriminate, understanding, and valuing differences.

Our Strategies (Approaches)

Our strategies to achieve our program statement are guided by the work done on Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years ("How Does Learning Happen" or HDLH). We understand that learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators, and their environments. We understand that for children to grow and flourish, the four following foundational conditions need to exist:

- A sense of belonging,
- A sense of well-being,
- Opportunities and support for engagement, and
- Opportunities and support for expression.

We will adopt the following 11 strategies to create these conditions:

1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well-being
2. Promote an environment which ensures good nutrition (with safe food preparation)
3. Support positive and responsive interactions
4. Encourage the children to interact and communicate
5. Foster exploration, play and inquiry
6. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
7. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences
8. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time
9. Foster the engagement of and communications with parents
10. Involve local community partners
11. Support others in relation to continuous professional learning

Plans of Action for the Preschool Program

The plans of action listed below are a means to execute the 11 key strategies required to support the Program Statement requirement from Section 46.3 in the Child Care and Early Years Licensing manual from the Ministry of Education. The plans of action largely follow the City of Toronto AQI Guideline which child care centres in the City of Toronto are required to follow.

Plans of Action

- 1) Being aware of how the day is planned allows for consistency, self-regulation, minimizes negative behaviors and promotes general well-being. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress." (See TDSB's "How Does Learning Happen" or HDLH, p. 30). ***In support of this, we will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the TDSB guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-1).***
- 2) Having an intentional plan for learning experiences to which children will be exposed promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). ***In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-2).***
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Staff will share with, and encourage families to be active participants in their child's care environment. "Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies. They listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experiences in the world around them. Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families, and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgment to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being." (HDLH, p. 19). ***In support of this, we will undertake to deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-3).***
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be developmentally-appropriate and safe for children. "Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems, and make meaning from their experiences – especially when the spaces contain interesting and complex open-ended materials that children can use in many ways." (HDLH, p. 20). ***In support of this, we will ensure an indoor physical environment that will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-4).***
- 5) Well-being can be promoted through a visual environment created through displays that are both inclusive and changed regularly to reflect the recent interests and artwork created by the children. "Enabling children to develop a sense of belonging as part of a group is also a key contributor to their

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lifelong well-being. A sense of belonging is supported when each child's unique spirit, individuality, and presence are valued." (HDLH, p. 24). ***In support of this, we will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-5).

- 6) Materials reflecting sensory, science and nature encourage children to explore through cause and effect experimentation and observation. Continual exposure to these materials and experiences allow children to learn more about their environments. "Optimal conditions for learning occur when we are fully engaged. For children, this happens in play that evolves from the child's natural curiosity – active play that allows children to explore with their bodies, minds, and senses, stimulating them to ask questions, test theories, solve problems, engage in creative thinking, and make meaning of the world around them. These investigations through play fuse intellect and feeling to help children make connections and develop the capacity for higher-order thinking." (HDLH, p. 35). ***In support of this, we will provide a sensory, science and nature program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-6).
- 7) Creative art promotes self-expression and individuality and provides independent experiences through different mediums for children. Providing regular opportunities within the Daily Schedule to allow for the time to complete/extend the creative process will help foster children's interests. "Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide an art program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-7).
- 8) A cozy and inviting environment is created to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Children are able to retell stories and situations with the accessible props, thus providing opportunities to enhance storytelling experiences and language development. "Opportunities for children to explore language and literacy through play contribute to their development of strong language and cognitive abilities in both the short and the long term." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide books and a program that utilizes them to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-8).
- 9) Staff will expose children to various materials and accessories to promote natural opportunities for the development of language and literacy. Planning language and literacy experiences every day encourages the children to use and develop their vocabulary, their questioning skills and recall abilities. "Programs can best support emerging literacy skills by providing open-ended materials that foster imagination and symbolic play, including signs, symbols, and props that support print awareness in authentic contexts; by encouraging children to engage in play with words and sounds in song and rhyme; and by offering numerous opportunities for children to share books and stories." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-9).
- 10) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, staff are promoting skills such as language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept. "Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical

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thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide music and accessories and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-10).

- 11) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). ***In support of this, we will deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-11).
- 12) We will provide access to an ample selection of props and blocks with which children can build, create and explore concepts. Offer play that develops spatial awareness, manipulation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and problem solving. Block play offers opportunities to work together, imagine, learn about cause and effect, patterning and sequencing that is child initiated. "Through play and inquiry, young children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond." (HDLH, p. 15). ***In support of this, we will offer blocks and construction materials and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-12).
- 13) We will provide children with a multitude of materials and accessories to encourage a natural play environment that enhances cognitive development in their daily experiences. We will ensure spontaneous cognitive and manipulative learning experiences occur throughout the day. Planned and/or documented cognitive and manipulative experiences will lead children to higher learning, based on the children's observed cues and interests. "The focus is not on teaching a body of knowledge or a predetermined set of topics. Nor is it centered on children's achievement of a specific skill set. In the early years, programs are most effective when the content of learning is focused on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry." (HDLH, pg15). ***In support of this, we will offer cognitive and manipulative materials, and a program to engage in this environment, to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-13).
- 14) We will provide children with an environment which promotes imaginative play with three or more role-playing possibilities by using accessories. Prop boxes will be used to enhance the area and the program plan focus. Children enhance their social interaction skills, emotional development and language extension through open-ended play. Mirrors in the dramatic area allow the children to see themselves from a different perspective "As children engage in various forms of social play and are supported to recognize the varied capabilities and characteristics of other children, they learn to get along with others; to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate; and to care for others." (HDLH, p. 24). ***In support of this, we will offer dramatic play accessories and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-14).
- 15) We will utilize guidelines for children to encourage safe, developmentally-appropriate electronic media usage. Guidelines may include, but are not exclusive to, the frequency of use, duration, and sign-up sheet. Parents/guardians will be made aware in advance of media used in the classroom, and resources will be available for alternative learning opportunities. We will

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monitor games brought from home or usage of Internet within the room. ***In support of this, we will foster an electronic media usage environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-15).

- 16) We will plan for compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. ***We will ensure that we provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care support for staff to meet or exceed the expectations for diapering and toileting routines described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-16).
- 17) We will make food and eating times positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff will encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. We will use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-17).
- 18) We will ensure age- and developmentally-appropriate utensils, dishes and furnishings are used to enable safe, and successful eating times. ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for equipment required for eating and seating described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-18).
- 19) We will ensure cot and bedding is hygienically maintained. Support staff will show flexibility with regards to the routine of the room and the cues of the children. Parents are encouraged to pay attention to whether we are meeting the sleep needs of their children and to offer guidance on what changes need to occur if we are not. ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for cots and bedding described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-19).
- 20) We will ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and staff. We will also provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at the Centre. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress" (HDLH, pg 30). ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for health and safety described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-20).
- 21) We will ensure compliance with Regional Public Health requirements for toy and equipment washing as part of providing a clean and sanitary environment. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for toys and play equipment washing described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-21).
- 22) We will maintain an environment that promotes practices for proper hand hygiene procedures in support of the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for hand hygiene described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-22).
- 23) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will have better awareness of the individual children's cues while children further develop their self-regulation and self-help skills at these times. Positive interactions during transitions provide a supportive learning environment. ***In***

support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for transitions described in the guideline
(preschool-AQI-guideline-23).

- 24) We will ensure awareness at all times of the number and names of children that are in our care. We will ensure documentation on the main attendance record accurately reflects the location of all children in our care throughout the day. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented with complete written verification after all staff and child transitions. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for attendance verification described in the guideline***
(preschool-AQI-guideline-24).
- 25) We will ensure adults promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with children, peers and other adults in the room. We will role-model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth. "When educators believe that all children have the right to participate and when they use inclusive approaches, they are more likely to find ways to reduce barriers, understand how each child learns, and create environments and experiences that are meaningful and engaging." (HDLH, pg 36). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for a positive atmosphere described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-25).
- 26) Staff will operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment with a view to the safety of all. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-26).
- 27) We will support staff in their competencies as EL&C professionals in following the cues of children and providing interactions that encourage children to extend their learning with activities that interest them and choices that support their learning goals. "When children initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, and problem-solve, make meaningful choices, and act spontaneously through play, they are more likely to be happy and get along well with others, to have lower levels of stress, and to be attentive and motivated to learn." (HDLH pg 35). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-27).
- 28) We will promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. We will support the children as they learn to self-regulate their emotions and to recognize empathy. "Studies show that when educators modeled and helped children express feelings, recognize others' feelings, and help others, children developed positive social skills such as perspective taking, empathy, and emotion regulation and were less likely to engage in problematic behaviours." (HDLH, pg 24-25). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-28).
- 29) We will promote the use of developmentally-appropriate and individually tailored strategies to support the behaviour management of the children. "... [A]n approach that emphasizes listening, responding to, and building on child-initiated communication and conversation can be a more effective way to promote children's language acquisition and their development of social skills, empathetic understanding, and ability to pay attention." (HDLH, pg 41). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-29).
- 30) We will encourage staff to balance verbal/non-verbal interactions with children, support them in providing experiences and opportunities to assist in extending children's learning, and help them

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play and role model positive social interactions with the children. "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they give every child a "voice"." (HDLH, pg 41). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of communication skills described in the guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-30).***

- 31) Support staff will use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. We will support them in encouraging the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "Educators can gain a deeper understanding of children's developing skills and evolving learning approaches and can support new learning by collaborating with children in discovery and sustained, shared thinking." (HDLH, pg 35). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for extending children's learning described in the guideline (preschool-AQI-guideline-31).***
- 32) We will ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for meal/menu planning, Centre meal requirements, snack planning and requirements, menu and/or snack adaptations, food substitutions, preparation, handling and transportation of food, and health and safety kitchen and/or food preparation area described in the guideline (nutrition-AQI-guidelines-1-7).***
- 33) We will ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely. Physical play contributes to children's well-being; through sport play, children may learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills. We will ensure that balls and equipment are in good condition and accessible to children. "Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them." (HDLH, pg 19). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for playground supervision and outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the guideline (Playground-AQI-guidelines-1-4).***
- 34) We will ensure collaboration with local community partners. "Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them. It fosters a sense of belonging to the local community, the natural environment, and the larger universe of living things" (HDLH p19.). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions described in the guideline (working-together-AQI-guidelines-1-4).***
- 35) We will support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is to "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth." ***In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to be the best we can (which follow).***

Plans of Action for the School-Age Program

The plans of action listed below are a means to execute the 11 key strategies required to support the Program Statement requirement from Section 46.3 in the Child Care and Early Years Licensing manual from the Ministry of Education. The plans of action largely follow the City of Toronto AQI Guideline which child care centers in the City of Toronto are required to follow.

Plans of Action

- 1) Being aware of how the day is planned allows for consistency, self-regulation, minimizes negative behaviors and promotes general well-being. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress." (HDLH, p. 30). ***In support of this, we will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the TDSB guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-1).***
- 2) Having an intentional plan for learning experiences to which children will be exposed promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). ***In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-2).***
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities and implement the activities in the program plan. Staff will share with, and encourage families to be active participants in their child's care environment. "Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies. They listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experiences in the world around them. Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families, and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgment to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being." (HDLH, p. 19). ***In support of this, we will undertake to deliver activities and learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-3).***
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be developmentally-appropriate and safe for children. "Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems, and make meaning from their experiences – especially when the spaces contain interesting and complex open-ended materials that children can use in many ways." (HDLH, p. 20). ***In support of this, we will ensure an indoor physical environment that will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-4).***
- 5) Well-being can be promoted through a visual environment created through displays that are both inclusive and changed regularly to reflect the recent interests and artwork created by the children.

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"Enabling children to develop a sense of belonging as part of a group is also a key contributor to their lifelong well-being. A sense of belonging is supported when each child's unique spirit, individuality, and presence are valued." (HDLH, p. 24). ***In support of this, we will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-5).

- 6) We will offer diversity in play equipment and toys as it relates to race, culture, gender, age, language, family status and ability. "Developing policies, practices, and environments that respect and support inclusion is one way to create a sense of belonging for children." (HDLH, p. 27). ***In support of this, we will ensure an offering of play equipment and toys to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-6).
- 7) Materials reflecting sensory, science and nature encourage children to explore through cause and effect experimentation and observation. Continual exposure to these materials and experiences allow children to learn more about their environments. "Optimal conditions for learning occur when we are fully engaged. For children, this happens in play that evolves from the child's natural curiosity – active play that allows children to explore with their bodies, minds, and senses, stimulating them to ask questions, test theories, solve problems, engage in creative thinking, and make meaning of the world around them. These investigations through play fuse intellect and feeling to help children make connections and develop the capacity for higher-order thinking." (HDLH, p. 35). ***In support of this, we will provide science and nature experiences and material to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (preschool-AQI-guideline-6).
- 8) Creative art promotes self-expression and individuality and provides independent experiences through different mediums for children. Providing regular opportunities within the Daily Schedule to allow for the time to complete/extend the creative process will help foster children's interests. "Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide art/sensory activities, equipment and materials to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-7).
- 9) A cozy and inviting environment is created to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Children are able to retell stories and situations with the accessible props, thus providing opportunities to enhance storytelling experiences and language development. "Opportunities for children to explore language and literacy through play contribute to their development of strong language and cognitive abilities in both the short and the long term." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide books and a program that utilizes them to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-8).
- 10) Staff will expose children to various language and listening opportunities for the development of language and literacy. Planning language and literacy experiences every day encourages the children to use and develop their vocabulary, their questioning skills and recall abilities. "Programs can best support emerging literacy skills by providing open-ended materials that foster imagination and symbolic play, including signs, symbols, and props that support print awareness in authentic contexts; by encouraging children to engage in play with words and sounds in song and rhyme; and by offering numerous opportunities for children to share books and stories." (HDLH, p. 42). ***In support of this, we will provide language &listening opportunities***

and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-9).

- 11) We will abide by guidelines for the use of TV and films to encourage safe, developmentally-appropriate usage for children. Guidelines may include, but are not exclusive to, frequency of use, duration, and content. Parents/guardians will be made aware in advance of TV/film usage in the classroom and resources will be available for alternative learning opportunities. ***In support of this, we will ensure TV and movie usage will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school-age-AQI-guideline-10).***
- 12) We will monitor/supervise usage and abide by guidelines to encourage safe, developmentally-appropriate computer usage for children. Guidelines may include, but not exclusive to, frequency of use, duration, and maintenance of a sign-up sheet. ***In support of this, we will ensure a computer usage environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school-age-AQI-guideline-11).***
- 13) We will provide children with an environment which promotes imaginative play with three or more role-playing possibilities by using accessories. Prop boxes will be used to enhance the area and the program plan focus. Children enhance their social interaction skills, emotional development and language extension through open-ended play. Mirrors in the dramatic area allow the children to see themselves from a different perspective "As children engage in various forms of social play and are supported to recognize the varied capabilities and characteristics of other children, they learn to get along with others; to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate; and to care for others." (HDLH, p. 24). ***In support of this, we will offer dramatic play accessories and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-12).***
- 14) We will provide access to an ample selection of props and blocks with which children can build, create and explore concepts. Offer play that develops spatial awareness, manipulation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and problem solving. Block play offers opportunities to work together, imagine, learn about cause and effect, patterning and sequencing that is child initiated. "Through play and inquiry, young children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond." (HDLH, p. 15). ***In support of this, we will offer blocks and construction materials and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-13).***
- 15) We will provide access to an ample selection of age-appropriate games and game accessories. "Programs are most effective when the content of learning is focused on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry." (HDLH p.15). ***In support of this, we will offer games, game activities and accessories to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (school-age-AQI-guideline-14).***
- 16) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual

mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). ***In support of this, we will deliver physical activities/active play indoors or outdoors that meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-16).

- 17) Further to the above, to "allow every child to participate and be challenged in meaningful ways" (HDLH p.29) in physical activities/active play indoors or outdoors, we will supply appropriate and ample active play equipment for the number of children enrolled. ***In support of this, we will ensure the supply of active play equipment meets or exceeds the expectations described in the guideline*** (school-age-AQI-guideline-17).
- 18) We will make food and eating times positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff will encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. We will use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-18).
- 19) We will ensure utensils, dishes and furnishings are will enable safe and successful eating times. ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for equipment required for eating and seating described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-19).
- 20) We will ensure accessible washroom facilities for all enrolled children and will ensure compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. ***In support of this, we will provide washroom facilities and supplies, and personal hygiene and body development-related information resources to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline*** (school-age-AQI-guideline-20).
- 21) We will ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and staff. We will also provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at the Centre. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress" (HDLH, pg 30). ***In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for health and safety described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-21).
- 22) We will ensure compliance with Regional Public Health requirements for toy and equipment washing as part of providing a clean and sanitary environment. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for toys and play equipment washing described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-22).
- 23) We will maintain an environment that promotes practices for proper hand hygiene procedures in support of the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for children's hand washing/sanitizing practices described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-23).
- 24) We will ensure that we maintain an environment and practices for proper hand hygiene by staff that promote healthy living. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for staff hand washing/sanitizing practices as described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI guideline-24).

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- 25) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will have better awareness of the individual children's cues while children further develop their self-regulation and self-help skills at these times. Positive interactions during transitions provide a supportive learning environment. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for transitions described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-25).***
- 26) We will ensure awareness at all times of the number and names of children that are in our care. We will ensure documentation on the main attendance record accurately reflects the location of all children in our care throughout the day. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented with complete written verification after all staff and child transitions. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for attendance verification described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-26).***
- 27) We will ensure adults promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with children, peers and other adults in the room. We will role-model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth. "When educators believe that all children have the right to participate and when they use inclusive approaches, they are more likely to find ways to reduce barriers, understand how each child learns, and create environments and experiences that are meaningful and engaging." (HDLH, pg 36). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for a positive atmosphere described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-27).***
- 28) Staff will operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment with a view to the safety of all. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-28).***
- 29) We will support staff in their competencies as EL&C professionals in following the cues of children and providing interactions that encourage children to extend their learning with activities that interest them and choices that support their learning goals. "When children initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, and problem-solve, make meaningful choices, and act spontaneously through play, they are more likely to be happy and get along well with others, to have lower levels of stress, and to be attentive and motivated to learn." (HDLH pg 35). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-29).***
- 30) We will promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. We will support the children as they learn to self-regulate their emotions and to recognize empathy. "Studies show that when educators modeled and helped children express feelings, recognize others' feelings, and help others, children developed positive social skills such as perspective taking, empathy, and emotion regulation and were less likely to engage in problematic behaviours." (HDLH, pg 24-25). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-30).***
- 31) We will promote the use of developmentally-appropriate and individually tailored strategies to support the behaviour management of the children. "... [A]n approach that emphasizes listening, responding to, and building on child-initiated communication and conversation can be a more effective way to promote children's language acquisition and their development of social skills, empathetic understanding, and ability to pay attention." (HDLH, pg 41). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline (school age-AQI-guideline-31).***

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- 32) Staff will initiate and build on conversations with and between children. Staff will extend conversations with individual children as well as between children. "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they give every child a "voice"." (HDLH, pg 41). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of communication skills described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-32).
- 33) Support staff will use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. We will support them in encouraging the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "Educators can gain a deeper understanding of children's developing skills and evolving learning approaches and can support new learning by collaborating with children in discovery and sustained, shared thinking." (HDLH, pg 35). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for extending children's learning described in the guideline*** (school age-AQI-guideline-33).
- 34) We will ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for meal/menu planning, Centre meal requirements, snack planning and requirements, menu and/or snack adaptations, food substitutions, preparation, handling and transportation of food, and health and safety kitchen and/or food preparation area described in the guideline*** (nutrition-AQI-guidelines-1-7).
- 35) We will ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely. Physical play contributes to children's well-being; through sport play, children may learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills. We will ensure that balls and equipment are in good condition and accessible to children. "Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them." (HDLH, pg 19). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for playground supervision and outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the guideline*** (Playground-AQI-guidelines-1-4).
- 36) We will ensure collaboration with local community partners. "Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them. It fosters a sense of belonging to the local community, the natural environment, and the larger universe of living things" (HDLH p19.). ***In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions described in the guideline*** (working-together-AQI-guidelines-1-4).
- 37) We will support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is to "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth." ***In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to be the best we can (which follow).***

Our Practices (Evaluation)

The following practices are intended to facilitate the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of our action plans so that we may continually improve our performance

As we believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children, evidence of our practices will be captured in our documentation.

As educators who deliver high-quality early years programs, we also know that you are never done. Our commitment to continuous improvement will be achieved by management policies and practices that embrace the program statement, including:

1. All new staff on hiring, and all existing staff (annually) will acknowledge and review:
 - a. This program statement document
 - b. All relevant and guidelines
2. Budget a professional development investment for staff and align the professional development with the program statement needs
3. The annual employee performance review will include a self-assessment of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document; staff will annotate their self-assessment with an example of each and identify goals for improvement for the next year
4. Undertake monthly staff meetings and include an agenda item to discuss our performance against the program statement and plan for improvement for next month
5. Each monthly staff meeting will, on a rotation basis, include on the agenda, one of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document; staff will discuss and reflect on current practices against this strategy and any opportunities for improvement will be captured
6. Gather together with staff annually to review and reflect on our performance and capture outcomes and set goals for the next period
7. An internal rating on our assessment for quality improvement (AQI) for each plan of action will be conducted annually for each program
8. Share our performance outcomes and goals review with Board/management and document and incorporate their feedback
9. Parent survey will be conducted annually to assess performance against the 11 key requirements