

PROGRAM STATEMENT			
Manual:	Home Child Care	POLICY #:	<b>4.19</b>
Source:	<i>O.Reg.137/15, s.46</i>	Section:	Program Administration
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## PROGRAM STATEMENT

Network Child Care Services believes that children, families and staff are capable, competent, curious and rich in potential. We are committed to collaborating with children, their families and with each other as educators to create high quality early learning and care environments that take strength based approach to learning and development in which children, parents and educators are co-learners.

### How Does Learning Happen? is the foundation of our program

Network's Program Statement is consistent with the Ministry of Education's policy on programming and pedagogy and is based on the ***How Does Learning Happen?*** document. Our program will support each child in our care to achieve the following **goals** and will meet the **expectations** for programs building on the four **foundations** for healthy growth and development:

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
<b>Belonging</b>	Every child has a sense of belonging when he/she is connected to others and contributes to his/her world.	Cultivate respectful relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
<b>Well-Being</b>	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
<b>Engagement</b>	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with her/his senses, bodies and minds.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and learning.
<b>Expression</b>	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express himself/herself in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

### Our Overarching Strategies

Our program has worked to incorporate and embed the *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)* principles, along with the provincial pedagogy for early learning, to strengthen the quality of our programs and ensure high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.

Working collaboratively, we will plan for and create positive early learning environments that:

**a) Promote the health, safety and well-being of the children. You will see:**

- Well organized environments, with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children – the children don't have to ask for everything that they need;
- A process to sign your child in and out of the program, to ensure they are safely supervised;
- Diverse and healthy menus, that follow Canada's Food Guide;
- Children and the Provider washing their hands frequently throughout the day to promote good hygiene and to reduce the spread of illness;
- Snacks are available to the children who arrive early and are set out for the children to serve themselves. Water is always available to the children throughout the day;
- At meal times, the Provider sits with the children and there is lots of conversation;
- Children are encouraged but never forced to try new foods;
- Lots of opportunities for gross motor play;
- Positive language that emphasizes accomplishment and effort;
- The home child care environment is kept clean throughout the day.
- Posting of children's allergy information;
- Providers modeling appropriate health concepts;
- Evidence of regular safety checks;
- Providers have current First Aid Training;
- Criminal reference checks are followed for any one who interacts with the children;
- Complete and up-to-date emergency information is kept for each child;
- Providers documenting and reporting accidents and illnesses;
- Providers follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education, the City of Toronto Health Department and the City of Toronto Children's Services Division.

**Healthy Food and Active Play Make a Difference**

Additionally, opportunities for rest and a balance between active and more reflective play are strategies that will be implemented to support positive interactions and facilitate healthy development.

**b) Support positive and responsive interactions among the providers, children and families.**

You will see:

- During the process to enroll your child in the home child care program, Network's Family Intake Consultant will collect information about your child's specific needs, likes and dislikes, and what comforts your child. This will allow the Provider to begin to build an understanding of your child's individual needs;
- Network's Quality Assurance Consultant will routinely contact parents/guardians to enquire on the satisfaction of the home child care program and to discuss the child's emerging development;
- Providers who greet and welcome you and your child upon arrival at the program;
- Providers using calm voices and at the child's level for face-to-face interactions;
- Parents and the Provider talking together, sharing information and knowledge about each child;
- Providers who acknowledge and engage with children, respecting their actual feelings; and

### **Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions**

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

Questions that Providers are encouraged to ask themselves:

- How do I **engage** with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing "wrong"?
- Am I **learning** too? How do I respond when a child asks me something that I don't know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: "Let's find out together!"
- Am I **moving away** from viewing play as just something children do and **moving towards** viewing play as intentional and inquiry based; a way for children to **express** themselves in multiple ways?
- Am I having fun? Is at least a part of each day filled with a **shared sense of joy** that is the wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?

### **Supporting Children to Manage their Behaviour**

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach. Providers focus on helping the children understand their feelings and emotions and provide support to help children regulate their behaviour.

The following are prohibited practices and are not permitted at any time under any circumstances (*O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34*):

- a) corporal punishment of the child;
- b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Any allegations of child abuse will be immediately reported to child welfare authorities and the Ministry of Education.

Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.

You will see many different ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings including:

- Painting, drawing, modelling with clay, plasticine and other art and creative / sensory materials;
- Telling or writing stories;
- Singing;
- Dancing;
- Talking with educators;
- Talking with other children;
- Building with blocks and other building materials;
- Conducting experiments;
- Solving problems;
- Participation in dramatic or life play;
- Planned excursions outside of the home child care premises, to promote children's connection to their local community;

- Providers getting down to children's level;
- Visual schedules and examples of different languages, cultural practices, posted throughout the home child care premises; and
- Educators scribing for children to capture their individual impressions.

**d) Foster children's exploration, play and inquiry.**

**You will see:**

- Children making sense of the world around them through play;
- Play that is supported by caring adults in environments with materials, space and time that encourage complex thinking and aid children to gain essential skills. These skills include: creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These are foundational activities that promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skill;
- Families sharing materials from their culture for exploration;
- Providers operating as play partners; and
- Providers encouraging children to explore entire space.

**Supporting Healthy Development and Learning**

In our home child care program, each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are identified. Providers are encouraged to set goals through individual attention, inquiry play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is supported. Providers are encouraged to focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development in a holistic way. This approach will be strengthened by:

- 1) Preparing the environment to foster learning and development;
- 2) Building on the children's ideas, questions, and theories as observed in play;
- 3) A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion amongst team members about how to support deeper exploration; and
- 4) Inviting and engaging others in the continuing process of program development including parents, the children themselves and other community partners including but not limited to educators within the school system.

Children learn through exploration, play, and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful exchanges with children, which encourages them to interact and communicate in a positive way, and promotes their ability to self-regulate. We use children's portfolios, learning stories, pictures and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities on an ongoing basis to study, interpret, make visible, and help inform children's learning and development, as well as the overall program.

**e) Provide child initiated and adult supported experiences.**

You will see:

- Weekly Program Plans posted with a variety of Provider planned activities, that will be added to throughout the week as the children expand on the activities or move forward in new directions;
- The number of transitions during the day are limited; children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place; and
- Times when the child takes the lead in planning the activity and times when the educator builds on observation to develop and implement activities that support each child to stretch his/her skills and abilities.

**f) Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development.**

You will see:

- Children actively engaged in activities, usually in small groups;
- Children and Providers are smiling, laughing and having fun; playing and learning together;
- Providers observing about children to build on the children's experiences;
- Educators discussing the documentation with the children and families;
- A focus on learning through play; and
- Rooms that are rearranged frequently to reflect the individual interests of the children.

**g) Incorporate a including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of children.**

You will see:

- Creative materials available to the children;
- Quiet, comfortable spaces for reading or quiet individual activities or rest;
- Children engaged in a range of different activities throughout the day;
- Providers listening and learning from the children as much as the children listen and learn from the educators;
- Providers encouraging children to explore nature and their natural environments;
- Quiet activities provided for children who do not require a nap during rest times; and
- Rooms that are set up to accommodate activities in all developmental areas.

**h) Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.**

You will see:

- Providers seeking out opportunities to talk with parents without ignoring the needs of the children;
- Opportunities for parents and Providers to share ideas about how best to support each child; and

### **Parents as Partners**

Providers foster engagement and ongoing communications with families regarding the program and their child. We strive to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in our program; we are partners in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children.

A strong, respectful and equitable relationship with parents is key to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and with their families. To this end, we seek out ways to engage parents in a way that meets their needs and builds on strengths while respecting the challenges that face young families including long commutes, time pressures and the busyness inherent in raising a family.

Strategies include but are not limited to:

- Informal discussions on a daily basis;
- Posted documentation of activities, interactions and engagement;
- Parent/educator (and sometimes child) interviews;
- Sharing resources and materials about community supports and activities;
- Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum;
- Inviting parents to participate in committees, Network AGM and Board Meetings;
- Facilitating social and open house activities; and
- Encouraging parent feedback through the provision of questionnaires, and newsletters.

Key ideas and messages we share with parents:

- Our program is **play and inquiry based** because research tells us that this is the way children learn best. A play based program provides the kinds of opportunities that children need to be fully **engaged** and to learn how to **express** themselves many different ways. We will be sharing our learning with and about your children in many different ways;
- What do you think that it is important that I know about your child to support his/her **well-being**?

- These are our **goals for your children** and this is what we will be doing with your child to support the achievement of these goals (outline the program expectations); and
- How can we support your **engagement** with our program so that you feel that you **belong**? What works for you, your schedule and your family?

**i) Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.**

You will see:

- Planned excursions to community services and programs such as the local library, grocery stores and other neighbourhood locations, making sure to advise parents of these plans;
- Use of community partners as a resource and support to families, children and staff;
- Educator Mentoring, where applicable, with local High School Parenting and Child Care programs.

**j) Strengthen the capacity of Providers or others who interact with the children at the home children premises in relation to continuous professional learning.**

You will see:

- Network offering series of staff and Providers training and workshops throughout the year, and Providers encouraged to participate.
- Registered Early Childhood Educators are required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators to commit to their own ongoing professional learning;
- New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program; and
- Materials and research shared with parents.

**k) The impact of the strategies set out in the Program Statement (Items (a)-(j) above) will be documented and reviewed by the affiliated provider and Network to determine whether the strategies and goals have been met.**

You will see:

- The Providers using different methods of recording observations about what the children are doing, including Program Plans, Menus, Journals, Pictures, Art Work, Photographs, Videos, Note-taking, etc.
- Pictures and documentation posted on the walls that tells and shows you what the children are doing;



- Parent surveys on an annual basis to gauge feedback from parents/guardians to determine and assess if approaches have been evident in the program and whether the goals for the child have been met.
- Network's Quality Assurance Consultant conducting and comparing the results from the Nippissing Developmental screening tool in various periods while a child attends the home child care program.
- Network's Quality Assurance Consultant contacting parents by phone or email on a quarterly basis to discuss their child's experience in the home child care program.

### **A Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

All new home child care staff, students and volunteers, affiliated Providers and individual who are ordinarily in the Provider's home child care premises are required to review Network's Program

statement prior to interaction with children in care of Network, and any time the Program Statement is modified.

Each affiliated home child provider may have a customized Program Statement posted in their premises that is unique to their home child care program.