



Opportunity made here.

## Program Statement

WoodGreen Community Services Child Care & Family Services' program statement is consistent with the Ministry of Education's policies, pedagogy and curriculum and the City of Toronto's Quality Care Requirements. Documents we reference in our program include the following:

- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario Pedagogy for the Early Years
- Early Learning Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings
- Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvements
- City of Toronto Every Child Belongs

Our program statement *goals and approaches* will be implemented using the Early Learning Framework to document and support each child through play-based emergent curriculum and inquiry-based learning opportunities. The child care programs are designed to encourage and help children grow and develop in order to maximize their individual potential within a group setting. We know that children learn through process and productive play and interaction within their environment. We focus on providing an anti-bias curriculum, working to promote each child's positive self-identity, sense of community, and critical thinking skills.

### **Children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential**

WoodGreen recognizes that each child is a unique individual who brings their own abilities to the program and we provide the encouragement and space to discover and learn, explore and develop their own creativity.

We provide an environment that supports creative and positive learning that fosters curiosity and exploration and invites investigation. We believe that every child is entitled to a safe and caring environment that supports a healthy sense of being valued. This environment gives children a sense of security and confidence to challenge themselves and optimize their learning while connecting with others.

We understand the importance of considering children's stages of development. For each child, individual developmental progress is a complex interplay between his/her developmental factors, unique family dynamics, community and life experiences.

With a pedagogical approach consistent with the Ministry of Education our *goals* for children are:

- Every child has a sense of **belonging** when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.
- Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and **well-being**.
- Every child is an active and **engaged** learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses.
- Every child is a capable communicator who **expresses** him/herself in many forms.

Children's interests are an essential part of their learning process. Daily activities that we offer include:

- Indoor and outdoor gross motor activities & experiences.
- Outdoor activity time for infant, toddler and preschool children and Before and After school programs on non-instructional days occurs twice daily with a minimum of 1 hour both in the morning and afternoon, weather permitting. For children in the Before and After programs on instructional days, a minimum of 30 minutes per day will be spent outdoors weather permitting.
- Music & movement
- Art & creative expression
- Math & numeracy

- Construction & design
- Science, nature & sensory
- Drama, visual arts & technology
- Language & literacy
- Rest period is provided on a daily basis for children who require it. Centre staff, students and volunteers comply with the Sleep Supervision policy which is aligned with the Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada. Rest period will not exceed 2 hours for toddler/preschool children. Infants will rest as needed. Parents/guardians are provided with a copy of this policy.
- Off-premise activities may include organized field trips to destinations such as Toronto Conservation Parks, Ontario Science Centre, local parks, community events, local libraries. The method of transportation for off-premise activities may include surface route public transit or chartered buses. Parents/Guardians are required to sign to provide consent for each activity. Staff child ratios will be maintained at all times while off-premise.

Our child care programs:

- Provide a variety of social play while supporting children to recognize their varied capabilities and characteristics.
- Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. By engaging in open-ended conversations and ask thought-provoking questions, educators will develop an understanding of each child's interests and support ideas, provide resources and materials to help create a positive learning environment
- Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate. Educators will support children with opportunities to make thoughtful choices and communicate to others by supporting children's use of language to express their feelings and emotions. Providing children with support in identifying their emotions and emotions of others creates opportunity to model empathy.
- Foster the children's desire for exploration, play and inquiry. Educators will observe and document children's interests and reflect on the observations to provide experiences that encourage children to explore and ask questions that will be inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans. Educators take an active role in play with children, follow their lead and extend their learning.
- Extend opportunities to create authentic relationships with others in the program.
- Facilitate enrichment through experiences with community partners. Educators plan and provide opportunities for children to participate in local community events/programs such as regular library visits.

### **Health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children**

We create a safe environment that facilitates children's attempts at reasonable risks, allows them to test the limits of their abilities and increase their skill competency while ensuring that children feel comfortable and secure.

**Health and safety** – Our programs meet all health and safety requirements as outlined by the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health. Updated information is posted in all the program spaces regarding all protocols and restrictions.

**Nutrition** – WoodGreen aims to inspire lifelong healthy eating habits by educating children through a variety of food experiences. This includes an awareness of the environment in which it grows and is cultivated. WoodGreen works alongside with Yummy Catering to ensure that all nutritional expectations are met.

### **Relationships with children, families and colleagues**

A sense of belonging is essential for children to build a trusting relationship within their community. Creating these authentic caring relationships through daily interactions contributes to the family's level of participation within the program and curriculum.

Our Educators take a planned curious approach to learning. By doing so, the children will more likely engage in creating problem-solving opportunities and more complex play and inquiry. Well thought-out environments will spark curiosity, invite investigation, provide challenges based on individual levels of development and stretch children's learning capacities.

Engagement occurs when the child is freely able to explore the environment while involved and focused on what they are doing. Children learn to think creatively, solve problems and seek out innovation leading to optimal learning and development throughout their lives.

Through positive child-adult interactions, WoodGreen works closely to extend the children's learning by encouraging them to build upon their existing knowledge. Staff develop an intentionally planned program that supports early learning experiences.

### **Positive self-expression, communication and self-regulation**

At WoodGreen, our inclusive programming leads to children's sense of belonging and emphasizes the importance of respect and sensitivity for diversity by providing positive and healthy environments for children. Inclusive programming means the provision of quality services for all children regardless of race, age, ability, language, culture, ethnicity or family structure.

Our goal is to foster, support, encourage, respond to and document the many ways in which children express themselves and the many "voices" with which they articulate their ideas and the variety of languages they use to communicate. We also seek to honour and reflect children's home language and culture in our programs.

Our programs focus on child-initiated active play-based learning as the way that children naturally learn best. Play allows children to actively construct, challenge, and expand their own understanding through making connections to prior experiences. The skills associated with entering play, maintaining play and conflict resolution are important to lifelong learning. Working through problem-solving steps at all developmental levels enhances the children's ability to regulate their emotions and to recover from stressful situations.

Our Educators' attention to authentic, reciprocal communication with children creates an engaging atmosphere where children participate in a two-way conversation that increases their sense of autonomy, competence and critical thinking. Educators assist in building and fostering the different levels of communication. These include verbal and non-verbal cues, play, modeling positive behavior, and exposure to different learning strategies and visuals. Children communicate in many ways, including through exploring materials and using their bodies. This may extend to the areas of math, problem-solving, creativity, language and literacy skills. Receiving support to interact and communicate in positive ways also supports children's ability to self-regulate.

The following is a list of **prohibited practices**:

- Corporal punishment of a child
- 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 him/herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- Locking the exits of the child care centre 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

- 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
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

The following positive behaviour practices will be considered as part of the monitoring and evaluation process of all educators:

- Uses positive language and appropriate tone of voice
- Provides positive reinforcement appropriately and frequently
- Demonstrates consistency in management of discipline
- Is able to promote child's independence and problem solving
- Shows respect for children by acknowledging their feelings and responding appropriately
- Guides behaviour in a positive manner
- Holds realistic behaviour expectations for individual children
- Expresses own feelings openly and honestly
- Speaks clearly, quietly and uses language child can understand
- Gains child's attention by touch and/or eye to eye contact
- Utilizes non-verbal forms of communication
- Listens to the children
- Competent and consistent when guiding behaviour
- Warm, loving and caring towards the children

These positive behavior practices will be monitored through ongoing observations of each staff and with practicum students throughout their placement. These observations allow for the monitoring and confirmation that authentic, reciprocal communication with children is creating an engaging atmosphere and that children participate in a two-way conversation that increases their sense of autonomy, competence and critical thinking.

### **Parent/Guardian Engagement and Communication**

A primary objective of the program is to meet the needs of children and their families through the provision of high quality programs. We recognize that all children have unique needs and abilities and, in partnership with families, we are committed to meeting the developmental and educational needs of all children within our program. We provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where families are encouraged to participate and contribute to their children's learning and developmental experiences.

Ongoing communication with parents and guardians is an essential component of our programs. Through daily contact during drop off and pick up time, the staff will initiate verbal contact with the family in order to gain insight into the child's experiences outside of the child care environment. This interaction will help guide the staff's approach with the child's entry into the program. Ongoing communication will also occur during regular intervals to allow for a greater discussion about the child's development, program goals and parent-teacher relationship. We aim to foster this relationship, as the families know their children best and are the most influential with respect to learning and development. During regular and ongoing performance management sessions with staff, the manager will discuss and evaluate the staff's approaches and interactions. Monitoring with students will occur throughout practicum placements between the student, cooperating teacher, and the college's supervisory staff as appropriate.

Engaging families to be a part of the curriculum enhances the program and supports the child's sense of belonging through the awareness of individual cultures, languages and family values. This shared collaboration creates many opportunities for learning for all staff, children and families.

WoodGreen aims to ensure that families have the supports available to meet their family's needs. As a multi-service agency we are aware of and offer a variety of programs and services to meet these needs. WoodGreen's core values of compassion, excellence, integrity, respect and teamwork are facilitated through this process.

### **Community Partnerships**

WoodGreen is committed to forming strong partnerships with a broad range of organizations in supporting the children and families to extend their learning experiences within their community. In collaboration with these partners we create more opportunities for families to connect with their community and create a sense of belonging.

WoodGreen is a multi-service agency with a history of creating strong partnerships both within and beyond the child care sector. The Agency's Core Values include demonstrating *Compassion* by caring for and supporting each other, *Excellence* by striving for excellence in all we do, *Integrity* by acting ethically, *Respect* by valuing every individual and Team Work where we work together to achieve goals. Within the Child Care and Family Services unit, we partner with the Toronto District School Board, child care networks, college advisory committees, the City of Toronto, other community agencies (such as Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre, Ralph Thornton Centre, local libraries) through active participation and engagement.

We are committed to working in partnership with practicum students to provide them with experiences that will enable them to have a successful career working with children where they can focus on meeting the developmental/educational needs of all children. We are also committed to acting as a resource to students and volunteers to support them in skill development and professional learning. Staff will guide and support students in their own self-reflection to focus on how to identify their strengths, use these strengths while enhancing their skills and provide ongoing coaching, mentoring and modelling.

### **Supporting staff in continuous professional learning**

To support our Educators in their ongoing learning, WoodGreen promotes a self-reflective and self-directed approach for continuous professional learning. There are opportunities both internally and externally to ensure that staff stay abreast of changes in the Early Childhood field, latest research and regulatory legislation.

At WoodGreen we believe that knowledgeable and responsive early educators will demonstrate the following abilities:

- Respond to the unique abilities, needs and characteristics of each child, family, community.
- Engage with children as a co-learner and co-planner as they explore their environment and through these observations set goals to enhance the learning environment.
- Provoke children's thinking, questioning, exploration and investigations and seek new ideas to facilitate children's exploration and understanding the world around them in meaningful ways.
- Support children's developing ability to identify and to express themselves and to learn empathy by taking others perspective.
- Regularly reflect on practices and procedures and make a commitment to build self-awareness.
- In consultation and monitoring by the child care manager, he/she will identify where improvement is needed and set goals to allow for learning opportunities to occur.

**Documenting and reviewing the impact of the WoodGreen Child Care Programs**

Pedagogical documentation demonstrates an understanding of how children think and learn versus simply recording events. Educators are able to reflect on children’s learning experiences that support and extend knowledge that is meaningful and engaging.

WoodGreen conducts ongoing progress reports and uses appropriate developmental assessment tools on children as methods to reflect on developmental growth and as a means to enhance and extend learning. This creates an opportunity to dialogue with families about their child’s experiences and the opportunity to provide input to help extend their child’s learning. This collaboration between educators, children and families creates a process for co-planning to meet each child’s unique needs and abilities. WoodGreen conducts client surveys as a method to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of programs and to identify areas for further development or growth.

The program statement will be reviewed by all educators, students and volunteers prior to interacting with children and sign off annually or when there are revisions or modifications to indicate that the statement is implemented to guide their practice in the program.