



Program Statement

January 1, 2017

At Oxford Community Child Care, we believe that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. We are committed to high quality early learning and care where children learn and grow to become confident, independent and contributing members of our community.



Oxford Community Child Care recognizes and supports *“How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)”* as the document to be used for the purpose of guiding the development of our programs, informing our decisions regarding best practices and building professional capacity in a quality early learning team.

We are in agreement with the Minister’s policy statement that, together with the regulations that guide program development, pedagogy and practice in all child care and early learning settings, *“How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)”* is intended to strengthen the quality of programs and ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children’s learning, development, health and well-being.

All programs offered by Oxford Community Child Care will use observation, reflective practice, critical thinking and a sound knowledge of child development to develop quality experiences for children and families. *“How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)”* is the foundation on which we will build our practice.

Belonging

Encourage the development of positive and responsive relationships and interactions.

Foster engagement and communication with parents about the program and their children.

Involve local community partners to support children, families and staff.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) b, h, i

Families matter. Raising children to be responsible, responsive citizens is hard work. Having genuine, open conversations between families and staff makes the job just a little bit easier.

We believe that families want to be involved in their child's day. Work, school and life commitments often make that challenging. Communication between staff and families is vital to creating a community of mutual respect and trust.

OCCC is a teaching facility. We support a variety of post-secondary students in achieving their goals. We also connect with community partners to link families to services. Community partners offer valuable services that complement the programs offered at OCCC.

Goal: Create more opportunity for conversations and interactions between staff and parents.

Approach: Staff will, at every opportunity, greet parents warmly and directly by initiating conversation and asking about the child. Staff should also ask about the parent and their day while maintaining a professional boundary.

Staff will make connections with families by sharing learning stories and inviting families to share their own stories to enrich the child's experience.

Starting April 1, 2017, OCCC will be piloting the implementation of a communication app between educators and families. The intent is to capture the learning of the child to share with families and build a better connection between the child's experiences and the family's engagement with the program.

Strategy: When registering children, staff should spend time with the family, be it in person or on the phone, explaining the program, the concepts, and expectations. Ask questions about what the parent's hopes and dreams for the child are. Be honest and clear about the benefits and limitations of group care.

Three groups in the organization will be selected to pilot the implementation of a communication app to share children's learning and experiences with families for a three month period. At the end of the trial, the staff involved will participate in an assessment of the tool that includes successes, failures, benefits and considerations. The pilot and the assessment will be used to determine the future use of the app and a potential implementation strategy, in stages, across the organization.

Expectations: Staff are initiating conversations and making efforts to continue to dialogue with families regularly in a manner that is honest, courageous, polite and respectful. Staff respect professional

boundaries with families by not connecting on personal social media and are very cognizant of the risks and responsibilities of dual relationships in the standards of practice and code of ethics.

Well-Being

Promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) a, g

Quality practices in health, safety and nutrition are the foundation that well-being is built on.

Being able to identify their individual needs and then understanding how those needs make them feel and function is an important part of growth and healthy development. Building relationships and contributing to a community is a vital part of well-being.

Children are natural born risk takers. Risk in play is an old concept being revisited with new ideas and theories. Being able to assess situations then take risks safely is an integral part of learning by doing. Children who are comfortable with taking risks often become successful and resilient learners.

Goal: Health, safety and good nutritional practices are a priority in all OCCC programs.

Children will be supported with learning to identify and articulate their needs and feelings to determine when play is active vs quiet, when rest is needed and for how long, what to eat, how much to eat and for snacks, when to eat.

Educators will learn more about the benefits of risk in play, how to incorporate safe risk into the program, how to assess risk and how to communicate the value of risk in play to families. Programs will transition into allowing for appropriate increased risk in play for children while maintaining safety.

All staff working with children are trained in the Good Beginnings Nutrition Program for Child Care Professionals by June 2017. This is a free, online preschool nutrition course developed by Registered Dietitians in Ontario specifically for child care professionals.

Approach: Infants are given the safety and security of loving educators who ensure their needs are met predictably and consistently. These trusting relationships are integral to promote the infant's ability to explore, communicate and achieve developmental milestones.

Toddler aged children, with the guidance and support of the educator, will learn to identify and articulate their needs and feelings. The educator will acknowledge the child's feelings and assist the child with problem solving. This is an important first step towards self-worth and self-regulation.

For Preschool age and older and within the limits of a group, programs and routines will gradually shift to a more open, self-sufficient concept with the educator being a guide to the child's journey.

Handwashing is a proven method of preventing illness. Increased hand washing and using efficient and effective methods will help to reduce the spread of illness. It will also keep the environment cleaner.

Creating an understanding between parents and staff of the value of safe and developmentally appropriate risk that allows for children to explore and engage in the environment.

Strategy: Snacks will be available for a longer block of time for children to determine when they want snack, self-serve and then clean up after themselves.

In addition to regular and required handwashing routines, children and adults will be encouraged to wash their hands at non-traditional times like after eating, before toileting and during transitions.

Staff development on what safe risk in play looks like, how to determine what is appropriate risk, how to set boundaries and how to support children in trying new experiences will support the successful implementation of 'risky play' in the programs.

Expectations: Genuine relationships are invaluable to the healthy growth, development and overall well-being of children and adults. A daily investment in building relationships with children, parents and extended family, colleagues and community partners is essential.

The environment (both indoor and out) will be scanned for hazards on a regular basis. Potential safety hazards are repaired or removed until repairs can be made.

Snacks and meals will be prepared and served to maximize nutritional content using fresh ingredients and minimal processed foods. Foods and drinks will be presented in a manner that is appealing to children and allows for self-sufficiency.

Communication with families is essential for risky play to be successful. Staff will recognize the comfort of families with the concept of risky play and allow for gradual transitions. Staff will promote the learning and benefits of the child's participation while respecting the family's viewpoint.

Engagement

Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry.

Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.

Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported.

Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into each day, and give consideration to the individual needs of each child.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) d,e,f,g

It is through play that children discover how their world works, how materials work, what happens when the environment changes and how their own actions and involvement play an important part in the functioning of the larger community. Involved, focused learning is messy. It's hands-on, involves choices, critical thinking and experimentation. Children need to be immersed in their discoveries. The intensity of their play will make a mess of the environment and of themselves. That's OK. That's expected.

Goal: Educators will develop a deeper understanding of provocations and invitations to play to create an environment, both indoor and out, that sparks curiosity and allows for in-depth study of the materials. Days will be organized to allow sufficient, uninterrupted blocks of time for children to engage in learning and with each other. Educators will develop a sense of when to observe, when to augment and support play and, when the play has come to a natural end, to spark curiosity with a new set of provocations to further develop the whole child.

Children will experience pride and responsibility for their play, their learning and for their environments. Children are encouraged and permitted to be self-sufficient by completing tasks for themselves while have calm, understanding support when needed.

Approach: Children are provided with a variety of experiences, provocations and invitations. Educators observe, ask questions and build trusting relationships with each child to determine the what, when and how to build the learning experiences provided. Children are encouraged to try new activities, however, the choices the children make are respected. Repetition leads to mastery. When a child is focused on task and meaningfully engaged in the activity and environment, growth and learning happens. Learning stories are regularly shared with families.

Strategy: Educators will create environments that are warm, inviting, linked to interests and support independence and self-regulation. Educators will experiment with provocations and invitations to play to find an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult supported experiences.

Regular, thoughtful documentation will be used to assess children's individual growth and needs.

Expectations: Educators ask questions that considers the play the child is engaged in and encourages the child to reflect upon what they are doing and why. Staff will be actively engaged with the children, at their level, to deepen their understanding of the individual child.

Educators are flexible, patient and actively supervising the play at all times. They expect and understand that for every success there will be learning; for every clean and organized room, there will be mess and chaos, and for every child there will be unique needs and contributions to the group.

The same care and consideration to indoor experiences is given to outdoor play.

Educators will reflect on their programs and, in collaboration with their team members, other program staff, and leadership, determine the direction of their program within the values and expectations of the organization.

Expression

Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way.

Support children in the development of self-regulation.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) c

Learning to communicate, negotiate, understand, problem solve and work together is a process. Behaviour and emotions are a part of that learning and important to healthy development. Social skills are developed on an individual continuum that reflects the child's age and stage of development.

Early literacy, in all forms, is critical to healthy development and later school success. Positive communication skills and self-regulation provide children with strong foundation on which to build relationships, create a sense of belonging, general well-being and contribute and engage with the world around them.

Goal: Children will be exposed to modelling of good language and social skills by educators that are active co-learners in the environment. Behaviours are expected. Educators consider behaviours from an analytical perspective to ensure learning, growth and that the child's sense of self-worth remains intact.

Educators strive for children to hear more than 2000 words per hour! That's a lot of talking, reading, communicating and interacting. Research shows that the number of *quality, positive* words a child hears in an hour can dramatically impact their future success (2000wordstogrow.ca).

Approaches: Children learn to positively interact with others through guided and spontaneous experiences. Educators demonstrate social skills that including asking for assistance, how to negotiate taking turns, problem solving through conflict, and how their actions impact others, the community and the environment. The amount of educator involvement is dependent on the maturity and development of the individual child and on the child's ability at any given time. Children experience a variety of emotions and physical needs like being hungry or tired that will impact on their ability to successfully use the skills they have consistently. Educators are trained to recognize when children are at their best and when a friendly helping hand may be needed.

Educators will support children in learning to recognize emotions and signs of distress before behaviours out of the child's control can occur. They will guide the child to make good choices, articulate their feelings, take responsibility for their actions and recover from overwhelming emotions and behaviours confident with their belonging and that our community is always looking forward.

The environment will be rich in language, books and opportunities to enrich language. Children of all ages enjoy being read to. Staff build on the experiences of books and literature to enrich and extend the play.

Strategy: Each program will incorporate an emphasis on literacy and language development. Educators will plan for storytime for younger children and, for older children, time for the educator to read to the group and for children to share their own unique stories.

OCCC educators and staff will receive training on self-regulation and implementing strategies from Calm, Alert and Learning by Dr Stuart Shanker. Dr Shanker is the leading Canadian expert on self-regulation and the connection between stress related behaviour and successful engagement.

Expectations: Educators are intentional in their conversations with children, asking open ended questions to encourage back and forth conversation and the development of language.

Educators listen to learn from the children and recognize whose needs are being met with the choices that are made. Educators will develop an awareness of when choices are meeting adult needs over the child's needs and re-focus their attention and programming on the child.

Encourage all staff with continuous professional learning.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) j

The roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators, early learning and child care workers and support staff are changing. The regulation of ECE's has increased the demands on the educator , provided for a higher standard of professionalism and a strong commitment to continuous professional learning. At OCCC, we believe the new direction of the profession creates a high quality care and early learning experience for children and families.

Goal: To create an organizational climate and culture where professional learning is valued and part of a regular and ongoing commitment to each educator and staff's professional identity. Reflective practice and the growth that develops from professional learning requires commitment from the individual staff. We believe cultivating a new climate and culture takes time, investment and a strong belief in our people. OCCC has made great strides towards this goal and is committed to its achievement.

Approach: OCCC will continue to support ECE's in their regulated requirement to complete a continuous professional learning portfolio through staff meetings that focus on topics geared towards growth and skill development. Non-ECE staff also have an obligation to understand and be knowledgeable on the issues and industry development that impacts on the Agency and are encouraged to participate by adding their expertise and experiences to the discussion and development of the Agency.

Strategy: A staff development program is being piloted with new staff that includes an opportunity for regular reflective discussions with a leadership team member, coaching and readings/videos tailored to the interests and experience level of the individual staff.

Expectation: All staff will reach the target of a minimum of 2 professional activities that total 5 hours or more each year.

Opportunities for local professional learning is provided by the Oxford Early Learning Association. Additional opportunities are provided by neighbouring communities. Staff are encouraged to determine their learning needs based on their annual goals and seek opportunities to support the achievement of those goals.



From How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

Document and review the impact of the strategies on children and families.

CCEYA, Ontario Regulation 137/15, s46(3) k

Oxford Community Child Care is committed to high quality early learning and care. This commitment requires us to reflect, review and document the impact of our goals and strategies on children and families on a regular basis. We will celebrate our accomplishments, learn from our considerations and make adjustments when needed. The Program Statement will be updated on an annual basis to reflect our growth and learning.

Goal: Through regular reflection, staff will document their journey to meet the goals outlined in the program statement along with the benefits and considerations of the strategies used to meet those goals.

Approach: At staff meetings, on a quarterly basis at a minimum, time will be allotted for a guided discussion on the achievement and implementation of the program statement. Staff will work within their program teams to allow for the documentation to be reflective of each program offered by OCCC.

Strategy: Staff will use their daily documentation and reflections to inform the discussion at the staff meetings. Staff may also be asked to participate in additional small group sessions or feedback surveys.

Expectation: Staff are expected to be prepared and to complete thoughtful reflections that demonstrate a thorough understanding of the goals and strategies and the overall statement of the program statement and show their growth and struggles with the implementation.