

Program Statement

Goals

The goals of Creative Minds Children Services Inc. are to:

- Provide a warm, nurturing and safe environment
- Provide an educational and emergent based curriculum for each child to develop in the areas of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, creative and moral growth
- Provide an inclusive program to enhance the children's awareness, understanding, and respect for cultural differences and similarities
- Value each child as an individual with unique capabilities and interests
- Provide qualified, caring and enthusiastic educators who will nurture each child's learning, thinking and development
- Provide a friendly and caring environment for parents and families
- Be open and flexible for families and their individual needs

Program

Creative Mind Children Services, Inc. uses a child-centred approach and ensures that each child is given an opportunity to learn based on their interests, abilities and learning styles. The educators use a variety of hands-on materials, so learning is fun and exciting as well as educational. The children have many opportunities to explore a wide variety of activities, both teacher and child oriented, in order to promote their motor, cognitive, social-emotional, and communication development. Children are seen as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. The curriculum is balanced between indoor and outdoor play, as well as a variety of small and large group activities.

Our Program Statement is based around the 4 Foundations from *How Does Learning Happen?: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression*. *How Does Learning Happen?* includes goals for children, expectations for programs and provides a starting point for teachers to reflect on the types of environments, experiences and interactions which can bring out the best in children, parents, and the teachers.

Belonging: "Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world." (HDLH p.12)

(B) Our program will strive to ensure all families establish caring and nurturing relationships with the teachers, so the children will be able to make connections between their home and the centre. The classroom atmosphere will promote a warm, inviting, and inclusive environment for all children and families who attend the centre. Creative Minds will provide many opportunities for children to play and learn together, as well as to interact with children in other classrooms. Creative Minds will ensure teachers greet each child when they are dropped off into the classroom with a smile and kind word. Teachers will get down to the children's level and offer validation to ensure to foster the children's positive self-esteem. We

will offer an “Open Door Policy” where parents are encouraged to visit and ‘pop’ in when they can, as well as to provide positive interactions with parents at drop-off and pick-up times.

(H) Effective communication with parents is essential to a centre’s success. Creative Minds will maintain an up-to-date Parent Handbook, designed to answer any questions parents may have about the generalities of the program. And, every month, each classroom will create a newsletter and calendar, containing information about up-coming events in the classrooms and the centre. The centre will use the Remind App and parent surveys to communicate with parents and to gain their feedback on the quality of care their children are receiving. The Parent Concern Policy will guide parents and teachers in addressing any concerns either may have. Through the organization of special days like a Mother’s Tea Party or a Father’s BBQ, Creative Minds will be able to present parents/guardians the opportunity to come into their child’s classroom and the centre and explore what their child is learning, as well as interact with their teachers. The use of documentation boards and binders, Parent-Teacher Nights, and the Parent Board will provide parents the opportunity to view what activities and opportunities their children are experiencing at the centre.

(I) Creative Minds believes in creating a network of local support which supports play as an important role in encouraging children to feel a part of their community and in supporting families by providing access to community resources. Creative Minds will provide the opportunity for the children to experience and explore their community and make connections to the real world. The teachers will organize field trips to the Twin Valley Zoo, pet stores, and other retail organizations, as well as participate on community walks. Children will be able to connect with local authorities, such as the Fire Department, Police Department, Ambulance, etc., during Community Week. Creative Minds will also provide support for co-op students from local high-schools, colleges, and universities offering placements and mentorship opportunities.

Well-being: “Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.” (HDLH pg. 12), which includes physical and mental wellness, and developing self-care, self-regulation, and self-awareness.

(A) Creative Minds is committed to nurturing the body with carefully planned, well-balanced, and diversified meals and snacks in accordance with the Canada’s Food Guide. Our menu will be ever evolving in order to meet the individual needs of the children, along with children who have allergies and dietary restrictions. We will encourage physical exercise and activities, which promote a healthy living style, through a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. We will promote the self-regulation of the children through each teacher getting to know the children individually in order to identify and work towards proactively lessening stressors, and to help the children become more self-aware. Teachers will work closely with the children and model problem solving skills and behaviours, as well as help them identify their feelings, the feelings of other children, as well as collaborate with the children to come up with possible solutions to a problem.

(G) In accordance with the Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014, the Creative Minds daily routine consists of morning and afternoon outdoor opportunities, as well as active play and rest and reflection times; however, we understand some parents may have requests which differ from the centre's daily routines and we try our best to accommodate. The daily schedule will be flexible to meet the individual needs of the children, within the allowable space and ratio requirements. Creative Minds will stress the importance and value behind listening to the children's behavioural cues and verbal requests as an indicator of when to shift to another part of the daily routine - except rest and eating times. Materials for both gross motor and quiet activities will always be available inside and outside and, weather permitting, the children will spend at least 2 hours a day engaging in outdoor activities.

Engagement: "Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses." (HDLH pg. 12).

(D) Our classroom schedules, routines and in-classroom bathroom facilities will allow for the children to have long, uninterrupted periods of play, in which there will be a variety of materials to stimulate different kinds of play; blocks, sensory, dress-up etc. The materials will be 'open-ended' and encourage further exploration. The teachers will provide various materials such as loose parts and natural elements to encourage imagination and creative play. Items from the real world will be brought into the classrooms, such as dishes, lamps, utensils, plants, rocks, fish, etc., to promote the learning of the natural world. Creative Minds will encourage the children to take the lead in their own learning, as well as inspire the children to develop their own activities to share with the other children. Teachers will aspire to engage in more discussions and open-ended questions with the children and their activities, to help create more opportunities to observe what the children's interests are. The teachers will take the children's interests and build the program around them.

(E) As Creative Minds teachers are creating, preparing and executing activities, they will also be alert and ready to be a part of any free play and to recognize, value and respond to spontaneous teachable moments. The teachers will understand their role as co-learners with the children and promote active, creative, and meaningful exploration and inquiry. The teachers will spend time looking at the world through the eyes of the children and putting themselves in their shoes, to understand the world as the children see it. By observing, documenting, and engaging in open-ended conversations with the children, the teachers will gain knowledge of the children's interests and will plan for and provide materials and activities to support their interests. The teachers will plan for and invite the children to participate in various activities, such as planting a garden, cooking pizza for lunch, etc. Creating a supportive environment, through child-initiated and adult-initiated experiences, will promote the empowerment and the courage for children to take ownership over their own learning.

(F) The space, design, and arrangement of the classroom are important components in creating a positive learning environment for the children. Creative Minds will create a safe environment where the children are free to explore without fear of failure. The children will be taught to be

respectful of others ideas. The classroom environment will incorporate the feelings of 'home' through items like lamps, area rugs, natural lighting, picture frames, etc., which will create a warm and natural home-like setting. The teachers will ensure all items in the classroom, at the children's level, can be utilized by the children, and to change the environment based on the needs and interests of the children.

(J) Creative Minds will encourage the continuous growth of its teachers. Creative Minds will encourage all teachers, RECEs and non-ECEs, to engage in continuous professional learning through a variety of workshops, training, and other various activities and opportunities. Every month, teachers will be given the opportunity to take part in monthly staff meetings and team meetings with their room partners and/or age grouping. The College of Early Childhood Education requires RECEs to fulfill their expectations in order to maintain their registry with the college. Workshops and training opportunities provided by Lansdowne Children Centre, Ontario Early Years Centre, or any other early years resource centre, will be made available for teachers to continue their professional development.

Expression: "Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways." (HDLH pg. 12).

(C) The teachers will understand their role as educators in helping the children interact and communicate in positive ways to support their ability to self-regulate. The teachers will create environments in which they can observe the physical and emotional states of the children and respond to them in a warm and caring manner. As there are many ways a child can express themselves, the environment will provide ample amounts of opportunities for the children to explore and express themselves in whichever way they want. In order for the children to learn and understand how to positively interact with their peers, the teachers will speak to the children using positive words and a positive tone. They will model appropriate behaviours, empathy, and use self-regulation out loud for the children to hear. The teachers will also have discussions and use open-ended questions to talk about emotions and to help the children develop their own calming techniques and strategies. The teachers will promote problem-solving by helping the children to listen to others, express their emotions, and help them to think of how others may be affected by their actions and words.

Program Statement Review

(K) Throughout the year, Creative Minds will continuously document and review the impact of the strategies set out in this program statement on the children and their families. The supervisor observes the classroom environments on a weekly basis and documents the interactions between the teachers and children, activities and experiences which the children are exploring, and an overall sense of the classroom. Each classroom maintains a Documentation Board and Binder which parents are welcome to view and observe what their children are learning. Weekly 'pop quizzes' and randomly asked questions about the policies and procedures followed by the centre are also ways for the supervisor to ensure the staff and

parents are in compliance. Each teacher is observed monthly on their interactions with children, parents, other staff, and the supervisor. They are also assessed on their knowledge of the program statement and the policies and procedures.

Creative Minds will hold a committee twice a year to assess the strategies, set out in this Program Statement, on the children and their families. This committee will assemble, evaluate and assess the goals and determine if any of the goals have been reached. If goals have been reached, the committee will then generate new goals for the centre. The new goals will be added to the Program Statement and a copy will be handed out to all staff and families.

