

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Western Day Care Centre has adopted the “How **Does** Learning Happen? – Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years” (2014) as the document to lead us in programming and pedagogy. This document, being grounded in research, provides a foundation for Educators to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children in the care of Western Day Care Centre.

At Western Day Care, we believe that children are competent and capable, curious, and rich in potential. Focusing on the four foundations of “How **Does** Learning Happen?” – Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression, the principles of the ELECT document and the focus of Think, Feel, Act, we will ensure optimal learning and healthy development throughout all aspects of our programs.

In order to stay current with our families’ increasingly full and busy lives, we have implemented the HiMama program in our organization to stay connected in the evolving technical world. Through secure email interaction, families are able to instantly access information regarding the program and their children. This does not take the place of meaningful, caring face to face connections but simply enhances the ability to communicate in another form.

HiMama addresses the four foundations of “How **Does** Learning Happen?” in the following ways:

Belonging: HiMama enables connections between home and the early childhood program, invites families to participate in children’s experiences, and builds trusting partnerships with families.

Well-Being: HiMama enables educators to observe patterns in children’s health and provide consistency in patterns of eating, physical activity, and sleep.

Engagement: HiMama enables educators to plan environments and experiences slightly in advance of children’s capabilities in order to provoke learning and skill development.

Expression: HiMama enables educators to document children’s communication to revisit thoughts and ideas expressed and foster further expression.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care.

Western Day Care Centres promotes healthy eating by providing nutritious and safe foods in a supportive environment.

Nutritious meals and snacks are planned for each child by our kitchen staff and the Management team according to the Child Care and Early Years Act and the London-Middlesex Public Health Unit regarding Canada's Food Guide. The kitchen staff ensure a safe food environment in the kitchen and maintains a current Safe Food Handling certificate.

Menus are planned using good menu planning principals and include a variety of new and familiar healthy and appealing foods. Water is encouraged and offered several times throughout the day. All food restrictions and allergies are posted for kitchen staff, educators and supply staff.

Western Day Care Centre utilizes the resources of the "Safe, Healthy Children Manual" from the London-Middlesex Health Unit as a basis for maintaining health and safety in the child care centre. Regular daily play ground checks are executed and recorded before any child uses the playground facilities. A Health & Safety Representative performs regular checks of the child care centre in conjunction with the Management team and fire drills are conducted monthly. All staff of the centre practice safe, appropriate handwashing procedures or use hand sanitizers when running water is not available.

Our HiMama program allows us to record daily health inspections for each child when they enter the child care centre and throughout the day. Families have immediate access to their child's daily routines and information and/or pictures of how their child is handling the day.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to providing positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff.

The Educators and Management team at Western Day Care Centre maintain an atmosphere of respect and professionalism.

- They engage in meaningful and responsive interactions with the children in order to extend and scaffold on the child's interests. They are conscious of positive body language as well as the tone and choice of words when communicating with children, team educators, families and community partners.
- They engage in meaningful and responsive interactions with all team members and with all community partners. They engage in meaningful and responsive interactions with parents – both at the beginning and the end of the day. Acknowledging, receiving and imparting information regarding the children is an essential aspect of every day.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and supporting their ability to self-regulate.

Western Day Care Centre follows the principles of the ELECT document (Early Learning for Every Child Today, 2014) in terms of self-regulation – 2.5 Regulating Attention, Emotions and Behaviour

- Expressing emotions appropriately; we help young children understand that while they are entitled to feel angry (mad) they must learn to express their anger (and other difficult feelings) in ways that do not hurt themselves or others. Children are supported to express a wide range of emotions.
- Focusing attention; we extend and scaffold on children’s interests in order to promote and increase attention span.
- Returning attention after a distraction; we are assisting children to get back on track. We may offer an extension of the materials or activity to increase attention to task.
- Persisting when frustrated; we offer support or assistance when children become frustrated.
- Using language to communicate needs and regulate emotions; we label and use language to model and assist children in communicating needs and emotions.
- Coping with challenges and disappointments; we acknowledge and empathize with challenges and disappointments and assist children with strategies to help overcome challenges.
- Effective strategies for self-calming - deep breathing, play dough, calm music, water play etc. – These are offered to children as a way to regain control or to expend excessive energy.
- Reduced waiting times; we examine different strategies for smaller group activities and transitions in order to reduce waiting times.
- We model appropriate anger management behaviours ourselves and state our feelings.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development will be supported.

- We have paid attention to the physicality of our rooms in terms of colour, space, and attention to natural materials. Is it too bright? Is it too stimulating? Have we brought the outside in? Do we have an adequate amount of open-ended materials or loose parts? These are some of the questions we explore when we set up our indoor learning environments
- We have looked at our play spaces and are allowing a variety of experiences and materials to be freely provided for children’s exploration at any time throughout their day.
- Children are encouraged to explore materials and initiate activities based on their own ideas and interests.
- Educators are looking for teachable moments and are including the children in planning for activities that are meaningful and relevant.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and giving consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care. In addition, we are committed to fostering children's exploration, play and inquiry and providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.

- We are committed to following the child's lead and incorporating the children's current interests in our programming. We employ meaningful observational skills. The choosing of play materials in the program is very purposeful and is meant to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage in exploration, play and inquiry using materials that spark their interest and curiosity. The play materials should promote learning and development in all areas including social, emotional, cognitive, communicative and physical. Educators are able to explain their choices of the play materials in their rooms and how they align with the program statement.
- We allow for uninterrupted interactions and explorations and stand back to observe before jumping into their play. We allow children to explore and initiate interactions. We ask open-ended questions about what the child is engaged in and allow them to share their discoveries.
- Educators may choose to introduce a play material (loose parts) or activity to possibly engage the child in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.
- We offer a rest, sleep or quiet time that does not exceed two hours to our toddler and preschool programs. Infants sleep and rest on their own schedules. The need for rest and sleep varies at different ages and even among children of the same age. The need for actual sleep and the need to simply rest will equally be respected. Parental contributions regarding their child's need for sleep or rest will also be respected. Young children benefit from periods of quiet relaxation to balance their active play. Some children require a long period of time to relax and sleep, while others only require a short rest period. Rest time in the child care centre should not disrupt the normal sleep patterns at home.
- The program at the Western Day Care Centre is designed to meet the needs of each child and to challenge them at their developmental level. Through the interaction of the child, the environment, the other children, and the other adults in the Centre, the child develops physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- Our educators provide a safe, stimulating environment for the children while outside through planning and evaluating activities, changing equipment and providing for special activities (i.e. creative, science experiences). The staff and administration will ensure that the outside playground is kept in a good state of repair.
- Outdoor activities will be incorporated in the classroom program plans which are located in each classroom. Educators will bring children's interests into the outdoor environment in order to sustain and enhance interest. In addition, educators will bring the outdoors and the neighbourhood into the daily program in order to further investigate and explore the natural environment.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

- Our HiMama program speaks directly to this important component of our program statement. The HiMama program sends immediate information to families regarding their child’s toileting, and dietary intake. In turn, it also allows families to email pertinent information directly to their child’s educator. It invites families into our program by getting immediate information in the form of learning stories, documentation, pictures and current information. This does not replace the responsive face to face daily contact of families in the morning and afternoon but simply enhances communication in another format.
- We offer “Parent Nights” where families can explore their child’s room, observe existing documentations and gain more information on the “How **Does** Learning Happen? – Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years” (2014) pedagogy.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to involving local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.

- We provide a separate inviting resource space for community partners to meet with families and children.
- Knowledgeable educators identify and refer special needs to community partners for assistance in providing the most successful experience within our organization. Early intervention strategies are key for all children to ensure they reach their optimal development. Community partners provide education and strategies to support staff.
- We have groups of children involved in our neighbourhood retirement home at Elmwood Place. Seniors and children alike enjoy interactions and activities together and both benefit from the experience. We also invite community partners to share their talents and knowledge with the children. Firefighters, paramedics, police officers and more are welcomed into our program for “real life” exposure with the children.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to supporting staff, or others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning.

Western Day Care Centre recognizes the importance of continuous professional development. We consider the unique professional learning needs of educators at the time of hiring, as well as the evolving professional learning needs of existing and experienced employees at varying points of their careers.

- New educators receive verbal feedback regularly on their progress.
- Formal appraisals for all educators occur yearly. Appraisals highlight areas of strengths and challenges complete with goals.
- We are committed to mentoring Early Childhood Education students in their journey to become a Registered Early Childhood Educator.

- Professional development opportunities for training, courses, workshops, seminars, webinars, and conferences will be posted for educators to consider.
- Educators are obligated to become involved in the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program through the College of Early Childhood Educators. The CPL program is designed to help RECEs reflect, plan for and document their professional learning in a meaningful way. Western Day Care Centre supports and encourages all professional learning for our educators.
- Memberships to professional organizations will be encouraged. Financial incentives are available for membership and certification to the AECEO.
- Western Day Care centre has a certified First Aid and CPR instructor on staff from the Canadian Red Cross Society. This instructor ensures that we are able to train and re-certify staff members in First Aid and CPR when required.

Western Day Care Centre is committed to documenting and reviewing the impact of the program statement on our children and our families.

- We will provide a yearly parent survey to assist us in assessing the impact of the program statement on our families and children.
- Dedicated time is given at every staff meeting to review and reflect on the Program Statement.
- The Program Statement will be reviewed by all educators starting employment and yearly thereafter. Educators and the management team will have input in the review and update of any revisions to the program statement. Constant evaluation and review of the program statement will strengthen the quality of the program and ensure that high quality experiences are provided.
- Staff appraisals and reflections will directly relate to the Program Statement.

