FAMILY DAY

Program Statement

To be reviewed annually

Family Day has a long history of serving families and children throughout Toronto and the surrounding communities. The Child Care and Early Years Act requires all programs to have a program statement that is consistent with the Minister's policy statement on programming and policy (O.Reg. 137/15, ss 46 1-4). Our program statement aligns with our policies and procedures, which educators are required to adhere to, and which guide our work with children and families.

Health, Safety and Nutrition

Health, safety and nutrition contribute to the healthy development and growth of the children we serve. To ensure all children, families and educators in our programs are safe, Family Day has developed policies and procedures, including our ***Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy***, that support a culture of well-being and belonging. All of our educators have been trained in standard First Aid and Level C CPR. We partner with families to provide quality child care and give them peace of mind, knowing their children are safe and developing as they interact with our caring and knowledgeable educators.

Healthy eating is essential. Family Day respects and accommodates special diets and food restrictions, and our menus reflect both children's food preferences and the centre's cultural diversity. Our menus have been reviewed by a registered dietitian, and the healthy meals and snacks we serve contain whole food ingredients, are high in naturally occurring nutrients and fibre, and are low in saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. The food does not contain trans-fat or artificial colours and flavours. We follow ***Canada's Food Guide***, the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and Family Day's guidelines to provide healthy foods that children enjoy.

Children who attend our full-day programs are offered lunch and two nutritious snacks each day. Educators share these meals with children, helping to model positive attitudes to healthy eating and create a family-style environment. Children in our before-and after-school programs receive healthy morning and afternoon snacks.

Positive Adult/Child Interactions

Our Family-Centred Practices view the family as competent, capable, curious and rich in experience. Families are valuable contributors to their children's learning and are their children's first teachers. Our knowledgeable, reflective and resourceful educators share valuable information with families on a daily basis.

The Primary Caregiving Model is one in which an educator is responsible for a small group of children. The educator's role in this model is to provide consistent care in a way that maximizes the potential for learning. Educators are responsible for overseeing children's care routines, observations, discussion with families, and setting appropriate learning objectives. This allows a strong, secure attachment to develop between the child and the educators. When caregiver consistently responds to a child's distress in sensitive and supportive ways, a secure attachment is formed. Educators and children develop genuine and respectful relationships.

Educators also promote respectful interactions among children and their peers, and among children and adults, through evidence-based practices. Some of the positive strategies we use include: sharing control with the children, focusing on children's strengths, supporting children's play, and adopting a problem-solving approach to social conflict.

These practices and strategies enable children to freely and confidently express their thoughts and feelings, and experience true partnerships with adults in play and conversation.

Self-Regulation

At Family Day we provide a consistent daily routine, choice, visually calming spaces, soft spaces, private spaces, and shared control between child and educator to reduce stressors.

Children are taught how to negotiate, communicate and compromise, independently and with the support of an educator. Using conflict resolution models, children are competent and capable of solving problems encountered during play.

Educators are trained in developmentally appropriate conflict resolution models and child guidance that emphasize acknowledgement of feelings before resolving conflicts – helping the child to develop self-regulation skills.

Self-regulation is the ability to control one's physical, behavioural and mental impulses. Improving children's ability to self-regulate will improve their life outcomes (Stuart Shanker's video-self- regulation). Self-regulation is how a child effectively and efficiently deals with, and recovers from, stress.

Family Day's Program Statement Implementation Policy supports the development of self-regulation as it promotes respectful interactions between children and caregivers and prohibits:

- corporal punishment of the 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 himself, 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 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;
- 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;
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. (CCEYA #4); and
- sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (as defined under the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007)

Learning Through Play

"An approach to learning is the foundation that affects how children learn in every content area. It encompasses children's engagement, motivation and participation in the classroom. Researcher Ross Thompson (2002) says that when young children are curious, interested and confident about discovering the answers to their questions, they are best able to benefit from learning opportunities." (H/S Preschool Curriculum) Approaches to Learning, Ann S Epstein, PhD., HighScope Press 2012.

Family Day uses the HighScope™ curriculum, a high-quality, research-based approach to learning which supports children in becoming strong, independent learners. This curriculum approach aligns with ***How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*** (Ministry of Education, 2014) (HDLH)

Research shows that children learn best when they are actively involved in personally meaningful activities with people and things. The HighScope™ curriculum calls this approach "active participatory learning," where children:

- Choose to pursue their own interests (well-being);
- Are able to manipulate many open-ended materials (engagement);
- Express/talk about what they are discovering (expression);
- Are supported by an educator who connects old information to new information, "scaffolding" the learning experience (belonging).

This approach to learning supports the view of the child and the educator as competent, capable of complex thinking, and rich in both potential and experience. In our programs the educator and the child are partners in shaping the learning experience. In an active learning environment, children develop a sense of belonging by forming authentic relationships with others and being part of a diverse community of learners. The structure of the day provides a balance of child and adult-guided/supported experiences, designed to engage children's natural curiosity and enquiry.

Learning Environments

"Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems and make meaning from their experiences – especially when the spaces contain interesting, complex, open-ended materials that children can use in many different ways." (HDLH, pg. 20)

Well-designed environments support the inclusion of all children, while supporting growth in all areas of development.

Educators use their knowledge of child development to design a positive learning environment that is intentionally and clearly divided into interest areas which support different types of play. Materials are carefully chosen and are: varied, open-ended and plentiful, reflect children's family lives and communities, and are labelled to promote the find = use – return cycle. New materials are introduced to the children by the educator before being placed in the environment. Within the interest areas, the materials are systematically arranged by function and labelled to support children's thinking and play.

"The environment is the context in which learning takes place. The environment was described by Loris Malaguzzi as "the third teacher" and is valued for its power to organize, promote relationships and educate. It mirrors the ideas, values, attitudes and cultures of those that use the space." (Malaguzzi, 1993)

The Daily Routine

The daily routine provides a social framework – an emotionally safe and predictable environment supporting the child's well-being. Educators intentionally limit interruptions and transitions to maintain a sense of calm. A natural flow from one activity to another allows time for educators to support the diverse needs and abilities of the children, and to support the implementation of Individual Plans.

Active learning is embedded in all parts of the daily routine. Educators and families work together to support children's seamless transitions between home, school and child care; this supports a sense of community.

The daily routine is designed to meet the individual and group needs of the children. This includes time for large and small group activities, group and individual work times, rest and quiet periods, as well as meeting the children's nutritional needs.

"A growing body of research suggests that connecting to the natural world contributes to children's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health and well-being. Providing daily opportunities to explore, care for and interact with the natural world helps to strengthen these connections." (HDLH, pg. 21)

Outside time presents many opportunities for learning, not only in the area of physical growth, but in all the other areas of development. The outdoor environment is viewed as an extension of the indoor environment. Educators and children explore nature in the outdoor environment together; they dig, plant, observe nature, and share their curiosities and discoveries. We go outside in all kinds of weather when it is safe to do so.

Parent Engagement

At Family Day we believe child care is a shared responsibility between family and educators. There are many ways information is shared with families, both formally and informally. Family Day embraces an open door policy and invites families to visit our programs prior to, and during, their child's care. This helps to foster responsive relationships between families and the educators. We encourage families to share their home cultures and integrate these into our programs.

Daily communication with a child's primary caregiver is encouraged, either verbally or written. For our youngest children, detailed daily logs are shared with families. The Look See Checklist™ by NDDS is used to help facilitate discussions with families regarding their child's development.

In continuing to foster responsive relationships between families and educators, Family Day employs a variety of additional techniques including parent surveys, information sessions and events. Parents' perspectives are encouraged, taken forward and carefully considered. Educators use technology to document various moments throughout the day, and we foster our ongoing communication with families through social media. Our Family-Centred Practice helps to define how we support our families.

Community Partners

The role of our partners is multifaceted. Partnerships with the Ministry of Education and municipalities are established with shared space agreements, and assist in making our services accessible for families. Our partnerships also help to keep our educators and families informed, and ensure we are using evidence-based approaches in learning and the care of children. Specialized agencies support inclusion of children with exceptional needs in our programs, strengthening the educator's role and relationship with the child.

Family Day's commitment to supporting life-long learning and enhancing excellence in our sector has developed into the mutually beneficial practice of hosting placement students from community colleges and high schools. As a leader in the sector, Family Day supports and provides opportunities for coaching and mentoring through our student placements and volunteers. The students gain valuable and practical experience from working with children and families through a sharing of knowledge.

To connect children and build their relationships to their communities, we visit local libraries, grocery stores, parks and nature trails. These excursions enhance the outdoors as a learning environment.

Continuous Professional Learning

"Educators are competent and capable, curious and rich in experience. They are knowledgeable, caring, reflective and resourceful professionals. Educators are life-long learners. They take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about ways to integrate knowledge from theory, research, their own experience and their understanding of the individual children and families they work with."
How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
(Ministry of Education 2014)

Aligning with the College of Early Childhood Educators' Standards of Practice, Family Day is committed to supporting continuous professional development in policy and practice for all of its educators. Family Day offers in-house training and supports opportunities for educators to participate in external professional development. Family Day ensures all opportunities for professional development align with ***How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*** (Ministry of Education, 2014)

Documentation/Review and Impact

Quality Assurance Documentation

- ✓ Annual licensing and other regulated inspections under the Ministry of Education – utilizing feedback to address and ensure ongoing compliance under the CCEYA
- ✓ Annually, internal assessments reflecting best practice include: Program Quality Assessment (PQA), Operating Criteria, and Assessment for Quality Improvement-utilizing feedback to assess agency training needs
- ✓ Developmental checklist tools for young children that assess and document developmental learning goals, are completed on a regular basis – results are used to develop developmental learning plans
- ✓ Agency-wide health and safety inspections – on-site, documented and reviewed – addressing deficiencies
- ✓ Serious occurrences are documented and analyzed for trends
- ✓ Daily observations and reflections of the program by educators – to inform and reflect children's areas of interest
- ✓ Staff Performance Reviews – contribution reviews, ongoing supervision meetings and team meetings are documented – used to encourage reflective practice, and ongoing career planning
- ✓ Interactions between staff and children are documented through child guidance-behaviour monitoring to ensure alignment with the Program Statement Implementation Policy.

Parent Engagement

- ✓ Annual parent surveys ensure ongoing feedback gets captured and analyzed to assess impact, and address (or respond to) deficiencies brought forward
- ✓ Social Media – a variety of forums

Program Statement Review

The development of the Program Statement is a document that educators, students and volunteers will review prior to working with children; they are required sign off on this statement once they understand the expectations and anytime the Program Statement is modified.

Educators receive training on the Program Statement and policies and procedures prior to working with children and families.

The Program Statement aligns with our policies and procedures, which educators are required to adhere to, and which guide their work with children and families.

These policies and procedures, along with the Program Statement, are reviewed annually to ensure they are in alignment with ***How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*** (Ministry of Education, 2014). The Program Statement will be reviewed and updated; when this occurs, educators, students and volunteers will review and sign off on the statement and all related policies and procedures

FAMILY DAY

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United Way Greater Toronto

For countless families, Family Day is the only way!