



MY SCHOOL HANDBOOK

2016-2017

My School Co-operative Nursery

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MY SCHOOL PROGRAM STATEMENT

IMPLEMENTING OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

AN EXPANSION ON OUR PROGRAM STATEMENT

The General Bylaws of My School Co-operative Nursery Inc. are available upon request.

History

“My School” was started in 1982 by a core of six people who got their main inspiration from "Time for Play" Nursery School located in Runnymede Public School. Their search for space ended when the Toronto Board of Education not only offered to rent them space at Garden Avenue School, but also offered a start-up grant of \$2,000.

In September of 1990, My School relocated to Howard Public School because Garden Public School needed more space to accommodate increased enrollment. At Howard, My School had to share one large room with the Howard Public School Daycare.

In September of 1997, My School found itself looking for a new location again as Howard Public School required our space to meet its enrollment demands. We found a new home in St. Vincent de Paul Separate School, which is where My School is housed today. Here we have one large playroom and use of the Kindergarten playground.

The history of My School illustrates the flexible nature of the school's structure. Members of the Co-operative have a direct say in the running of the school. If a majority of members want certain aspects to change, those changes are easily carried through.

Philosophy

This handbook has been put together so that people joining the nursery school will get a better understanding of how a Co-operative Nursery School works.

There is no set academic program and there is no formal reporting of progress between teacher and parent. The drive of the program of My School is for the children and the parents to enjoy themselves together.

A Co-operative works well if all members are actively involved with the school. Active involvement necessitates commitment of time and energy, but brings with it new friendships for both children and parents. This fosters a greater sense of belonging in the community.

For people who are willing to involve themselves for an average of one or two hours per week, the Co-operative Nursery School is a positive and rewarding place to be.

My School Program Statement

At My School Co-op, we are committed to providing a safe and stimulating environment where each child can thrive socially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. We believe that through play, the child acquires a variety of new skills and learns to make choices that recognize and respect the needs and feelings of others. Each child can develop at his/her own pace in a caring and inclusive environment, with the understanding that each child is curious, capable and rich in potential.

Due to the importance of play to a young child's development, our program has a lengthy, unstructured playtime. During this time, the children have an opportunity to choose their own areas of interest from options including painting and crafts, building toys, books, costumes, make-believe toys and a large sand table. We strive to provide a positive atmosphere for play by providing the materials and enthusiasm and including opportunities for both individual and small group activities

The teachers are always close at hand in a guiding, supporting and enabling capacity. But the play environment is designed to be self-motivating, child-directed and teacher-facilitated. To this aim, My School will:

- Foster the development of a positive self-image within each child and a positive concept of family and community.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop self-expression and language enrichment.
- Provide children with experiences which promote their understanding of their environment.
- Foster family involvement.
- Provide children with opportunities to learn, play together and to share with others.
- Include outdoor activities and active play.
- Provides healthy food choices, following the Canada Food Guide.
- Include regular assessment of the program's effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiencies.
- Consider the individual need of each child.

- My School will involve local community partners to help support our children, their families and our staff and volunteers to ensure that each child's specific care and needs are being met.

Our program statement is consistent with the Ministry of Education's policy statement on programming and pedagogy, and will be reviewed annually. The program statement can be found in its entirety at the end of the Handbook.

Why A Co-op?

With the responsibilities of belonging to a co-op nursery school come many rewards. Your child is eased into a formal school setting with the reassurance of your presence. On the duty days, parents interact with the teachers, they laugh, and they enjoy time together with the children. The bond built between teacher and parents fosters a trusting relationship with the teacher and your child.

There is a sense that the teacher, for that very special time in your child's life, is an extension of your family.

There is an excellent child/adult ratio that ensures every child's needs are met.

You will be able to observe your child as they grow and develop in an environment where they are exposed to new and different expectations. It is wonderful to watch your wee one as they play, create, interact with their peers and other adults, and weave their way through the school year.

Parents will also have a chance to get to know the many wonderful, friendly families in the school in a more personal way than you could otherwise. While your child makes new friends, you too will have the chance to make new friends and share in new experiences. The school becomes a community that extends beyond the classroom and beyond the time your child spends at My School.

Through the co-op experience, the transition to full day kindergarten is made easier. Your child is more comfortable with routines, with interacting with various adults and children, and with being that bit more independent.

Since the school is managed and operated by the parents of the children enrolled each year, and the addition of duty persons replacing the requirement of another teacher, the cost of operating the school is significantly reduced, making the program more available to more families.

Hours of Operation, Holiday Breaks and P.A. Days

My School's hours of operation are from 9:05 a.m. until 11.30 a.m. We follow the Toronto Separate School Board calendar for the following holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, Family Day, March Break, and Easter Break. We close at the end of June and return in the beginning of September.

School Closure

In the event of the school being closed i.e. building problems, inclement weather, etc. you will be contacted and informed of the situation by a member of the Board.

In the event that both teachers are sick at the same time, the school will be closed and parents will be informed as above.

Activities off the Premises

At My School we go on a couple of local excursions off the premises in May/June when the children are more mature and able to follow the directions. The outings could include a trip to the Library and possibly a trip to the local park. We do not go on trips requiring the use of vehicles. Families will be given advanced notice of the trip and their consent requested on the appropriate form. Extra help from available parents/caregivers will be requested and is always welcome.

Our Community Partners

At My School we welcome the community into our classroom in a variety of scenarios. Parents, relatives and caregivers are encouraged to share their talents and interests with our class e.g. music, a science experiment, career sharing etc.

Any child with special needs is given the opportunity to flourish physically, socially, mentally and emotionally, to the best of our ability.

We are open to all support services and aids in the community to train our staff, contribute to individual program plans or work in the program as additional support in the classroom. My School involves our community partners to help support our children, their families and our staff and duty persons to ensure that each child's specific care and needs are being met.

Staff Development

Each staff member is a qualified Registered Early Childhood Educator. Staff are committed to ongoing professional development and take part in varied professional activities including courses, workshops, and visiting other childcare centres.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Enrollment

The Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario requires that children be 2 1/2 years old at the time of admission.

Enrollment Options

Each class has 16 children, with 2 RECE's and 2 volunteer duty persons. We offer two programs:

2 day - Tuesday and Thursday

3 day - Monday, Wednesday and Friday

A **5 day** program i.e. Monday to Friday, is offered only if enrollment allows. This is at the discretion of the Board and the Supervisor. A family requesting the 5 day option will be informed by the May 31st only if it is being offered. Date of application would apply.

The days are not interchangeable.

Registration

Application forms will be accepted **only** in the year they are being registered. i.e. Applications will be accepted in January and thereafter for the upcoming September enrollment.

Priority at registration will be given first to children of active members and second to children of alumni members. Active members and alumni have priority until January 31st for the upcoming year. Applications are accepted on a first come basis thereafter.

Refer to <http://www.myschoolcooperative.org> for further details.

Wait List

A waiting list is compiled when more applications are received than spaces available. No fee is required. Information is compiled and kept confidential by the Membership Chair. Requests with regards to position on the waiting list can be directed to the Membership Chair.

Children are required to be two and a half years of age to be placed on the current waiting list and are placed in order of application received.

A list of 'too young' applicants, over the age of 2 years old is compiled and placed on the waiting list in order of age, and will be used only if age requirements are met and

current wait list is exhausted.

Admission Forms

Adult Immunization Form

The Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario requires that any person working or volunteering in a licensed nursery school must submit a medical certificate showing that the person has had:

- A physical examination and is healthy
- Either a chest x-ray or a skin test for tuberculosis.
- Up-to-date immunizations.
- Hepatitis B: Not a requirement, but highly recommended for anyone working with children.

Child Immunization Form

Form must be submitted showing each child has been immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health.

NOTE: REQUIREMENT FOR BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN

For medical exemption, the Statement of Medical Exemption Form for Immunization must be completed by a doctor or nurse practitioner before participation in the school.

For religious/conscience objections, the Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief form must be completed by a "commissioner for taking affidavits" (i.e. must be notarized) before participation in the school.

Forms available on request.

Forms to be signed and submitted by the primary parent and by all duty persons. i.e. if the parent is not the duty person, they are still required to be knowledgeable of the Manual and the Handbook, along with all duty persons.

1. Policies and Procedures Manual read and understood.
2. The Program Statement read and understood.
3. The My School Handbook read and understood.

Forms to be signed and submitted by duty persons only

- Toronto Police Vulnerable Sector Check Form: More information on the VSC process is available in our Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Collection of Personal Information Form

Copies of all forms are available on our website or can be picked up at the school.

Anaphylactic Forms

If your child has an anaphylactic allergy and requires an Epi-pen/Allerject the school provides forms that must be filled out by parents and the child's doctor before your child can start the program, and annually thereafter. Forms can be downloaded or picked up at the school.

FEES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR SEPTEMBER 2016

My School is a co-operative/non-profit centre, so childcare fees are based on the actual cost of operation. These costs are reviewed annually and fees are set accordingly.

3 Day - \$250.00 per month

2 Day - \$168.00 per month

Registration Fee - \$75.00 per family

Police Reference Check Fee - \$25.00 per person participating in duty days

Non-refundable Fees

A yearly membership fee is to be paid to the Co-operative upon registration for the following school year.

First and last month cheques (September and June) must be submitted together at the June General Meeting and are non-refundable. Postdated cheques covering the monthly tuition fees for the school year must be paid at the September General Meeting and will be returned if your child is withdrawn from the program.

The monthly fee is not dependent upon the number of actual school days in a particular month, it is an equal amount for all months. The fees are set on a yearly basis.

There is a cost for a Police Reference Check for each person participating in duty days.

Income Tax Statements and Payment Receipts

Upon request a record of payment shall be provided free of charge. Upon request the previous year's fees and other monies paid to the school will be provided to each family by the Treasurer/Bookkeeper. Tax receipts are not mailed unless requested. Receipts will not be issued until all outstanding fees and penalties are paid.

Failure to Pay

Each member of the Co-operative understands and agrees that prompt payment of dues is required for all fees of the Nursery School and for payments related to fundraising activities. The policy in the event of a failure to pay is outlined in the My School Policies and Procedures manual.

Withdrawal

The policy for withdrawal of a child during the school year is outlined in the My School Policies and Procedures manual.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

This section describes in detail the minimum requirements for all members joining My School Co-Operative Nursery. In addition to regular duty days, other **mandatory** Co-op responsibilities include participation on a Committee or on the Board, full participation in fundraising projects, clean-ups, and attendance at General Meetings.

Committee Work

My School is administered totally by parents. To manage this job, four Standing Committees have been set-up: Membership, Program, Space and Equipment and Special Events/Fundraising. Someone from each family (not necessarily the same one as the Duty Person) must work on one of these committees, and/or be a member of the Board of Directors. The Administrative Structure section of this handbook describes the mandate and function of the Board and of the Standing Committees.

Committee work requires time and energy, but usually gives parents a time to meet and talk without the children (meetings are usually at night), allowing for an expanded adult social life. Your roots in the community will grow!

Attendance at Meetings

All members **must** attend the General Meetings. General Meetings serve to ratify decisions of the Board, to recruit Board Members and Supportive Role volunteers for the upcoming year, for Committee Chairpersons to report on their work and for general members to raise concerns or issues that might require a vote. Attendance is taken at these meetings. Failure to attend two consecutive meetings may result in dismissal from the Co-operative. The annual Orientation Meeting is also mandatory for all members.

Clean-Up

In compliance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, toys, furniture and equipment must be washed regularly and kept in good repair. For this reason, all members are

required to participate in one evening of cleaning up in the classroom and outdoor toys during the school year. Board members are exempt from clean up duties.

Members will be assigned one evening in the year. If they are unable to come that evening, they are responsible for arranging alternate clean-up evening with another family.

Participation in Fundraising Events

Participation in all fundraising events is expected from all families involved in the school.

Duty Days

An adult from each child's family is required to serve as a "Duty Person", spending the morning with the children one to two times per month. (2-Day program: 1 morning per month. 3-Day program: 2 mornings per month). Duty Persons are helpers at the nursery school and are there to facilitate easy play among the children. However, they should not interfere with or dominate the children's activities. The teachers are in charge of the classroom and their instructions regarding each job should be followed. The job as a Duty Person is rewarding for most families as they watch their children master new skills and see budding friendships develop.

In accordance to The Child Care and Early Years Act, a policy has been set which does not allow duty parents to bring siblings in on duty days. A number of families usually have siblings not attending Nursery School, and exchanges may be arranged between Duty Persons for babysitting.

Disciplinary Procedures for Failure to Meet Requirements

When a member fails to fulfill her/his duties and/or participation requirements the following shall occur:

- The member is contacted by a board member and reminded of their responsibilities. The two parties agree upon what specific activities the parent should undertake to meet the requirements.
- If there is no satisfactory improvement or a second occurrence in the school year, the Board will communicate a warning in writing.
- If there is another occurrence in the school year, the Board takes the necessary steps including possible expulsion. See Expulsion Procedure in the Bylaws.
- At the discretion of the Board, a Committee Chairperson may recommend that a member who cannot fulfill certain assigned duties be assigned an alternate job.

A GUIDE TO DUTY DAYS

Approach your duty day as you would a professional job. It is very important that you arrive on time and are prepared to work. The quality of your child's program depends on you.

- The duty roster will be emailed out to each member a couple of weeks prior to its starting date. When the duty roster comes out, check your days carefully. The duty roster will let you know whether you are responsible for snack or craft duty on the applicable duty day.
- If you cannot attend on your assigned day, change with another family and contact the Emergency Parent with the changes to keep track.
- The snack Duty Person should arrive by **8:50 a.m. sharp** to help set up for that day. The craft Duty Person should head to the playground by **9:00 a.m. sharp** to help set up the playground.
- If you are going to be late, phone the teachers at 416-516-2397 or text the Emergency Parent so they will know that you are coming and when to expect you.
- If you are unable to make it to work on your day, please contact another parent to switch with you. Please note that the Emergency Parent does not cover someone else's duty day unless it is a last minute emergency.

Communicating with Children in the Classroom

- Relax, be calm and understanding. Give children a chance to get used to you.
- Help a child to help himself by encouraging him to be as independent as he is able. Always ask, "Would you like me to help you?" first.
- Sit down whenever possible when participating or watching.
- State suggestions or directions in a positive way.
- Give a child a choice only when there is a choice.
- Avoid shaming, labeling behavior, and comparing children.
- Praise the children for what they are doing, for their abilities, for sharing, for friendliness, etc. Praise is very uplifting to the child and builds his confidence.
- Painting: print their names on their paper.
- Toileting: try to be as positive as possible in toileting/washing routines. These routines are an important part of the child's needs and provide for lots of learning experience. It should be a pleasant, leisurely experience rather than one in which the child is rushed and prodded.
- Please inform teachers of any changes in your child's life that might affect his behavior at school.
- If you wish to discuss your child's progress, please arrange a time with the teacher.
- Finally, if you have any questions or are in doubt about anything, please ask. Remember, you are only there part-time, so you may not always be aware of certain situations.

How to Play with Children

It can be challenging to interact with a group of young children. But with a little practice and some helpful tips it can be a lot of fun for everyone.

- **Give directions:** Make sure you have the child's attention. Get down to their level and have them look into your eyes. Directions should be concise and specific to avoid confusing the child.
- **Guide behaviour:** Use a positive approach, e.g., commend desirable behaviour and disregard minor unacceptable behaviour. Make positive statements and avoid saying, "no" and "don't." Instead try, "Chairs are for sitting on" or "The playdough belongs on the table." Be alert to the children's activities to avoid problems, e.g., redirect the child who is obviously going to knock down the blocks of another.
- **Encourage independence:** Encourage the child to do as much as possible for themselves. However, do not insist on complete self-help if they are clearly tired at the end of the morning or afternoon or becoming increasingly frustrated. Let children develop their own problem-solving skills. Offer suggestions when they cannot do it alone. Allow the child to choose their own activities. Avoid interrupting any activity in which the child is absorbed. Offer suggestions only if they seem to be wandering aimlessly.
- **Encourage creativity:** Help the child discover their own sense of creativity rather than conforming to adult standards. Refrain from participating in the arts and crafts program – a child cannot attain the level of skill of an adult and seeing a sample of an adult's work may cause a child to feel inadequate (if a child asks you to draw something, try saying, "If I show you my way, it will be my horse, not yours", or "You can think of so many things I can't." Ask questions to clarify the child's own ideas – "What are the important parts of a horse?" "What colour do you want to make it?" If a child asks you what to make, direct their thinking in a general way – e.g., avoid "Paint a tree with apples" and try, "Did you see anything interesting to you?" or "Let's see how many different things the brush can do."
- **Stimulate curiosity and learning:** When possible, ask leading questions to help the children discover answers for themselves – e.g., "What will happen if...". Encourage the children to become aware of their surroundings and explore the senses – touch, smell, hearing and sight. Draw attention to the little details. Children should be directed towards areas that interest them and should never be forced to participate in an activity that has little or no interest for them.
- **Accept each child as an individual:** Accept each child for what they are and what they can do rather than what you think they should be or should be able to do. Avoid making comparisons between one child and another. Help each child feel they have something to contribute to others. Take the time to get to know and understand each child. Show genuine interest in what they do.

Things to Watch for While On Duty

- Change children who are wet or dirty.
- Remind children to roll-up sleeves before water play or finger painting.
- Direct children to Kleenex when they need it.
- Watch for untied shoelaces.
- Straighten equipment and keep it orderly without restricting children's play.
- Help children to put away equipment they are finished using.
- Check to see that all clothes on children's hook are put on and done up.
- Check that all puzzle pieces are accounted for before putting away.
- Wipe up spills.
- Report equipment/toys that are broken or in need of repair to teachers.
- Keep the classroom doors closed. Do not leave propped open.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, the following is never permitted at My School by staff, duty person, student or volunteer

- Corporal punishment of a child
- Deprivation of a child's basic needs including food, drink, bedding, sleep, shelter, clothing or toilet use
- Exits, locked or lockable rooms are not permitted to be locked for the purpose of confining a child, or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision.
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose 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
- 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
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

Playground Supervision Duties

- Playground Duty begins at 9.00 a.m. Pick up a Duty Tag from the staff.
- There are two tags, each tag has different duties. Follow instructions on your tag.
 - a. **Monitor Gate.** Watch that no children get out when the door is opening and closing. Stand off to the side a little and ask the adults not to cluster at the gate so the teachers still have a clear view. Have families sign in their child as they enter into the playground. At the end of outdoor time, tidy toys in the toy box and lock it. When heading inside, stay with the teacher at the front of the line to assist with the children, and hold doors open.
 - b. **Supervise Climber.** Stay at the bottom of the climber, between the panels and the blue climbing ramp, as the spacing between the panels and the climber are 1 foot short of preferred requirements and require extra supervision. Assist children as necessary. At the end of outdoor time, tidy toys. When heading inside, stay in the middle of the line to assist with the children.
- Upon arrival, assist with taking the toys and mat out. Sweep any wood chips into the pit. Wipe down the slide if it is wet
- Wood chips must be kept in the pit.
- A garbage can, tissues and sanitizer is kept in or by the storage box
- Ensure all toys are in the box at tidy up time
- Keep children off the climber when the ground is frozen
- Be vigilant of straying children at all times
- Tags can be removed and hung on the hook at the end of the sink once indoors

Potential Dangers

- Climbing, other than on the jungle gym.
- Shovels or rakes waved in the air
- Throwing hard objects, sand or pebbles
- Wandering
- Big blocks piled high or unsteadily
- Broken equipment or toys with sharp edges
- **THE GATE TO THE PLAYGROUND MUST BE CLOSED AT ALL TIMES.**

Rules

1. Walk indoors – running is for outside.
2. Children must go down the slide with their feet first
3. Smocks should be worn when playing in the water.
4. Loud voices are for outside.
5. No toys or food should be brought from home. Breakfast should be eaten at home.
6. If someone else is picking up your child, inform the teacher via email or in

writing.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DUTY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF HIS/HER DUTIES. A COPY OF THE DUTIES ARE KEPT IN THE ROOM FOR REFERENCE.

Snack Duties

- 9:00 - Go to the playground, help set up.
- Pick up playground responsibilities tag from a teacher/hook
- 9:45 - Wash hands, put on gloves, clean table, snack area with diluted bleach
- Prepare snack/check allergy list. Sit at the table and serve individually
- Ensure child's hands are washed
- Serve snack on an ongoing basis until all the children are served
- Encourage conversation with and between the children
- Encourage children to clean up their space (set up dirty dishes bucket)
- Wipe tables with diluted bleach, sweep floor under the tables and in corners. Wash and sanitize dishes according to instructions posted. Complete dishes by 11.00 a.m.
- 11:00 - Tidy up time – stop your duties immediately. Assist with tidying the toys, encourage the children to put the toys in the appropriate spot
- Clean and disinfect My School toilets
- Complete duties when children are settled if necessary

Snacks

When you are a “Snack” Duty Person, it is your responsibility to provide and prepare the snack for 16 children. Please note that My School has a policy of **healthy snacks only**.

No juice or sweets please. All snacks must follow the snack guideline of the Canada Food Guide. For My School this means each snack will include at least 2 food groups i.e. fruit/vegetable, protein, whole grain.

Before bringing snacks to school, please check the Allergies List that will be e-mailed to you and posted by the snack area of the classroom. If your child has food allergies, please indicate those foods on your application form and inform the staff so they will be included on the Allergy List. Also provide an alternate snack (something that will keep in the cupboard) to be used on days when the provided snack is not appropriate for your child. **St. Vincent de Paul is a peanut-free zone.**

Sit with the children and enjoy and encourage their conversations. Create a relaxed and comfortable environment. Be prepared for spills and calmly clean up any accidents, offering reassurance when they happen.

Everyone should always be aware of possible choking hazards, such as raw fruits and vegetables. Cut food into smaller pieces if necessary e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes. Everyone should be vigilant for signs/symptoms of distress e.g. choking, gagging, coughing, etc. when children are eating or drinking. Parents will be informed should any such signs/symptoms occur.

Suggested Snacks

We keep filtered water in the fridge for drinking that is available for the children at snack time, and upon request. The school will typically purchase the cracker/bread product due to the high number of allergies. Variety is welcome.

The following are suggested to add:

- Veggies and dip, seaweed
- Fruit: oranges, apples, pears, bananas, melons, kiwis, raisins etc.
- Vegetables: carrot sticks, celery, green peppers, cucumbers etc.
- Yogurt, cheese, tofu, chick peas, protein etc.

Craft Duties

- 8:50 - Help set up craft – the teachers organize the craft
Pick up playground responsibilities tag from teacher
- 9:00 - Go to playground, help set up
- 9:35 - Help escort children back to classroom
- Help undress and settle children
- Ask a teacher if unsure of activity or require assistance
- Allow children to do for themselves
- 11:00 - Tidy up craft table if children are finished
- 11.10 Tidy up time – stop your duties immediately. Assist with tidying the toys, encourage the children to put the toys in the appropriate spot.
- Complete your snack duties when children are settled.
- Continue clean up duties when children are settled
- Paint brushes and pots washed
- Glue sticks washed, pots saved or washed
- Smocks cleaned and put away
- If you are unsure of where something goes, place it on the counter by sink
- 11:30 - Ensure all jobs are completed

What to Do at Circle Time

The children are our first priority. If a child needs assistance on the carpet (e.g. comforting, settling down), then remain on the carpet. If everything is settled, follow the list of JOBS TO DO posted on the classroom blackboard, e.g. wash toys, put art work on the bulletin board, organize buckets, tidy up clothes rack etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

My School will strive to protect children, staff and duty persons from the spread of infectious disease and to provide the children a safe environment to play in. Please read our complete Health and Safety Practices in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Sanitary Practices

Snack Preparation

Eating surfaces are disinfected daily before and after snack with a bleach solution.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is of the utmost importance in both children and adults to help reduce the spread of infection. Soap and disposable paper towels are used.

Wash hands:

- before and after handling food.
- after using the washroom.
- after taking children to the washroom.
- before and after glove use.
- after treatment/care involving blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions of staff, duty persons and children, even if gloves were used.
- after diapering
- after blowing noses.
- after picking or scratching the body.
- before snack.
- whenever hands get dirty

Hand Washing Routine

Please turn on the taps and have the children wash their hands in clean running water. There is hand soap beside the sink and paper towels should be made available to the children for drying their hands. A hand washing poster is displayed beside the sink area for reference.

Hand Sanitizer Use

Use when soap and water is not readily available e.g. playground. If hands are visibly soiled, use a moistened towelette to remove the visible soil first. Follow poster guidelines on sanitizer use.

Glove use

Use gloves when it is anticipated that hands will be in contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, or contaminated equipment and environmental surfaces. Gloves are for single use only. Follow poster guidelines on how to put on and take off gloves posted in the classroom.

Toileting

Staff will take children to the toilet.

- Be as positive as possible in toileting/washing routines. These routines are an important part of the child's needs and provide lots of learning experience. It should be a pleasant, leisurely experience rather than one where the child is rushed and prodded.
- Allow the child to do as much as they can by themselves and then assist for the remainder. Some children need help getting on to the toilet, pulling up and down pants etc. while other children may request privacy. Ask simple questions, e.g. 'Do you want me to help you or do you do this by yourself?' This can usually help you to assess their situation and respect their needs.
- Both children and adults should wash hands as above.

Toilet Training

Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's toilet training with the staff so that a co-operative and consistent effort can be achieved. Learning to use the toilet takes time and it is also usual for a child to regress. We are accepting when accidents occur.

Please send in ample changes of clothing throughout this time.

Diaper Changing

Staff will change diapers. Staff will collect diaper changing mat, wipes, plastic gloves, plastic bags, paper towels and disinfectant spray.

- Diaper changing procedures are posted in the washroom and should be strictly adhered to.
- Wrap diaper tightly in a plastic bag and dispose of the diaper in the diaper disposal garbage can.
- Disinfect mat with disinfectant and wipe with paper towels.
- Wash hands according to the hand washing procedures.
- Place soiled clothing in a tightly sealed plastic bag and place in child's locker to be washed at home.

Water/Sensory Tables

The water tables are filled with fresh water and sanitized at the end of each day the water table is in use.

Children with cuts, sores etc. on their hands are not permitted to use a communal water/sensory table.

Cups and other open vessels are not used so that children are discouraged from drinking water in the water table.

Water retaining toys should not be used.

Toy washing and Disinfection

- Toys will be washed regularly to ensure cleanliness and help stop the spreading of germs.
- Any damaged toy should be discarded.
- Clean-up nights will be organized every 6 weeks. Each family is required to participate in one clean-up night per year. The parent responsible for supervising the clean up will be trained in the correct use of the sanitizer.
- At the end of the school year, staff will have three school days to clean the toys before they are put away for the summer.
- Toys will also be cleaned regularly in the sanitizer on a weekly basis and documented, especially pretend food and other toys that children tend to put in their mouths.
- Any toy that a child has put in his/her mouth will be put in the sanitizer.
- When washing by hand, toys will be washed in hot soapy water and rinsed in hot water with a cap full of bleach in the large sink. (1/100 solution) Toys must be dried completely before they are put away. Use towels, and allow to air dry overnight if necessary.
- For large toys, wash with hot soapy water and spray with bleach solution.
- Outdoor toys will be given a thorough wash monthly.
- Clean-up nights will be documented in the Clean Up Log.

Room and washroom disinfecting

- High touch areas will be disinfected on daily basis.
- Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each morning

YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

To ensure the safe keeping of each child, all parent/delegate must be aware of the importance of the drop off and pick up procedures.

Any Parent /Delegate involved in the Nursery School needs to be familiar with the site of the playground and the classroom before the start of school in September. A Mandatory Orientation meeting is held in September to provide this information or you can contact the school and speak to a teacher if you are unsure where the sites are located. It is their responsibility to ensure any delegate e.g. grandparent, new caregivers, other parent etc. is also familiar with the school playground, the site of the classroom, and the procedures for drop off and pick up.

Drop off:

Drop off is from 9:05 a.m. in the playground facing Fermanagh Avenue.

- A Duty Person will be at the front gate with a sign in board. Sign your initials at your child's name, record time of arrival and comment on your child's general health.
- **Only use the front gate closest to the school entrance on Fermanagh. The rear gate is to be kept locked at all time.**
- One of the teachers will be close by the gate. Inform the teacher that you have signed your child in and they are in the playground.
- It is important that one of the teachers is present in the immediate area.
- Do not leave your child alone with a Duty Person, Class Assistant or Volunteer.

In the event of inclement weather, we will start our day in the classroom. The same procedure above will apply.

Pick up:

- Pick up is at 11.30 a.m. at the classroom.
- Wait in the hallway.
- The teacher will send each child out as she sees the parent/caregiver.
- As the hallway can be busy, ensure your child stays in your sight at all times and does not leave the hallway until ready to leave.
- If you wish to speak with staff, wait until other children have departed before entering classroom.

The First Days

Because preschool probably represents your child's first regular experience away from home, you should expect that he will require a little time to adjust to this new situation. The rate at which he will make this adjustment will depend on many things, chiefly age and individual needs. Please note that the 2-day children may take longer to adjust.

Your awareness of the following may help:

1. Prepare him/ her very simply for what he can expect when he/she goes to My School (e.g. teachers, children, other parents, toys, painting, stories). Avoid an exaggerated picture of fun and joyous times and do not drill good behavior in advance.
2. Be prepared to come and stay with him/her at school until he feels reasonably secure. How long you should remain (one hour, one day or several days) can be worked out between you and the teachers according to your child's needs. Please note it may take some time for the child to transfer the parent-related trust to the teaching staff.
3. Do not expect your child to walk in and immediately accept fifteen other children as playmates – even if he is normally a very friendly child. He/she may prefer to sit on the sidelines and observe. The teachers will help encourage his/her participation in group activities but they will not force him.
4. Do not hesitate to discuss any problems concerning your child's adjustment to My School with the teachers.

A Day at My School

9:05 Arrival

Children are welcomed in the playground where they have the opportunity to run around, climb, play with trucks, dinosaurs and animals, dig with shovels and buckets, build with blocks etc. or read a story with the teacher.

9:35 Come indoors and get ready to play

The classroom is well equipped for playing/learning activities that are set-up in accordance to the theme. Children are encouraged to engage in the various areas of the classroom of their choice, such as our dramatic play area, paint easels, sensory and water tables, science and math activities, puzzles, listening centre, play dough table, smaller table toys, larger toys and blocks on the carpet, and the reading area. Small groups work on various projects with teachers and duty persons at the tables to help develop fine motor skills, creativity and language. When inclement weather has not allowed us to play outdoors, the children take turns playing on bikes in the hallway. Toys and activities are rotated weekly. Our weekly plan is posted on the hallway bulletin board and on our website for parents to see what is happening at My School.

10:00 – 11:00 Ongoing snack time

Healthy snacks are offered at the snack table. Chatting, good manners and independence are encouraged as children gather around the table when they are ready to eat.

11:00 Tidy up time

Everyone is encouraged to tidy up with adult assistance and get ready for carpet time.

11:10 Carpet Time

Stories are read, songs are sung, children move with music and finger plays.

11:30 Farewell for the day

Teachers take the opportunity with the adults to share their child's morning.

Washroom visits are on a 'need to go' basis throughout the morning.

Your Child's Clothes

A lost and found box is located outside the classroom. A pair of shoes/slippers should be kept in your child's cubby for winter/wet day use. Label all outdoor clothing and any other clothes left at school. Provide extra clothing for your child to keep in their cubby. It is preferable to leave their clothing/shoes at school and not to bring a back pack daily, so they do not have to be carried in from the playground.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is celebrated at school with a special crown and card and everyone joining in the Birthday Song, with our plastic cake and candles, and a loot bag to take home. Parents do not bring in anything.

PURPOSE OF PLAY

“Play is the work of a child.” - Sutton Smith

Purpose of the Activity Centers

Playhouse:

The child gains confidence from 'play' situations, tries out familiar roles, e.g. mother, father etc., makes new friends, develops oral language, learns to share and be part of a group, has opportunity for dramatization (dress-up clothes), has opportunity for reading (food labels, soap boxes).

Construction Toys:

The child clarifies language concepts, uses new vocabulary, is stimulated to solve problems, experiments with space, shape, and relative size, gradually increases attention span, develops hand-eye coordination, develops small muscle coordination, learns to work with others, is stimulated to create, and works at his own level.

Blocks:

The child develops oral language, dramatizes familiar situations and tries out new roles, experiments with space, shape and relative size, develops large muscle coordination, releases energy, learns to work with others and share materials, is encouraged to plan and organize, is stimulated toward creativity, and uses written signs.

Puzzles:

The child increases his hand-eye coordination, develops visual perception, increases his attention span, and develops self-confidence.

Sand and Water:

The child is stimulated to create, discover the physical properties of sand and water (wet and dry), begins to measure and estimate, develops facility and oral language, learns to share and be part of a small group.

Library:

The child acquires an interest in books, begins to choose favorite books, extends his range of experiences, learns how to handle and care for books, and is exposed to a wider range of interests.

Puppets:

The child expresses himself through role-playing, experiments with new vocabulary, gains self-confidence, and learns to co-operate with others.

Painting and Craft Tables:

The child develops coordination, finds expression for his creative talents, develops oral language, gradually acquires an awareness of detail, and is given opportunities to concentrate, plan and organize.

Climber and Riding Toys:

The child develops large muscle coordination, gains confidence in own body's abilities, releases energy, learns to cooperate with others, has the opportunity to dramatize and role-play, and develops oral language skills.

Snack Table:

The child develops appropriate social behaviour in a relaxed and comfortable setting. Manners are encouraged: making requests appropriately, taking turns, showing respect for their peers sitting beside them etc. Through chatting with their peers and the Snack Person, vocabulary and confidence are also developed.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SUPERVISION

The medical forms for both parents and children are kept in the school in a confidential file.

Do not send your child to school if any of the following occur which may affect the child's normal functions:

- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Fever
- Contagious viruses
- Pinkeye
- Any infections (ear, throat etc.)

If a child in the school develops symptoms of illness, the parent (or, if unable to be contacted, the alternate person designated by the parent) shall be notified so that the child can be taken home a.s.a.p. The child will be isolated from the other children until they are picked up.

It is at the discretion of the teachers if a child is considered to be too sick to be at school.

The staff should be notified if your child is absent. Parents should call the school at 416-516-2397 or e-mail the Supervisor.

The parent should note his/her child's allergies first on the application form, which will then be transferred to the allergy list posted in the classroom.

When a serious accident or illness occurs to a child in the school, the teacher-supervisor will remain with the child, the other teacher will stay with the class and the Duty Person will call an ambulance if necessary and notify the parents. The teacher-supervisor would accompany the child in the ambulance. Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedure will be followed.

The teacher shall permit at any time inspection of the nursery by the local Medical Officer of Health or any person designated by him/her.

The teachers should be informed immediately of any suspected communicable medical problem. The teacher shall post a notice and inform Public Health where necessary.

In the event of accidents, falls, etc., an "Incident" form with two copies is to be filled out by the witness and to be initialed by the teacher. The original will be filed in the classroom and copies given to coordinator and parent.

COMMUNICATION

Bulletin Boards, Parent Mailbox, Website and E-mail

A monthly newsletter is sent out, and posted on our bulletin board to keep parents up to date with programming activities, special events, Ministry requirement changes, etc. with last minute additions and changes e-mailed to everyone. The minutes of our Board Meetings will be sent to everyone and posted on our bulletin board.

In February of each year, families will be invited to give their thoughts, considerations and suggestions of how the school can best move forward via a confidential survey regarding the program, the space and the teachers. My School encourages families to offer input to the staff and the Board of Directors at any time throughout the year.

It is the responsibility of each member to keep in touch with the school's activities. Read the bulletin board in the hall outside the classroom for any notices, reminders or duty schedules, check e-mails and the website on a regular basis for newsletters, duty rosters, telephone lists, reminders etc. It is the parent's responsibility to pass on information to any designate duty person. At the beginning of each school year parents will be given a password to the parent's section of the website to access posted information. If you would prefer a paper copy, please inform one of the teachers.

Consultative Procedure

If members have any suggestions or concerns regarding the school, they should contact the Vice-President. The Vice-President will direct the member to the appropriate board member for action.

The complaint procedure is outlined in Section 13.0 of the Bylaws.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

A Board of Directors consisting of the following members runs My School's day-to-day business:

- President
- Vice-President (Chair, Human Resources Committee)
- Treasurer
- Secretary (Chair, Communications Committee)
- The Teachers (only one vote)

Chairpersons for the following committees

- Programming
- Membership
- Social/Fundraising

This Board meets on an average of once every four to six weeks. Decisions made at the board are communicated to the general membership at General Meetings and sometimes through the newsletter. Minutes of board meetings are posted on the bulletin board outside the classroom. Following is a brief description of the specific function and duties of each board member and of each Standing Committee:

President

- Co-ordinates the activities of the members of the board
- Directs members' inquiries to the appropriate officer
- Prepares agenda for General and Board meetings with secretary
- Chairs the General and Board meetings
- Has signing authority on behalf of the co-operative
- Votes at Meetings only when it is required to break a tie
- Acts as the liaison with the principal of St. Vincent de Paul
- Acts as the liaison with other community groups or agencies
- Helps in the orientation of new President
- Is a member of the Teacher's Performance Appraisal Committee
- Responsible for lease agreement with Toronto District Catholic School Board
- Responsible for heading a committee to secure a new space for the school in the event of our present space being no longer available.

Vice-President

- Seeks replacement for teachers in case of absence
- Acts as a liaison between teachers and members and between teachers and Board
- Directs members' concerns to appropriate committee chairperson
- Heads hiring committee when necessary
- Replaces President at board or general meetings when the President is unable to attend
- Has signing authority on behalf of the co-operative
- Handles parent complaints
- Is a member of the teachers' Performance Appraisal Committee
- Responsible for ensuring compliance of the My School Privacy Policy

Secretary

- Records and distributes minutes for all Board and General Meetings
- Types correspondence
- Posts notice of Board Meetings and Parent Bulletin Board
- Types and distributes Agenda at the General Meetings
- Has signing authority on behalf of the Co-operative
- Receives nominations for annual elections and conducts election at the Annual General meeting in June
- Records any changes to the Bylaws
- Responsible for preparing, typing and distributing our monthly newsletter.

Treasurer

- Keeps the Cooperative's general ledger and all financial records
- Prepares and submits all legislative returns on behalf of the Cooperative
- Has signing authority on behalf of the Co-operative
- Acts as Chairperson of the Budget Committee when needed
- Responsible for negotiating teachers yearly contract and salary review
- Disburses petty cash
- Prepares budget and presents it to membership for ratification at the Annual General Meeting in June
- Prepares the year-end financial statements - to be reviewed by a third party - and presents this to the membership
- Provides board with update on financial matters
- Chairs the Financial Committee which includes the Financial Recorder and the Payroll/Bookkeeper
- Ensures all three signing officers are registered with the bank by September

Payroll / Bookkeeper (Outsourced, works with Treasurer)

- Submits Toronto Pay Equity forms
- Submits Statement of Account for current source deductions and ensures payment of source deductions
- Submits Workers' Compensation forms
- Submits any injury reports with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario (WSIB)
- Submits employment records to the federal government
- Handles insurance agreement
- Pays teachers and other bills
- Issues T4 slips to teachers
- Issues Record of Employment forms for Unemployment Insurance purposes
- Attends Financial Committee meetings when necessary
- Issues child care receipts on behalf of the cooperative on request

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is a two-person committee responsible for monitoring and maintaining membership to full complement.

The Chairperson:

- Acts as a registrar
- Prints lists for teachers
- Recruits and advertises for new members
- Keeps up-to-date waiting list
- Sends out information with regards to school start, General meetings and the Orientation Meetings
- Passes on withdrawal notices, and information of new families to the treasurer, the duty roster person, committee chairs and teachers throughout the year
- Takes attendance, collects forms and cheques at General Meetings
- Notifies President of those who have missed two consecutive meetings
- Attends board meetings

Committee member: Assist with above duties as requested by the chairperson.

Program Committee

The Program Committee is responsible for assisting the teachers in delivering their program. They work cooperatively with the teachers and the members of the committee to develop and enrich the program. Decisions and/or input regarding the program must reflect the school's commitment to uphold and promote a non-violent, non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory environment for all children.

The **Chairperson:**

- Chairs programming meetings, records tasks delegated, and e-mails list of tasks to committee members.
- Responsible for coordinating and delegating the different functions of the committee as listed below.
- Will remind committee members of their tasks a week before their due date.
- Is a member of the teachers Performance Appraisal Committee.
- Assists with the End of Year Picnic

The **Committee members: Photographer:** One or two people to photograph the children for graduation certificates and throughout the year.

- **Cut outs:** craft cut outs are distributed among the committee.
- **Tasks distributed:** e.g collecting rocks, making purchases, project assistance
- **Special Events:** One or more persons to organize in-school events, i.e. magician, musician, clown, storyteller, dramatist, parties etc. in conjunction with the teacher's requests
- **Program Options:** One or two people may wish to organize or teach a creative movement or music class on a regular or part-time basis. Arrangements would be made with the Program Coordinator and teachers.
- Attends two or three evening programming meetings per year

Social/Fundraising Committee

The Social/Fundraising Committee is responsible for organizing social and community building events, including fundraising projects when necessary. The proceeds of these will be used to meet the fundraising goal, determined by the Co-operative as a whole.

The **Chairperson:**

- Ensures that each event has a designated Event Co-ordinator from the committee
- Ensures that funds raised from fundraising events are deposited in the bank; and that donors are recognized for their contributions.
- Attends board meetings and ensures that all members of the co-operative fully participate in events and activities.

Committee members: Organize and execute special event and fundraising activities. The Committee would research all possible sources of funds, including government agencies and foundations.

Non-executive Positions

Information Officer / Web Master (reports to President)

- Gathers, updates and maintains all contact lists in Google Mail
- Archives the school year's electronic files on a CD for future templates required in the running of My School business
- Ensures that all present and incoming members are familiar with the Google Docs and Google Mail system and procedure
- Compiles a members' list and all committee-related information with a password-protected code
- Maintains the website for current, incoming and potential new My School Co-op members
- Posts any changes, forms, photographs etc. to website
- Maintains domain name registration
- Responsible for ensuring the compliance of the My School Privacy Policy

Financial Recorder (Works with Treasurer)

- Tracks, records and deposits all membership fees and monthly fees

Emergency Parent

- A volunteer to be available on any of your child's school days on an "on-call" basis. This means you will check each day before leaving to see if all the Duty Persons have shown up.
- If a scheduled Duty Person has a last minute emergency, (i.e. the parent or child wakes up sick) and cannot do their duty day, they may call you to fill in and then owe you a day.
- **An Emergency Parent does not cover someone else's duty day unless it is a last minute EMERGENCY.** Parents must first try to switch with someone from the duty roster.
- The ideal candidate for this position does not work or have commitments during their child's school time and would not mind staying for the day on short notice or no notice at all. This person can better offer their time to the co-operative during mornings because **if you are an Emergency Parent, you are not required to sit on a committee.** Hence, no evening work!

Duty Roster Parent

- Is responsible for organizing the clean-up schedule and its distribution.
- Is responsible for creating a monthly duty roster. He/she prints copies to post in the school on the bulletin board and distributes it to each member via email. This happens ten to fourteen days before the beginning of each month.

Clean up night Coordinator (works with the Supervisor)

- Is responsible for coordinating and supervising six clean up nights per year
- Fixes broken equipment or arranges for it to be fixed

The Primary Parent

The Primary Parent is the parent/guardian who will be most involved in the school

The My School Handbook

Each Primary Parent, Duty Person, student and volunteer is required to sign that they have read and understood The My School Handbook.

The Program Statement

Each Primary Parent, Duty Person, volunteer or student is required to sign that they have read and understood The Program Statement.

Policies and Procedures Manual

Each Primary Parent, student and volunteer is required to sign that they have read and understood The Policies and Procedures Manual

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE FAMILIAR WITH ALL OF THE ABOVE SO
PLEASE READ WITH CARE.

Revision of The Policies and Procedures Manual, The Handbook, and The Program Statement

The above will be reviewed annually by Staff, the Board of Directors and the Primary Parent and all Duty Persons at the mandatory Orientation.

The above will be reviewed by students, volunteers, and substitute staff before participating in our program.

Ministry of Education

My School Co-operative is licensed under the Ministry of Education. Every year, a licensing specialist from the Ministry performs a full inspection of the nursery for license renewal. He/she reviews the program, policies and procedures, health and safety practices, and all requirements of the Child Care and Early Years Act. A detailed report is reviewed with the Supervisor and with the Board of Directors. A summary is posted in the parent bulletin board.

MY SCHOOL PROGRAM STATEMENT

My School strives to deliver positive and stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that enhances a child's social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development. This enhancement happens throughout a child's daily routine, which encompasses a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, quiet time, lunch and snack times.

Play is the cornerstone of our curriculum – understood to be essential to the healthy social and cognitive development of children. Through play experiences and guidance by specially trained staff, the children are exposed to situations that will stimulate:

- communication and social skills through child-child and adult-child interactions
- fine motor development
- gross motor development through physical activity and outdoor play
- self-esteem and decision-making capabilities
- curiosity
- initiative
- independence

When this approach to learning takes place along with staff's understanding of child development, each child's learning and individual development is supported and as a result, the child's competence, capacity and potential are maximized. We know that children flourish in all areas of development when they are in supportive, caring and responsive relationships with adults whose focus is on the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children.

We strive to provide a program that offers services to children and their families.

We believe that every child deserves to be treated with dignity, respect and equality. We honour and respect all children's beliefs, culture, language and experiences acquired from their family and community.

It is also the duty of the school to ensure that any child with special needs is given the opportunity to excel and flourish physically, socially, mentally and emotionally.

We are open to all support services and aids in the community to train our staff, contribute to individual program plans or work in the program as additional support in the classroom. Our staff will work cooperatively in a professional partnership with all services in place for the well-being of the child. Service coordination meetings are required to successfully setup goals and discuss what the best interest of the child and their family is.

It is important to the success of our program to have positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and our staff. We encourage engagement and open communication with parents about our program and their children.

My School believes capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children.

Strategy

The strategies to achieve our program statement are guided by the work done on Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, How Does Learning Happen (HDLH).

We understand that learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators, and their environments.

We understand that for children to grow and flourish, the four following foundational conditions need to exist: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression.

These foundations are a vision for the future potential of all children and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting.

FOUNDATIONS	GOALS FOR CHILDREN	EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
1. Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world	Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them
2. Well-being	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being	Early childhood programs nurture a child’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self, as well as self-regulation skills
3. Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and play to develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovating
4. Expression or communication	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms including creativity, problem solving, mathematical behaviours and language development

11 Key Strategies

To ensure that My School delivers positive and stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that enhances a child's social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development we will adopt the following eleven key strategies:

1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well-being
2. Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, caregivers and staff
3. Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to regulate
4. Foster exploration, play and inquiry
5. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
6. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences
7. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time
8. Foster the engagement of and communications with parents
9. Involve local community partners
10. Support staff and others in relation to continuous professional learning
11. Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in strategies 1 to 10 on the children and their families

My School ensures that all new staff, students and volunteers review this program statement prior to interacting with the children; and, that all staff, students and volunteers review this program statement at any time that it is modified or at least annually.

Plan of Action

1. Being aware of how the day is planned allows for consistency, self-regulation, minimizes negative behaviors and promotes general well-being. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress." (HDLH, p. 30). **In support of this, we will prepare and post (in a place accessible to both parents and staff) a daily written and visual schedule that lists and shows (using real photos) when the activities and events will occur throughout the day.**
2. An intentional plan for learning experiences that children will be exposed to, promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program. "As defined in Early Learning Framework,

early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). **In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan that describes the learning experiences planned for the children or documented by the end of the day in each curriculum area. The Program Plan will be posted on the Family Bulletin Board.**

3. Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Staff will encourage families to be active participants in their child's care environment "Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies. They listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experiences in the world around them. Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families, and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgment to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being." (HDLH, p. 19). **In support of this, we will deliver learning experiences that meet the individual physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the children.**
4. Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be developmentally appropriate and safe for children. Materials reflecting people with disabilities/diverse cultures will be placed in an inclusive manner throughout the room. "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 and complex open-ended materials that children can use in many ways." (HDLH, p. 20). **In support of this, we will ensure an inclusive indoor physical environment that is reflected in many different ways, such as planned learning experiences, displays, art materials, books, music, props, accessories and language.**
5. A visual environment created through displays that are inclusive and are changed regularly to reflect the recent interests and artwork created by the children promotes well-being. "Enabling children to develop a sense of belonging as part of a group is also a key contributor to their lifelong well-being. A sense of belonging is supported when each child's unique spirit, individuality, and presence are valued." (HDLH, p. 24). **In support of this, we will create a visual environment through displays that are the children's eye level, which promotes spontaneous interactions, logical thinking and memory recall. Displays will include parent participation in the program**

and encourage community involvement. Displays of people with disabilities, diverse cultures and family structures will also be placed in an inclusive manner throughout the room.

6. Materials reflecting sensory, science and nature encourage children to explore through cause and effect experimentation and observation. Continual exposure to these materials and experiences allow children to learn more about their environments. "Optimal conditions for learning occur when we are fully engaged. For children, this happens in play that evolves from the child's natural curiosity – active play that allows children to explore with their bodies, minds, and senses, stimulating them to ask questions, test theories, solve problems, engage in creative thinking, and make meaning of the world around them. These investigations through play fuse intellect and feeling to help children make connections and develop the capacity for higher-order thinking." (HDLH, p. 35). **In support of this, we will provide a Sensory program that includes documented learning experiences referring to one or more of the five senses, and a Science and Nature program that provides the children with the opportunity to experience natural objects and/or events.**
7. Providing independent experiences through different mediums for children, creative art promotes self-expression and individuality. Regular expectations within the Daily Schedule and children's interests allow for the time to complete/extend the creative process. "Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity" (HDLH, p. 42). **In support of this, we will provide an art program that allows for time to complete/extend the creative process. Safe art materials and equipment will be accessible to children and will be developmentally-appropriate. Materials reflecting diverse skin tones will be placed in an inclusive manner.**
8. A cozy and inviting environment will be created with various materials and accessories to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Planning language and literacy experiences every day encourages the children to use and develop their vocabulary, their questioning skills and recall abilities. Children will be able to retell stories and situations with the accessible props, thus providing opportunities to enhance storytelling experiences and language development. "Programs can best support emerging literacy skills by providing open-ended materials that foster imagination and symbolic play, including signs, symbols, and props that support print awareness in authentic contexts; by encouraging children to engage in play with words and sounds in song and rhyme; and by offering numerous opportunities for children to share books and stories." (HDLH, p.

- 42). **In support of this, we will provide books, language and literacy materials and programming in multiple learning areas that gives opportunities for enriched, extended learning possibilities. Shelves and toy bins will be labeled with words and pictures. Books, language and literacy materials will reflect diverse people/cultures, disabilities, different languages and real images. We will provide families opportunities to access literacy materials.**
9. By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, staff are promoting skills such as language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept. "Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children’s learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). **In support of this, we will provide music, accessories and programming that are age-appropriate and are played in a meaningful manner that benefits the learning opportunities and experiences during the morning.**
10. We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). **In support of this, we will deliver physical play learning experiences where children are given choices of physical play learning experiences whether indoor or outdoor.**
11. We will provide access to an ample selection of props and blocks, with which children can build, create and explore concepts. We will offer play that develops spatial awareness, manipulation of 2-D and 3-D materials and problem solving. Block play offers opportunities to work together, imagine, learn about cause and effect, patterning and sequencing that is child initiated. We will ensure spontaneous cognitive and manipulative learning experiences occur throughout the day. "Through play and inquiry, young children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond." (HDLH, p. 15). **In support of this, we will offer a program that supports the development of cognitive and manipulative skills of the children based on their cues and interests. Children will have access to a selection of accessories and blocks, with which they can build, create and explore concepts.**
12. We will provide children daily experiences with a multitude of materials and

accessories to encourage a natural play environment that enhances cognitive development. We will ensure spontaneous cognitive and manipulative learning experiences occur throughout the day. Planned and/or documented cognitive and manipulative experiences will lead children to higher learning, based on the children's observed cues and interests. "The focus is not on teaching a body of knowledge or a predetermined set of topics. Nor is it centred on children's achievement of a specific skill set. Programs are most effective when the content of learning is focused on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry." (HDLH, pg15). **In support of this, we will offer a program that supports the development of cognitive and manipulative skills of the children based on their cues and interests. Children will have access to a selection of accessories and materials, such as counting and sorting games, puzzles, cause and effect toys, lacing beads, sewing cards and shape sorters, etc.**

13. We will provide children a dramatic play environment and accessories, in good condition, which promotes imaginative play with three or more role-playing possibilities. Props will be used to enhance the area and the program plan focus. Children enhance their social interaction skills, emotional development and language extension through open-ended play. Mirrors in the dramatic area allow the children to see themselves from a different perspective "As children engage in various forms of social play and are supported to recognize the varied capabilities and characteristics of other children, they learn to get along with others; to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate; and to care for others." (HDLH, p. 24). **In support of this, we will offer Dramatic Play accessories and environment, and a program to engage in this environment.**
14. We will comply with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices to ensure we will provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for staff for diapering/toileting routines. In support of this, all accessories and washroom fixtures are in good condition and all diapering supplies are available and close at hand. Diapering procedures are posted in the washroom.
15. We will make food and eating time positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff/duty persons will encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. We will use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. We will ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils, dishes and furnishings are used and available to enable safe, and successful eating times. **In support of this, we will ensure that staff/duty persons encourage and never force children to eat food; staff/duty persons sit with the children while serving at the table; the children sit in small groups during meal and snack times; children self-serve all foods; and clean up when finished. We will ensure developmentally appropriate eating utensils, dishes and furnishings are available in the room.**

16. We will ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and staff. We will ensure compliance with Regional Public Health requirements for toy and equipment washing. We will provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at My School. "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress" (HDLH, pg 30). **In support of this, we will remove anything that is potentially dangerous to children. Anything done to maintain cleanliness, including toy and equipment washing, will follow the current Regional Public Health cleaning guidelines and schedules. We will ensure that the toy and play equipment washing schedule identifies categories of toys and play equipment, and that it is signed and/or initialed and dated by staff when complete; as soon as toys and/or play equipment become soiled, they will be properly cleaned.**
17. We will ensure environment and practices for proper hand hygiene procedures that promote healthy living. We will support the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. **In support of this, we will have staff/duty persons role-model proper hand-washing procedures for the children and will post the Toronto Public Health handwashing poster. through the use of the visual hand-washing schedules. Gloves provide barriers to potential illnesses and exposure to harmful materials and will be worn by staff when necessary. The supervisor will monitor the staff's/duty persons' hand hygiene practices to support awareness and healthy habits.**
18. Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will have awareness of the individual children's cues while children further develop their self-regulation and self-help skills at these times. Positive interactions during transitions provide a supportive learning environment. Staff will be aware at all times of the number and names of children that are in their care. Documentation accurately reflects the location of all children in care throughout the morning. Staff will ensure all arrival and departure times are accurately documented on the Main Attendance Record in pen. Staff will complete written verification after all staff and child transitions. **In support of this, we will ensure that the Main Attendance Record always accompanies the whole group and that it reflects the names of the children who have departed for the day.**
19. We will ensure all adults promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with all children, peers and other adults in the room. Staff and duty persons will role-model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth. "When educators believe that all children have the right to

participate and when they use inclusive approaches, they are more likely to find ways to reduce barriers, understand how each child learns, and create environments and experiences that are meaningful and engaging" (HDLH, pg 36). **In support of this, we will ensure that staff/duty persons direct positive attention to all children, maintain a positive tone of voice, model positive non-verbal communication skills, display empathy and use teachable moments to further develop positive social behaviours.**

20. Staff will operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment and safety of all. **In support of this, we will ensure staff communicate with each other the location of the children and work together to ensure the whole room environment is supervised at all times.**
21. We will support staff/duty persons in their competencies to follow the cues of children and provide interactions that encourage children to extend their learning with activities that interest them and choices that support their learning goals. "When children initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, and problem-solve, make meaningful choices, and act spontaneously through play, they are more likely to be happy and get along well with others, to have lower levels of stress, and to be attentive and motivated to learn" (HDLH pg 35). **In support of this, we will provide children with choices, time and materials so that they may follow their own learning goals.**
22. We will promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. We will support the children as they learn to self-regulate their emotions and to recognize empathy. "Studies show that when educators modeled and helped children express feelings, recognize others' feelings, and help others, children developed positive social skills such as perspective taking, empathy, and emotion regulation and were less likely to engage in problematic behaviours."(HDLH, pg 24-25). **In support of this, we will ensure that staff/duty persons role-model how to accomplish tasks, address children by their name, assist children to process their own emotions and learn to identify the emotions of others, and provide encouragement on how tasks are completed.**
23. We will promote use of developmentally appropriate and individually tailored strategies to support the behaviour management of the children. "... an approach that emphasizes listening, responding to, and building on child-initiated communication and conversation can be a more effective way to promote children's language acquisition and their development of social skills, empathetic understanding, and ability to pay attention" (HDLH, pg 41). **In support of this, staff will use developmentally appropriate strategies to support the behaviour of the children within the room, while also role-modelling positive guidance strategies and encouraging children to problem solve as needed. Staff will consistently use developmentally**

appropriate strategies when re-directing the children and they will be aware of the individual behaviours of the children in their care and can anticipate potential situations.

24. We will encourage staff/duty persons to balance verbal/non-verbal interactions with children. We will support them to provide experiences and opportunities to assist in extending the learning with all children. We will help them play and role-model positive social interactions with the children. We will support staff to use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. We will support them to encourage the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they give every child a "voice"" (HDLH, pg 41). **In support of this, we will ensure that staff allow children to respond by using language or gestures, responding to gestures initiated by children. Staff/duty persons will model active listening skills; will participate in play with the children; and, where possible, they will use language to extend the children's vocabulary. Staff/duty persons will also encourage verbal and non-verbal interactions between children. Staff will play and role-model positive social interactions with the children.**

25. We will ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. **In support of this, we will ensure that children are being offered nutritional well-balanced meals and snacks that reflect the Canada Food Guide. Children who have allergies, special diets, food intolerance, special needs, medical needs or observances will be provided with nutritional adaptations. These adaptations are up-to-date and identified throughout the classroom and playground binder. All handling of food and preparation areas will be safe and sanitary, and at least one staff will be trained in safe food preparation.**

26. We will ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely, while being well-shaded and well-supervised. Physical play contributes to children's well-being through play; children learn turn taking, communication, sharing, as well as gross motor skills. Developmentally appropriate 3-D materials, balls and equipment are in good condition and accessible to children. "Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them." (HDLH, pg 19). **In support of this, we will ensure that time is scheduled to setup the playground or indoor gross motor play areas prior to children having access to them to decrease wait times and maximize children's participation. We will also ensure that any unsafe conditions or situations are quickly remedied and that staff have access to a communication device to quickly obtain assistance when needed. A first aid**

kit will be accessible to staff outside to deal with emergencies promptly. Storage will be provided for all outdoor equipment to ensure that it is stored and maintained in a safe manner.

27. We will ensure collaboration with local community partners. “Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them. It fosters a sense of belonging to the local community, the natural environment, and the larger universe of living things” (HDLH p19.). **In support of this, we will ensure collaboration for programming for individual children and that the sharing of information for individual children takes place only after both the parents and staff have signed the appropriate forms. Families will be invited to share knowledge and talents and off site visits in the local community will take place, as appropriate and with proper communication with parents. Resources will be provided to families to assist them in accessing programs and information within the community.**

28. We will support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is to “provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth”. **In support of this, we will provide staff with resources to pursue appropriate professional learning and growth.**

Practice

The following practices implement, monitor and evaluate our action plans and allow us to continually improve our performance.

1. My School ensures that all new staff, students and volunteers review this program statement prior to interacting with the children; and, that all staff, students and volunteers review this program statement at any time that it is modified or at least annually.
2. Annually, parent/family surveys will be conducted to assess our performance against the 11 Key Strategies outlined in the Program Statement.
3. Each Program Plan of Action will undergo an annual assessment for compliance and necessary updates.
4. Board meetings will include a discussion evaluating performance against the Program Statement and a plan for improvement should the My School Board of Directors (the Board) consider it to be appropriate.

5. Annually, a staff meeting will be scheduled to review and discuss performance in relation to the Program Statement and to set goals for the upcoming year.
6. Staff will share the goals and performance (relating to the Program Statement), as discussed at the annual staff meeting with the Board and document and incorporate their feedback into the plan for the upcoming year.
7. In order to support staff in their continuous growth and professional learning, a professional development budget for each staff will be established to support the Program Statement needs.

Compliance With The Program Statement

My School will ensure compliance of staff, duty persons, volunteers and students with the approaches set out in the Program Statement by:

- Monitoring of staff, duty persons, volunteers and students as outlined in the Compliance and Contraventions Policy and Procedures;
- Ensuring staff are familiar with the Program Statement and reviewing annually;
- Families, students, volunteers and duty person reading the Program Statement prior to interacting with any children and reviewing the Program Statement with parents at the September Orientation Meeting;
- Addressing an incidence of non-compliance through discussion in confidence with the supervisor and the individual involved with a reminder of the expectations of the Program Statement. Incidents of non-compliance will be noted in a log book (following the Procedure for Reporting a Potential Incident) kept in a secured environment; and
- Following the Compliance and Contravention Policy and Procedures if the situation re-occurs and there seems to be no resolution.

Development of The Program Statement

Staff and the Board have contributed to the development of The Program Statement. It reflects the shared vision of the people who are a part of the My School program. It is a living document and will be developed and reviewed as each year progresses to ensure it is aligned with our philosophy and the Ministry's policy statement.

IMPLEMENTING OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES – AN EXPANSION ON OUR PROGRAM STATEMENT

Recognizing the variety of people involved in My School, i.e. staff, duty persons, volunteers and students, the following has been designed to offer more information and expand on our Program Statement. The following 11 Key Strategies are from The Ministry of Education Child Care Manual, page 69.

1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well-being

- My School has in place policies and procedures that outline practices that will nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
- Snack time is unhurried and includes conversation between both the children and adults. Children are encouraged to serve themselves with the adult overseeing helpings. Snacks are provided by the families and are checked daily by the staff to ensure they follow the Canada Food guide and do not conflict with any food allergies. The snack is written in the Daily Log Book, which is accessible to parents/designates.
- Staff will put the need of each child first, will respect their words, wants and needs and allow each child to feel their needs are being met and that they are safe and cared for. Then the child has a solid base and can relax and move to exploring the world around them.
- Staff will ensure that every child is given time and consideration daily.
- Stimuli will be considered; such as sound level and visuals.
- Opportunities for active and quiet time will be offered daily.
- We will provide opportunities and time to practice self-help skills. For example, each child has their own coat hook, and in all areas children are encouraged to do what they can for themselves, e.g. serve their own snack, put away utensils, do washroom routine, wash hands, select toys, tidy up.
- We will give children time – to self regulate, to relax, to enjoy the moment.
- Comfort will be offered to any child that is upset. Staff will help work through difficult moments.
- Children will be celebrated for big and small achievements, e.g. birthdays, toilet training, artwork, tower building, etc., and simply for arriving at school. They belong and are important.
- Staff will be supportive of children as they learn to identify, monitor and manage stress levels and engage in strategies for self-regulation (e.g. of emotions, attention and behavior). Voices will be kept calm and soothing in moments of stress. Staff will be available physically and emotionally to the children.
- We will reach out to families who are experiencing challenges to support them and assist with accessing formal support agencies.
- Our environment will be set up to be safe, engaging, and encouraging of our philosophy that all children are curious, competent and capable.

2. Supporting positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, caregivers and staff

- At My School, we believe that connections between children, families and the staff play a key role in the well-being of our children.
- Positive relationships require taking the time to communicate to the families about their child's morning,. e.g. what activities they were involved in, how their morning went, how they were feeling, or what they were proud of creating. By taking the time to chat before and after school, as the children arrive or get dressed to leave, the staff make themselves available for conversation with the parents, building an open relationship that builds trust between the child, parents and the My School staff. Bridging between home and school, the staff and the families can laugh together and share their stories, creating a feeling of community.
- Taking an interest in the children's conversations, giving opportunities to expand their conversations, asking about their families and what they did at the week-end are all easy strategies to build that special relationship with our children.
- We watch for body language and other forms of self-expression. It is important to connect with each child and recognize and value of his or her unique spirit, individuality and presence.
- We do our best to be attuned to the physical and emotional states of each child and respond in a sensitive manner to build trust that their needs will be met, building confidence they are precious and worthwhile.
- Staff will be watchful for how they can support relationships between children as they initiate, respond, collaborate, celebrate, and demonstrate care for others.

3. Encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to regulate

- The ability to self-regulate is an important component of children's development..
Self-regulation is different from self control (resisting an impulse) or compliance (suppressing behavior to avoid punishment or attain a reward).
- Staff/duty persons will be respectful of what the child is interested in and what the child is trying to communicate and also be willing to share their own perspective in a positive and meaningful way to continue the exchange.
- Staff/duty persons will be attuned to how the child is feeling and respond to their varied cues and communication.
- Staff will set up the program to help reduce stressors, e.g. few transitions, an ongoing snack time, children taken to the washroom individually.
- Being aware of stressors for each child, being able to reduce the stress, and re-frame the behavior in a caring, supportive manner will allow children to recover more quickly from stress.

- Staff/duty persons will watch for opportunity to facilitate conversation between children by helping children listen to and express themselves to one another.
- Staff/duty persons will both initiate conversation and allow the child to lead the conversation.
- Staff/duty persons will be aware of the many ways children communicate and respond with sensitivity. For example, child may give a cue with his/her body language that they do want to be physically comforted and a little time and space is needed.
- Art activities are less adult determined, more child directed and children are encouraged to express themselves through drawing, painting, sculpture, movement, music, and storytelling to communicate their ideas and understanding of the world.
- Storytelling is important and is offered throughout the morning where conversations of families, of different experiences, of ideas, etc., are encouraged.
- When problems arise between 2 or more children, staff will give the children the opportunity to solve the problem to the best of their ability, making their presence known and stepping in to assist when necessary to facilitate the children using their eyes, ears and words.

4. **Fostering the children's exploration, play and inquiry**

- At My School, we believe that each child is an active learner who explores their world with body, mind and senses.
- Available to the children are a variety of interesting, good quality, developmentally appropriate, open-ended materials that encourage children to initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, make meaningful choices and act spontaneously through play.
- Children are encouraged, but not forced, to participate in all activities.
- Materials are appropriately accessible allowing for choice.
- The environment is designed for easy flow to ease clumping together and frustration.
- Opportunities for group and individual experiences are available. For example individual painting on the easel, large boxes on the floor for a group of children to paint.
- If beneficial, adaptations are made to ensure the inclusion and participation of each child.
- We will provide the opportunity for child-initiated and adult supported experiences.
- Staff are enthusiastic co-learners and engage with each child about his or her questions, theories and curiosities.
- Staff will assess the program and the environment regularly to consider what is working, what is not, how ideas/themes can be expanded.
- Staff will consider appropriate outdoor set up.
- To enrich our daily program, we offer music and movement classes with a professional instructor, 1 morning during each of the 2-day and 3-day programs for 3 months in the winter. Children have the opportunity to dance with scarves, sing, and move to music in many wonderful ways.

- We regularly throughout the year have a colleague play the guitar to enhance our song and story time. To sing and move with a musical instrument offers a different dimension and brings a renewed joy to carpet time.
- We invite, into the classroom, families who play an instrument, who have something work related or anything else they would like to share with the group.
- Annually, the programming committee is responsible for organizing several activities (puppet shows, concert, etc.) by professional organizations. For example, a group of small animals, brought to us by a company called Whimz, have come each year, and this is such an excitement and enjoyed by staff, children and families alike.
- Twice per year we branch out with an outing to the library.

5. Providing the opportunity for child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

Child-initiated experiences are those which children have indicated what they want to do and how. The children are the originators through their personal choice. In adult-supported learning, the staff takes a leading role, building on the interests and initiations of the children, and taking the role of supportive play partner, enabling the children to engage in a chosen activity, which would be unlikely to be possible without an adult.

- The morning has a lengthy unstructured free play time to give children the opportunity to explore at their own pace in a way that makes sense to them
- The classroom environment will be set up to offer a choice of play and art materials.
- Toys can be mixed and matched and moved around.
- Staff will engage in activities such as lotto games, a giant floor puzzle, putting together a extensive train track, etc.
- Small group activities where children can come and go - e.g. building a high tower, painting a bear cave - will be both planned and responsive to the children's current interests.

6. Planning for and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported

- Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion is important. Props, posters, toys and books will reflect various capabilities, cultures and families.
- Staff understand that positive experiences in early childhood set the foundation for life-long learning, behavior and well-being and will create opportunities for children to learn through play, based on their interests and what challenges them through an intentional, planned program. A weekly program plan will be designed and implemented by the staff and posted on the bulletin board and the website.
- If beneficial, adaptations will be made to ensure the inclusion and participation of each child.

7. Incorporating indoor and outdoor play, active play and opportunity for quiet time

- Planning will include outdoor time, and will include activities to promote gross motor, fine motor, cognitive and dramatic skills. For example, bubbles, magnifying glasses, balls, capes, buckets and shovels, stepping stones and various toys will be offered. During inclement weather there will be bikes/balls out in the hallway.
- Opportunities for quiet time can be found in the book corner, the sensory table and the sand table.

8. Fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

Being a Co-operative our school brings a rich variety of skills and talents from the families involved. Our Board heads the program, and all families participate in many different ways from belonging to a committee to cleaning the classroom. Everyone does his or her share, and everyone contributes.

It is the goal of My School that the staff, the Board and the membership work together to ensure the quality of our program, with reference to our Program Statement, by implementing the following guidelines:

- The Board meets every 6 weeks to discuss all aspects of the program on the membership's behalf.
- Families and friends are always welcome to spend a morning at the school.
- Duty days foster attachment, participation, positive relationships and enjoyment for everyone. Families watch their children as they progress throughout the year.
- Social activities held outside the school hours are planned to include both family and adult only events.
- The programming committee meet three times per year and are invited to share thoughts and ideas to add to the daily programming.
- The programming plan is posted on the bulletin board and on the website for parents/caregivers to see and share the days' activities with their child.
- Parents/duty persons are required to respond to an annual Evaluation Survey of the program including the staff's approach to child guidance, how the staff interact with children and each other, the daily programming, the environment, the duty persons comfort level on their duty days, and how effectively the staff communicate the goals of the school to the parents/duty persons. The survey takes place in February and the Board with the staff discuss the results and the recommendation in the March/April Board meeting. Staff will implement the recommendations of the Board in a timely fashion.
- We strive to keep our families informed via monthly newsletters, email updates, notices on our bulletin board and keeping the information up to date on the parents' section of our website.
- E-mails, telephone calls are encouraged after hours for parents who prefer confidentiality, and for parents who are busy during our open hours.

9. Involving local community partners and allowing those partners to support the children, their families and the staff

- We welcome outside agencies that may support the development of the individual child where required, including training to encourage inclusion where appropriate and offering support to families in challenging situations.
- The staff will keep up to date on how to resource and utilize appropriate agencies.
- Staff will forward resource information to families.

10. Supporting staff and others in relation to continuous professional learning

- The Board ensures the budget and staff compensation is appropriate.
- The Board works closely with staff to ensure they have a strong voice in the school.
- At Board meetings staff opinions are encouraged, voiced and considered, and have a staff vote when decisions are being finalized.
- Professional learning activities are encouraged with time made available and financial support. The budget includes amounts for professional activities and staff coverage.

11. Documenting and reviewing strategies

- Time will be allotted for staff to discuss, assess and document.
- We recognize continuity is important in all areas by all staff.
- Staff will routinely assess the mornings activities; what worked; what could be improved; what were the children interested in; how can it be expanded; what was not so interesting and make adjustments to the program.
- Staff will share and discuss observations of the children (social, emotional, intellectual and physical), document where appropriate and consider how to incorporate observations into the program planning.
- Staff will recognize when further resources are required.
- Staff will allocate enough time to plan for upcoming programming, organize supplies, rotate toys, etc.