

Hester How Early Learning Centre Program Statement

Revised: April 2025

Approved by Board of Directors: April 25, 2025

This Program Statement captures the philosophy and goals that guide our program for our children. It describes the strategies we use to realize these goals, the plans of action to execute the strategies, and the practices to implement, monitor, and evaluate those action plans, and continually improve our performance.

Program Statement Framework

Our Program Statement describes the following:

- The philosophy which captures our goals
- The strategies which are our approaches to realize our goals
- The plans of action which execute these strategies
- The practices which implement, monitor and evaluate plans, and continually improve our performance

Our Philosophy (goals)

- Inclusive enriched childcare environment
- Honors and respects all children's beliefs, cultures, languages, and experiences acquired from their family and community
- Promotes health and well-being
- Fosters the children's exploration, play and inquiry as a key goal
- Capture and document our practice to reinforce learning
- Support all children's ability to self-regulate, so children feel comfortable and confident
- Foster the children's health and well-being indoors and outdoors
- Form trusting relationships with children and their families
- Provide everyone with a sense of belonging
- Children learn to: care about other people; understand others' feelings; cooperate and share; express their opinions; resolve conflicts; and develop self-competence, self-worth and self-regulation

Our Strategies (approaches)

1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well being
2. Promote an environment which ensures good nutrition and safe food preparation
3. Support positive and responsive interactions
4. Encourage the children to interact and communicate
5. Foster exploration, play and inquiry
6. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
7. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences
8. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time
9. Foster the engagement of and communication with parents

10. Involve local community partners
11. Support others in relation to continuous professional learning

Our Plans of Action

The Plans of Action in each of these topic areas are the means to execute our strategies:

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| 1. Daily written and Visual Schedule | 18. Toys & Play Equipment Hygiene |
| 2. Program Plan | 19. Educator & Children's hand Hygiene |
| 3. Learning experiences | 20. Transitions and attendance verification |
| 4. Indoor physical environment | 21. Positive Atmosphere |
| 5. Displays | 22. Supervision of children |
| 6. Art and Sensory | 23. Fostering Children's independence |
| 7. Books, language & literacy | 24. Development of Self-esteem |
| 8. Music and accessories | 25. Behaviour Guidance |
| 9. Physical play learning Experiences | 26. Communication and Extending Children's Learning |
| 10. Cognitive & manipulative | 27. Menu and/or Snack Adaptations |
| 11. Science & nature | 28. Food Substitutions |
| 12. Block & Construction | 29. Preparation, Handling and Transportation of Food |
| 13. Pretend play | 30. Health and Safety Kitchen and/or Food Preparation Area |
| 14. Care Practices | 31. Connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions |
| 15. Meals and Snack time | 32. Outdoor Playground environment |
| 16. Cribs and bedding | |
| 17. Health & Safety | |

Our Practices

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

As we believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, families and children, evidence of our practice is captured in our documentation.

As educators who deliver high-quality early years programs, we also know that you are never done. Our commitment to continuous improvement will be achieved by policies and practices that embrace the program statement.

1. All new educators on hiring, and all existing educators (annually) will acknowledge and review the following:
 - This program statement document
 - All relevant and attached guidelines
2. Parent feedback will be invited informally annually to assess performance against the 11 key requirements/strategies.
3. Internal Rating (AQI) will be conducted annually for each program.
4. Undertake monthly educators meetings. Standing agenda item to discuss performance against the program statement and or plans for improvement for next month.
5. Each monthly educators meeting will, on a rotation basis, include on the agenda, one of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the How Does Learning Happen (HDLH) document. Educators will discuss and reflect on current practices against this strategy, and any opportunities for improvement will be captured.
6. Undertake quarterly director/educator program report to board meetings. The agenda item to discuss performance against the program statement and or plans for improvement for next period.

7. Staff annually to review and reflect on our performance and capture outcomes and set goals for the next period.
8. Share “performance outcomes and goals review” with Board/Management and document and incorporate their feedback.
9. Budget a professional development investment for each staff and align the professional development with the program statement needs.
10. The annual educator performance review will include a self-assessment of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document. Educators will annotate the assessment with an example of each and identify any goals for improvement for the next year.

Our Philosophy (Goals)

At Hester How Early Learning Centre, our mission in programming is to provide play-based, flexible, adaptive, dynamic and high quality experiences to meet the needs of every child in an inclusive environment.

We believe that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential, and that the four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish are: **belonging**, **well-being**, **engagement** and **expression**.

The principles of ELECT and the Continuum of Development are used as the Early Learning Framework (ELF) to guide and support meaningful pedagogy.

As qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators we are knowledgeable, responsive and reflective in practice, and our roles are multi-dimensional. We collaborate with our directors, while making connections with the community, co-learning with families and children, and seek out professional development opportunities in order to provide for continuous professional learning.

We:

- Cultivate and support authentic, positive and responsive relationships and interactions to create a sense of **belonging** among and between children, parents, educators, various resource consultants and the world around us, by creating a program that is inclusive, and fostering that sense of belonging by sharing observations and strategies while maintaining ongoing communication with families;
- Nurture children’s health, safety, nutrition and **well-being**, and support their growing sense of self, by considering the overall development of the whole child and taking a holistic approach to our programming;
- Provide environments and experiences to **engage** children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and enquiry, by designing indoor and outdoor environments and experiences that spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges that are responsive to individual capabilities, helping the children to extend the boundaries of their learning;
- Foster communication and **expression** in all forms, by modeling various, positive verbal and physical interactions, and encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way, supporting their ability to self-regulate by giving them opportunities to take initiative, tackle challenges with enthusiasm and persistence, and cope with and adapt to challenges, frustrations and the unexpected in everyday living.
- Continually review and document the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families in each program at our monthly program educators’ meetings, at which time the strategies are modified as required.

- We believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children.

Above all, we recognize the connection between emotional well-being and social and cognitive development and the importance of focusing on these areas holistically.

Our Strategy

Our 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:

- A sense of Belonging,
- A sense of Well-Being,
- Opportunities and support for Engagement, and
- Opportunities and support for Expression.

We will adopt the following 11 strategies to create these conditions:

1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well being
2. Promote an environment which ensures good nutrition and safe food preparation
3. Support positive and responsive interactions
4. Encourage the children to interact and communicate
5. Foster exploration, play and inquiry
6. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
7. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences
8. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time
9. Foster the engagement of and communications with parents
10. Involve local community partners
11. Support others in relation to continuous professional learning

Plans of Action for our Infant Program

The Plans of Action listed below, are a means to execute the 11 key strategies required to support the Program Statement requirement from Section 46.3 in the Child Care and Early Years Licensing manual from the Ministry of Education. The Plans of Action largely follow the City of Toronto AQI Guideline which Child Care Centers in the City of Toronto are required to follow.

Plans

- 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 prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-1*)
- 2) Executing an intentional plan for learning experiences that children are exposed to, promoting 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 prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-2*)

- 3) Educators use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Educators share with families and 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 deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-3*)
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments are developmentally appropriate and safe for children. "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 ensure an indoor physical environment that meets or exceeds the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-4*)
- 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 create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-5*)
- 6) Providing independent experiences through different mediums for children, creative art promotes self-expression and individuality. "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 provide an art & sensory program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-6*)
- 7) A cozy and inviting environment is created to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Children are 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 provide books, language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-7*)
- 8) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, educators promote 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 provide music and accessories and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-8*)

- 9) We 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 deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-9*)
- 10) Offer children daily experiences with a multitude of materials and accessories. Encourage a natural play environment that enhances cognitive development. 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 offer Cognitive & Manipulative and Science & Nature materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-10*)
- 11) 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. Pretend play is an opportunity to provide children an environment and accessories, in good condition, which promotes imaginative play. "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) "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 offer a Blocks & Construction and Pretend Play accessories environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-11*).
- 12) Following the individual cues of the children, and developing an awareness of what each child brings and how they adapt to situations and environments allow us to provide the care and learning that best respects and reflects their needs. "Gaining knowledge about children from multiple perspectives helps educators ensure that programs also value the unique and diverse characteristics of the children's families and the communities in which they live. It's not a "one-size-fits-all" approach." (HDLH, pg 18). In support of this we may develop an individual schedule for each child based on their needs and/or the family's requests and capture daily information to share with parents to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-12*).
- 13) Compliance with Toronto Public Health (TPH) procedures and practices. Ensure we provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for educators for diapering routines to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-13*).

- 14) Make food and eating time, including times when infants drink bottles, positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Educators encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. Use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-14*).
- 15) Ensure crib or cot and bedding is hygienically maintained. Educators show flexibility with regards to the routine of the room and the cues of the children. Family members are engaged for guidance in sleep routines as appropriate. Pay attention to how we are meeting the needs of the children and what changes need to occur if we are not. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for Cribs, Bedding and Sleep times described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-15*).
- 16) Ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and educators. Provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at the centre. "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 meet or exceed the expectations for Health, Safety, and Toy & Play Equipment care described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-16*).
- 17) Ensure environment and practices for proper hand hygiene procedures that promote healthy living. Support the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-17*).
- 18) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Educators have better 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. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions and Attendance Verification described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-18*).
- 19) Ensure all adults promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with all children, peers and other adults in the room. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-19*).
- 20) Educators 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-20*).
- 21) Support educators in their competencies as professionals in following the cues of children and providing 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 meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-21*).

- 22) Promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-22*).
- 23) Promote use of developmentally appropriate and individually tailored strategies to support the behaviour guidance 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, we meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-23*).
- 24) Support educators 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. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting Communication and Extending Children's Learning described in the attached guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-24*).
- 25) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Meal/Menu Planning, Centre Meal Requirements, Snack Planning and Requirements, Menu and/or Snack Adaptations, Food Substitutions, Preparation, Handling and Transportation of Food, and Health and Safety Kitchen and/or Food Preparation Area described in the attached guideline (*nutrition-AQI-guidelines-1-7*).
- 26) Ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely. Physical play contributes to children's well being through sport play; children learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the attached guideline (*Playground-AQI-guidelines-1-4*).
- 27) 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 meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions described in the attached guideline (*working-together-AQI-guidelines-1-4*).
- 28) Support educators in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "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".

Plans of Action for our Toddler Program

The Plans of Action listed below, are a means to execute the 11 key strategies required to support the Program Statement requirement from Section 46.3 in the Child Care and Early Years Licensing manual from the Ministry of Education. The Plans of Action largely follow the City of Toronto AQI Guideline which Child Care Centers in the City of Toronto are required to follow.

Plans

- 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 prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-1*)
- 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 prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-2*)
- 3) Educators use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Educators share with families and 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 deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-3*)
- 4) 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 create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-4*)
- 5) 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 provide a sensory, Science and Nature program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-5*)

- 6) 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 provide an Art program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-6*)
- 7) A cozy and inviting environment is created to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Children are 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 provide language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-7*)
- 8) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, educators 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 provide music and accessories and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-8*)
- 9) We 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 deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-9*)
- 10) Offer children daily experiences with a multitude of materials and accessories. 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. 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 offer a Cognitive & Manipulative and Blocks & Construction materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-10*)
- 11) Pretend play is an opportunity to provide children an environment and accessories, in good condition, which promotes imaginative play. Prop boxes are 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 pretend play 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 offer Pretend Play accessories and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-11*).

- 12) Following the individual cues of the children and developing an awareness of what each child brings and how they adapt to situations and environments allow us to provide the care and learning that best respects and reflects their needs. "Gaining knowledge about children from multiple perspectives helps educators ensure that programs also value the unique and diverse characteristics of the children's families and the communities in which they live. It's not a "one-size-fits-all" approach." (HDLH, pg 18). In support of this we develop an individual schedule for each child based on their needs and/or the family's requests and capture daily information to share with parents to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-12*).
- 13) Compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. To ensure we provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for educators for diapering routines to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-13*).
- 14) Make food and eating time positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Educators encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. Use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-14*).
- 15) Ensure cots and bedding is hygienically maintained. Support educators to show flexibility with regards to the routine of the room and the cues of the children. Parents are engaged for guidance in sleep routines as appropriate. Pay attention to how we are meeting the needs of the children and what changes need to occur if we are not. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for cots, bedding and sleep times described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-15*).
- 16) Ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and educators. Provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at the centre. "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 meet or exceed the expectations for Health, Safety, and Toy & Play Equipment care described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-16*).
- 17) Ensure environment and practices for proper hand hygiene procedures that promote healthy living. Support the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-17*).
- 18) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Educators have better 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. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions and Attendance Verification described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-18*).

- 19) Ensure all educators promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with all children, peers and other adults in the room. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-19*).
- 20) Educators 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-20*).
- 21) Support educators in their competencies as EL&C professionals in following the cues of children and providing 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 meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-21*).
- 22) Promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-22*).
- 23) 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, we meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-23*).
- 24) Support educators 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. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting Communication and Extending Children's Learning described in the attached guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-24*).
- 25) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Meal/Menu Planning, Centre Meal Requirements, Snack Planning and Requirements, Menu and/or Snack Adaptations, Food Substitutions, Preparation, Handling and Transportation of Food, and Health and Safety Kitchen and/or Food Preparation Area described in the attached guideline (*nutrition-AQI-guidelines-1-7*).
- 26) Ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely. Physical play contributes to children's well being through sport play; children learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the attached guideline (Playground-AQI-guidelines-1-4).

- 27) 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 meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions described in the attached guideline (working-together-AQI-guidelines-1-4).
- 28) Support educators in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "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 capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).

Plans of Action for our Preschool and Kindergarten Program

The Plans of Action listed below, are a means to execute the 11 key strategies required to support the Program Statement requirement from Section 46.3 in the Child Care and Early Years Licensing manual from the Ministry of Education. The Plans of Action largely follow the City of Toronto AQI Guideline which Child Care Centers in the City of Toronto are required to follow.

Plans

- 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 prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-1*)
- 2) An intentional plan for learning experiences that children are 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 prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-2*)
- 3) Educators use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Educators share with, and 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 undertake to deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-3*)

- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments are developmentally appropriate and safe for children. "Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, problem-solve, 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 ensure an indoor physical environment that meets or exceeds the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-4*)
- 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 create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-5*)
- 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 provide a sensory, Science and Nature program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-6*)
- 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 provide an Art program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-7*)
- 8) A cozy and inviting environment is created to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy enjoyment. Children are able to retell stories and situations with the accessible props, thus providing opportunities to enhance storytelling experiences and language development. "Opportunities for children to explore language and literacy through play contribute to their development of strong language and cognitive abilities in both the short and the long term." (HDLH, p. 42). In support of this, we provide books and a program that utilizes them to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-8*).
- 9) Educators expose children to various materials and accessories to promote natural opportunities for the development of language and literacy. Planning language and literacy experiences every day encourages the children to use and develop their vocabulary, their questioning skills and recall abilities. "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 provide language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-9*)

- 10) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, educators 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 provide music and accessories and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-10*)
- 11) We 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 deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-11*)
- 12) Provide access to an ample selection of props and blocks, with which children can build, create and explore concepts. Offer play that develops spatial awareness, manipulation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and problem solving. Block play offers opportunities to work together, imagine, learn about cause and effect, patterning and sequencing that is child initiated. "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 offer Blocks and Construction materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-12*)
- 13) Provide children daily experiences with a multitude of materials and accessories to encourage a natural play environment that enhances cognitive development. Ensure spontaneous cognitive and manipulative learning experiences occur throughout the day. Planned and/or documented cognitive and manipulative experiences 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 centered on children's achievement of a specific skill set. In the early years, 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 offer cognitive and manipulative materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-13*)
- 14) Provide children an environment and accessories, in good condition, which promotes imaginative play with three or more role-playing possibilities. Prop boxes are 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 offer Dramatic Play accessories and environment,

and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-14*).

- 15) Utilize guidelines for children to encourage safe, developmentally appropriate electronic media usage. Guidelines may include, but not exclusive to, frequency of use, duration, and sign-up sheet. Families/guardians are made aware in advance of media used in the classroom, and resources are available for alternative learning opportunities. Monitor games brought from home. In support of this, we ensure an electronic media usage environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-15*).
- 16) Plan for Compliance with Toronto Public Health (TPH) procedures and practices. To ensure we provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for educators to meet or exceed the expectations for diapering and toileting routines described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-16*).
- 17) Make food and eating time positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Educators encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. Use this time to engage and develop relationships with all of the children. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-17*).
- 18) Ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils, dishes and furnishings to enable safe and successful eating times. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for equipment required for eating and seating described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-18*).
- 19) Ensure cots and bedding is hygienically maintained. Support educators to show flexibility with regards to the routine of the room and the cues of the children. Families are engaged for guidance in sleep routines as appropriate. Pay attention to how we are meeting the needs of the children and what changes need to occur if we are not. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for Cots and bedding described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-19*).
- 20) Ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and educators. Provide health and safety resources on topics that are relevant to the children and families at the centre. "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 meet or exceed the expectations for Health and Safety described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-20*).
- 21) Ensure compliance to Regional Public Health requirements for toy and equipment washing as part of providing a clean and sanitary environment. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for toys and play equipment washing described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-21*).
- 22) Ensure environment and practices for proper hand hygiene procedures that promote healthy living. Support the individual child's lifelong learning of proper hand hygiene. In support of this we meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-22*).
- 23) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Educators have better 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. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-23*).

- 24) Ensure awareness at all times of the number and names of children that are in care. Ensure documentation on the Main Attendance Record accurately reflects the location of all children in care throughout the day. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented. Complete written verification after all educator and child transitions. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for attendance verification described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-24*).
- 25) Ensure all educators promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with all children, peers and other adults in the room. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-25*).
- 26) Educators 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-26*).
- 27) Support educators in their competencies as professionals in following the cues of children and providing 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 meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-27*).
- 28) Promote interaction with children in a way that fosters self-esteem. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-28*).
- 29) Promote use of developmentally appropriate and individually tailored strategies to support the behaviour guidance 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, we meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-29*).
- 30) Encourage educators to balance verbal/non-verbal interactions with children. Support them to provide experiences and opportunities to assist in extending the learning with all children. Help them play and role model positive social interactions with the children. "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 meet or exceed the expectations for supporting development of Communication Skills described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-30*).

- 31) Support educators 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. Support them to encourage the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "Educators can gain a deeper understanding of children's developing skills and evolving learning approaches and can support new learning by collaborating with children in discovery and sustained, shared thinking" (HDLH, pg 35). In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Extending Children's Learning described in the attached guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-31*).
- 32) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we meet or exceed the expectations for Meal/Menu Planning, Centre Meal Requirements, Snack Planning and Requirements, Menu and/or Snack Adaptations, Food Substitutions, Preparation, Handling and Transportation of Food, and Health and Safety Kitchen and/or Food Preparation Area described in the attached guideline (*nutrition-AQI-guidelines-1-7*).
- 33) Ensure children are able to engage in outdoor play experiences safely. Physical play contributes to children's well being through sport play; children learn turn taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship as well as gross motor skills. 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 meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the attached guideline (*Playground-AQI-guidelines-1-4*).
- 34) 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 meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions described in the attached guideline (*working-together-AQI-guidelines-1-4*).
- 35) Support educators in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "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 capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).

Our Practice

Our practices implement, monitor, and evaluate action plans and continually improve our performance. As we believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, families and children, evidence of our practice is captured in our documentation. As educators who deliver high-quality early years programs, we also know that you are never done. Our commitment to continuous improvement will be achieved by policies and practices that embrace the program statement.

Ministry-to-AQI Cross reference

Since there is not a 1:1 relationship between Ministry of Education requirements and the Plans of Action structure on the City of Toronto AQI Guidelines, the following table aligns the 11 key strategies with the AQI guidelines so that assessment documentation can be used to confirm compliance.

Strategies	Infant Program Plans of Action ("i" – infant AQI guideline)	Toddler Program Plans of Action ("t" – toddler AQI guideline)	Preschool Program Plans of action ("p" – preschool AQI guideline)	School-age Program Plans of Action ("s" – School-age AQI guideline)
1. Promote an environment which is healthy, safe, and supports general well being	i.1, i.2, i.3, i.4, i.5, i.8, i.9, i.12, i.13, i.14, i.15, i.16, i.17, i.18, i.20, i.22, i.23, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.8, t.9, t.12, t.13, t.14, t.15, t.16, t.17, t.18, t.20, t.22, t.23, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, p.5, p.10, p.11, p.15, p.16, p.17, p.18, p.19, p.20, p.21, p.22, p.23, p.24, p.26, p.28, p.29, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.4, s.5, s.6, s.10, s.11, s.16, s.17, s.18, s.19, s.20, s.21, s.22, s.23, s.24, s.25, s.26, s.28, s.30, s.31, Playground-AQI-1-6
2. Promote an environment which provides good nutrition and safe food preparation	i.12, i.14, i.17, nutrition-AQI-1-7	t.12, t.14, t.17, nutrition-AQI-1-7	p.17, p.18, p.22, nutrition-AQI-1-7	s.18, s.19, s.23, s.24, nutrition-AQI-1-7
3. Support positive and responsive interactions	i.1, i.3, i.7, i.8, i.9, i.10, i.11, i.12, i.13, i.14, i.18, i.19, i.20, i.21, i.22, i.23, i.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.3, t.7, t.8, t.9, t.10, t.11, t.12, t.13, t.14, t.18, t.19, t.20, t.21, t.22, t.23, t.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.3, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.16, p.17, p.23, p.25, p.26, p.27, p.28, p.29, p.30, p.31, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.3, s.6, s.8, s.9, s.12, s.13, s.14, s.16, s.17, s.18, s.25, s.27, s.28, s.29, s.30, s.31, s.32, s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
4. Encourage the children to interact and communicate	i.2, i.3, i.5, i.6, i.7, i.8, i.10, i.11, i.13, i.14, i.19, i.21, i.22, i.23, i.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.5, t.6, t.7, t.8, t.10, t.11, t.13, t.14, t.19, t.21, t.22, t.23, t.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.15, p.16, p.17, p.25, p.26, p.27, p.28, p.29, p.30, p.31, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.4, s.5, s.6, s.7, s.8, s.9, s.10, s.11, s.12, s.13, s.14, s.15, s.18, s.27, s.28, s.29, s.30, s.31, s.32, s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
5. Foster exploration, play and inquiry	i.1, i.2, i.3, i.4, i.5, i.6, i.7, i.8, i.9, i.10, i.11, i.21, i.22, i.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.5, t.6, t.7, t.8, t.9, t.10, t.11, t.21, t.22, t.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.15, p.25, p.26, p.27, p.28, p.29, p.30, p.31,	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.4, s.5, s.6, s.10, s.11, s.15, s.7, s.8, s.9, s.16, s.17, s.13, s.14, s.12, s.27, s.28, s.29, s.30, s.31, s.32,

			Playground-AQI-1-6	s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
6. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences	i.1, i.2, i.3, i.4, i.5, i.6, i.7, i.8, i.9, i.10, i.11, i.12, i.13, i.14, i.15, i.19, i.20, i.21, i.22, i.23, i.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.5, t.6, t.7, t.8, t.9, t.10, t.11, t.12, t.13, t.14, t.15, t.19, t.20, t.21, t.22, t.23, t.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.15, p.16, p.17, p.19, p.25, p.26, p.27, p.28, p.29, p.30, p.31, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.4, s.5, s.6, s.7, s.8, s.9, s.10, s.11, s.12, s.13, s.14, s.15, s.16, s.17, s.18, s.27, s.28, s.29, s.30, s.31, s.32, s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
7. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences	i.1, i.2, i.3, i.5, i.6, i.7, i.8, i.9, i.10, i.18, i.19, i.21, i.22, i.23, i.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.5, t.6, t.7, t.8, t.9, t.10, t.11, t.18, t.19, t.21, t.22, t.23, t.24, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.15, p.23, p.25, p.27, p.28, p.29, p.30, p.31, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.4, s.5, s.6, s.7, s.8, s.9, s.10, s.11, s.12, s.13, s.14, s.15, s.16, s.17, s.25, s.27, s.29, s.30, s.31, s.32, s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
8. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time	i.1, i.2, i.4, i.5, i.6, i.7, i.8, i.9, i.10, i.11, i.12, i.15, i.20, i.21, i.22, Playground-AQI-1-6	t.1, t.2, t.4, t.5, t.6, t.7, t.8, t.9, t.10, t.11, t.12, t.15, t.20, t.21, t.22, Playground-AQI-1-6	p.1, p.2, p.4, p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.9, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.13, p.14, p.15, p.19, p.26, p.27, p.28, p.30, p.31, Playground-AQI-1-6	s.1, s.2, s.4, s.5, s.7, s.8, s.9, s.10, s.11, s.12, s.13, s.14, s.15, s.16, s.17, s.28, s.29, s.30, s.32, s.33, Playground-AQI-1-6
9. Foster the engagement of and communications with parents	i.1, i.2, i.3, i.4, i.5, i.12, i.15, i.16, i.18, i.19, i.20, i.23	t.1, t.2, t.3, t.4, t.12, t.15, t.16, t.18, t.19, t.20, t.23	p.1, p.2, p.3, p.5, p.9, p.15, p.19, p.20, p.23, p.24, p.25, p.26, p.29	s.1, s.2, s.3, s.5, s.10, s.20, s.26, s.27, s.28, s.31
10. Involve local community partners	Working-together-AQI-1-4	Working-together-AQI-1-4	p.9, Working-together-AQI-1-4	s.2, Working-together-AQI-1-4
11. Support others in relation to continuous professional learning	i.2, i.3, i.4, i.12, i.19, i.20, i.23, i.24, Our-Practices-1-10	t.2, t.3, t.12, t.19, t.20, t.23, Our-Practices-1-10	p.2, p.3, p.4, p.25, p.26, p.29, p.30, p.31, Our-Practices-1-10	s.2, s.3, s.4, s.24, s.27, s.28, s.31, s.32, s.33, Our-Practices-1-10