

NEWSTEAD ACADEMY CHILD CARE

PROGRAM STATEMENT

OUR PRINCIPLES

Every child is special in the eyes of their parents and those who love them. At NACC, each child is also precious to us. As educators of young children, we believe every child is unique, depending on their previous upbringing and social experiences, of which makes them an individual with great potentials and capabilities. We support the child's growth and development with a holistic approach.

At the NACC, we understand that children learn through play. Play by definition is enjoyable, spontaneous, active, and undertaken without external goals and sanctions. This means that children are self-learners that do not require an adult to dictate what and how they should learn. As long as children's intrinsic motivations and choices in play are supported by responsive professionals in positive, developmentally-appropriate learning environments, a child will flourish. Children's innate curiosity and developmental potential will be maximized when they are allowed to exercise their autonomy in decision-making regarding learning and participation.

Our Mission

At the heart of what we do is to maintain an exceptional learning environment that fosters the physical, socio-emotional and moral development of every child for them to reach their full potential.

Our Vision

Our vision is to create a warm and inclusive family atmosphere, where all educators and families feel inspired to develop genuine partnerships with the focus on providing a dynamic learning environment for children to reach their full potential. Regardless of race, gender, age, ability, social status and/or family dynamics, each child is able to fully participate in all aspects of our program without discrimination.

Our Values

Communication

We are committed to carrying out conversations that are openly cooperative and collaborative. We welcome all perspectives, as well as value and respect all points of view. We give and receive information and feedback in a timely manner. We expect the same to be reciprocated.

Lifelong Learning

We believe that NACC has a responsibility to nurture the natural desire to be lifelong learners within both children and adults. NACC staff commits to efforts for professional and personal growth with equal importance given to fostering children's learning. As co-learners with our children and families, we embrace the opportunities that are presented to us for growth through our daily encounters.

Sense of Well-Being

There is joy and hopefulness in the work we do, as well as in the relationships we have with others. NACC cares about the overall health of our people; we understand that optimal well-being involves the maintenance of mental, physical, emotional, environmental and spiritual health. NACC acknowledges and supports the fulfillment of such needs.

Relationships

Relationships are the foundation on which the organization operates. We believe the quality of the care we provide is measured by the quality of the relationships we have with the children, families, employees, suppliers, funders, legislators and our environments. We are committed to ensuring these relationships are respectful, warm and caring, honest and open, as well as fair and equitable.

The Pursuit of Excellence

In our efforts to continuously improve, we are dynamic. We have the courage to lead, the willingness to take appropriate risk, and the strength to be creative. We are accepting of change that strengthens and improves us.

Fiscal and Corporate Accountability

We are committed to financial prudence and stability – to making decisions that take into account and are based on the short-, medium- and long-term goals and objectives of the corporation. We conduct ourselves and our business in a manner that is legal, moral and ethical.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

All children are unique with their own personality, strengths and needs, as well as their own learning style. It is our responsibility to tap into the children's potential and to develop strategies that help children to master all age-appropriate skills. NACC programs are designed to stimulate children's social-emotional and cognitive thought processes. They will be able to develop in a safe and supportive learning environment. NACC believes in fostering children's intrinsic desire to explore through providing a wide range of activity types, including but not limited to, creative arts, STEM, music & movement, dramatic play and gross motor exercises. Our programs will foster independence, self-esteem and problem-solving skills by respecting children's autonomy and decisions.

OUR PROMISE

At **NACC**, we promise:

- To keep children's best interests as the top priority in any operational decisions.
- To maintain the highest quality in operating a licensed child care centre for the education, care and guidance of children.
- To continually strive for improvements to the learning and/or working environment used by all children, families and staff.
- To provide children with activities designed to enhance all areas of their development in preparation for entering the public school system.
- To provide a clean and safe environment for children to grow in all 5 developmental domains: social, emotional, communication & literacy, cognitive, and physical.
- To never undermine children's capabilities and potentials.

OUR GOALS & APPROACHES

1. Promote Health & Safety, Nutrition and Well-Being Awareness

Keeping children healthy and safe is a top priority at NACC, as we understand that this is parents' primary concern and is the key factor in determining the level of trust given to our services. Therefore, we have developed relevant policies and procedures to guide staff in supporting children's overall development.

Some of the procedures in place include:

- Behaviour management policies and procedures
- Sanitation and disinfection procedures
- Food-handling certification requirement of staff
- Menu planning in consultation of Canada's Food Guide
- Monthly emergency drills, includes but not limited to fire evacuation and lock downs procedures
- Standard First Aid and CPR Training

2. Develop, Maintain & Support Reciprocating Relationships

We understand that young children flourish in all areas of development when they have established positive and reciprocating relationships with adults. NACC educators build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, and caring. Inclusive and respectful environments are carefully designed to foster such social bonding between individuals. When children feel safe, secure, and valued as contributing members of their social group, they are able to explore and to be engaged in meaningful learning experiences. To support every child's growth and development, NACC educators communicate with parents on a daily basis via a wide variety of media, including but not limited to verbal conversations, written observations/documentations, printed newsletters etc.

Some of the approaches implemented by educators to support relationships include:

- Daily communication with parents in regards to their child's rest, appetite and learning experiences
- Open doors approach with management
- Visual documentations of children and staff engaged in activities displayed in the room
- Periodicals & newsletters
- Practicing inclusion policies & procedures within the centre
- Sharing of relevant information about the child and providing appropriate community resources when needed

3. Encourage Children to Self-Regulate and to Interact Positively

We believe that adults are role-models in supporting children's development of appropriate social skills, including the use of self-regulation and conflict resolution strategies. In general, self-regulation involves gaining some degree of control over one's bodily functions and impulses, including but not limited to managing of one's emotions, changing of one's behaviours and maintaining focus or attention with intent.

Some of the approaches implemented by educators to set the stage for positive

interactions among children include:

- Splitting into smaller groups within the class to allow for more individualized support to children
- Educators are role-modeling inclusive, respectful, and collaborative interactions with children and other adults
- Educators ensure the learning environment is flexible so they can capture teachable moments and scaffold the children's interests
- Educators ensure toys, equipment, and materials are age-appropriate, plentiful to the children's social development level, and are available to children at their own decision.
- Children are given freedom to make choices throughout the day, for example, choices of materials used and level of participation in activities etc.
- Educators are active participants as play partners and co-learner to the children's learning initiatives
- Educators attend trainings that strengthens understanding of self-regulation and resiliency theories.

4. Foster Intrinsic Motivation to Play, to Inquire and to Explore

Children are born with a natural sense of curiosity and wonder; they have an innate need to play. As parents and educators, we watch children explore their world through using their senses, engaging in repetition of tasks, asking questions, imitating others and re-enacting experiences. But what are children really doing? Children are putting together all the pieces of how the world works through exploration, play and inquiry.

NACC educators foster, expand and scaffold this natural talent called play by:

- **Being an active participant** – engage in play with children, design and set up the physical environment, provide developmentally-appropriate activities and experiences
- **Being an observer** - observe children's play and interests, record observations and scaffold learning
- **Being a planner** – record activities and experiences on the program plan daily
- **Being a reporter** – prepare daily journals, observations, documentations, and program plans
- **Being a reflective educator** – participate in staff meetings and professional development training

5. Encourage Child-Initiated Experiences with Adults' Support

As active observers of children's play, educators will demonstrate group-entry skills by joining into their initiated activity and to expand their knowledge or play idea through asking opened-questions. Provocation setups, also known as enrichment projects, are designed in a way that stimulates children's thinking and curiosity in exploring about unfamiliar ideas, skills and/or knowledge.

Some of the approaches implemented by educators to provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences include:

- Educators following the lead of children's play, such as participating in games in which children have created the rules or acting out the character assigned by children in a dramatic play idea
- Educators setting up invitations to play through using provocation materials and/or ideas
- Educators asking open-ended questions
- Educators making thoughtful interpretations of children's play through observations made and using the information to plan appropriate activities that covers the goals within the 5 learning domains
- Educators are actively watching for play initiations and assisting timid children with gaining the confidence needed to request for joining into play
- Educators are spread out within the physical environment and be accessible to children when they needed support or assistance

6. Design and Arrange Physical Environment to Support Every Child's Learning

We understand that a well-designed physical space acts as a third teacher to children aside from the parents and educators. Our unique approach to planning and creating learning environments supports children's play with consideration of the 5 learning domains. By incorporating natural materials and loose parts, children are stemming away from single-purpose plastic toys and using their imagination for unrestrictive play instead.

Learning centres are designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children. We have created environments that are meant as an extension to the child's home, which included the use of calm colours, soft furnishings, plants and pets, photographs of the staff and children, and accessories that are intended to make children feel comfortable and safe.

Some of the approaches implemented by educators to support every child's learning include:

- Educators are given weekly preparation time to reflect on experiences, to collaborate with other educators to document learning, and to prepare the programming plan
- Educators provide activities/experiences that scaffold (a fancy term for taking the learning to the next level) children's learning
- Educators document highlights of play and learning experiences in children's daily journals
- Ages & Stages Questionnaires completed on each child in a full day program
- Projects/constructions can be maintained and expanded on throughout a prolonged period of time so that children have the opportunity to resume their play and/or to make adjustments as they see fit, this also allows children to practice waiting for a delayed gratification from participating in a multi-day activity

7. Incorporate Active & Quiet Activities for Both Indoor and Outdoor Settings

NACC educators design a daily schedule that meets the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the day. Care requirements, age, developmental level, energy level, and interests of the children are taken into consideration while planning for a tentative program plan; tentative, because flexibility for changes is crucial for following children's leads. Generous blocks of time for children to explore, play, and inquire are included both indoors and outdoors. Even though the daily schedule is not rigid but operating in small groups is mandated. Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the day both indoors and outdoors as well.

Educators keep transitions between activities to a minimum, so children's thought

processes for learning are not interrupted. Young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the day, therefore snacks and mealtimes are consistent as is the rest period. In addition, weather does not stop us from having fun outdoors; dressing appropriately according to the temperature is an essential self-care skill that children must learn. In very poor weather conditions, such as days having extreme heat or freezing rain warning, active play will take place indoors so that children get the physical activities their bodies require.

Some of the approaches implemented by educators to incorporate daily activities include:

- Full day programs offer at least 2 hours (1 hour in the morning and 1 hour in the afternoon) of outdoor time
- Educators plan outdoor activities with goals for meeting skill indicators from all 5 learning domains
- Transitions are facilitated in small groups and kept to a minimal
- Flexible schedule to accommodate the needs of children, including but not limited to extending an activity due to current interest or substituting the use of a planned material to children's spontaneous choice
- Quiet and active areas are set up intentionally to minimize interference with one another

8. Foster Engagement & Communication with Parents

At NACC, we understand that parents are the most important people in a child's life, and educators play a supporting role. Getting to know family members is critical as an educator, the reason being the inclusion and participation of family members in our program helps children to develop a greater sense of belonging. Thus, educators and parents should communicate on a regular basis about children's activities and health. One way of maintaining close communication is by educators' keeping short daily journals of each child's learning and development, which will be available for parents to read.

Strategies to engage parents in reciprocal communication include:

- Documentations posted that describe play and its connection to learning
- Developmental screening tools, such as Ages & Stages Questionnaires and/or Look see, are completed by staff 3 times a year and by parents once a year or as needed
- Facilitate events, such as open houses or holiday concern, that give families an opportunity to interact with one another
- Parent surveys are completed annually
- Displays of children's artwork, sculptures and creations can be seen throughout the centres
- Photographs of children at play are displayed throughout the centre
- Activities on program plans are based on children's interests, as well as learning needs observed by educators.

9. Involve Community Partners

NACC works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support the children and families in our programs. We view the community as a valuable resource; thus, our educators would plan learning opportunities that help children to understand their responsibilities as a community member, including but not limited to fostering their empathy for helping those in need.

While our range of community partners is broad, the largest and most important is our education system. NACC actively seeks out opportunities to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community through networking opportunities, community planning tables and conferences.

Ways in which we involve community partners include:

- Educators are members of childcare committees in the community
- Invite members of the community into the program related to the children's interests (such as firefighters, police officers, veterinarians, grandparents, etc.)
- Welcoming volunteers from the community into our programs

- Educators use the Richmond Hill Public Library/Bookmobile system as a resource to provide learning opportunities related to the children's current interest
- Hosting humanitarian projects, such as establishing food donation boxes, for supporting local social work efforts

10.Support & Engage in Educators' Continuous Professional Learning

NACC is committed to the ongoing professional development of all our educators. After all, what the educators learn influences practice, thus the benefits are passed onto the children. Aside from having to maintain current credentials in trainings such as Standard First Aid & CPR and/or Food Handler certification program, educators are also required to attend external learning events and conferences for professional development.

On a day-to-day basis, the centre's supervisor is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and overall development of educators. Based on the learning needs of the educators, the supervisor may: meet with staff to discuss about learning strategies; challenge the team to focus on and to improve on a particular service area; conduct regular staff meetings to reflect and plan accordingly to children's needs and to changes in legislations; invite speakers from community agencies to participate in children's programs and/or to host training sessions for staff; and/or provide additional resources including networking opportunities, articles, and physical tools to supplement educators' professional learning.

Ways we encourage educators' continuous professional learning include:

- Child development professionals brought in to facilitate workshops
- Professional development is a part of the annual employee performance review
- Educators' annual professional development goals are reviewed with management
- Opportunities for staff to attend conferences and workshops offered in the community
- Monthly staff meeting for taking a proactive approach in sharing new information and knowledge, in problem-solving, and in keeping current with strategies that best support the overall need of our children

LIST OF PROHIBITED PRACTICES

- Corporal punishment which may include but not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, punching is prohibited. Any form of either verbal or physical punishment is prohibited.
- Physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to highchair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is longer imminent is prohibited.
- Locking the exits of the centre for the purpose of confining a child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision is prohibited. Unless such confinement occurs during an emergency.
- No use of harsh, degrading measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, scare or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth is allowed.
- Children cannot be deprived of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will is prohibited.
- Children will not at any time be locked or confined in a locked room at all

In order to promote positive social interactions amongst everyone within the centre for supporting the overall well-being of all children, these guidelines will be followed:

- Behaviour guidance should be proactive, boundaries should be clearly defined in simple language, and rules should be kept consistent and enforced, to prevent misbehaviours.
- Children shall not be blamed, shamed or frightened under any circumstances. Instead of punishment, use redirection and positive reinforcement strategies for behavioural management in the classroom
- Use the 5W+1H method in shaping children's thought process, guiding them to meet their own needs/wants using positive methods

- For example: What were you trying to achieve/to obtain? Who could have helped you with meeting your goal in an appropriate way? When is a better time or where is a better location for your choice of activity? Why did you choose this behaviour and how can you behave differently next time? How can teachers support your need?
- Speak with children at their eye level using a calm, positive tone of voice.
- Model and demonstrate appropriate ways of interacting with others; express recognition for those children that practiced positive/respectful social behaviors, including but not limited to, showing empathy for others
- Provide choices and set clear boundaries for children
- Allow children the opportunities to explore independently.
- Offering and outlining appropriate choices and children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves.
- Setting limits and take into consideration the individuality of the child.

REVIEWS OF PROGRAM STATEMENT

Management will conduct ongoing assessment on NACC's program statement reflecting its effectiveness and applicability for meeting the needs of our children and families. Changes will be made as necessary and be reviewed with staff in a prompt manner to ensure implementation. Feedbacks and suggestions from staff and from parents are welcomed at any time; this can be done via filling in surveys, meeting with management, discussing during monthly staff meetings etc.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A reminder that NACC employees, children and parents are required to remain responsible and respectful at all times. Failure to conduct appropriate behaviours verbally and/or physically, for problem-solving or any other reasons, can result in termination of employment or termination of care for the child/family.