



PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S CIRCLE DAYCARE

This Program Statement document 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.

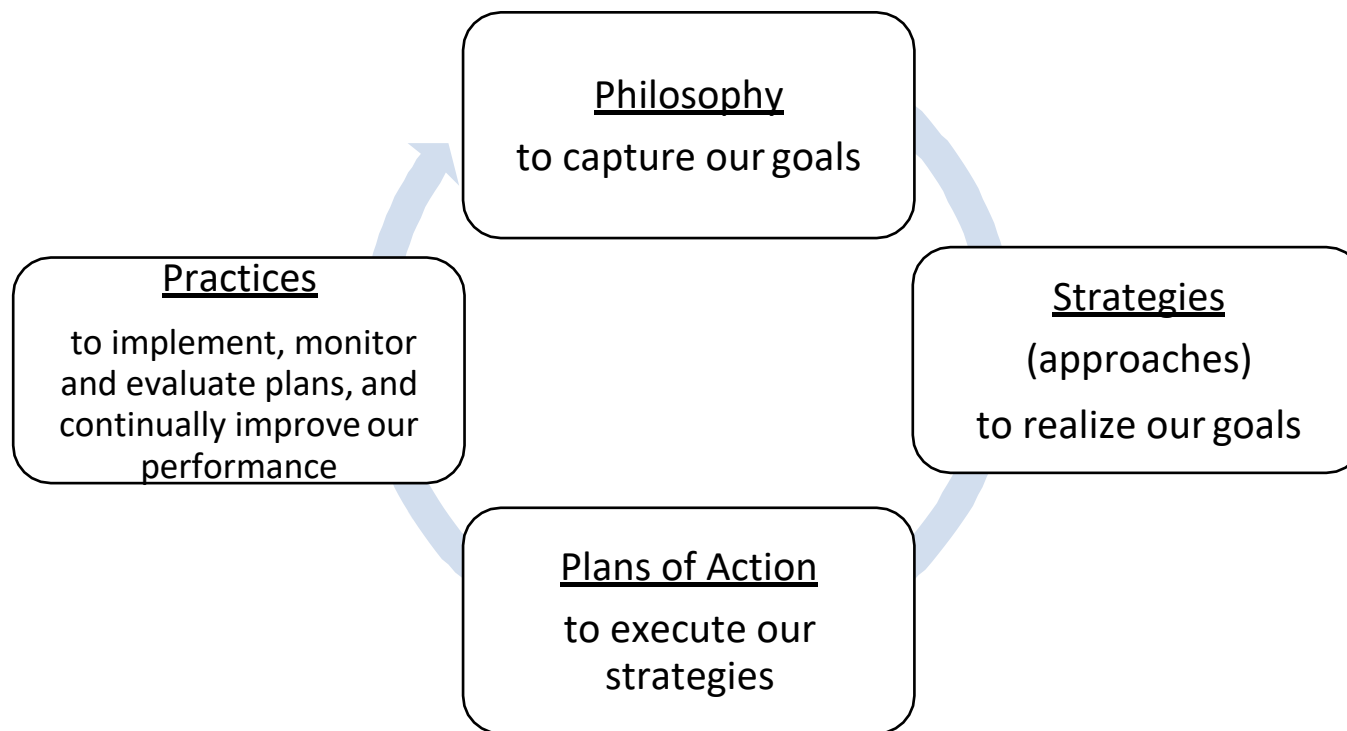
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Program Statement Framework

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



Program Statement = Philosophy (Goals) + Strategy (Approach) + Plans of Action + Practice (Evaluation)

Our Practices

1. All new staff on hiring, and all existing staff (annually) students and volunteers will acknowledge and review:
 - a. This program statement document
 - b. All relevant and attached guidelines
2. Children's Circle Day Care will implement a number of strategies to support and encourage parents/caregivers engagement in our commitment to continuous improvement including but not limited to:
 - a. Semi-annual Parent/Caregiver and Educator professional development sessions that include opportunities for discussion and co-learning.
 - b. Regular updates about the program and the pedagogical framework that forms the foundation of the curriculum. This will include newsletters, email bulletins and other forms of communication.
 - c. Semi-annual parent/educator meetings to discuss each child's progress and to share information about the child and their interests.
 - d. Daily feedback as to the activities and experiences of their child(ren)
3. A Parent survey will be conducted annually to assess performance against the 11 key strategies (detailed in the Program Statement).
4. Internal Rating (AQI) for each Plan of Action will be conducted annually for each program.
5. Each monthly staff meeting will, on a rotation basis, include on the agenda, one of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document. Staff will discuss and reflect on current practices against this strategy, and any opportunities for improvement will be captured.
6. Management/board meetings will be undertaken quarterly. These will always include an agenda item to discuss performance against the program statement and plan for improvement for next period.
7. Staff and board will meet annually to review and reflect on our performance and capture outcomes and set goals for the next period. Parent survey and assessment reports from all government agencies will be used.
8. Performance outcomes and goals review will be shared annually with board/management and their feedback document and incorporated.
9. Allocate budget for a professional development investment for each member of staff and align the professional development with the program statement needs.
10. Educators will be regularly observed and monitored by the Supervisor or designate. The Supervisor will document these observations on a semi-annual basis on a Program Statement monitoring form and provide feedback to staff regarding their interactions with children and programming in their early learning settings. The Program Statement monitoring forms will be kept on file for a 3 year period.
11. The annual employee performance review will include a self-assessment of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document. Staff will annotate the self-assessment with an example of each and identify goals for improvement for the next year.

Our Philosophy (goals)

- Inclusive enriched childcare environment
- Honors and respects all children's beliefs, culture, language, and experiences acquired from their family and community
- Promote health and well-being
- Fostering the children's exploration, play and inquiry as a key goal
- Capturing and documenting our practice is reinforcement of the 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
- Forming trusting relationships with children and their families
- Providing everyone with a sense of belonging
- Children learn to: care about other people; understand other's feelings; cooperate and share; to 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 communications 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:

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

Since there is not a 1:1 relationship between strategies and plans, the ministry-to-AQI table in the appendix supports a cross-reference for compliance

Our Philosophy (Goals)

Children's Circle Daycare believes that children are competent, capable and curious, and that they have great potential. Children require environments that respect who they are and who they are becoming. The goal of early learning and care is to support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff. Partnership between families and the child care provider is essential for the optimal growth and development of young children. Each child's family is the most important influence in the child's growth and development. We welcome and encourage ongoing discussions with parents and caregivers about their child's progress – social, emotional, cognitive – and their daily life at Children's Circle.

How Does Learning Happen? is the foundation of our program

Using the common framework articulated in *How Does Learning Happen?* our centre will support the children to achieve the following **goals** and will meet the **expectations** for programs building on the four **foundations** for healthy growth and development:

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he/she is connected to others and contributes to his/her world.	Cultivate respectful relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with her/his senses, body and mind.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and learning.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express himself/herself in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

Program Statement = Philosophy (Goals) + Strategy (Approach) + Plans of Action + Practice (Evaluation)

Play is the work of early childhood. We believe play is how young children learn not only as individuals but how they learn to relate to and engage with others. The staff members balance the needs of the individual and the group. Play is the basis of our curriculum as it provides many opportunities for interacting with other and exploring the world while:

- Problem-solving
- seeing patterns
- making predictions, testing them and evaluating the results

We balance indoor/outdoor, active play, rest and quiet time within each of our programs' daily schedules. Activities within the program emphasize skills as well as:

- self-esteem
- self-respect
- self-regulation
- respect for others

We believe capturing and documenting our practice is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family and children. Staff will support all children's ability to self-regulate, so that children feel comfortable and confident with the learning environment.

Because we recognize the primary importance of parents in the lives of children, we act to support children's attachments to their parents. We know that our relationships with children must create continuity of care with home. Parents are active partners with early childhood professionals in their children's experiences. We celebrate children and families across the spectrum of diversity – including but not limited to different abilities/disabilities, ethnicities, race, class, culture, linguistic communities, sex, gender identities, sexual orientation and family orientation and family origin.

Our Strategy

Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions

Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there are a range of interesting, intriguing and developmentally appropriate activities options to engage children. Educators are reflective practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual children and child development supports positive behaviours on the part of children, educators and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.

Questions educators ask themselves:

- How do I **engage** with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing "wrong"?

Program Statement = Philosophy (Goals) + Strategy (Approach) + Plans of Action + Practice (Evaluation)

- Am I **learning** too? How do I respond when a child asks me something that I don't know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: "Let's find out together!"
- Am I **moving away** from viewing play as just something children do and **moving towards** viewing play as intentional and inquiry-based, a way for children to **express** themselves in multiple ways?
- Am I having fun? Is at least a part of each day filled with a **shared sense of joy** that is the wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?

Supporting Children to Manage their Behaviour

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach. Educators focus on helping the children understand their feelings and emotions and provide support to help children regulate their behaviour.

The following are unacceptable behaviour management strategies and are not permitted at any time under any circumstances.

- 1) Corporal punishment;
- 2) Harsh or degrading measures that may humiliate or undermine a child's self- respect and self-esteem;
- 3) Exposing a child to harsh or derogatory language;
- 4) Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing or bedding, sleep and toileting; and
- 5) Confining a child by locking the exits of the centre or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children (except in an emergency lock down situation)

In the event of any violation of the behaviour management expectations as described above, educators and/or staff will be subject to the Progressive Discipline Policy.

We plan for a creative, positive and nurturing environment in which children's play is fostered through exploration, and inquiry. The Daycare's staff are knowledgeable, empathic, skilled, capable, competent and caring educators. Children's Circle has an ongoing commitment to professional growth and learning. Keeping current with practices and research in child development facilitates positive learning and skill development.

In play, children's curiosity and joy ensures that ideas and skills become meaningful. Play motivates children's attention and offers challenges that are within the child's capacity to master. Planned play experiences ensure opportunities for learning exist in the physical environment and play activities. Children's learning in play is communicated to families.

Early childhood professionals watch children's play to determine when they are ready for new experiences and activities. They participate in children's play and follow their lead and interests. Early childhood professionals provide opportunities to practice emerging skills and extend play with achievable challenges.

Children explore in this way when they are learning about the social world and the world of things. In their play children hear and use language. Through play children learn to:

- care about other people
- understand others' feelings

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- cooperate and share
- express their opinions
- resolve conflicts
- develop self-competence, self-worth, and self-regulation.

Our curriculum is organized around the following 5 areas of development:

- (i) physical (gross and fine motor);
- (ii) social (awareness, respect, ability to share and cooperate);
- (iii) communication (verbal and non-verbal);
- (iv) self-esteem (self-awareness and positive self-image)
- (v) cognitive (comprehension, problem solving, and skill acquisition).

Staff provide parents with the opportunity to discuss their child's progress through on-going communications, a semi-annual open house, monthly newsletters and parent meetings if necessary or requested.

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"). 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 that is healthy, safe, and supports general well-being.
2. Promote an environment that 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 engagement and communication with parents.
10. Involve local community partners.
11. Support others in relation to continuous professional learning.

Plans of Action for the 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 AQL 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 will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQL-guideline-1*)
- 2) An intentional plan for positive learning experiences that children will be exposed to, promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program, including children with individualized plans. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQL-guideline-2*)
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development, any individualized plans and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Staff will 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 will undertake to deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQL-guideline-3*)
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be 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 will ensure an indoor physical environment that will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQL-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 will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide an art & sensory program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide books, language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline- 7*)
- 8) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, staff are promoting skills such as language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept. "Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). In support of this, we will provide music and accessories and program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-8*)
- 9) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). In support of this, we will deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will offer a 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 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 will offer a Blocks & Construction and Pretend Play accessories and 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 an inclusive environment for 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 will 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 guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-12*).
- 13) Compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. To ensure we will provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for staff for diapering routines to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the 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. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-14*).
- 15) Ensure crib or cot and bedding is hygienically maintained. Staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Cribs, bedding and sleep times described in the 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 staff. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Health, Safety, and Toy & Play Equipment care described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-17*).

- 18) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions and Attendance Verification described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-19*).
- 20) Staff operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment and safety of all. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-20*).
- 21) Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the guideline (*infant-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 will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-23*).
- 24) Support staff to use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. Support them to encourage the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they give every child a "voice"" (HDLH, pg 41). In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting Communication and Extending Children's Learning described in the guideline (*infant-AQI-guideline-24*).

- 25) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for healthy eating as outlined in *Canada's Food Guide*, and ensure our practices meet or exceed the requirements for safe food preparation as outlined in *Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Foodhandlers*.
- 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions.
- 28) Support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth". In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).

Plans of Action for the 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 will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-1*).
- 2) An intentional plan for positive learning experiences that children will be exposed to, promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program, including children with individualized plans. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-2*).
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development, any individualized plans and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Staff will 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 will undertake to deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide a sensory, Science and Nature program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide an Art program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-7*).
- 8) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, staff are promoting skills such as language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept. "Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). In support of this, we will provide music and accessories and program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-8*).
- 9) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). In support of this, we will deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will 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 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 will offer Pretend Play accessories and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 an inclusive environment for 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 will 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 guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-12*).
- 13) Compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. To ensure we will provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for staff for diapering routines to meet or exceed the expectations for routine care practices described in the guideline (*toddler- AQI-guideline-13*).
- 14) Make food and eating time, including times when toddlers drink bottles, positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-14*).
- 15) Ensure crib or cot and bedding is hygienically maintained. Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Cribs, bedding and sleep times described in the 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 staff. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Health, Safety, and Toy & Play Equipment care described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-17*).

- 18) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions and Attendance Verification described in the guideline (*toddler-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 will meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-19*).
- 20) Staff operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment and safety of all. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-20*).
- 21) Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-23*).
- 24) Support staff to use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. Support them to encourage the children to question, problem-solve and experiment. "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they

give every child a “voice” (HDLH, pg 41). In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting Communication and Extending Children's Learning described in the guideline (*toddler-AQI-guideline-24*).

- 25) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for healthy eating as outlined in *Canada's Food Guide*, and ensure our practices meet or exceed the requirements for safe food preparation as outlined in *Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Foodhandlers*.
- 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions.
- 28) Support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth". In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).

Plans of Action for the Preschool 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 will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-1*).
- 2) An intentional plan for positive learning experiences that children will be exposed to, promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program, including children with individualized plans. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-2*).
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development, any individualized plans and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities. Staff will 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 will undertake to deliver learning experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-3*).
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be 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 will ensure an indoor physical environment that will meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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

Program Statement = Philosophy (Goals) + Strategy (Approach) + Plans of Action + Practice (Evaluation)

develop a sense of belonging as part of a group is also a key contributor to their lifelong well-being. A sense of belonging is supported when each child's unique spirit, individuality, and presence are valued." (HDLH, p. 24). In support of this, we will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide a sensory, Science and Nature program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide an Art program to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will provide books and a program that utilizing them to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-8*).
- 9) Staff will 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 will provide language & literacy materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-9*).
- 10) By exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres, staff are promoting skills such as language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept. "Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity." (HDLH, p. 42). In support of this, we will provide music and accessories and program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the

expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-10*).

- 11) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). In support of this, we will deliver physical play learning experiences that meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will offer Blocks and Construction materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will lead children to higher learning, based on the children's observed cues and interests. "The focus is not on teaching a body of knowledge or a predetermined set of topics. Nor is it centred on children's achievement of a specific skill set. 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 will offer cognitive and manipulative materials and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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 will be used to enhance the area and the program plan focus. Children enhance their social interaction skills, emotional development and language extension through open-ended play. Mirrors in the dramatic area allow the children to see themselves from a different perspective "As children engage in various forms of social play and are supported to recognize the varied capabilities and characteristics of other children, they learn to get along with others; to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate; and to care for others." (HDLH, p. 24). In support of this, we will offer Dramatic Play accessories and environment, and a program to engage in this environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the 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. Parents/guardians will be made aware in advance of media used in the classroom, and resources will be available for alternative learning opportunities. Monitor games brought from home or usage of Internet within the room. In support of this, we will ensure an electronic media usage environment to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-15*).

- 16) Plan for Compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. To ensure we will provide physical, instructional, and early learning and care supports for staff to meet or exceed the expectations for diapering and toileting routines described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-16*).
- 17) Make food and eating time positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for equipment required for eating and seating described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-18*).
- 19) Ensure crib or cot and bedding is hygienically maintained. Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Cots and bedding described in the 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 staff. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Health and Safety described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for toys and play equipment washing described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Hand Hygiene described in the guideline (*preschool- AQI-guideline-22*).
- 23) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions described in the 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 staff and child transitions. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for attendance verification described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI- guideline-24*).

- 25) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-25*).
- 26) Staff operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment and safety of all. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-26*).
- 27) Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-28*).
- 29) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-29*).
- 30) Encourage staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting development of Communication skills described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-30*).
- 31) Support staff to use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Extending Children's Learning described in the guideline (*preschool-AQI-guideline-31*).

- 32) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for healthy eating as outlined in *Canada's Food Guide*, and ensure our practices meet or exceed the requirements for safe food preparation as outlined in *Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Foodhandlers*.
- 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions.
- 35) Support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth". In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).
- 36) 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 an inclusive environment for 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).

Plans of Action for the Before and After Program (Kindergarten and School-Age)

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 AQL 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 will prepare and post a daily written and visual schedule to meet or exceed expectations described in the guideline.
- 2) An intentional plan for positive learning experiences that children will be exposed to, promotes the on-going learning opportunities and developmental growth for all children enrolled in the program, including children with individualized plans. "As defined in Early Learning Framework, early years curriculum is the sum total of experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively; it sets out goals for children's learning and development, health, and well-being; and it provides direction for educators." (HDLH, p. 15). In support of this, we will prepare a Program Plan to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 3) Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development, any individualized plans and the children's cues to implement the activities and experiences described in the program plan. "Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies. They listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experiences in the world around them. Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families, and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgment to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being." (HDLH, p. 19). In support of this, we will undertake to deliver activities and experiences to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 4) Play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments will be 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 will ensure an indoor physical environment that will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 5) A visual environment created through displays that are inclusive and are changed regularly to reflect the recent interests and artwork created by the children promotes well-being. "Enabling children to develop a sense of belonging as part of a group is also a key contributor to their lifelong well-being. A sense of belonging is supported when each child's unique spirit, individuality, and presence are

valued." (HDLH, p. 24). In support of this, we will create a visual environment through displays to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.

- 6) We will offer diversity in Play Equipment/Toys as it relates to race, culture, gender, age, language, family status and ability. "Developing policies, practices, and environments that respect and support inclusion (HDLH, p. 27) is one way to create a sense of belonging for children. In support of this, we will ensure an offering of play equipment and toys to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 7) Providing independent experiences through different mediums for children, creative art promotes self-expression and individuality. Regular expectations within the Daily Schedule and children's interests allow for the time to complete/extend the creative process. "Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children's learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity" (HDLH, p. 42). In support of this, we will provide Art/Sensory Activities, Equipment and Materials to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 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 will provide books and accessories that meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 9) Staff will expose children to various language and listening 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 will provide language & listening opportunities and materials and a program that utilizes these to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 10) Utilize guidelines for use of TV and Films to encourage safe, developmentally-appropriate usage for children. Guidelines may include, but not exclusive to, frequency of use, duration, and content. Parents/guardians will be made aware in advance of usage in the classroom, and resources will be available for alternative learning opportunities. In support of this, we will ensure TV and Movie usage will meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 11) Provide children an environment and accessories, in good condition, which promotes imaginative play with three or more role-playing possibilities. Prop boxes will be used to enhance the area and the program plan focus. Children enhance their social interaction skills, emotional development and language extension through open-ended play. Mirrors in the dramatic area allow the children to see themselves from a different perspective "As children engage in various forms of social play and are supported to recognize the varied capabilities and characteristics of other children, they learn to get along with others; to negotiate, collaborate, and communicate; and to care for others." (HDLH, p. 24). In support of this, we will provide Dramatic Play Activities and Accessories to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.

- 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 will offer Blocks and Construction Activities and Accessories to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 13) Provide access to an ample selection of age-appropriate games and game accessories. "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 p.15). In support of this, we will offer Games, Game Activities and Accessories to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 14) Materials reflecting, science and nature encourage children to explore through cause and effect experimentation and observation. Continual exposure to these materials and experiences allow children to learn more about their environments. "Optimal conditions for learning occur when we are fully engaged. For children, this happens in play that evolves from the child's natural curiosity – active play that allows children to explore with their bodies, minds, and senses, stimulating them to ask questions, test theories, solve problems, engage in creative thinking, and make meaning of the world around them. These investigations through play fuse intellect and feeling to help children make connections and develop the capacity for higher-order thinking." (HDLH, p. 35). In support of this, we will provide Science and Nature Experiences and Material to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 15) We will promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children. "Through active play and physical exploration, children gain increasing levels of independence, learn to persevere and practice self-control, and develop a sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual mastery and competence." (HDLH, pp. 29-30). In support of this, we will ensure Physical Activities/Active Play Indoors or Outdoors that meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.
- 16) To "allow every child to participate and be challenged in meaningful ways" (HDLH p.29) in Physical Activities/Active Play Indoors or Outdoors, we will supply appropriate and ample active play equipment for the number of children enrolled. In support of this, we will ensure the supply of Active Play equipment meets or exceeds the expectations described in the guideline.
- 17) Make food and eating time positive learning experiences that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for meals and snack times described in the guideline.
- 18) Ensure utensils, dishes and furnishings to enable safe, and successful eating times. In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for equipment required for eating and seating described in the guideline.
- 19) Ensure accessible washroom facilities for all enrolled children. Ensure compliance with the Regional Public Health procedures and practices. In support of this we will provide washroom facilities, and

Program Statement = Philosophy (Goals) + Strategy (Approach) + Plans of Action + Practice (Evaluation)

supplies, and personal hygiene and body development related information resources to meet or exceed the expectations described in the guideline.

- 20) Ensure all materials, play equipment, furnishings and fixed fixtures are in good working order, clean and safe for the children and staff. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Health and Safety described in the guideline.
- 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for toys and play equipment washing described in the guideline.
- 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Children's hand washing/sanitizing practices described in the guideline.
- 23) Ensure environment and practices for proper hand hygiene by staff that promote healthy living. In support of this we will meet or exceed the expectations for Staff Hand Washing/Sanitizing Practices described in the guideline.
- 24) Transitions are a challenge and an opportunity for children. Staff will 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Transitions described in the guideline.
- 25) 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 staff and child transitions. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for Attendance Verification described in the guideline.
- 26) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for a Positive Atmosphere described in the guideline.
- 27) Staff operate as a team and with the engaged awareness to ensure supervision of the whole environment and safety of all. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for supervision of children described in the guideline.
- 28) Support staff 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for fostering children's independence described in the guideline.

- 29) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for supporting the development of self-esteem in children described in the guideline.
- 30) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for behaviour guidance described in the guideline.
- 31) Staff will initiate and build on conversations with and between children: Staff will extend conversations with individual children as well as between 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Supporting development of Communication skills described in the guideline.
- 32) Support staff to use observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and encourage opportunities to support the child's individual learning path. 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Extending Children's Learning described in the guideline.
- 33) Ensure good nutrition and safe food preparation. In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for healthy eating as outlined in *Canada's Food Guide*, and ensure our practices meet or exceed the requirements for safe food preparation as outlined in *Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Foodhandlers*.
- 34) 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 will meet or exceed the expectations for Playground supervision and Outdoor play space, equipment and learning material described in the guideline.
- 35) 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

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sense of belonging to the local community, the natural environment, and the larger universe of living things" (HDLH p19.). In support of this, we will meet or exceed the expectations for connecting and collaborating with local community and institutions.

- 36) Support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth". In support of this, we will capture as evidence, Our Practices and our efforts to Being the best we can (which follow).
- 37) 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 an inclusive environment for 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).

Our Practice

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, family and children, evidence of our practice will be 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 management policies and practices that embrace the program statement.

- 1) All new staff on hiring, and all existing staff (annually), students and volunteers will acknowledge and review:
 - a. This program statement document
 - b. All relevant guidelines
- 2) Children's Circle Daycare will implement a number of strategies to support and encourage parents'/caregivers' engagement in our commitment to continuous improvement including but not limited to:
 - a. Semi-annual parent/caregiver and educator professional development sessions that include opportunities for discussion and co-learning.
 - b. Regular updates about the program and the pedagogical framework that forms the foundation of the curriculum. This will include newsletters, email bulletins and other forms of communication.
 - c. Semi-annual parent/educator meetings to discuss each child's progress and to share information about the child and their interests.
 - d. Daily feedback as to the activities and experiences of their child(ren).
- 3) Ongoing communication with families will be used to assess performance against the 11 key strategies (detailed in the Program Statement).
- 4) Internal Rating (AQI) for each Plan of Action will be conducted annually for each program.
- 5) Each monthly staff meeting will, on a rotating basis, include on the agenda one of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document. Staff will discuss and reflect on current practices against this strategy, and any opportunities for improvement will be captured.
- 6) Management/board meetings will be undertaken quarterly. These will always include an agenda item to discuss performance against the program statement and plan for improvement for next

period.

- 7) Staff and board will meet annually to review and reflect on our performance and capture outcomes and set goals for the next period. Parent feedback and assessments from all government agency reports will be used.
- 8) Performance outcomes and goals review will be shared annually with board/management and their feedback documented and incorporated.
- 9) Budget for professional development investment for each member of staff will be allocated. Professional development will align with the program statement needs.
- 10) Educators will be regularly observed and monitored by the Supervisor or designate. The Supervisor will document these observations on a semi-annual basis on a Program Statement monitoring form and provide feedback to staff regarding their interactions with children and programming in their early learning settings. The Program Statement monitoring forms will be kept on file for a 3 year period.
- 11) The annual employee performance review will include a self-assessment of the 11 key strategies to create the conditions promoted by the HDLH document. Staff will annotate the self-assessment with an example of each and identify goals for improvement for the next year.

If staff are not in compliance with the Program Statement, depending on the nature of the non-compliance, a plan may be implemented to aid the staff to come into compliance or the situation may result in following our internal process for staff non-compliance to policy.