Program Statement

(Parent Handbook Insert)
Chid Care and Early Yers Act 2014

The Ministry of Education requires all licensed child care programs to develop and implement a Program Statement, which guides the day-to-day beliefs, values and best practices of our program. The How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years Document (HDLH?) is to be used for the purpose of guiding our licensed child care.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool, Licensed Child Care programs recognize that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool programs strive to support optimal development by ensuring that the Four Foundations of Learning and Development outlined within HDLH are considered in all aspects of our programs in partnership with parents.

The Four Foundations of Learning and Development	• How The Chestnut Tree Preschool Licensed Child Care Supports the Four Foundations
Belonging	• We provide an environment that supports the diverse needs of all children and families in the The Chestnut Tree Preschool . We strive to be accepting of all exceptionalities and we adjust our environment to meet the needs of each unique child. • To support inclusion, we consider each child's capabilities rather than focusing solely on their needs. • We value and support the families we serve and recognize them as partners in their children's learning as we believe they are the child's first educators. Our Educators are true professionals who build relationships with children and their families and connect with organizations within their community recognizing that "it takes a village to raise a child". • Materials, photographs, posted material and resources reflect diversity in race, family composition, abilities etc.
Well-Being	• The Chestnut Tree Preschool Licensed child care staff promote mindfulness throughout the day. Children are given opportunity to finish tasks and practice new skills. The moments spent caring for individual, physical needs are viewed as an opportunity to empower the children to be independent, to gain self-confidence and to be supported through the process with much or as little support as they need.
Engagement	• Planned programs are developed to reflect the children's interests and individual development, enabling children to choose the learning experiences, materials and play partners they want to engage with. Educators encourage and support children to make their own decisions and solve problems. They help children to experience logical consequences and hypothesis through their play in order to support children's feelings of engagement and value within the program and with others.
Expression	• Educators encourage children's self-expression through their play, art mediums, music and movement, the use of open ended questions and by providing time for children to reflect, hypothesize and share their responses.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool Child Care recognizes that each child enters into our care with their own unique history, personality and abilities. All children develop new skills at their own pace. Observations of your child and their interests are the basis for planning developmentally appropriate experiences in all the developmental domains.

We document children's learning to enable us to reflect on each child's unique development and to share heartfelt experiences with the children and families within our programs.

We encourage our Educators to recognize the importance of self-reflective practice and on-going professional learning opportunities to provide nurturing, responsive learning environments.

This program statement aligns with our local Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) initiative which provides educators with the tools and training to ensure that all children can experience the maximum developmental benefit of all learning opportunities.

Goals & Approaches

A
Approaches to promote health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children;

Your child's health and well-being is our top priority. Our Educators provide safe and appropriate supervision of children based on age, development and environment.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool Children's Services Licensed Childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Providing nutritious foods and beverages that incorporate family and cultural preferences and are in accordance with the Canada's Food Guide, including one main meal and snacks throughout the day.
- Being sensitive to and accommodating for children's food restrictions and allergies.
- Creating family-style, positive eating environments with foods and portion sizes that are responsive to children's cues of hunger and fullness.
- Ensuring that all staff members are trained and able to appropriately respond to health, safety and emergency situations;
- Providing opportunities for children to engage in risk at a level that is appropriate for their development.
- Supporting mental health wellness through encouraging children's development of self- regulation, resiliency and a rich emotional vocabulary.

- Providing daily opportunities for sleep, rest or engagement in quiet activities depending on each individual child's needs and development.
- Consulting with Niagara Public Health to ensure that all health and safety procedures are in accordance with research-based best practices.
- Providing at least two hours of time spent learning outside on a daily basis, weather permitting.
- Monitoring children's engagement in activities to determine optimal periods for transitions.

B Approaches to support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff;

Positive and responsive relationships are essential to high-quality early learning and care. Our Educators develop positive relationships with the children through the programs they implement. They provide a nurturing environment by providing invitations and activities that align with interests of the children and that will provide opportunities for your child to achieve their developmental milestones.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Welcoming and greeting children and families at arrival.
- Providing opportunities for children to be heard and for their contributions to be appreciated within their communities.
- Honouring children's ideas and contributions by responding to them in a respectful way and by focusing on using authentic language in our interactions with them.
- Interacting with children on their level.
- Getting to know the children on an individual basis to identify and work to proactively minimize stressors, and to help the children become self-aware.
- Actively listening to children and giving them the time and space to express themselves.
- Responding to challenging behaviours with the most appropriate and effective but least intrusive strategy.
- Reframing challenging behaviours by reflecting on why they may be occurring and what the child might be trying to express.
- Rather than saying "No" to a child, we will explain the reason why and offer appropriate or acceptable options.
- Encouraging children to be respectful of the ideas of others and modelling this ourselves.
- Being aware of the audience when discussing the child or children with co-workers or parents/guardians.
- Establishing professional and positive relationships with their colleagues in their rooms and the centres in which they work.

C Approaches to encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate;

Children's present and future well-being is influenced by their ability to self-regulate. (How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years)

Educators adjust the environment and activities to meet the needs of the children, while encouraging critical thinking and providing choices to all children.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Modelling resiliency and problem-solving skills with children and helping them to identify their feelings, the feelings of others, and possible solutions;
- Placing importance on encouraging children to develop authentic skills for solving problems, instead of having them take part in a prescribed solution (e.g. making a child say sorry);
- Staff will take the time to stop and listen and be present in the moment in order to build authentic relationships with children.

D Approaches to foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry;

Our program builds on children's interests. Educators create learning environments which offer invitations based on children's interests where children can participate, explore, discover and learn, giving them the opportunity to express themselves.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Observing and engaging with children to understand their questions and inquiries and using these as a guide for programming.
- Respecting and supporting the children's sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Viewing the environment as the "third teacher" and understanding the significant impact it has on our program.
- Organizing the learning environments in a way that makes them aesthetically appealing, uncluttered, engaging and welcoming.
- Incorporating materials that add to a homelike feeling within the learning environments (e.g. curtains, plants, lamps, natural lighting, soft colours, pillows, real materials).
- Providing interesting and complex open-ended learning materials for children to engage with and explore.
- Including real items (e.g. dishes, lamps, glass jars) for children to use and explore in their play.
- Providing natural elements (e.g. sticks, rocks, shells, plants) to help children explore the natural world.
- Role modelling and encouraging respect for materials in the shared learning environment.
- Engaging in open-ended conversations with children and asking thought-provoking questions to help expand the children's learning and our understanding of their explorations.
- Having an awareness of the many languages that children use to express themselves and providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways.

- Reviewing documentation of learning experiences with the children in order to encourage their reflection on their learning.

E   Approaches to provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences;

Learning environments are offered in all aspects of our program to support children's interests and development throughout the day. Educators create the learning environments through observation and discussion with the children.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Actively play partnering with children to expand their learning and support their social experiences.
- Knowing when to be an intentional observer in a play scenario and to support these learning experiences from afar.
- Showing flexibility in supporting children in their expansion of play and the use of play materials.
- Acting on teachable moments throughout the day during indoor and outdoor activities to expand children's interest and knowledge.
- Limiting the number of transitions throughout the day; children do not spend a
- Lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place.

F   Approaches to plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported;

Our educators offer learning environments which build on children's interests and are developmentally appropriate and challenging to the children who are in each group.

They have an extensive understanding of child development and know the development of the children in their care.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Facilitating referrals for Resource Consultant support for our children with special needs, families and Educators, as needed.
- Supporting positive learning environments through the use of Quality Child Care Niagara tools.
- Changes in interests are adapted to and adjustments are made during experiences to support children's success and learning.
- Each child will be welcomed and greeted by the Educator in the room.
- Provocations and invitations will provide opportunity for all children's developmental needs to be met.
- Ensure there are enough materials in the room to promote choice in free play.

• Facilitate positive interactions between children.

G Approaches to incorporate indoor, and outdoor play as well as active play, rest, and quite time into the day;

Our programs offer a selection of activities for the children to participate in where natural elements and nature are introduced into your child's play environment.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

• Providing at least two hours of time spent learning outside on a daily basis, weather permitting.
• Children are encouraged to explore the outdoor environment. We support this exploration through ensuring children are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. For example, splash pants and rubber boots for rainy day exploration.
• Provide provocations and learning invitations which encourage participation in all areas of the program.
• Monitoring children's engagement in activities to determine optimal periods for transitions

H Approaches to foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about their children and the program

'Family engagement' is not about giving families' information, but rather an opportunity to build, connect and strengthen relationships with each family and ultimately each child. We value parents as our partners and work with them through various activities and communication modes.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool Children's childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

• Communicating with families daily on an in-person basis at minimum at arrival and departure;
• Educators seek out opportunities to talk with parents without ignoring the needs of the children.
• Communicating our perspective of the children's learning and development with families in documentation sent electronically and posted on documentation boards;
• Encouraging families to share their perspective on the children's learning and development through in-person sharing and electronic responses.
• Encouraging families to share pictures and stories of their child's time at home and with family;
• Incorporating aspects from a variety of cultures within the learning environment (e.g. food, music, art, photographs, artifacts);
• Planning special events and social activities for families to engage in throughout the year.

I   Approaches to involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the   children;

Our child care centres work closely with the community to offer new opportunities within our programs to enrich our services. We value community partnerships within our services which will enhance the lives of children, families and staff.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Working closely with Regional Departments, recognizing their expertise and resources that they offer. Niagara Speech & Language Services, Niagara Public Health, Local Niagara Fire Prevention as well as other Children's health services
- Establishing relationships with local Regional programs. This could include visits, sending holiday cards, pumpkin patch visits etc.
- Collaborating with various professional services in Niagara to support families in care. These include Niagara Region Children Services, Niagara Childcare Referral Program,
- Purchasing local foods.
- Mentoring and supporting peers and participants of high school, adult learning programs, and college and/or university student placements at our centres.

J   Approaches to support staff or others who interact with the children in relation to professional learning

All staff participate in continuous learning in their respective employment that is offered both internally and externally.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool's childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Educators meet together to share ideas and information and to develop programs.
- Working in collaboration with their team partners to evaluate, develop and implement the planned program.
- RECE's are required to participate in the College of Early Childhood Educator Continuous Professional Learning Program.
- Having Centre representatives attend community network groups. Then they have the opportunity to share the information with their colleagues.

K   Approaches to document and review the impact of the strategies on the children and their families set out in clauses A to J above. ;

We document, measure, review/revise our practices and policies on a regular basis, taking into consideration the direction of the Ministry of Education, *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014, The College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and Public Health* recommendations. We strive for continuous improvement which supports our best practices in all our services. We welcome input from our families.

The Chestnut Tree Preschool childcare programs support these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, including;

- Ongoing observations, documentation and reflection of children's learning to plan for individual learning needs and within a group setting
- Educators are provided with time to prepare documentation to make learning visible.
- Team meetings and staff meetings are planned to discuss children, programming, centre initiatives and education in the field of ECE
- Conducting anonymous parent surveys to secure feedback and suggestions regarding our program and the service we provide.