



## MISSION STATEMENT ON PROGRAMMING AND PEDAGOGY

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In 2014, the Minister of education released a statement that cites a Ministry document titled “**How Does Learning Happen?**” to be used as the guiding text to inform programming and pedagogy in Ontario. At Share & Care Child Care Centre, we believe in providing a continuity of care that begins in the home and grows within our home away from home setting. We understand that each child comes with a unique upbringing that influences their learning and development; therefore we strongly believe in the importance of positive partnerships between our educators and our families. The How Does Learning Happen document explains that children’s learning is heavily impacted by the child’s family, educators and the environment in which they are surrounded. Therefore, by creating a supportive and respectful environment that is fully inclusive, we are able to provide children with the best quality of care. We believe that each child is “**Competent, capable, curious and rich in potential**” and therefore should learn and grow in a respectful environment that fosters their curiosity, competence and abilities. Furthermore, our program is informed by the following four foundations outlined in the Ministry Document: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression**. These foundations are the pillars in which our program at Share & Care Child Care Centre is built upon. Our Program statement is reviewed annually by management and staff and updated to incorporate the most current research and theory that informs our practice in consistency with Ministry requirements.

**Belonging:** Every child deserves to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to the environment in which they are in. There is a direct correlation between academic success and the quality of the relationship between the child and caregiver. Our passionate educators aim to create a sense of belonging by focusing on the **individual relationships** and bonds that are built with each child and their family. We believe that building these bonds begins prior to a child and family commencing at Share & Care. We offer a **complimentary transition period** of one week; this period happens the week prior to their official start date and entails the child and parents participating in the program for a few

hours each day. We feel as though this allows both the parents and child to gain a sense of security with the staff and environment. A well-adjusted child with a strong level of comfort and trust in a comprehensive learning environment will flourish. At Share & Care we aim to **listen, learn from and respect families** without superimposing personal perspectives and judgments. Whether it is through simple gestures such as a warm hug or larger gestures such as celebrating and recognizing various cultural practices and home languages, we believe that all of these elements create a greater sense of belonging for each child. It begins in the morning during drop-off; **each child** deserves to have **someone's eyes light up** when they enter the room. Our educators greet each child and family with an affectionate smile and visible joy; as we find this sets the child up for a pleasant day and allows the parents to leave with the assurance that their child is not only happy, but also cared for. Throughout the day, our educators are consistently **warm and responsive** to the needs of children. When children's needs are consistently tended to, it builds a sense of trust between the child and the educator, allowing them to feel safe in the environment. This is particularly important for toddlers as they rely on the help of an educator for self-regulation and soothing purposes during times of distress. Our educators have a deep understanding of the value of human connection and its effects on learning, and we recognize that children thrive off of affection. The power of touch is necessary in order to create bonds and foster trust. Our educators encourage children to approach us for comfort, warm hugs, a lap to rest on or a shoulder to lean on. As children grow and become more independent, they may not require affection as often as toddlers as they begin to develop a greater ability to self-regulate in the preschool stage of development. We encourage this newly found sense of independence while remaining **open and approachable** to all children. We believe in allowing children to embrace their **individuality** and accept every child as they are without the imposition of personal biases on the children. Each child differs in terms of personality, beliefs, ability, etc however our educators aim to find ways to connect with each child individually. We also encourage children to investigate and explore the world and their environment freely without fear of being shun for their differences. Our educators go a step further to teach the children within our environment to accept and show kindness to all children, educators and families. **All children belong at Share & Care.**

**Well-Being:** If a child's well-being is compromised, they will not thrive. We intend to create an environment that promotes the **health and well-being** of all children. We have policies that strictly prohibit children from participating in the

program when they are ill in order to maintain a **healthy environment** for all children. We understand that communicable diseases are common amongst children; however, we aim to maintain a low occurrence of these. We do this by following our illness policy, disinfecting toys, shelves and surfaces regularly and consistently, and maintaining an overall cleanly environment. These **sanitary practices** are informed by the **Ministry of Public Health**. **Nutrition** also plays a large role in the health and well-being of each child. We ensure that we provide children with an adequate amount of nutritious food each day as our menu follows the **Canadian Food Guideline** for healthy eating. Furthermore, we understand that a child who is hungry will not feel physically well enough to participate in the learning process. Therefore, although we encourage all children to taste the food provided, we also provide children with **healthy alternatives** should they refuse the food provided. Many attempts will be made to ensure that children are fed; however, should children refuse food or liquids, it will not be forced upon them. Research shows that **physical activity** is also essential to the well-being of all children; we recognize this and provide children with adequate indoor and outdoor time. We are also conscious of environmental factors that may be present. For example we ensure that children are **dressed according to the weather**; extra clothes for all types of weather are on the premises in order to ensure that children are protected from the elements during outdoor time. Children rely on the help of adults to self-regulate, as they grow and develop, they learn to regulate their emotions without adult intervention. As educators, we aim to keep children within the boundaries of a **calm and alert state of arousal** while also providing them with the **skills and strategies necessary for learning how to self-regulate without adult intervention**. Children who are too tired, too hungry or overly stimulated will score low in terms of overall wellness. In order to maintain a calmly alert state of arousal, we follow a consistent routine that provides children with an adequate amount of play and rest time. Along with following a consistent routine, we also aim **to provide each child with unchanging and age appropriate limits and expectations**. Furthermore, beyond our routine and expectations, our environment is also of utmost importance. We aim to provide children with **environments that are both attractive and appealing** to all of their needs. We ensure that each classroom provides areas for both **active** and **quiet play** as we understand that while some children may want to engage in dramatic or block play, others may want to quietly sit with a book or puzzle. All of the aforementioned elements contribute to a child's well-being. We aim to be aware of all of these elements and provide an environment that promotes the well-being of all children.

**Engagement:** This refers to children being actively involved and in-charge of their learning. In order for learning to happen children must be engaged in long bouts of play. According to current research, children learn by being **actively engaged in an activity of interest** while **an educator supports and enhances the play by asking thought provoking questions, modeling, mimicking and engaging in play** with the children. In doing-so, the educator is learning with the child which enhances inquiry, cognition, language development, etc. As educators at Share & Care we aim to be both a source of knowledge and an active learner at the same time. We encourage children's inquiry by allowing them to hypothesize, test, analyze and problem solve situations independently. Our children are encouraged to learn while using all of their senses. In order to make this possible, we provide age appropriate play-materials that foster children's natural curiosity and creativity. Our curriculum also emerges from the children. After careful observation of current interests; activities, learning experiences, play materials, books, photographs, etc are brought into the learning environment. The approach itself is called **Emergent curriculum**; whereby the curriculum is based off of observations of the children's current interests. Furthermore, the learning environment spreads far **beyond the classroom** into community Centers, libraries, parks, fields and other outdoor areas. We believe that materials should be open to children at all times. The classroom is a place to learn and explore without limitations, therefore all materials are easily accessible to children on age-appropriate shelves within their reach in the classroom. Our educators are also flexible; by allowing free-choices children learn how to become self-governing and independent. By providing children with rich materials and meaningful play experiences that help develop all areas of development, we are developing not only the **skills necessary for** beginning **kindergarten** but the **skills necessary for life**.

**Expression:** this refers to a child's ability to express themselves both **verbally** and **non-verbally**. Providing children with rich communication and language throughout the day is essential to their development. Educators communicate through **labeling, questioning, explaining and providing children with language**. As educators we aim to connect with each child in order to understand every child's unique way of communicating. Even children with language may not have the words to express themselves, being **connected with a child** will allow the educator to **understand the child** and aid them in gaining the skills necessary to express themselves. As children develop, language and expression with peers becomes increasingly important. Allowing children to **communicate, collaborate, problem solve and work together** also fosters language development. We also provide children with labels and print within the

classroom, on shelves, walls or in books to introduce children to literacy and promote **letter recognition** and **early reading skills**. Creative expression is also valued at Share & Care. Children are encouraged to explore mark-making with a variety of mediums, creative construction, dance and movement, dramatic/pretend play, etc without the intervention of any biases. We believe that a child's representation of objects, situations and perspectives is unique to them and should not be corrected. All children are capable. As educators we either foster children's learning by maintaining a **positive learning environment** that promotes exploration; or we squander their creativity by creating an environment that glorifies correctness. Children need to be taught in environments that **respect the learning process**, part of the learning process is trial and error. Therefore, celebrating an individual's successful achievements both big and small gives them confidence in their abilities. At Share & Care we are not trying to educate the creativity out of our children, rather we **celebrate their creativity and individuality** in order to create a **positive sense of self**.

Learning is holistic and requires a balance of all elements in order to be effective. At Share & Care we believe in a **holistic approach to learning** that is inclusive of the four foundations in conjunction with the **Physical, Social, Emotional, Cognitive, and Language** development of each child.

**Our Staff:** To ensure the observance of our philosophy, daily monitoring of all staff is done by the supervisor or designate. Moreover, an extensive performance review will be conducted twice annually in order to ensure all staff are **maintaining best practices**. Please refer to the Share & Care code of behavior within the manual for a list of prohibited practices that will result in the immediate dismissal of any staff, student or volunteer. Furthermore, in order to remain current in the field, our educators continue to develop their skills and knowledge by attending a minimum of 15 hours of professional development in the form of workshops, webinars, etc throughout the course of the year.

In closing, our Mission at Share & Care is to be one unified team with the common goal and objective of creating a holistic learning environment where **all children and families feel a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression**.