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York University Co-operative Daycare Centre's Program Statement

February 2021



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Program Statement

York University Co-operative Daycare Centre's (YUCDC) Program Statement describes how our programs support and foster early learning and care. It outlines our view of the child, our philosophy and pedagogy as well as the goals and approaches in maintaining a quality early learning and childcare environment where everyone is welcomed and celebrated.

Our Program Statement describes principles, practices, policies, and curriculum that is consistent with the Ministry of Education's guidelines and resources.

- Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming & Pedagogy for the Early Years
<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/programCCEYA.pdf>
- "How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
- Ontario's Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) Framework
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
- Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ResearchBriefs.pdf>

Our View of the Child

The programs offered by YUCDC reflect the pedagogy and theory that are rooted in the fundamental aspects of child development research and study. The underlying factors and guiding principles in our programs view the child as unique, competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.

Our Philosophy

At YUCDC, we believe that our Centre is the *Home Away from Home* for the children in our care. Our program focuses on active play-based learning as the way that children naturally learn best. Play is children's primary medium of learning and their natural response to the environment around them. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge and expand on their own understanding through making connections with prior experiences thereby opening the door to new learning.

Intentional play-based learning enables children to investigate, inquire, and engage in critical thinking. Play is responsive to each child's unique learning style and capitalizes on his or her innate curiosity and creativity.

YUCDC respects children's rights as declared by UNICEF and promotes the Article 31 that every child has the right to "rest and leisure to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." (UNCRC, Article 31 (1))

Our Commitment

We strive every day to:

- provide an inclusive enriched environment, which honors and respects all children's beliefs, cultures, languages, and experiences acquired from their family and community.
- promote children's health and well-being through understanding and addressing children's needs and rights.
- foster children's natural desire to explore, play and inquire.
- capture and documenting children's learning journey which is extended to the curriculum and environment by the child and educator.
- scaffold through curriculum and a collaborative planning process.
- support all children's ability to self-regulate so that children feel comfortable and confident.
- foster the children's health and well-being indoors and outdoors.
- form trusting relationships with children and their families.

At YUCDC, we provide an inclusive environment where children naturally seek to grow and flourish by providing the four foundational conditions: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression**. We believe in providing an inclusive enriched learning environment, which honours and respects all children's beliefs, culture, language, and experiences acquired from their family and community. Our educator's attitude is one of inclusion and respect. Understanding the social experience of disability allows those working in early childhood education and care environments to consider that it is not a diagnosis that defines disability, but the degree to which we are meeting the needs of each child either facilitation their development or creating barriers. (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Ostrovsky, M. M., Laumann, B. M. & Hsieh, W., 2006; Purdue, 2009; Underwood, Valeo & Wood, 2012)

While most children naturally engage in play, not all children play the same. We know that through rich and meaningful play, children will develop a stronger sense of self. They will learn to express their opinion and thoughts and learn to respect the thoughts and feelings of others around them.

Our Vision

YUCDC's vision is world-embracing, where each child's individuality and uniqueness is celebrated. As we believe that learning does not only happen within the boundaries of a classroom, our goal is to extend our practices and values to the environments and communities beyond our Centre. Our team has come together to foster anti-racist views and avoid gender bias values, attitudes, and practices. Our programs and activities reflect the ethno-cultural diversity of Toronto and promote, respect, and appreciate those differences.

Our Values to Early Learning and Childcare

YUCDC's Program Statement outlines our values and approach in maintaining a quality early learning and childcare environment where everyone is welcomed and celebrated.

a. Children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.

YUCDC believes that children are competent, capable, and curious, and have great potential. We view children as mine, rich with inestimable values and that with education, care and love they will develop to their full potential.

b. Cultivate Authentic Relationships and Connections

YUCDC supports positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and staff. Partnership between families and the Centre is essential for the optimal growth and development of young children. We welcome ongoing discussions with parents and caregivers about their child's progress – social, emotional, cognitive – and their daily life at the Centre. We believe that the learning environment consists of everyone (children, teachers, and families) working together for the holistic development of the child. We believe in staff forming trusting relationships with children and their families, providing everyone with a sense of belonging. Staff provide parents with the opportunity to discuss their child's progress through on-going discussions, and parent meetings if necessary or requested. If there are any problems or concerns regarding your child, your child's teachers will discuss it with you so that we are all working together.

c. Educators are co-learners in the classroom.

Children are guided by skilled educators who establish a flexible program in an inclusive, supportive, and non-discriminatory environment. YUCDC is committed to hire staff that are positive, life-long learners and passionate about working with children. Our team has an ongoing commitment to professional growth and learning.

All our staff strive to foster children's exploration, play and inquiry as a key goal in the classroom. 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, strengthening their sense of self-worth and confidence. We will foster the children's health and well-being, indoors and outdoors. Our educators use several strategies to communicate effectively with children. They observe, wait, and listen, when communicating to children. Our educators are knowledgeable, empathic, skilled, and caring individuals who are engaged in pedagogical documentation and capturing children's learning and interactions. We plan for a creative, positive, and nurturing environments in which children's play is fostered through exploration, and inquiry. This approach facilitates positive learning and skill development.

d. Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.

YUCDC provides a positive learning environment for children that enhances their personal level of development. Having a rich and inviting environment allows children to engage in active,

creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry. Our physical space contains inviting open-ended materials that allows children to enhance their sense of wonder, exploration, and joy.

Children’s ideas are the crux of the emergent curriculum that is based on the interests and needs of the children. Open communication between and among staff, children, families, and other partners is crucial to realizing a warm and safe environment in which the children at YUCDC can play, learn, and thrive. We provide programs to support our "holistic" approach to child development, including sports, dramatic and creative arts, self-help skills, and science experiences. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to participate in all activities. We strive to provide a stimulating program that offers services to children, families, and the community, within the framework of the Child Care and Early Years Act and ideologies in Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, “How Does Learning Happen”. Our emergent curriculum is organized around the following 5 areas of development: physical (gross and fine motor); social (awareness, respect, ability to share and cooperate); communication (verbal and non-verbal); self-esteem (self-awareness and positive self-image); cognitive (comprehension, problem solving, and skill acquisition). We are a licensed childcare centre which strives to meet and exceed Health and Safety expectations set by the Ministry of Education. We have developed enhanced policy and procedures to safeguard the safety and well-being of children, staff, and families. We provide nutritious meals, in accordance with Canada’s Food Guide, that are culturally sensitive. We accommodate dietary and religious food requirements.

Four Foundational Conditions Essential to Fostering Learning and Development

Our goals are guided by 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**.

Our Goals and Approaches to Early Learning and Childcare

YUCDC’s programs have adopted the following five goals and approaches to guide how learning happens. These eleven approaches are listed in the Ministry of Education’s Childcare and Early Year’s Act, Ontario Regulation 137/15 46.3a-46.3k.

GOAL ONE: To promote health, safety, nutrition, and WELL-BEING of the children.

Our programs provide a space and opportunity for children to develop a sense of self, health, and well-being. Each child’s individual needs are valued and accommodated when possible.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children (CCEYA, O.REG 137 46(3a))
- Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play, and quiet time into the day, and give considerations to the individual needs of the children receiving childcare (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3g)). "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."

APPROACHES:

• Health

- ✓ monitor and assess each child's health regularly through observations and communications with parents, the child, staff, and any other community agencies.
- ✓ engage parents in the guidance of their children (behaviour, sleep, etc.) as appropriate.
- ✓ ensure proper hand hygiene and environmental cleaning practices are followed to promote healthy living.

• Safety

- ✓ provide children only with materials considered 'safe for children's use'.
- ✓ implement allergy protocols to ensure healthy and safe environments for all children.
- ✓ ensure child safety by ensuring appropriate supervision at all times.
- ✓ ensure a safe environment by conducting all necessary environmental safety checks.

• Nutrition

- ✓ provide healthy and nutritious food as per Canada's Food Guide.
- ✓ promote positive eating environments that promote social interactions and self-help skills.
- ✓ encourage children to have a healthy respect for food and eating. Staff use this time to engage and develop relationships with all the children.

• Well-Being

- ✓ be responsive to children's overall emotional well-being and individual needs.
- ✓ encourage positive interactions and support self-regulation.
- ✓ incorporate indoor and outdoor play as well as active play, rest, and quiet time into the day.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ familiarize themselves with all information for each child concerning any medical conditions, exceptionalities, allergies, healthy meals and snacks, food restrictions, medication requirements and parent preference with respect to diet, exercise, and rest time. Forms and journals will be used to document health and safety and the well-being of the children. Allergy lists, including the names of all children and their respective food allergies or restrictions, will be posted in each cooking and serving area, in each play area or playroom, and in any other area where the children may be present. Where it is not practical to post a list, educators will ensure the inclusion of the list in the attendance binder.
- ✓ ensure that the environments are welcoming and comfortable and meet the needs of the children in their care.

- ✓ demonstrate 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. Educators pay attention to how they are meeting the needs of the children and what changes need to occur if they are not.
- ✓ promote daily active physical play learning experiences for children.
- ✓ ensure all meals, snacks and beverages provided meet the nutritional requirements as set out in the CCEYA and are posted in every program room, kitchen, and website. Any substitutions that are made are noted on the posted menus.

GOAL TWO: To support positive interactions by fostering a SENSE of BELONGING.

We believe that every child should have a sense of belonging, feel connected to others, and contribute to his/her world.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, children providers and staff (CCEYA, O.REG 137 46 (3b)). “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”.

APPROACHES:

- ✓ engage in conversations that are positive, welcoming, and respectful and that balance sharing when listening with children, parents, and staff.
- ✓ promote and facilitate inquiry and open-ended communications among children, parents, and staff.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with children, parents, & staff.
- ✓ role model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth.
- ✓ interact with children, being respectful of their individuality by using their names, and introduce new children to others, while engaging in discussions about similarities and differences and identifying gifts and contributions of other children.
- ✓ acknowledge feelings and use books and resources that represent diversity and model empathy for others.
- ✓ facilitate the environment and experiences that help children express themselves, problem solve, be creative, reflect, and engage in positive expressions.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self –regulate (CCEYA, O.REG 137 46 (3c)). "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”.

APPROACHES:

- ✓ have spaces accessible to children that can accommodate quiet activities, small and large groups and individual inquiry while promoting choices.
- ✓ have spaces that allow for indoor and outdoor activities.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ communicate on a daily basis with parents to understand the needs of each child as an individual.
- ✓ support children's self-regulation and their ability to deal with stress.
- ✓ 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.

GOAL THREE: To foster exploration through ENGAGING in play, EXPRESSION, and inquiry.

We believe that every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses. YUCDC staff offer children daily experiences through play-based learning. Play is their natural response to the environment around them. When children explore or are manipulating objects, acting out roles, and exploring with different materials, they are engaged in learning through play. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge, and expend their own understandings through making connections to prior experiences. Through play and inquiry, 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 the children's learning.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3d))

APPROACHES:

- ✓ promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with children, peers, and other adults in the room.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ create environments and experiences that support learning and foster exploration through play and inquiry.
- ✓ facilitate and support inquiries from the children.
- ✓ provide and facilitate learning activities and spaces that meet age-appropriate needs.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences (CCEYA, O.REG 137 3(e)) "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".

APPROACH:

✓ create environments and experiences that support learning, individual development and engagement that allow for child-initiated experiences to be supported by adults.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with children, peers, and other adults in the room.
- ✓ role-model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

■ Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3f)) "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".

APPROACH:

- ✓ provide children with the opportunity to work with open-ended materials that inspire creativity.
- ✓ allow children to engage in small and large group settings.
- ✓ provide a flexible schedule when possible to allow for deeper engagement.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ use their observations, knowledge of child development and the children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities.
- ✓ share with and encourage families to be active participants in their child's care.
- ✓ provide learning environments based on the children's interests.
- ✓ provide a variety of choices for them.
- ✓ facilitate learning through play environments that are enjoyable, spontaneous, and active, and respond to the children's curiosity.
- ✓ be knowledgeable about child development.
- ✓ foster and explore creative ways in which children can learn what is meaningful and relevant in their lives.
- ✓ observe and document learning to reflect and facilitate learning opportunities.
- ✓ ensure that indoor and outdoor opportunities are regularly available and offer rest or quiet times when needed.

GOAL FOUR: To connect with family and community.

We believe that families are competent, capable, curious, and rich in experience. YUCDC will aim to engage and communicate with families about their children's learning experiences. We believe that families know their children best and are the first and most powerful influence on learning and development. The needs of each child are considered in the context of their family

composition, values, culture, and language. The approach enriches relationships between early childhood settings, families, and their communities.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Foster the engagement of and communications with parents about program and their children (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3h))

APPROACHES:

- ✓ communicate regularly with families with verbal updates (face-to-face, email, phone calls), access to documentation, daily charts when appropriate, and regular meetings as required to provide parents engagement opportunities and feedback.
- ✓ communications will be clear, reader-friendly, accessible and will meet all necessary regulations.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff. (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3i)) “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.”

APPROACH:

- ✓ network with community resources that will help support children, their families, and staff.
- ✓ ensure collaboration with local community partners.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ ensure strong and positive relationships with parents to ensure clear understanding of the families in which the children grow and flourish. Communication with parents will be regular and can be verbal, written, or electronic.
- ✓ deliver stimulating learning experiences in an interactive environment that enhances children’s social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development with peers, staff, parents, and community partners. Through listening and expression, a collaborative culture of trust and appropriate risk-taking will be created.
- ✓ ensure inclusive opportunities for all and by networking with parents and other community partners, resources will be accessed to ensure the best opportunities for all.
- ✓ build strong and positive relationships with the University.

GOAL FIVE: To ensure pedagogical documentation.

Pedagogical Documentation is a means by which to learn how children think and learn. “It offers a process to explore all of our questions about children....to make learning visible to others, to allow for interpretation, encourages educators to be co-learners alongside both children and families. (HDLH, p.21)

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Support others in relation to continuous professional learning (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3j))

APPROACH:

- ✓ provide, support, and encourage all staff to engage in continuous professional learning.
- ✓ support staff in continuous growth and professional learning.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ be provided with opportunities to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth” through self-reflection and goal setting and staff meetings. Research, theory, and practice suggests that this is one of the things important to achieve a high-quality program.

CCEYA REFERENCE:

- Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in (3a to 3j) on the children and families (CCEYA, O.REG 137 (3k))

APPROACHES:

- ✓ support the communication with parents as active participants, planning and creating environments and experiences using documentation.
- ✓ allow time for regular review, reflection, and evaluation about the learning. As educators who deliver high-quality early years programs, we know that we are never done. Our commitment to continuous improvement will be achieved by management policies and practices that embrace the program statement.
- ✓ review the impact of strategies, and support and monitor the ongoing process through things such as regular communication, annual parent surveys, regular parent engagement meetings, ongoing educator collaboration.

IMPLEMENTATION- Educators will:

- ✓ use both written and pictorial documentation as a tool for reflection, goal creation, and the scaffolding of the children’s learning. Individual notes, reflections and observations on each child’s learning will be kept on file as a basis for more in-depth discussion with parents.
- ✓ implement, monitor, and evaluate action plans to continually improve their performance. *Capturing and documenting our practice* is a form of reinforcement of the learning process for educators, family, and children,
- ✓ capture *evidence* of their practice in their documentation. As educators who deliver high-quality early years programs, we also know that we are never done. Our commitment to continuous improvement will be achieved by management policies and practices that embrace the Program Statement.
- ✓ use their observations, knowledge of child development 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