

# Program Statement

Name of Child Care Centre: Toronto Waldorf School

Date Policy and Procedures Established: 2016-09

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: 2023-02

This Program Statement is provided to current and prospective parents of children in the TWS Child Care. It describes the goals and approaches used in our TWS Childcare programs. Consistent with the requirements of the *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*- the TWS Child Care supports Ontario's Pedagogy and the vision for the Early Years through continuous learning from the following documents:

- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014
- Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children

As qualified educators and caregivers, our goal is to provide enriching programming and a learning environment that supports the four foundational conditions that are essential for children to grow and flourish: **Belonging. Well-being. Engagement and Expression.**

Our goals are to create daily interactions with children that foster a sense of connectedness to others, and individual experiences of being valued while encouraging the building of positive relationships with others. We also value the importance of physical and mental health and wellness of the children by encouraging them to develop the capacity for self-care, a healthy sense of self, and self-regulation skills, as well as by providing nutritious meals throughout the day.

We encourage children's positive expressions and communication through their body language, words, and use of their imagination with the provision of safe indoor and outdoor play environments. At TWS Child Care, plenty of play-learning opportunities are provided to encourage children to interact with the world around them, maximizing their competence, capacity, and disposition for lifelong learning. New families are warmly welcomed into our community to mutually support the children's growth and development.

## Holistic View of the Child

*TWS Child Care and our Educators recognize children as **competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.***

We recognize the importance of a holistic perspective – considering the child's mind, body, and spirit.

This whole child approach is evident in all of our child care programs offered here at TWS, from the Toddler to Preschool years- preparing their transition to kindergarten, elementary/secondary education, and eventually into adulthood.

The TWS Childcare Program carries a view of the *whole* child, mind, body, and spirit. This holistic perspective can be considered from various angles. In this document, we will use the following sections:

- (A) Promoting the Health, Safety, Nutrition, and Well-being of the Child
- (B) Supporting Positive and Responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers, and staff
- (C) Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate
- (D) Foster children's exploration, play, and inquiry
- (E) Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
- (F) Plan for and create a positive learning environment in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans
- (G) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time, into the day, and consider the unique needs of the children receiving child care
- (H) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children
- (I) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff
- (J) Support staff or others who interact with children in relation to continuous professional learning
- (K) Document and review the impact of strategies on children and their families

## **(A) Promoting the Health, Safety, Nutrition, and Well-being of the Child**

### **Goal:**

Every child is a capable, curious, and competent learner and can develop resilience when provided with healthy food, nutrition, and a sense of well-being in a loving, warm, nurturing, and safe environment.

## **(B) Supporting Positive and Responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers, and staff**

### **Goals:**

Every child has a sense of belonging when they are connected to others in loving and secure relationships. Each child is encouraged to share, work together, care for each other, and respect the needs of others in positive and interactive relationships in the classroom. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators respect and regard the children positively to help them become capable communicators. By creating close familial interactions with parents, children, and educators, strong connections are made to build the bridge between the home and the classroom for the child.

## **(C) Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate**

### **Goals:**

Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with their body, mind, and senses, in many different ways. Child-initiated and creative play are encouraged in the classroom to help the children feel secure as they learn to trust, explore, interact, and communicate in a positive way with the support of their Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators. Each child's individual needs are considered and respected in the rhythm of the day, supporting their needs and ability to self-regulate at their own pace.

**(D) Foster children's exploration, play, and inquiry****Goals:**

Everything in a young child's environment has an impact on them inwardly and outwardly. Through play, exploration, and inquiry children develop a curiosity about the world they live in and where they belong. Creative play enhances physical, emotional, and social well-being allowing children to learn through investigation, exploration, and discovery. Parents are encouraged to engage with the Child Care Programs and initiate meaningful, positive communication with Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators to support their children as curious learners.

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**(E) Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences****Goal:**

Children are encouraged to create their own learning situations in child-initiated and creative play- which enhances their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators approach the children with patience and care to help them become motivated and independent learners.

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**(F) Plan for and create a positive learning environment in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans****Goal:**

The environment is a key factor in supporting all children's development and learning experiences. The environment supports the young child in an inclusive manner. The use of natural materials found in both indoor and outdoor environments helps to foster a connection to the natural world- developing in the child an appreciation, awe, and wonder for nature and the world they live in. All play environments and learning opportunities are planned with the inclusivity of all children in mind- including children with individualized plans.

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**(G) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the unique needs of the children receiving child care****Goal:**

The physical space, both indoor and outdoor, reflects a home-like environment where children can identify with a regular routine for active play, rest, and quiet time. The rhythm of the day includes outdoor play twice daily; morning and afternoon, allowing for physical movement in the nature-inspired playground and/or the wooded field within the school premises. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators support regular rhythm and patterns of activities in the classroom to support the children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive developmental needs.

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**(H) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children****Goal:**

Parents and Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators support each other by keeping the lines of communication open. The partnership between parents and Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators helps develop the child's sense of security and well-being while fostering positive, authentic, and caring relationships. This bond serves to support the child's developmental needs.

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**(I) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff**

**Goal:**

Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators support both children and their families through cultural events year round and have interest with local community partners. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators encourage families to feel a sense of belonging and connection with their local communities.

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**(J) Support staff or others who interact with children in relation to continuous professional learning**

**Goal:**

Our Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators are responsible for providing a nurturing, warm, and safe environment for the children to develop and grow holistically. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators meet regularly to review their work and the children's development; attend lectures and continue professional development workshops and training. Our Child Care Faculty also offers parent/teacher gatherings that support and update their knowledge of the health, safety, and well-being of the children in their care.

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**(K) Document and review the impact of strategies on children and their families**

**Goal:**

Observation of the whole child is an important part of understanding each child's development. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators have interviews with parents to share their observations of the child's development and monthly letters detailing program activities are sent via email. At parent/teacher gatherings, we openly discuss and reflect on the children's milestones, as well as, areas of accomplishment.

## **Our Educators – Child Care Faculty**

The developing relationship between children and the Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators is important to support the child's need to feel safe and secure. Our Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators view young children as competent and capable, engaging in age-appropriate activities supporting their growth and learning development. Child Care Faculty staff/Early Childhood Educators value children's learning through play and imitation. Artistic activities such as storytelling with puppets, singing/eurythmy, drawing, and painting are consciously offered to support children's sense of awe, wonder, and imagination.

Our Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators support the children's important learning experiences with warm, loving, and positive aspects of involvement they cultivate in their daily working routine; be it sweeping the floor, folding laundry, working with children to prepare snacks, or building a bridge on the floor with the child. The consistency of this warm, gentle presence helps the child to feel secure to reach out and connect with others.

Our warm and positive approach extends to parents and families. Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators welcome and encourage the engagement of parents. We want to learn about your family's culture and values, and how your child is supported by the family. All Child Care Faculty staff/ Early Childhood Educators have Waldorf curriculum training or are currently pursuing their training, and are valid Registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators. All Child Care Faculty Staff/ Early Childhood Educators also possess valid Police Vulnerable Sector Checks and Valid First Aid & Infant /Child CPR Training as well.

## Professional Development and Training

TWS Child Care is committed to the ongoing professional development of all educators. The Toronto Waldorf School provides ongoing coaching and mentoring opportunities to further develop our educators in their continued development. In-service and out-of-centre learning opportunities and workshops are encouraged to all staff to strengthen their skills and knowledge in the Early Learning field, as well as, Waldorf Pedagogy.

## Child Guidance

All educators, volunteers, and students will follow our core values of caring, honesty, inclusiveness, respect, and responsibility. They will ensure that every child develops a sense of belonging, as well as a positive sense of self, health, and well-being. All educators and support staff acknowledge that every child is an active and engaged learner who explores their world with body, mind, and senses and is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways. Educators are here to support children in developing strategies to remain calm and to regulate their emotions while recognizing the effect of their actions on others.

### Strategies used by Educators and support staff:

1. Positive Reinforcement
2. Redirection (diverting/distracting, substitution)
3. Discuss inappropriate behaviour
4. Modeling / Demonstrate Conflict Resolution (problem-solving skills)
5. Ignore inappropriate behaviour (such as whining, arguing about limits, efforts to start arguments, temper tantrums etc.)
6. Break or Removal from activity/ routine

We believe that every situation can be used as a teaching moment. When dealing with undesirable behaviour, staff speak with each child at their level, and calmly discuss the behaviour and help the child learn new strategies to deal with frustrating situations and their emotions. Rather than focusing on negative behaviour, which only reinforces the undesired behaviour, we strive to focus on the positive behaviours a child displays and encourage them to express their emotions in an acceptable way.

### Prohibited Practices include:

Corporal punishment of the child;

Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat stroller, or other device for the purposes of discipline or in place of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;

Locking the exits of the Child Care Centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.

Deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten the child or undermine his/her self-respect, dignity, or self-worth;

Depriving the child of basic needs, including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, bedding, or comfort;

Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

All employees, volunteers, and students must review and sign the **Program Statement Implementation Policy** before employment/ volunteering and review them annually afterward or when substantial changes are made.

Child Guidance Strategies used by staff will be closely monitored by the Child Care Administrator/ Supervisor on an ongoing basis through regular written informal and formal observations and evaluations. Contraventions to our Child Guidance Policy or prohibited practice expectations will result in professional disciplinary actions against the individuals involved according to the discipline policy of the school.

All written records of monitoring will be kept on file for three years. Placement students or volunteers will not be left alone with the children as per outlined our Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy.