

LITTLE LEADERS HOME CHILD CARE AGENCY PROGRAM STATEMENT

Building Blocks - How Does Learning Happen?

Little Leaders Home Child Care Agency follows “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)” as the guiding document under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

Our vision for the early years, is that all children have the required means to learn, grow, and excel, in a way that works with their unique needs. Little Leaders program is built on the concrete beliefs that children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. With this in mind, we provide children with the ability to learn in a way that will most benefit their personal growth. Furthermore, with each interaction, our providers are mindful of the four foundational conditions essential for children’s growth: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression. Children should experience these four foundations daily regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting.

HOW DOES LEARNING HAPPEN?

Little Leaders utilizes a play-based learning approach to create the best setting for early years development. Learning happens when children are provided with proper materials, an appropriate environment, and strong support for each child’s individual needs. Gentle guidance and a loving hand from child care providers will reinforce their safety, while maintaining a degree of flexibility in the program, to provide children with the freedom to learn in a way that is most fitting for them. Our child care provider’s teachings step outside of regular “classroom style” and instead support children with an environment that is designed for exploration and early-years self-teaching. This learning happens independently regardless of age, skill level, or varying abilities. The child will demonstrate to the provider how much support they need to optimize their development and learning experience, at a pace that best suits their unique skills.

THE ENVIRONMENT AS A THIRD TEACHER

Little Leaders believes that children, rich in potential, will learn in ways that step outside of our teaching abilities. While circle time, crafts, language, literacy, numeracy, science, technology, outdoor exploration and other components of structured programming provide a wonderful foundation, the flexibility remains that allows children to participate in said activities, or learn in an independent fashion, depending on how they see fit on a day to day basis. With the notion in mind that children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential, we understand that each child’s intuitive goal is to acquire as much information as they can during crucial early years and we can support them with an interactive environment. Our child care homes are set up so that materials for play (and in turn learning) are accessible to them at their reach. Other materials which may be left out of reach are rotated into an

“available materials” area so that children are continually presented with new learning opportunities. The environment acts as a third teacher, giving children the freedom and independence to teach themselves by exploring their intentionally constructed environment.

FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF GROWTH

- Every child has a sense of **belonging** when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.
- Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and **well-being**.
- Every child is an active and **engaged** learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.
- Every child is a capable communicator who is encouraged to **self-express** in any and all possible forms of language (verbal language, body language, actions, etc)

Our child care providers instill these 4 foundations into each day, giving every child a strong base of support to foster a healthy learning environment. These are conditions that children naturally seek for themselves. Providers are encouraged to record these interactions daily through use of Little Leaders Journaling.

Aspects Of A Strong Child Care System

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

Little Leaders’ philosophy on child care is that it should assist the family in raising their child. We believe that child care should be an extension of and/or stimulator to the learning and development that the child receives at home. A seamless transition between the home experience and the daycare experience will enhance the opportunity for development. Effective communication between the parent and the child care provider is the key to success. The long-term goal is a healthy relationship between the child and their adult-world.

Providers are encouraged to maintain an open line of communication with parents through proper journaling, posting menu plans and daily activities, and sharing about the child’s day with parents each morning and afternoon.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOR PROVIDERS

Little Leaders Home Child Care Providers are supported by the agency in a variety of ways, both in-house and outside of the child care home. In-house, Little Leaders staff and home visitor(s) continually monitor meals, nap-time, and indoor/outdoor play through home visits. These accurate documentation. Outside the home, providers are engaged in developmental and professional learning opportunities through their respective municipalities. In Halton, providers are all aware of the Quality First program

– to-date roughly 75% of Little Leaders providers are participants or have been. Providers are encouraged to discuss these developmental activities with parents.

HEALTHY BODIES

A child's awareness of their own body with respect to fitness, nutrition and safety are the platform for a healthy lifestyle. This includes appreciating diversity between children with respect to age, culture, and varying abilities. A child's day must be a balance between active play and restful activity, both indoors and outside. Active play allows children to develop coordination, test their limits, and build strength. Restful activity allows the body time to revitalize. During the infant, toddler, and preschool stage, restful activity must consist of napping. School age children may engage in restful activity that includes listening to music, reading books, or participating in story telling. TV is not accepted as a form of "rest".

HEALTHY MINDS

Mental stimulation is absolutely essential to a child's learning and development. It is an ongoing process throughout all the child's activities in a day, whether active or restful. We encourage the introduction of general concepts/themes to the child which then allows their natural curiosities to expand on the learning experience. By offering them opportunities to explore and inquire, they will learn about themselves as well as the world around, and how to the two co-exist compatibly.

INTERACTION WITH THEIR WORLD

Interaction between a child and people, places and things is a key to a child's overall realization of how they fit into our world, creating a sense of purpose and self-respect. Community interaction is the key to linking a child's learning to the world around them. Engagement with the community, and exploration into support systems outside the four walls of a home should be reinforced with children. A child will learn how their world impacts them and ultimately how they can impact their world. This includes behaviours that are acceptable and not acceptable, and learning the relationship between actions and reactions in every aspect of life. Advanced stages of this concept will lead to understanding the laws of nature, legislated policies and personal relationships.

HEALTHY ATTITUDE

Little Leaders strongly believes in fostering a learning environment that creates a way of life for children to continue through life with a positive attitude towards their view of themselves, their view of others, their view of the world around them, and the interconnection between all of these elements.