

CENTRAL EGLINTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE

1 HISTORY AND PROGRAMME STATEMENT

History

Central Eglinton Joint Children's Centre (CECC) is a not-for-profit, charitable organization that is overseen by the Ministry of Education (through *The Child Care and Early Years Act*); The City of Toronto - Children's Services; The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). It is run by an elected/appointed Board of Directors, who oversee the general operation.

CECC was founded in 1981 by the parents of children in Eglinton Public School. It was born out of the need for quality childcare in the community. Initially, CECC offered one half-day programme that complemented the School's Kindergarten. Since 1981, we have continued to add new programmes: Pre-School, Kindergarten and School Age. In 1998, we added a School Age Satellite Programme at St. Monica's Catholic School on Broadway Avenue. In 2001, it expanded to accommodate a Kindergarten Programme.

In September 2012, the Ministry of Education introduced Full Day Kindergarten to Eglinton School and CECC took on the role as 3rd Party Child Care Provider for the children attending kindergarten. Also, in 2012 we ended the Kindergarten Programme in St. Monica's School. The start of Full Day Kindergarten allowed us to open a Toddler Programme as well as additional Pre-School rooms at our Eglinton site.

Programme Statement

CECC provides a secure, supportive, and trusting environment in which children are recognized as being competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. It is an inclusive, play-based learning space in which children can develop and grow at their own pace. The goals of our programme are to nurture independent thought and action, self-confidence, self-regulation, co-operation, and social skills. We believe that families are an integral part of our programme and that by forming trusting relationships with them we provide a strong sense of belonging and collaboration. Our Registered Early Childhood Educators are knowledgeable, empathetic, and skilled. They provide a curriculum, based on ongoing observation of the children's play and interactions. They see play and inquiry as key components to a balanced, comprehensive programme that fosters children's health and well-being.

CECC has an access and equity/anti-bias policy, which promotes respect for Age, Ancestry, Colour, Race, Citizenship, Ethnic Origin, Place of origin, Creed, Disability, Family status, Marital status (including single status), Gender identity, gender expression, Receipt of public assistance (in housing only), Record of offences (in employment only), Sexual orientation.

Review and Acknowledgement Sign-Off

All employees, volunteers, and students, prior to commencement of employment or placement, will review the Programme Statement and sign an acknowledgement form that declares they have understood its purpose and practice. They will sign a new declaration if annually and/or if there have been any changes.

Programme/ Pedagogy and Curriculum

Pedagogy is "the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that support that understanding of learning." Curriculum (the content of learning) and pedagogy (how learning happens) in early years' settings are shaped by views about children, the role of educators and families, and relationships among them. (How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014).

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf>

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How Does Learning Happen at CECC?

Our pedagogical approach and subsequent emergent curriculum reflect our view of children being competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.

Our play-based curriculum supports how we:

- a) Promote health, safety, nutrition and well-being through our daily planning, policies, hygiene and health practices, and our comprehensive menu.
- b) Build positive, inclusive, and responsive interactions amongst the children, families, staff, and local community partners.
- c) Provide and promote opportunities for children to communicate effectively and build on their self-regulation.
- d) Focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development in a holistic way, valuing them as individuals and as competent contributors with their own interests and points of view.
- e) Provide environments in which children learn through exploration, play and inquiry, which are adult supported, and child initiated.
- f) Provide opportunities that promote active, and passive play, rest and quiet time, indoor and outdoor play, while considering the unique needs of each child.
- g) Foster the engagement of, and ongoing communication with families about their children and the programme.
- h) Involve local community partners and allow the partners to support the children, their families, and staff.
- i) Encourage self-reflection, discussion, and ongoing collaboration among our educators through continuous professional learning.
- j) Engage with families, using their values, strengths, contributions, and unique perspectives in the delivery of our curriculum; and,
- k) Document and review the impact of the above strategies on how they affect the children and their families.

Our Practice - Implementation

General

Before becoming a Board Member, Employee, Student Teacher, Volunteer with CECC, each person will review and acknowledge:

- The Programme Statement Document
- All relevant policies and guidelines that support CECC's Pedagogical Practices

Board of Directors

- Helps develop and oversee the implementation of CECC's Programme Statement and all relevant guidelines.
- Annually reviews and may amend the Programme Statement, guidelines and all other Policies and Practices.
- Provides a budget that invests in each staff member's professional development.
- Evaluates the performance of CECC's Directors.

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CECC's Directors

- Oversees the implementation of HDLH (Programme Statement)
- Undertakes regular staff meetings in which CECC's performance and how it relates to the Programme Statement is discussed.
- Oversees weekly team meetings in which the implementation of the Programme Statement is discussed.
- Meets regularly with individual educators to discuss their role in the implementation of the Programme Statement.
- Reviews with staff, the annual inspection results from Toronto Children's Services and the Ministry of Education and resulting changes to practice that need to be made.
- Share inspection results with the Board of Directors.
- Undertakes annual performance review with each staff that includes a self-reflection section on their implementation of the principals in HDLH

CECC's Educators

- Create a programme that complies with CECC's Programme Statement
- Create an environment that is welcoming and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Prepare a daily programme plan that allows children to explore, play and inquire.
- Listen, observe, document, and discuss children's learning, with each other, with our families and with the community
- Share ideas and best practices with teams at weekly planning meetings and staff meetings.
- Evaluate own practice as part of the self-reflection section of the annual performance review.

CECC Families

- Attend an information session prior to starting with CECC to learn about our programme.
- Meet with their child's Registered Early Childhood Educators via a home visit (when applicable)
- Annually review a copy of the Family Handbook, that includes the Programme Statement and further information about CECC's practices
- Partake in an annual survey that assesses CECC's practice and services.
- Partake in semi-annual "Parent Chats" to discuss the well-being and development of their child/ren in the context of CECC's programme.
- May join CECC's Board of Directors, or volunteer on a Board Committee.

Our Implementation Goals are to...

Promote a sense of BELONGING by:

- **Seeing parents/guardians as those with the most knowledge about their children.**
 - Fostering relations with the child's family, respecting family culture and, Including them in decision making.
 - Meeting formally and informally to discuss their child's interactions, development, and general well-being.
- **Providing opportunities for community building amongst families in our programmes**
 - Hosting social events– Family Fun Nights, Family BBQ etc.
 - Fostering communication between families at drop off and pick up.
 - Hosting opportunities for parents to share their experiences with each other:

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Promote a sense of BELONGING by...continued:

- **Providing an environment where children 'see' themselves.**
 - Providing personal space allotted for belongings.
 - Documenting children's play and learning in the classroom: photos, artwork, etc.
 - Connecting with families and communities and inviting their participation to ensure that environments and experiences reflect and are relevant to children's everyday lives.

- **Building warm, responsive relationships with each individual child**
 - Engaging in one-to-one interactions with the children
 - Being aware of the children's physical and emotional well-being
 - Recognizing and valuing each child
 - Interacting on the child's level for face-to-face interactions
 - Following the children's lead and interests during play
 - Using a pleasant, calm voice and simple language
 - Providing warm, responsive, non-intrusive physical contact
 - Acknowledging children for their accomplishments and efforts in a genuine, authentic manner

- **Providing a consistent, predictable structure for the day, with consistent limits**
 - Providing a consistent, but flexible, daily schedule and ensuring children are aware of it: pictorial cues, etc.
 - Planning smooth, minimal transitions, using transitional props and materials to aid with transitions
 - Planning for individual needs during transitions: time for slower eaters, picture cues and verbal encouragement for reluctant dressers, etc.
 - Establishing clear, consistent, and developmentally appropriate limits
 - Helping the children understand classroom expectations.

- **Providing an environment which fosters respectful communication and interaction.**
 - Supporting interactions among and between children, modelling positive, empathetic, and communicative exchanges
 - Redirecting children when they engage in challenging behaviour.
 - Providing natural and logical consequences that are age appropriate for the individual child.
 - Listening to children and encouraging them to listen to others.
 - Planning and implementing formal and informal social skills programmes/activities to help children develop positive social interactions, self-regulation, problem solving, cooperation, concentration, listening and waiting etc.
 - Reaching out to families to provide support and involving community partners that provide guidance, strategies, child and family assistance, resources, financial support etc.
 - Reflecting on practices, discussing with peers, researching best practices

- **Recognizing and supporting each child, parent, and educator as an individual with unique strengths, needs, personality and story.**
 - Providing training for staff in personality/communication styles and temperament
 - Taking time to have 'Welcome Visits' with families prior to children starting to get to know each child and their family.
 - Documenting children's learning from a strength-based perspective – highlighting the learning that is taking place for that individual instead of making comparisons between children or imposed benchmarks.
 - Using self-reflection and strength-based observations in staff reviews
 - Planning for each child's needs - extra time to complete tasks, larger or smaller pieces, verbal support for social conflict resolution, etc.

Promote a sense of WELL-BEING by:

- **Providing a clean and well-maintained environment**
 - Ensuring equipment and furnishings are cleaned according CCEYA, Toronto Public Health and Children’s Services requirements
 - Providing a designated Safety Officer (staff member) to regularly inspect and ensure maintenance of equipment and furnishings.
 - Undertaking daily, weekly, monthly, and annual inspections of the playground
 - Working with School Caretaking staff to ensure maintenance and cleaning of floors, washrooms, garbage, etc.
 - Ensuring linens, upholstery covers, etc. are laundered weekly, or more frequently if needed.
- **Maintaining Infection Control**
 - Ensuring Staff and children follow health and hygiene policies and practices dictated by Toronto Public Health
 - Incorporating health and hygiene practices into the daily classroom routines: handwashing, toileting etc.
 - Having staff perform a visual daily health check of each child.
 - Isolating sick children, until parents can pick up.
 - Enforcing exclusion policies – ensuring children and staff, when sick, stay at home for the required length of time.
- **Providing for children’s physical development**
 - Incorporating exercise and active play into daily programme
 - Providing time and space for outdoor play
 - Planning for development of large muscle skills, making necessary adaptations for individual needs and abilities.
- **Providing for children’s safety**
 - Ensuring staff are all trained in Standard 1st Aid & CPR.
 - Ensuring all Parents/Guardians sign their children in and out of CECC.
 - Ensuring staff undertake regular headcounts as per CECC’s attendance policy
 - Practicing monthly fire drills and quarterly “Lockdown” drills
 - Ensuring all staff, students and volunteers have undergone a Vulnerable Sector Screening
 - Training staff in how to “Support Positive Interactions” which includes annual formal behaviour guidance. monitoring, and sign-off on CECC’s policies
 - Providing resources for parents/guardians on safety topics: Home Alone Workshop, Helmet Safety, etc.
- **Supporting healthy eating**
 - Employing in-house cooks to develop nutritious, wholesome menus that are varied and appealing.
 - Providing certification for all food handlers
 - Providing seasonal, rotating menus which are reviewed annually by a nutritionist.
 - Ensuring menus reflect the dietary, religious, and medical needs of the children.
 - Following all guidelines from governing agencies – Toronto Public Health, etc. regarding safe food handling and transportation
 - Providing resources to parents/guardians regarding healthy eating habits for children: parent workshops, lunchbox ideas, etc.
 - Providing food experiences for children for them to explore new foods and consider healthy options.

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Promote a sense of WELL-BEING by... continued:

- **Promoting mental health and wellness**
 - Incorporating opportunities and time to practice self-help and self-care skills as part of daily programming: yoga break, calm down spot, etc.
 - Support staff in developing tools and skills to manage stress and maintain a balance between work and life through training (RIRO – resiliency), social gatherings, sick leave policies, time during work hours to complete tasks, etc.
 - Putting a strong focus on programming for children’s social/emotional development
 - Providing training for staff related to children’s mental health challenges: depression, stress, anxiety.
 - Encouraging children to develop strategies to regulate their emotions and deal with stress: calm down spot, role play, blowing out candles, time for a break, etc.
 - Providing tools and resources to assist families related to mental health & wellness: stress reduction tips, information about importance of sleep, Kids Have Stress Too workshop, etc.

Promoting Self EXPRESSION by:

- **Being aware of the many “languages” children and adults use to communicate.**
 - Providing a variety of media with which children can represent their learning and understanding paint, clay, blocks, print, creative movement, dramatic play, etc.
 - Encouraging children to try different tools for expression: computer programmes, teaching a dance, etc.
 - In planning, providing different ‘entry points’ for children to explore a topic or inquiry.
 - Providing flexibility to staff in the way they plan and document children’s exploration and learning.
- **Providing individualized support so children of all abilities can express themselves and be heard.**
 - Providing time, space, and materials to encourage expression through creative materials that reflect children’s capabilities as well as their social and cultural background.
- **Engaging in authentic, reciprocal communication with children, where children participate as both initiators and equal partners.**
 - Facilitating successful communication between children by helping children listen to and express themselves to one another.
 - Documenting children’s communication to help them revisit thoughts and ideas expressed to extend their understanding.
- **Supporting children’s engagement with language and stories**
 - Providing a wide range of reading materials: different styles, levels, and languages
 - Providing many opportunities for oral storytelling: guests, circle time, cuddle time on the couch, etc.
 - Engaging and cultivating children’s connections with stories and books in a variety of contexts (e.g., by sharing books and telling stories with individuals, small groups, and large groups), and for a variety of purposes (e.g., to foster close relationships, explore and play with language structures, recount past events, research ideas, spark conversations, and connect with cultural traditions)
 - Weaving language- and literacy-related activities and materials into all daily experiences, routines, and physical spaces
 - Working with families and community members to find ways to support and enrich the transmission of language and culture.
 - Endeavoring to incorporate home languages in written and spoken word in the classroom.
- **Encouraging educators to continuously reflect and seek to improve their own communication strategies and techniques.**
 - Providing opportunities for professional development related to communication style, etc.

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Supporting a sense of ENGAGEMENT by:

- **Recognizing the key role that the environment plays in how children interact and engage.**
 - Providing a warm, inviting, and comfortable space
 - Providing space for children to work
 - Providing a wide range of open-ended materials that are organized in a way for children to easily access.
 - Promoting use of materials in a variety of ways and locations
 - Providing space and time for children to engage in active and passive play and inquiry.
 - Ensuring there are sufficient and varied play materials, for children to explore with their senses, manipulate, and investigate.
 - Providing space for individual and group play
 - Providing materials, equipment and experiences that offer challenges and are responsive to the needs of all children.

- **Recognizing the key role that the organization of time plays in how children interact and engage.**
 - Providing a daily schedule that is flexible yet predictable with minimal interruptions and transitions.
 - Providing a daily schedule that allows for large periods of time for children to play and explore both inside and out.
 - Providing time for individual, small and large group play opportunities.

- **Fostering a culture of collaboration - Providing opportunities for sharing of thoughts, ideas, and skills**
 - Participating with children as co-investigators, co-learners, and co-planners, allowing them to see themselves as collaborators.
 - Allowing children to continuously question and test their own theories, strategies, and ideas; being there to facilitate the process.
 - Regularly engaging the children and parents in finding solutions to classroom challenges or questions
 - With children and families, seeking resources from the community to help provide information related to our inquiries, challenges, or play experiences.
 - Seeking feedback from families, staff and children through casual conversation, Board meetings, surveys, etc. as part of regular decision-making processes
 - Providing time and opportunity for staff to collaborate on planning and projects related to their work with children: committees, team meetings, etc.
 - Displaying the value placed on collaboration and engagement by documenting the process, not just the final product.
 - Engaging families in Parent Chats to discuss their child's learning and any suggestions they might have for the programme.

- **Encouraging participation from families and the community in the daily programme and children's learning**
 - Offering a wide variety of ways for families to participate in the daily programme: sharing a favourite story, providing props for the drama centre, adding an observation to their child's portfolio, assisting with a special event, proofreading policy, helping create a garden, etc.
 - Involving the community in children's explorations: artwork display at the bank, purchasing groceries at the local fruit market, borrowing books from the community library, arranging a visit from the local fire department, etc.

- **Planning & Documentation**
 - Staff are given programme planning time, with their room partners and team, to discuss and document children's learning and to prepare a weekly programme plan.
 - The programme plans are reviewed and signed by CECC's Directors and posted in the classroom.

