



Ska:na Family Learning Centre

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Child Care Program Statement

The SFLC offers extensive educational services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children, youth and their families to ensure success within the mainstream school environments and within all aspects of their lives. The Curriculum's Aboriginal language and cultural component will be primarily based on the Ojibwa culture/tradition and balanced with respecting and including all children's cultures enrolled in the program.

The Child Development Curriculum is designed to enhance the learning styles and learning environment of children. Ontario's pedagogy for the early Years Curricula to be used in the program will have principals deriving from the "Active Learning" education approach. The "Active Learning" approach involves children in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, ideas, and events. Through such self-initiated active learning experiences, children learn concepts, form ideas, and create their own symbols and abstractions. As conscious participant-observers share control and initiative with children for classroom and centre activities, they are guided by key experiences that all children need to have as part of their intellectual/mental, physical, spiritual, emotional development. Also adults ensure the presence of the five essential elements of an "Active Learning" setting: materials, manipulation, choice, language from the child and adult support. These "ingredients of active learning" assure that materials are age and culturally appropriate, that there are many opportunities for children to freely manipulate the materials; that children can make many choices, discuss their own ideas and pursue their own interests both with other children and with adults; and that children can rely on appropriate adult support to carry out ideas and to be responsible for their own efforts. In addition, SFLC encompasses the research and legislation in Ontario's three major early learning documents: How Does Learning Happen?, The Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and Think, Feel, Act Lessons from Research about Young Children..

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years is a professional learning resource guide about learning through relationships for those working with young children and families. It is intended to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in early years programs. 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. The pedagogical document, How Does Learning Happen?, helps educators focus on these interrelationships in the context of early years environments.

How Does Learning Happen? is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression. These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children's future potential and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. They are aligned with the Kindergarten program. They are conditions that children naturally seek for themselves.

The Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) is a Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings. This early learning framework, sets out six principles to guide practice in early years settings. It also provides a continuum of development for children from birth to age eight. ELECT is recognized as a foundational document in the early years sector. It provides a shared language and common understanding of children's learning and development for early years professionals as they work together in various early childhood settings. The principles of ELECT have informed provincial child care policy, such as the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, as well as pan-Canadian early learning initiatives such as the Statement on Play of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. ELECT principles are also embedded in the program document used in Ontario's innovative Kindergarten program.

Think, Feel, Act, are six research briefs for educators working in early years settings which, highlight the latest research in early childhood development, strategies to put the key ideas into practice and reflective questions for educators. There is a common thread throughout the briefs: a view of the child as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. These briefs are intended to challenge the status quo and encourage critical reflection as we consider our work from different perspectives. As 'briefs', the documents are not intended to provide an in-depth analysis of each topic, but instead, to pique your interest and highlight key ideas that are useful and relevant to your work. You are encourage you to use the reflective questions throughout the briefs to stimulate personal reflection and team discussions. Educators and other professionals are invited to try out some of the suggested practices and exchange ideas with colleagues. Above all, these briefs are intended to get people talking about some of the big ideas that have such a significant impact on the experiences of children across the province.

(Approved September 15, 2015)