



## Program Statement

The philosophy of the Ottawa Catholic Child Care Corporation is to provide relaxed, recreational and educational programs in child-centered environments where children safely learn through play. Our Educators see children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Using the Conscious Discipline® model of a School Family, the centres promote safety, connection and problem solving among staff and children. Educators support the development of relationships, emergent program planning, reflective practice and principle of paying it forward. Additionally, utilizing everyday events the practice of Conscious Discipline® empowers adults working with children to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.

Our program goals include but are not limited to;

- promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children
- supporting positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff
- encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate
- fostering the children's exploration, play and inquiry
- providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences
- planning for and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans
- incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time
- fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents
- involving local community partners
- supporting staff
- documenting and reviewing the impact of our program on the children and their families

Our philosophy and program goals are guided by the Conscious Discipline® approach and supported by the Ministry of Education's framework for Ontario early childhood settings entitled *How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH)*

The programs provide safety, both physically and emotionally, for all children. Routines are established that reflect the orderly expectations of the program; such as turn taking, respectful listening, and following directions. The *Safe Place* is a learning centre available in each program to assist children in learning the skill of composure (managing emotions) and self-regulation. Children may choose to go to this cozy corner or quiet area for comfort and/or to practice calming techniques when they feel any sort of upset.

Our programs promote health and nutrition by providing a light nutritious snack in the morning and afternoon. Emphasis is placed on healthy choices, appropriate serving sizes, trying new foods, incorporating the children's menus suggestions, and treating snack and meal times as unique social experiences.

Educators plan and organize the environment and activities based on the developmental needs of the children. Observations of and conversations with the children assist Educators in planning appropriately for each child, and each group of children. Spontaneous facilitation of new activities and expansion of current activities is provided in order to take advantage of children's natural curiosity and help maintain engagement. Using *HDLH* as a guide, Educators plan and promote activities based on broad categories of development for each child. The goal of engaging families is met through clear and consistent verbal and visual communication / documentation. Thoughtful curriculum planning for indoor as well as outdoor play, active as well as rest/quiet time capitalizes on the interests of the children and helps to encourage engagement.

Wherever possible parents are given the opportunity to offer input into ideas for activities, equipment and field trips. Families are kept abreast of their child's day through the posting of Program Plans outlining the daily activities, conversations with Educators, and written adjustment reports shortly after beginning in the program. Documentation in the form of pictures and work samples is posted for families, and linkages with what the children are engaging in are made with reference to the *HDLH*, *Conscious Discipline*® and *ELECT* documents. These examples help to inform parents about the skills their children are acquiring as well as a means for Educators to review and assess the program.

Our Educators form relationships with each child, which aids in providing individual support and guidance. Encouraging language is used in order to acknowledge how a child has contributed to the group or made a positive choice. Environments are created that aid in healthy connections and relationships among and with children, in order to facilitate meaningful problem solving. Each child has a job in the program, allowing them to see themselves as helpful to others, and to create a value of service. The idea of connectedness to one another and to the group as a whole is explored daily through activities and conversations that highlights our similarities, values our differences and supports unity.

In keeping with our philosophy and goals, children participate in the *Community Helper* initiative which is incorporated into the program at each centre. This initiative promotes a sense of responsibility and affiliation to the greater community, and an awareness of the various needs of communities. Children participate in service projects initiated by them as a means of learning about their community and their role in it. Examples of *Community Helper* activities include; regular visits to retirement homes, fundraising for charities and the creation of items by the children to support and / or thank others. Additional examples may be found on the Corporation website ([www.occhildcare.ca](http://www.occhildcare.ca)).

Educators are encouraged and supported to engage in ongoing professional learning. Workshop, course, literature and speaker information is posted regularly to our E-Portfolio for all staff to make note of. And funds are available to facilitate this process where appropriate. Furthermore, the Corporation hosts regular professional development opportunities on relevant topics.

Finally, through regular documentation of activities and learning, adjustment reports of the children, communication with families and ongoing staff improvements to programs and processes, the impact of the programs on children and their families is regularly assessed.

Details regarding the goals and / or operational components of the programs are outlined in the Family Handbook. Together with the Program Statement, these documents serve as a means to inform you about the programs' overall philosophy and communicate policies and procedures.