



Community of Maple Child Care Services Program Statement

OUR MISSION

To nurture, to educate, to assist in discovery, but most important, to run with, to play with, to learn with and to care for our children in our home away from home.

At **Community of Maple Child Care Services (COMCCS)**, we are inspired by the philosophy of the “Reggio Emilia” approach to Early Learning, building on ***How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for Early Years***. We believe that children are capable, competent, curious and rich in potential. We are committed to collaborating with children, their families and with each other as educators to create high-quality, early learning and care environments that take a strength-based approach to learning and development in which children, parents and educators are co-learners.

Using the common framework articulated in ***How Does Learning Happen?***, our programs strive to support the children to achieve the following **goals** and will meet the **expectations** for programs, building on the four **foundations** for healthy growth and development:

Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when they are connected to others and contribute to their world.	Cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.	Nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

Our Key Strategies

Our programs have worked to incorporate and embed the ***Early Learning for Every Child Today*** (ELECT) principles, along with the provincial pedagogy for early learning, strengthening the quality of our programs and ensuring high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of children.



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Working collaboratively, we will plan for and create positive early-learning environments that:

1) Promote the health, safety and well-being of young children, families, and educators by including the following:

- Well-organized environments with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children – children don't have to ask for items that they need,
- A process to sign children in and out of the program, on a daily basis, to ensure that they are safely supervised,
- A variety of equipment that is maintained in a good state of repair,
- Daily opportunities for gross motor play, where children are encouraged to use their entire bodies to explore the world both indoors and outdoors, incorporating the *Physical Literacy Handbook*,
- Positive language that emphasizes accomplishment and effort, empowering the child's success,
- Posting photographs and detailed profiles of all our staff,
- All our meals, snacks, and beverages meet the recommendations set out in the Health Canada document "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide". Children enrolled in the child care centre will be served snacks and lunches from the child care centre's menu provided by the catering company,
- Snacks are available for children in the Before & After School Program,
- At meal times, educators sit and eat with the children and engage in active conversation,
- Children's allergies, medical conditions and individual implementation plans are documented, posted and reviewed by all our staff, students and volunteers,
- Children and staff wash their hands frequently throughout the day to reduce the spread of illness and promote good hygiene,
- Children serve themselves, when possible, and are encouraged, but never forced, to try new foods,
- Water is always available to the children throughout the day,
- All sites are kept clean throughout the day and are professionally cleaned on a nightly basis,
- Toys and equipment are disinfected daily, weekly and monthly,
- Monthly Health and Safety inspections are conducted by our Health and Safety Committee to ensure a safe environment,
- Educators follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, the Region of York Health Department, and the Region of York Children's Services Division.

Healthy Food and Active Play Make a Difference

Additionally, opportunities for rest and a balance between active and more reflective play are strategies that will be implemented to support positive interactions and facilitate healthy development.



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2) Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children and families.

Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions

Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there is a range of interesting, intriguing and developmentally appropriate activity options to engage children. Educators are reflective practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual children and child development, supports positive behaviours on the part of children, educators and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.

- Educators engage with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing “wrong,”
- Educators are co-learners and actively participate in exploring and investigating information together with the children,
- Educators view play as intentional and inquiry-based,
- Educators are genuinely interested and share a sense of joy that is the wonder of new learning - “Engage and have fun.”

The following will ensure positive and supportive interactions:

- During your child/children’s enrolment process in one of our programs, you will complete registration documentation, and we will provide an overview of the **Parent Handbook**, including policies and procedures,
- A tour of the program and site will be provided, and you will be introduced to your child’s educators,
- Child Care Parents will be invited to participate in an initial Parent Engagement meeting at which time we will compile information about your child’s specific needs, likes and dislikes, and what comforts your child. This will allow educators to build an understanding of your child’s individual needs,
- Educators will greet and welcome you and your child upon arrival at the program,
- Educators use calm voices and are at the child’s level for face-to-face interactions,
- Parents are encouraged to visit and spend time interacting with their child and educators in the program,
- Parents and educators talking together, sharing information and knowledge about each child,
- Educators will build trusting relationships by promoting mutual bonds of affection and respect with all children by encouraging a home-away-from-home atmosphere.

Supporting Children’s Self-Regulation

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach. Educators focus on helping the children understand their feelings and emotions and provide support to assist children to regulate their behaviour.



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3) Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in numerous ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.

A variety of ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings, including:

- Painting, drawing, modelling with clay, play dough and other art and creative/sensory materials,
- Telling or writing stories,
- Singing,
- Dancing,
- Talking with educators,
- Talking with other children,
- Building with blocks and other building materials,
- Conducting experiments and other science activities,
- Solving problems,
- Planned excursions outside the centres to promote children's connection to their local community (School Age children only),
- Technology (tablets, iPads, limited internet use),
- Providing a variety of activities and experiences that encourage individual or group interactions,
- Providing materials, activities and experiences, that promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Personal and social development play promoting role playing, fantasy and imagination.

4) Foster exploration and inquiry that is play-based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.

Supporting Healthy Development and Learning

At **COMCCS**, each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are identified. Educators set goals through individual attention, inquiry, play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is supported. Educators focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative and cognitive development in a holistic way.

This approach will be strengthened by:

- Preparing the environment to foster learning and development;
- Building on the children's ideas, questions and theories as observed in play;
- A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion amongst team members, at room, team and program meetings, i.e. how to support deeper exploration;
- Inviting and engaging others in the continuing process of program development, including parents, the children themselves and other community partners such as, but not limited to, educators within the school system;
- Children making sense of the world around them through play;



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- Play supported by caring educators in environments with materials, space and time, which encourages complex thinking and assists children to gain essential skills. These skills include creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These provide a foundation for curriculum and promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skills;
- Children learn through exploration, play and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful exchanges with children, which encourages them to interact and communicate in a positive way, promoting their ability to self-regulate;
- Using a developmental tool based on **Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)** to establish developmental goals for all children in the infant, toddler and preschool programs;
- Using the **Child Care Accommodation Policy** aimed to foster an environment that encourages and supports accommodation requests by working with the parent/guardian on strategies to accommodate the needs of their child;
- Using the **Early Referral Identification Kit (ERIK)** to help identify developmental concerns early to ensure timely intervention, essential for optimal child development and family support for all children in the infant, toddler and preschool programs;
- **Individual Support Plans (ISPs)** and **Individual Program Plans (IPPs)** are put into place to ensure that children's special needs, and any other needs, are addressed with a focus on growth and development;
- Children's portfolios, display boards, learning stories, pictures, daily reflections and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities, compiled on an ongoing basis and used to study, interpret, make visible, and help inform children's learning and development, for all children in the infant, toddler and preschool programs.

5) Provide both child-initiated and adult-supported experiences to foster development, which may include the following:

- Times when the child takes the lead in planning an activity and times when the educator builds on observation to develop and implement activities that help each child to improve their skills and abilities;
- Daily program plans posted with a variety of educator-planned activities that will be added to throughout the week, as children expand on the activities or move forward in new directions;
- The number of transitions during the day is limited so that children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place.



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6) Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development, including:

- Educators observing and compiling documentation about children building on their experiences;
- Educators discussing the documentation with the children;
- Children and staff smiling, laughing, having fun, playing and learning together;
- Children actively engaged in activities, usually in small groups;
- A focus on learning through play with educators, while encouraging and supporting questions, answers and problem-solving on the part of the children.

7) Incorporate a range of various experiences that consider the individual needs of the children, including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time.

These can include:

- Well-stocked toy shelves and creative materials available to the children;
- Quiet, comfortable spaces for reading, quiet individual activities, or rest;
- Children engaged in a variety of activities throughout the day;
- Children taking the lead, actively shaping their play;
- Educators listening and learning from the children as much as the children listen and learn from them;
- Educators encouraging children to explore nature and their natural environments;
- Quiet activities for children who do not require a nap during rest times.

8) Foster engagement and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.

Parents as Partners

Educators foster engagement and ongoing communication with families regarding the program and their children, striving to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in our program; we are partners in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children.

A strong, respectful and equitable relationship with parents is fundamental to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and their families. To this end, we endeavour to engage parents in ways that meet their needs and build on strengths, while respecting the challenges that face young families, including long commutes, time constraints and the pressures inherent in raising a family. Strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Two annual assessments (employing the ELECT-Developmental Screen) on each child's development. Results are shared with parents (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers);
- Annual parent/educator meetings (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) and/or as requested by the parent/s or educator;
- Opportunities, both planned and informal, for parents and educators to share ideas about how best to support each child;
- Portfolios for each child, made accessible to parents;



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- An “open-door” policy that welcomes parents to drop off and pick up their children, and to drop in whenever convenient within regular operating hours to observe the program;
- For infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, daily information about the child’s day is documented and completed for parents by the educators;
- Incident reports completed when a child has an accident/incident. A copy of the report, with all needed information, is provided to the parents;
- Informal discussions on a daily basis;
- Educators taking the opportunity to talk to parents, while at the same time tending to the needs of the children;
- Posted documentation of activities, interactions and engagement (pictures, display boards, on-line app);
- Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum, (e.g. monthly classroom news, calendars, enhanced curriculum involving specialized knowledge and expertise);
- Inviting and encouraging parents to participate directly in the day-to-day activities;
- Social and special events including:
 - Christmas concert;
 - Annual Corporation picnic;
 - Annual General Meeting (AGM);
 - Annual Curriculum Night (infant, toddler, and preschool programs)
 - Annual School Age Engagement Drop-in;
 - Parent participation at the Board level.
- Communication with parents, including:
 - Annual family survey;
 - Monthly calendar of events;
 - Monthly classroom news;
 - Display boards;
 - Quarterly newsletter;
 - E-mail communication;
 - Website;
 - Social Media;
 - Daily feedback, both verbal and written (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers);
 - Parent/Staff correspondence;
 - On-line Communication App.

9) Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for children and families to develop close connections with a range of community support.

- Planned excursions to community services and programs such as the local library, grocery stores and other neighbourhood locations;
- Use of community partners as a resource and support to families, children and staff;
- Sharing resources and materials about community support and services;
- Field trips, for School Age children, which provide a variety of experiences within the community, that both child and parent can participate in.



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10) Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning, including:

- Annual Staff Professional Learning Conference;
- Regularly scheduled professional development sessions which staff are encouraged and supported to attend;
- Registered Early Childhood Educator's commitment to their continuous professional learning, as required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators;
- New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program;
- Sharing materials and research with parents;
- Educators are required to participate in up to one full day or two half days annually of personal professional learning opportunities, based on their Performance Review learning goals;
- Educators schedule planning time each week;
- Educators meet to share ideas, information and to develop programs;
- Educators are encouraged and supported to participate on community networks or committees.

11) Use many languages to document and review the experiences of the children and the educators in order to:

- Provide an ongoing record of development (ELECT), individual portfolios, ISPs, and IPPs;
- Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on the impact of their activities and strategies – ISP's, Reflections/Documentation of Stages, Evaluations;
- Provide a visual and oral record that enables parents to review and explore the developmental trajectory of their child including:
 - Display Boards with documentation posted explaining and showing parents what the children are doing;
 - A variety of methods of recording observations specific to the child's accomplishments, i.e. daily journal, project journal, daily feedback documentation;
 - Developmental assessments (ELECT) completed twice a year, for all infant, toddler, and preschool children.

12) Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for all children, families and staff regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family environment and developmental abilities.

- Create a safe space, taking into account the differences each child and family bring to our early childhood setting;
- Children and families will be encouraged to participate and share their beliefs that relate to diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Professional development will be available to ensure educators are fluent in diversity, equity and inclusion practices;



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- Educators will provide activities and ample opportunities for children to explore different cultures, traditions, and celebrations as they relate to the families in the program;
- Educators will ensure their classrooms are set up to meet the abilities of all children and families in the program;
- Ensure materials and activities in the classroom are representative of all cultural backgrounds, gender abilities, family make up and developmental abilities;
- Develop trusting relationships with staff, children and families that are non-judgmental understanding varying social realities and foster a culture of inclusion;
- Make room for creativity and innovation and operate from a strength-based perspective and celebrate diversity;
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is part of our organization's foundation and practices to remove barriers, offer proper support, and improve diversity and inclusion throughout our programs.

Educators

The dedication and work of our educators is a very important factor in the successful implementation of *Ontario's Vision for Early Years*. Our educators are highly trained in the field of Early Childhood Education with a strong understanding of early learning, personal qualities of empathy, and the ability to relate positively to children and families.

Continuous Professional Learning for Educators

Our early learning environments support educators and others who interact with children to continually self-reflect, have discussions, foster ongoing collaboration, and engage in continuous professional learning, in order to provide the best possible learning environment for children. Staff are provided with many mandatory health and safety related training sessions, including Standard First Aid and Infant Child CPR and Occupational Health and Safety training.

A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

All new staff, students and volunteers are required to review the program statement prior to interaction with children in our care, and at any time the program statement is updated. All staff are required to review the program statement on an annual basis. This will be accomplished, once a year, during a staff team meeting which provides an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year and to set goals for the upcoming year.