



Royal City Cooperative Preschool

Program Statement

At Royal City Cooperative Preschool (RCCP), we aim to inspire every child to flourish, and all contributions are valued. We are committed to developing the whole child – physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. We believe that each child is an individual who is competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Each preschooler is treated with respect and encouragement.

Our program statement will follow the Minister’s policy statement on programming and pedagogy. Our preschool will follow the “How does Learning Happen” document, which is frame-worked around the four foundations of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression. These foundations are important for children to experience each and every day to ensure positive development.

There are a variety of programs available. Each program includes age specific activities in forms of intellectual, emotional, developmental and sensory initiatives. Being a co-operative preschool, families are involved in the operation of the school and daily activities.

We have five different classes. MWF AM class is specifically designed for a mixed age of preschoolers, 30-36 months by the end of December 2023. This class may also have 4 young spots, meaning children who are 24 months by the September in which they start. We have a toddler class which runs T/TH AM and is for those who are 20 months by the September in which they start and younger than 30 months. We are now offering a new T/TH AM PRESCHOOL class for children 30 - 36 months by the end of December 2023. Our afternoon preschool groups are for those older preschoolers heading off to JK the following year. Our toddler class and AM and PM Preschool Classes aim to provide activities to learn through play in a classroom setting.

Our program strives to build good relationships with the children and their families through positive, caring interactions. We help the children feel safe and secure in their environment and

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with the individuals they interact with. The daily program in each class is designed to meet the developing and maturing needs of the children as they progress from solitary play to an awareness of other children and on to a desire to cooperate with them in play.

'Play is a child's work'. Preschool-age is a time when a child's brain is rapidly developing; children learn easily and well at this age. Children are exposed to a variety of activities to support their physical, emotional and intellectual growth. Each day includes free play, circle, songs, stories, creative experiences and indoor or outdoor gross motor play, weather permitting. Children are able to participate in dramatic play, tactile activities, a reading corner, puzzles and games, blocks and vehicles and a science table.

We have qualified, enthusiastic and caring professionals who have extensive training and background in the field of Early Childhood Education and another one holds a teachers degree specialising in Special Education. Four of our teachers are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators(in good standing). One of our other teachers is registered with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)and is also in good standing . Our teacher's assistant has many years of experience running her own home childcare! They believe that it is an extreme privilege to be trusted with the care of parents' precious children.

Supporting positive interactions among children, and the staff

At RCCP, each child further develops the social skills that will be required of him/her throughout life: interacting with other children, and communicating in a positive way, learning how to wait, how to take turns, how to listen, being able to follow routine, how to problem- solve and to how to work in small and large groups. Some of the approaches used by the staff will be role modelling respectful, inclusive, positive interactions with children and other adults. We will redirect and guide children demonstrating how to resolve difficulties if there is conflict. We will engage in the children's play to demonstrate positive social skills including encouraging discussion and if conflict arises, helping them understand how their actions affect others. We will help the children identify their feelings and how to self regulate through conversation, modelling language skills and role playing. We will provide an environment that is full of experiences for children to explore and interact with others in play with a variety of play centres, craft materials, auditory materials, sensory materials, books, and songs.

Prohibited Practices:

- a. corporal punishment (which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching);
- b. physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat, etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent);
- c. locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs

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- during an emergency.
- d. use of harsh, degrading measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
 - e. depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
 - f. inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Belonging

It is our aim to create an environment to welcome every child and their family and help them to feel comfortable as part of our preschool community.

An initial tour of the school, discussion around the needs of the child and roles of the parents in a co-operative setting all occur as part of our registration process. We invite all new registrants to come for a night of play in June.

An introduction of each child to one classroom teacher occurs prior to the start of the school year in the form of a visit in the child's home environment. This is an opportunity for the teacher to meet with the child and family and gather any information to help get to know the child and family better. The staff will use a warm and caring manner through body language and words when interacting with the children. They will capitalize on opportunities for one-to-one interactions to make connections and build relationships with each of the children.

We will strive to provide an inclusive environment by encouraging families to share their cultural beliefs and customs for holidays, and inviting them to come into the classroom.

Through observations and documentation we will get to know what the children are interested in, what brings them joy, and how they relate to others and the environment around them.

There is a year end picnic for all families to come together for celebration, A local park is chosen and we meet during our final class time for each class. We plan two Stay and Plays at the school where families can come and enjoy time together in the rooms. One before the children start with us in September and one in the spring. We also try to plan other events for our school community and guests such as a family skating party, Christmas parties, and a family carnival where all families participate in a day with games, a silent auction and a children's raffle.

Engagement

The staff will engage in one on one play or with a group using eye to eye contact, modelling language skills, encouraging and asking questions during play. Staff will provide a wide variety of materials for children to explore with their senses, manipulate, and investigate. This will help

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us to observe and discover their interests and strengths and respond to them through further activities.

Staff will create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans. Staff will make experiences available by providing materials that allow the children's curiosity to be sparked, inviting them to investigate and explore. We intend to set out a variety of materials as a result of observations and documentation of previous days, to challenge their thinking and extend their play experiences. These materials may include loose parts, books, pictures, clip boards and pencil and paper in the various centres (ie: kitchen area, block area). We will provide active play areas as well as quieter areas, such as a book corner with comfy cushions, where the children can feel a sense of calm and comfort. These experiences are intended to support each child, recognizing that they are each learning and developing at a different level.

We welcome all families to share family traditions, holidays and customs throughout the year within the classroom. This may be through bringing in articles to display in our World Corner, for dramatic play, and/or during our group times.

We intend to include those with individualized plans through support using visual aids, and special equipment available either through Inclusion Support Services or by other means. Where Inclusion Support is needed and available, it will be implemented. The program will accommodate all children according to their needs, sensitivities and choices.

Engagement with the parents in our co-operative is important as well. In addition to participation in co-operative duties, we encourage ongoing communication at drop-off and pick-up times and scheduled meeting times.

Fostering exploration, play and inquiry

The child's exploration and inquiry is fostered through playing, with guidance and feedback from the program staff as appropriate. The staff will encourage the children to ask questions, will pose questions to them, and help them to research answers through photos, books, the tablet or computer. The below-mentioned indoor and outdoor environments are available to facilitate this. These environments inspire the children to initiate discovery.

Indoor play

Typical indoor play activities include craft room activities involving paints, paste, play dough, crafts, science table, books, puzzles, sensory play (water, sand). A second room also has activities involving dramatic play, blocks, puppets, cars/trucks, dolls, dress up, and a play kitchenette.

Outdoor play

A dedicated fenced playground includes a large climbing apparatus with slide, a sand box, riding toys and a playhouse. We also have access to a gymnasium where children are provided with balls, hockey sticks, balance beams, tricycles, ride on toys and a mini-trampoline. Children are in the playground or gymnasium for free play at the end of each program.

Staff will respect the needs of each individual child for active play and quieter activities, allowing opportunities for individual play, one on one play with peers or staff, as well as small or large group play times.

Observations, Documentation and review of activities

We observe the children daily with the specific goal of watching for their interests and things they are curious about. The notes of observations guide our program activities. We discuss our observations regularly in order to incorporate the children's interests into our days and to ensure our activities follow the curiosity of the children. We also use our observations to create documentation and display for parents. Various framed photo journals and comment documents are displayed in the classroom outlining the activities observed and the interaction with the program staff and fellow students. These are shared with parents and children. Daily we try to send photos via email of what their children are engaged in each day and a quick observation explanation.

Exposure to the community

We generally have 1-2 field trips per year for our preschool classes. Each family transports their own child(ren) to and from the field trip. We do neighbourhood walks observing signs of the different seasons. We invite our families to share any experiences with the children in our classroom. We have been fortunate to have special guests from the community into the classroom, such as members of the fire department, police officers, and dentists. We also try to deliver mail to our neighbours that the children make themselves. As covid is now in the past we have new groups meeting at the church (such as Stroke Recovery, Park and Dance - Parkinsons support group and a new Montessori school) building and we plan to organize short visits of singing together or playing games.

Professional development and planning

Each program staff member is an active participant in ongoing educational opportunities and professional workshops in order to enhance their knowledge, growth and development as teachers responsible for guiding young children and their parents. The preschool will budget for staff to attend a minimum of 10 hrs of professional development. Staff are encouraged to attend workshops and conferences set up by the Quality Child Care Initiative of Guelph, online courses, or other learning opportunities. Staff are also involved in the Co-operative Preschool Network meetings that occur 2-3 times a year in the community. The Supervisor attends Operator

Meetings and Supervisor Meetings whenever possible. Knowledge of the Emergent Curriculum Approach, Continuum of Development and Four Foundations of Learning, guide our planning.

Communication & Interaction between the Board, Teachers and Parents

General information regarding the school and its programs are available on the school website. An introduction of each child to one classroom teacher occurs prior to the start of the school year in the child's home environment. Communication between all teachers in the program and the child's parent or guardian occurs regularly during pick-up and drop-off to the program on an informal basis. Twice yearly Annual General Meetings (AGM) are held, which all teachers and members of the co-operative are invited to and expected to attend. The board and teachers meet on a monthly basis. One newsletter per semester is distributed to parents outlining past events and teacher's reflections. Information regarding trips or other special events are communicated via a letter home in the child's bag.

Any comment, question, or suggestion from a parent/guardian is welcomed by the teachers if it represents a programming matter, or by a member of the board if it involves administration of the school. A Parent Handbook is available to all members of the preschool on the school website. A suggestion box is provided in the classroom as another means to enable this communication.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

We meet all health and safety requirements of the Ministry of Education and Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. Each staff member possesses a Standard, Level C First Aid CPR / Infant and child, as well as a Food Handlers Certificate given by our local Public Health Department.

We are involved with and have access to support from the Canada Mental Health Association, Kids Ability and Early Years Professional Resource Centre and a Resource Consultant through the County of Wellington. Also if any parent wishes to reach out for help about any concerns about their child they can call Here4Kids 1-844-454-3711. You must leave a message and they will return your call.

We provide opportunities to promote healthy bodies through daily indoor and outdoor activities. One of the parental roles in our school is "shopper" for snack. These parents will be provided with the shopping list of what to buy and bring it directly to the school. Our menu is given to each family, posted in the classroom and is available on our website. The daily snack menu that follows the Canada Food Guide has been approved by dietitians from the WDGPH. All meal preparation is done at school. The children sit together and eat snack in a group setting.

All allergies and food limitations are taken seriously and are posted in the classroom and in the Emergency books. All anaphylactic plans for individual children are reviewed by all staff and volunteers and posted in the main classroom. Our anaphylaxis policy is also reviewed by all staff and volunteers before beginning employment. Our anaphylaxis policy and playground

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policy are available to view online, and parents can speak to our program staff at any time.

Implementation and Review of the Program Statement

We will review our Program Statement annually with staff, students and volunteers, and the Board of Directors, as well as anytime that changes to the statement are made. All staff, students and volunteers, and members of the Board of Directors shall review this statement prior to working at the preschool or whenever the program statement is modified. The comments and feedback from the parent survey will be reviewed and included in discussions, and staff performance appraisals will reflect the strategies outlined in the Program Statement.

Ongoing informal conversations, as well as monthly discussions, reflections, and continuous observations, will occur among staff to ensure they are supporting children's learning and development, and planning accordingly for the future.