

## **PROGRAM STATEMENT**

*Established in conjunction with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*

Mothercraft Ottawa (Mothercraft), believes that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Our Child Care Programs offer safe, secure and supportive environments within which children can grow and thrive. Mothercraft actively seeks out and supports collaboration with community partners for the benefit of all children, families and staff.

In alignment with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy, Mothercraft's Programs are guided by "How Does Learning Happen", Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years and by "Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT).

"How Does Learning Happen" is based on [four key foundations](#):

[Belonging: a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.](#)

Our Evered Avenue location is home to a variety of programs that support families in many ways. From the moment a family walks into the building, they are welcomed with a warm smile and a helping hand (and maybe some stickers on special occasions).

Mothercraft is a close-knit community and we are often the extended family. It is a partnership of two families raising a child together. We encourage everyone to share their special celebrations and events with us as we like to share ours. Our families get to know each other through the children's friendships and special events.

We believe that each family is unique and establishing strong partnerships with them enhances our ability to meet the needs of their children in our care. We welcome families into our environments and value their perspective, ensuring that communication is an important part of each day. Sharing information through posted program plans, message boards, learning stories, email, and daily conversations supports this critical partnership between families and Educators/Home Child Care Providers. All strategies set out to meet individualized goals and activities as characterized above will be thoughtfully established, documented and their impact reviewed and communicated on a regular and ongoing basis with families.

What you might see....

- Informative "Welcome to the Program" packages given out to parents as they inquire about the program or upon registration
- Integration to the program is planned with the parents to meet the needs of each child and family.
- Parents calling in to see how their child's day is going
- Educators welcome families and children with a personal greeting; seeking information about the child's health, mood, or special events in the child's life – supporting the child and family in this transition
- Educators ensuring that a child's favourite toy or activity is ready for the child upon arrival to help ease transition into the program.

What you might see.... (Cont'd)

- Every child has their own special place for their belongings
- Families are encouraged to come and participate in the program
- Walls proudly filled with the children's work (art, photographs, comments etc.)
- Celebrations of special holidays and traditions

[Well-being: the importance of physical and mental health and wellness incorporating capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation.](#)

Our curriculum is built from child generated ideas. We teach and model the acceptance of diversity in all aspects of daily life, thoughts, feelings, social skills and learning styles.

We encourage the children to interact with their peers and teachers in a positive and respectful manner. We offer an academic play-based learning environment for the children to retain new information and to explore. A positive learning environment is essential to the success of each child. We value every child as an individual and treat them with respect. Our environment and teaching tools help aid the children in their personal development, express their emotions, support autonomy and foster self-regulatory skills.

Our menus follow the Canada Food Guide and provide the children with nutritious meals and snacks which also contribute to their overall wellbeing. The menus within our Centre Based Group Care Programs are dietician approved.

What you might see....

- Lots of hugs, laughter and smiles
- Educators and children working together to accomplish daily tasks and activities- giving the children a sense of confidence and pride.
- Children using proper handwashing techniques
- Visual cues to help guide the children through a task or routine (step-by-step pictures)
- Children dressing and undressing independently.
- Children choosing the activities they want to explore
- Children making choices at meal times
- Children serving their own lunch or snack
- Children listening to the cues of their own bodies (deciding whether to eat snack or not)
- Children having flexible rest times
- Children practising deep breathing techniques and other self-regulating strategies
- Children playing outside twice a day – in the playground and neighbourhood parks and on community walks
- Daily schedules that are built to follow the children's natural rhythm
- Time is allowed for unstructured play as well as teacher guided play
- Children are free to show their individuality
- Intrinsic rewards are encouraged

### What you might see.... (Cont'd)

- Supporting the children in expressing their thoughts and feelings appropriately
- Teaching children to recognize feelings and emotions – their own and others
- Demonstrating and encouraging respect for others (bodies, possessions and ideas)
- Providing outlets to express needs (small quiet spaces, jumping jacks in the hall)
- Educators provide clear and consistent expectations

**Engagement:** suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovating which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

The Mothercraft Team is dedicated to creating an exciting learning environment and curriculum inspired by the children, their families and our community. This allows us to be supportive and responsive to each child's individual journey along the developmental continuum socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically.

Our environment is designed to encourage and support the development of positive social interactions allowing children to develop problem solving and self-regulation skills as they learn about themselves and the world around them. Activities and experiences are children inspired and adult supported while our play based learning approach, programs, and schedules offer a balance of rest, active and quiet play both indoors and outside allowing the children to be active and engaged learners. We believe children are capable of informed risk taking and increasing independence within appropriate environments.

### What you might see....

- Activities that engage all the senses
- Small, individual and large group play
- Children interacting with their peers
- Parents and community partners sharing their knowledge
- Educators and children expressing their sense of wonder and excitement through inquiry
- Children helping children
- Educators and children using technology for learning and documentation
- Responsive curriculums based on the interests and needs of the children
- Real artifacts (dishes, glass jars, wasp nests etc.) for exploration
- Children learning beyond the doors of Mothercraft as we explore the parks, museums, forests, stores and the resources of our neighbourhood.

**Expression:** Communication (expressing and listening) takes many different forms. Children use their bodies, words and materials to develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language rich environments support growing communication skills which are foundation for literacy.

What you might see and hear.....

- Children identifying and expressing their feelings through the use of many different *materials* (books, felt boards, music and songs, costumes, dramatic play etc.)
- Educators modelling patience as they allow the children time to formulate their thoughts and responses
- Open-ended thought provoking questions
- Use of sign language
- Healthy physical expression such as dancing and yoga
- Educators modelling appropriate language and body language
- Children being offered choices and support as they work through the outcomes and consequences of their choice.
- Day-to-day conversation and chats about their interests, feelings and experiences
- Educators responding to the children's efforts to communicate through words, gestures or expression of emotions.
- Educators supporting the parents to share their stories, questions and concerns
- Visual cues/pictograms and charts to help the children identify feelings.
- Walls filled with documentation of the children's work
- Introduction to new languages
- Educators learning key words/expression in the language used at home

Continuous professional learning is an integral part of Mothercraft Ottawa's commitment to children and families and we seek out, encourage and support all of our staff and Home Child Care Providers to engage in opportunities as they arise.

This program statement is considered a living document and may change as we learn and grow with our children and our community. The Mothercraft Team will continue to contribute to the development of this statement. Mothercraft will support all employees (permanent and temporary) with the implementation of the statement through on-going discussion and critical reflection opportunities on-going during their career/placement with Mothercraft. All employees (permanent and temporary) formally review the statement annually and as changes arise.