

Program Statement

10 Chapman Street, Kingston, Ontario
Annual January Review



Something Special Children's Centre (SSCC) follows a play based educational program that aligns with the Ministry of Education's How Does Learning Happen and ELECT document (Early Learning for Every Child Today). We also incorporate Wings of Discovery (Science and Math based) and Jolly Phonics (Language and Music based) into our daily program. We use the following Ontario Ministry of Education resources and documents (www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html) to guide our professional growth and reflective practice:

- How Does Learning Happen: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children
- Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings

We use all of these resources to support a well-rounded, pedagogical environment for our children to explore the wonders of life while discovering exciting new curiosities.

We also use HiMama, a web based software that aids our staff in document management and increases parent involvement and engagement with our centre.

Our motto at SSCC is "We Celebrate Life". Our program offers a stimulating, high quality educational environment in which all children are able to explore in a safe, child-oriented facility, where healthy risks are encouraged.

This policy statement, together with the Ministry of Education's regulations that guide program development, pedagogy and practice, strengthens the quality of our program. High quality experiences lead to positive outcomes in children's learning, development, health and well-being, while attending SSCC and into their futures. We celebrate life and we realize this objective through our belief that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

We want you, the parent, to understand what we do and how we implement our Program Statement. All daycares in Ontario are required to have a Program Statement that meets the Minister of Education's requirements. We prepared our statement by incorporating each section of the Minister's Statement on How Does Learning Happen and divided it into segments. In each segment, we detail what our objectives are to ensure that we meet all of the objectives and to show you, the parent, how we accomplish our goals. You are likely wondering what the word pedagogy means.

Pedagogy is in simple terms considered to be the teaching method that an educator uses in order to "support pedagogy and program development in early years' settings that is shaped by views about children, the role of educators and families, and the relationships among them. It builds on foundational knowledge about children and is grounded in new research and leading-edge practice from around the world." <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

Reading through this document, you will notice that the role of each member of our staff is different, but the overall objective of our goals remain consistent.

Fostering Children's Exploration, Play and Inquiry

Our educators support child initiated and adult supported play through: observation, the set up our programs which provide a positive learning environment, and experiences that match the children's growing interests. Educators discover these interests by noticing and documenting children's play, interactions, observations and inquiries. Through reflection, props and learning tools are provided to support the children's growing interests. In essence, the educator follows the child's lead.

Our educators get involved. They have dress up and silly days, play in the mud days, crawl around on their hands and knees; and get on the children's level to see what they see, and they ask open ended questions of the children. Educators and children have fun together through playing and learning. Through observations, educators know the children well and are able to pick up on children's cues; they know what is bothering them, what excites them, what they need simply by where they are looking. They verbally label these cues for the children to encourage language development and communication.

How we accomplish our goals of fostering children's exploration, play and inquiry

At SSCC we use "How Does Learning Happen" as our guiding principle for children's learning. We believe educators are capable, competent and able to self-reflect. The Floor Coordinator and/or Director meet with educators on a regular basis to reflect on their understanding of the Four Foundations of Learning: belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. These core principles do not change, no matter the age of the child. We also use the six ELECT principles as guides in our programs:

- Principle 1: Positive experiences in early childhood set the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, health and well-being.
- Principle 2: Partnerships with families and communities are essential.
- Principle 3: Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion is vital.
- Principle 4: An intentional, planned program supports learning.
- Principle 5: Play and inquiry are learning approaches that capitalize on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.
- Principle 6: Knowledgeable and responsive RECE and other early learning practitioners are essential to Early Childhood settings.

At SSCC we respect and value our educators' opinions and knowledge. Through listening and respectful discussion, everyone learns how to include and introduce new activities which foster curiosity and supports children's future potential for learning. Collaboration and cooperation amongst team members allows trust and friendships to develop, thus creating a healthy work environment.

Plans are established through observations which are based on the children's budding interests, to capture next stages in learning. Documentation by educators on a daily and weekly basis leads to improved delivery of programs, developing an awareness of our environment, and allows for changes to our props based on supporting documentation and weekly teaching.

Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-being

Health and Safety

The safety of our children is our most important concern. We provide a variety age appropriate equipment and materials that are safe, and in good repair. Toys and equipment are selected based on the age and development of the children who will use them. Educators closely supervise the children's activities, both inside and outside the building.

While at play, through observation of the children's use of toys, equipment and interactions with others, educators plan their next activities. We allow children to take age appropriate safe risks in our yards, while still maintaining recognized/required rules for our Centre. In doing so, children are encouraged to learn how to problem solve, self-regulate what actions they will take, and determine if they feel they will be safe in an activity. Educators are close by to discuss options with children to help them make safe choices, and to interact in a friendly manner with others. In doing so, they are creating friendship, sympathy, empathy for others, developing emotional intelligence, and self-expression. Safe risks could be walking on a log, going down the slide without holding the sides, riding a bike backwards, and standing on a step ladder to reach something with an educator's physical support.

Educators are aware of and follow child care regulations regarding safe environments for child care centres. We conduct two playground checks per day before the children enter our yards. We have a checklist for leaving and entering the building to ensure all children are safe and accounted for. We have a Health and Safety Committee, and we conduct monthly and annual checks of our building and playground. We follow the Health Unit's requirements for immunization and exclusion criteria.

How we accomplish our goals of health and safety

The health and safety of the children we care for and our educators is paramount at SSCC. Educators and management play vital roles in ensuring we have a safe and healthy environment at SSCC.

Educators will:

- Be certified in Standard First Aid and Infant Child CPR
- Hold a valid vulnerable sector CPIC/VSC
- Review and sign off on and comply with our internal health and safety policy
- Report to parents/guardians if a child is unwell or injured
- Work with Management to coordinate emergency medical care
- Duty to Report to protective services within required guidelines

When inside, educators will:

- Screen visitors to the centre via security system and alert supervisors of the person's presence in the building
- Watch where the person goes
- When deemed necessary, educators will take children to a safe area on their floor or exit the building
- Follow the Health and Safety Policy protocol when a stranger/parent is considered dangerous

1. In the case of an unknown person arriving to pick up a child: educators will:

- a) Upon arrival of an unknown pickup person, educators request that individuals provide proof of identity before releasing the child to the person.
- b) Educators check our emergency pickup list to ensure that the person has parental/guardian permission to take the child.
- c) Educators call the parent if the person is not on the list
- d) Educators comply with court orders that designate access

- Read the classroom log and communicate changes that will occur for a child within their team or late shift staff
- Pass on changes to emergency pickup lists to the office for updating files
- Educators regularly count their groups to ensure all children are present
- Children must have adult supervision in the bathrooms or any other room out of an educator's vision

When outside, educators will:

- Conduct two daily playground checks before the children enter the yards.
- Prepare the checklist for leaving and entering the building to ensure all children are safe and accounted for.
- Promote children's safety outside by locking playground gates.
- Visually check who is entering the yard, maintain a safe playground and provide appropriate toys.
- Whistle blows are used when there is a danger in the yard, such as a stranger. Children are taught to line up immediately upon hearing the whistle and wait for instructions from their educator.
- Educators are aware of our protocol for using a safe room when the children or educators are in danger.

Management will:

- Duty to Report to protective services within required guidelines.
- Ensure the building is equipped with security cameras which record motion at the doors and on the stairs.
- A fire system is installed and checked monthly by management, and annually by professionals.
- Monthly fire drills are conducted to ensure children know what to do in the case of a fire.

- Maintain a Health and Safety Committee and conduct monthly and annual checks of the building and playground.

In the case of disaster in the building, we proceed to Providence Manor, located at 175 Sydenham Street, for shelter. Once there, we call parents to advise them of the reason for evacuation and to request that their child be picked up at Providence Manor. We advise the Ministry of Education of the serious occurrence within 24 hours of the evacuation and include the expected outcome.

Nutrition / Meals

At SSCC children receive breakfast, a snack in the morning and afternoon, and a full meal at mid-day, which is prepared by the cook or designate. The weekly menus are posted on the bulletin board at the main entrance, in the kitchen and on HiMama. We offer a four-week menu rotation which changes in the winter and summer. Well-balanced, nutritional meals and snacks are prepared in accordance with the Canada Food Guide, and are reviewed and approved by the Kingston Frontenac Lennox and Addington (KFL&A) Health Unit's dietician.

All food is stored and prepared on site by our cook, and served quickly to retain maximum nutritive value, and to prevent cross contamination. We offer a variety of foods based on the multicultural dietary requirements of our children. During mealtimes, the focus is on conversations with the children about their food, where it comes from, how it is grown and cooked. This is a social time where the children are not rushed. Children are never forced to eat what they do not want and are able to have as much as they want of any particular food group. At SSCC we also encourage children to try new foods. During this time, positive child-caregiver interactions promote friendship and trust.

How we accomplish our goals of nutrition

Balanced nutrition is a pillar in our program at SSCC and something we take pride in as the foundation of how children grow. To ensure we're fostering healthy eating and nutrition educators and management at SSCC play critical roles.

Educators will:

- Record each child's intake/meals are for parents to review, allowing them to plan a balanced diet when preparing meals at home.
- Complete daily activities, including: outside time, rest time, and bathroom routines, etc.
- Report to parents when a child does not eat or feels unwell.

Management will:

- Enlist the help of the local Health Unit to ensure menus are following the Canada Food Guide and are reviewed by their dieticians.
- Source fresh food whenever possible from local distributors.
- Prepare all meals on site by the cook or designate.
- Follow the Health Unit's requirements for immunization and exclusion criteria in order to keep all children and staff healthy.

Well-being and Sense of Belonging

At SSCC comfort is offered to children with hugs and sitting on an educator's knee or holding an educators hand. Educators greet the children and parents on arrival, taking children from parents to help with transitions and wave good bye from the window. Transitions are set to manage the flow of the children's day, and are completed in smaller groups to lessen anxiety for children who have difficulty with change. Smaller groups allow for teaching moments of self-help, independence and confidence.

Fostering a sense of independence is important at SSCC. Children learn to button, zipper, put on coats, boots, and hats,

all in preparation for outside time. Children are not rushed and are given verbal cues that an activity is going to change. They are given time to finalize an activity as all children learn at their own pace. When challenging behaviours occur, the educators reflect on what happened to cause the issue and work to alleviate the catalyst. Redirection is most helpful in these situations and an educator assists the child to become involved in another activity. This opportunity is used to discuss the event at the child's level of understanding thus creating empathy for others and enables the children who are listening to feel safe and supported. We believe that children's health is related to the need to engage in physical activities. They enjoy both indoor and outdoor gross motor activities, such as riding bikes, playing on the climber and in the tree house, and ball games and action games.

Our Learning Environment

While engaged in child-initiated activities, which are adult supported, children develop social interactions that will help them be cooperative friends, teammates and collaborators. Our educators are engaged as play partners, providing opportunity for children to explore their environment, the elements of nature, and engage in creativity.

Each child is given individual attention by our educators throughout the day by actively engaging in activities the children are interested in. The educators take notes, and then add them to the program plan for the next day/week based on those observations. Through reflection and follow up, the children's interests continue to be enhanced by providing additional props that evolve further exploration. The educators are supportive, engaged, encouraging, and consistent in expectations. Children are taught how to use and respect toys and books.

During sleep time children are helped to fall asleep while having their backs rubbed by their educators. Each child sleeps on their own crib/cot which is placed in a calm area with soothing music, with comfortable sheets and blankets. When they awake, they are offered quiet activities which allow the other children to continue to rest.

Each classroom has areas that depict family (pictures), cubbies for personal belongings, bulletin boards which often include picture documentation learning stories, and areas where special items from home are kept. We celebrate birthdays by singing Happy Birthday at lunch and making a birthday crown to wear all day. They get to be the leader on their birthday, fostering self-worth and pride.

We also give children a voice by encouraging them to communicate with their peers in order to make themselves understood and heard by another. This is done through self-regulation, language, voice-tone, and body language. We support this by helping them to know what to say, what to do and how to interact in a positive manner while retaining personal dignity and self-worth.

How we accomplish our goals of well-being, belonging and our learning environment

At SSCC, fostering a child's sense of well-being and belonging in our learning environment is crucial. Educators and management both play important roles in ensuring we're supporting these goals.

Educators will:

- Promote self-esteem, empathy and self-worth through respect and recognition of children's efforts.
- Foster friendships with peers through play and conversation.
- Encourage a sense of belonging by establishing areas that promote comfort, family pictures and items from home.
- Be a play partner by engaging in child-initiated activities, which are adult supported, to promote the development of social interactions that will help them be cooperative friends, teammates and collaborators.
- Participate as a play partner, thus teaching the children how to interact, promoting the development of emotional intelligence and sympathy for others.
- Set up individual cubbies for each child's belongings.
- Send home art creations for parents to post at home.
- Modify their classroom routine based on the needs of the children.

Management will:

- Provide training and research links for educators to increase their continuous professional learning and practice.
- Review quality of performance with each educator to promote self-reflections and growth.
- Report to protective services within required guidelines
- Provide planning time to set up programs, research and organize materials for prepare learning stories.
- Offer professional development support to learn new skills.

Contravention of Prohibited Practices

Educators will:

- Comply with the prohibited practices guidelines for the Ministry of Education, the Collective Agreement and the Prohibited Practices Policy.
- Comply with all established guidelines for child protection based on Duty to Report.

Management will:

- Monitor educators' involvement with children through observations and written record.
- Ensure that contravention of SSCC's prohibited practices is dealt with swiftly within the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and the Collective Agreement of the Centre, as well as the internal policy for prohibited practices.
- Investigate allegations of prohibited practices and report findings to appropriate authorities.

Educators / Parent Relationships and Involvement

Our Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) or educators with other qualifications. We believe in the importance of communication with our families. We see families as competent, as able, and as active participants in all aspects of the program. We see educators as competent, capable and rich in experience. To maximize our contact and involvement with parents at SSCC we use a variety of resources including:

- Using HiMama to provide parents daily up to date reports on the activities in which their children were involved
- Sending pictures of them actively involved in play.
- Posting learning stories in our classrooms for all to review and display the progression of play and development.
- Engaging our families through our Facebook page, and newsletters,
- Inviting parents to special dinners throughout the year.
- Involving them in field trips and invite special visitors to the centre.
- Providing our families with our Parent Handbook upon enrollment, and inform them of revisions as they occur.
- Post our Parent Handbook on our website and update parents as changes occur.
- Ensuring they receive all memos using HiMama, paper and email.

We strongly believe face to face communication is also very important and we strive to speak with every parent every day. When this is not possible, we communicate by phone, HiMama or email. We view ourselves as partners with our families in the care of their children, and respect family values. Annually, we ask parents to complete a survey of our services to revamp our programs, change our menus, to promote change and to ensure our hours of care are adequate for our families. We use this survey to make changes where needed and to share all the good things we have accomplished with our educators.

Supporting Educators in Continuous Professional Learning

We hire our Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) and teaching assistants with strong consideration given to personality, skill, education and particularly their personal interactions with children and parents. Our educators are dedicated and caring individuals who put children's needs first. All of our educators review the daycare's operational policies and our program statement before starting work with the children. Annually we host ECE students and volunteers, and our RECE's act as cooperating teachers and provide guidance and feedback.

SSCC supports our educators with weekly planning time for documentation, program development and research. We offer professional development in a variety of ways, including educators meetings, video seminars (Ministry of Education website) How Does Learning Happen and resource materials (books and articles from the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario [AECEO], Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care [OCBCC] and College of Early Childhood Educators [CECE] Association of Daycare Operators, Ontario [ADCO] websites).

We document and review through educator programming sheets, reflection of developmental skills recorded on HiMama and through the progression noted on our Program Plans posted in our classrooms. We are also involved with the City of Kingston's, Professional Learning Group. Through this monthly seminar, we are able to provide up to date information to our educators on *How Learning Happens* and supporting them in their program development.

Our educators are committed to continuous professional learning and remain up-to-date with the changes in key values in their field. Each of them are engaged in completing professional requirements to continue to hold RECE credentials through the College of ECE's. We meet regularly, as a group, to study and learn about current research and best practices in the field of early childhood education.

Professional reflections on a variety of topics are completed by our educators. They come from various backgrounds and ethnicities and as such implement their own interests into the program. We empower them to modify their program schedules based on the current needs of their group. For instance, outside time may be adjusted because a classroom activity is so exciting that the children are fully engaged and a break in activity would be disappointing for the children. Our educators have many great ideas, years of experience and support each other's professional growth by sharing ideas, resources and tips.

How we accomplish our goals of supporting our educators

Formal annual and bi-annual reviews are conducted by the Director which focuses on the educator's strengths and growth. Quarterly observations of educators in action are recorded by the Director and/or Floor Coordinator. Conversations, observations and interactions with children, parents and team members are all areas that the Director and Floor Coordinator documents while monitoring staff interactions. This reviews are presented during a private consultation with the Director or Floor Coordinator and all parties sign off on the review.

At SSCC we encourage feedback from our educators. They regularly contribute ideas and knowledge in our centre to enhance our children's experience.

Our Educators are given the opportunity to attend outside workshops that are offered in the community when they are offered. This also includes conferences in other cities that relate to Early Childhood Education. By providing the opportunity for professional development they continue to develop their skills and thus ensures that our staff are comfortable with changes in our curriculum and teaching methods. They have support of our senior Floor Coordinator who attends monthly Kingston Frontenac Professional Learning Community seminars and brings that information back to our educators in the form of printed material, videos and presents the information to all staff during staff meetings. SSCC mentors ECE students from St. Lawrence College and in doing so, continues to keep our educators up to date on changes in curriculum and also how to enhance our classrooms for continuous learning both for our educators and for the children. All Early Childhood Educators have made a commitment to abide by the standards of their profession as set out in the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of practice. All Early Childhood Educators hold themselves accountable, and use the Code of Ethics, the Standards of practice and the CCEYA to guide their decisions and practice. As members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, each educator must prepare a portfolio detailing their professional development and skills that they are working on. This portfolio is a living document that is a requirement to continuing to practice in Early Childhood work environments.

Community Partners

At SSCC, we actively collaborate with other child care centres and are involved in many events in the childcare community. In doing so, we are able to stay current with changes that are happening and implement new things in our childcare centre. We work with Community Living Kingston to develop and follow individual plans for children who have

special needs and our local health unit for dietary requirements and physical activities.

We are also involved in a pilot project that promotes physical development and activities in childhood as well as a nutritional project involving menus for child care centres. We are partners with the City of Kingston's, Childcare Programs. We value the relationships and connections we have in the community with a variety of agencies that provide learning and support to our educators, children and families. These include:

Community Living Kingston	Pathways for Children and Youth
KFLA Public Health	Early Expressions Speech and Language
Child Development Centre	Local School Boards
Kingston Literacy	Kingston Fire and Rescue
Family & Children's Services	City of Kingston Child Care Programs
Ontario Early Years Centres	St. Lawrence College ECE Program

Documentation and Review of Impact

To ensure the ideas and methods described in our program statement have a positive impact on the lives of our children and families, our centre adheres to the following:

1. Ongoing pedagogical documentation of the children's learning and progress.
2. Consultation with families on strategies specific to their own children.
3. Observations and documentation of educator's interactions with children.
4. Monthly staff meetings to continue to learn about and discuss the implementation of the program statement.
5. Online and paper version of family survey.

Program Statement Review

Parents will be asked to review the program statement prior to enrolling their child(ren) with our centre. As a part of the registration process, parents will be required to sign that they have reviewed this document. The Director or Floor Coordinator of the centre will meet with all new families and engage in dialogue about the program statement to ensure parents understand what it means for their child and that all of their questions have been answered.

Every employee, student, and volunteer will also review and sign off on the program statement prior to interacting with children, at any time when the program statement is modified, and at least annually thereafter. Together, the Board of Directors and the Executive Director shall review the program statement annually to ensure that it is being followed in daily operations and programming, and make necessary updates as required.

How we accomplish our goals and monitor our program review

Our goal is to ensure all staff and parents are aware and clearly understand our program statement and what is required to implement it. In order to accomplish this, we review our program statement with all who will interact with the children. All staff read and signs the program statement, as well as all policies when they start employment, prior to interacting with the children. It is then reviewed and signed annually thereafter.

SSCC's policies and procedures are read by new staff, volunteers and students before they are involved with the children. Each person is required to sign off on all policies as changes occur. Parents are given a copy of the program statement within our Parent Handbook. This statement is reviewed with parents upon enrollment and the parent is asked to sign that they have read and understand the program statement objectives.

Our Director or Floor Coordinator reviews the sign off binder with the person and witnesses' signatures as they occur. Parents are required to sign off on the Parent Agreement within the enrollment package given to them upon enrollment. The program statement is reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Director annually to ensure all updates and/or changes are included in a revised version.

Program Statement Review

This Program Statement will be reviewed, updated, signed and dated on an annual basis by the Board of Directors. New employees, Students, and Volunteers will read/review and sign off on the program statement before engaging in any activity with the children and at any time when the program statement is modified, and at least annually thereafter. A running record of all signatures will be kept in the office.

SSCC's Program Statement is a living document. As such, as changes occur during the year, this statement will be updated to keep our centre up to date. New regulations will come into effect in September 2017. Before these regulations come into force, SSCC will update this statement and incorporate changes that will occur at that time.

Board of Directors Signature(s): _____

Date of current review: _____, _____