



Centres for Early Development Program Statement

Since 1931, Mothercraft has dedicated itself to the promotion of healthy child development and support for families with young children. We believe every child is competent, curious, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential (as articulated in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, 2014).

Regularly documented observations and bi-annual developmental summaries help Mothercraft staff to set goals and objectives that will ensure your child builds the important social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills they need to prepare them for a life of learning, wellness and active participation in society.

Mothercraft's licensed child care programs, known as our Centres for Early Development or CEDs, provide a play-based, child-centred approach to early learning and care. We believe that the health, safety, nutrition and social-emotional needs of every child are paramount. We encourage children to explore, play and inquire throughout their day. Our success is based on our ability to listen and respond to the needs of the children and their families, as well as to utilize new or emerging, evidence-informed practices to continually improve our programs. Mothercraft's curriculum balances the individual developmental needs of each child with the unique characteristics of every group of children to provide a caring and inclusive environment.

The following principles and approaches guide us in our day-to-day work:

- Emotional wellbeing enables children to interact and communicate in a positive way, which supports their ability to self-regulate. Through responsive, individualized and age-appropriate interactions (such as positive guidance, modeling, redirection, and space to regulate emotions), children are empowered to problem-solve.
- Parents are their children's first teachers. We support the whole child through transition and intake meetings, which enable us to gather information such as interests, needs and temperament. Transition plans are designed on an individual basis and take into account the unique strengths and/or needs of each child and their family.
- Children are active participants in their own learning. They are involved in the program planning process through expression, inquiry, choice, play and exploration. Responsive programming, documentation and learning objectives allow for extension and adaptation of plans.
- Children develop at their own rate so opportunities for learning are planned accordingly. One way this is achieved is through small group experiences which allow for more one-on-one interactions.
- Learning environments are carefully designed to foster a sense of belonging and to encourage exploration. A variety of concrete, representational and symbolic play materials are provided to accommodate all learning styles and needs.
- Our centres are designed to maximize health, safety and well-being through secure door-code access, sleep monitoring and monthly safety checks of all play spaces.



Nutritious catered meals are provided at most locations, while meals are prepared daily on-site at Avondale, Robertson House and Midtown.

- Indoor and outdoor active play, as well as rest and quiet time, are part of the day. Our environments, schedules and routines are responsive to children's needs for rest and wakefulness. Staff support individual sleep routines and provide opportunities for small group experiences, transitions and routines that allow for more individualized care. Daily opportunities for physical activity are provided indoors and outdoors. Outdoor activities are planned and documented. During inclement weather, alternative gross motor activities are provided indoors.
- A balance of teacher-supported and child-initiated learning opportunities is embedded in the curriculum. Our programs use a play-based, child-centred approach that support the individual development needs of each child. Educators observe children's play, follow the child's lead and provide appropriate scaffolding to extend learning. Developmentally appropriate challenges and open-ended materials encourage exploration, creativity and problem-solving. Ongoing observation and documentation help educators assess interests, strengths and progress, and inform meaningful learning opportunities.
- Engaging local community partners such as resource consultants, family resource programs, referring agencies, libraries, schools and community colleges helps to build partnerships that support the children, their families and staff.
- Children are engaged learners who explore the world with body, mind and senses. We encourage this by incorporating children's interests and developmental needs into the program. We also create opportunities for spontaneous learning by incorporating activities like neighbourhood walks into our curriculum as appropriate. Creativity, innovation and global citizenship are encouraged.
- Each child's progress and development is assessed in a variety of ways: through daily observations, administering of the LOOKSEE Checklist by NDDS, review of developmental checklists, and overall assessment of children's interests and development.
- Ongoing communication and engagement with families ensures meaningful participation in the program. Parents receive important information about their child's learning and development in a variety of ways: individual child portfolios, developmental profiles, newsletters, calendars, curriculum meetings, parent handbook, parent surveys and Storypark.
- Highly-trained and well-qualified staff are critical to the success of the program and the achievement of child and family outcomes. Mothercraft staff are supported in their roles through regular professional development opportunities, agency-wide staff meetings and trainings, mentoring, classroom team meetings and reflection activities, and regular staff meetings. We are committed to ongoing documentation, discussion, review, reflection and improvement for all staff.