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Program Statement

Heritage's Program Statement is consistent with the Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy. The Program Statement is reviewed with staff, contracted home childcare providers, parents, students and volunteers annually and whenever changes occur.

The Program Statement outlines the organization's approaches that will be implemented during the day to day operations and to the four pedagogical pillars of "How Does Learning Happen": Belonging, Expression, Well-being and Engagement.

Heritage believes that children are competent, capable, curious and full of potential. It is this belief that guides our practices and helps us develop our early learning and care philosophy and program goals.

We believe that quality programs are rooted on continuous professional learning and whenever possible, will support the planning and delivery of workshops and training sessions to promote learning with our staff and contracted home based providers.



Promote health, safety, nutrition & well-being of the children

We believe that children's health, safety, nutrition and well-being is an important aspect of their development. Our policies and procedures are developed to be reflective of this philosophy and to promote every child's health, safety, nutrition and well-being.

The staff and contracted home based providers will observe the agency's mandate as listed in the policies and procedures and in consultation with parents regarding their children's health, safety, nutrition and well-being. An emerging collaborative approach to health, safety, nutrition and well-being is a meaningful aspect of the parent-agency relationship and a way to ensure the quality of the program.

Training and development to further our knowledge and understanding of health, safety, nutrition and well-being will be offered to staff and contracted home based providers.

We will build positive relationships with children, their families and each other to encourage each child's sense of well-being and nurture their natural energy and curiosity. We will offer children healthy and well-balanced meals that follow Canada's Food Guide. To foster health and safety, staff and contracted providers will ensure environments are safe and free of hazards and that Toronto Public Health guidelines are maintained at all times. Documentation and observations to record children's health, safety, nutrition and well-being will be maintained daily, monthly and quarterly.

Support positive & responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers & staff

Children

We believe that children's growth and development is best supported when their environments reflect a sense of belonging, expression, well-being and engagement. When caring individuals respond readily and with interest or enthusiasm they promote positive and responsive interactions that will foster a lasting positive impact in the children's lives.

We ascribe to be an inclusive, learning-friendly environment for all children under our care. We value children as unique individuals and encourage them to be competent and confident individuals. We welcome and nurture all children regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics.

Children under our care will be supported in the development of positive methods of conflict resolution, problem solving and in being responsive to others' feelings by role modeling and responding to them in a positive and respectful manner. We will guide the children in using both verbal and non-verbal communication and in taking a positive, problem solving approach. Parental involvement through discussions and feedback will inform our practice.

Incorporate indoor & outdoor play, as well as active play, rest & quiet time, into the day, & give consideration to the individual needs of the children

We believe that children benefit from care that provides a variety of learning experiences that are meaningful to them. Daily outdoor play is an important element in helping children develop their physical skills. Indoor and outdoor play, as well as time to rest, be active and have quiet time will help the child to develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

We will plan and implement seasonal schedules that include time for both indoor and outdoor play as well as rest time. This will be documented in the program plan and will be developed to meet the needs of the individual child as well as the group of children in care.

Foster the engagement of & ongoing communication with parents about the program & their children

Parents are the first and most important teachers the children have and are valued partners in our service. When parents are connected to the agency by ongoing respectful and responsive communication, information is shared in order to enhance the care the children receive.

We will seek parental input into various aspects of the childcare experience when the child is enrolled and in regular conversations thereafter. We will respect the privacy and information provided by parents.

We will be active listeners and further support parents through discussion as well as the provision of resources and referrals they consider would be beneficial.

We believe it is important that we build trusting relationships with parents and that we respond positively to their questions, comments or concerns. Complaints regarding the service will be documented and followed through.

Provide child-initiated & adult supported experiences

Children learn best when there are varied opportunities to explore on their own as well as, participating in activities that are supported by an adult. Their natural curiosity and interests are always considered when planning programs.

Planned play activities and implementation of a program that has a balance between child initiated and adult supported activities support the children's learning at a developmentally appropriate level. Heritage will support a balance by ensuring the daily schedule is flexible and offers opportunities for independent play as well as planned activities that are supported by the adult.

Plan & create positive learning environments & experiences in which each child's learning & development will be supported

Heritage supports positive learning environments full of experiences that foster the child's development and learning. We want to facilitate environments that help each child develop to their full potential. Our program plans are rich and varied with opportunities for self-guided exploration, inquiry and is inclusive of all children's needs and interests.

The environment where children play in will encourage the children's imagination, sense of curiosity and creativity daily. Setting short term and longer term learning goals for each child in care and the experiences provided to the children will support them in goal achievement.

Families

Families are diverse in makeup and size. We believe that their needs directly reflect the service we provide in our early learning and care programs. As partners in the process of their children's learning, parents are treated with respect. We believe that a practice based on ethical behaviours is an important responsibility to all families. Whenever possible, we will assist parents in finding a service that can accommodate their needs and listen to their concerns. We will promise to treat them with respect and to find ways to build trusting relationships.

Staff and Home Based Contracted Providers

Heritage is a multi service agency offering a variety of early learning and care services. Each staff and contracted provider make up the family of people committed to the safety and well-being of each child. We regard each other as professionals and believe that each person working with the children can offer quality programs for young children.

Documentation in the form of program plans, observation and curriculum/ staff meetings, menu plans, sleeping plans and consultations with the parents will inform our responsive approach to each child and family.

Training and development to further our knowledge and understanding of communication principles, positive problem resolution strategies, child development and principles of "How Does Learning Happen" will be offered to staff and contracted home based providers.

Community Partners

Interactions with the public, staff, home based providers and professional supports to the organization will be conducted in an ethical and professional manner. We collaborate with community partners that work alongside our families to ensure the success of the child. We communicate through newsletters, distribution of relevant printed materials on our parent boards and utilize local resources to plan and implement workshops and professional training.

Encourage the children to interact & communicate in a positive way & support their ability to self-regulate

We believe that communication and positive interactions improve emotional health and demonstrate a respectful practice with children, families, colleagues and community. Encouraging children to make choices and using behaviour management strategies that support the child's ability to self-regulate are key components of a program that is based on quality standards.

Children

We believe that positive and responsive interactions foster caring relationships with children. We will encourage children to interact and communicate with each other and support their developmental needs as they learn social and collaborative skills. This will include supporting the children in the development of problem solving skills, self-regulation and in providing opportunities to express themselves socially and emotionally.

We will actively role model positive communication with children while ensuring we are considering the child's developmental and emotional needs. We respect the importance of children's self-esteem to their overall well-being and the need to strengthen it through respectful interactions.

Families

The agency values parental engagement in the program and will strive to communicate professionally and seek their input in matters regarding their child's eating, sleeping and behavioural needs. We believe that parental input and feedback are invaluable in helping our program succeed. As partners in the process of learning, parents are treated with respect.

Staff and Contracted Home Child Care Providers

Training and development to further our knowledge and understanding of communication principles, responsive and inclusive practice in early learning and care programs and family connections will be offered to staff and contracted home based providers.

Communication with families is very important. Heritage will always conduct detailed conversations with parents regarding their children's needs before they are enrolled and maintain communication at minimum on a quarterly basis.

Foster the children's exploration, play & inquiry

We believe that children need time to explore, learn through play and have opportunities for natural inquiry. The experiences offered in the program plans will be varied and based on observations that reflect the children's interests and needs. Program plans will be developed with awareness of the children's interests, individual needs and goals based on input from parents.

How we manage the environment directly impacts on the health, growth and self-esteem of children. We respect the need for children to have choices in their day. As natural explorers, children need the freedom to choose what they play with, how they express themselves and to make decisions about what, where, and how they will learn. Choice and Inquiry are essential as they form the basis for meeting other needs and pursue interests and potential.

Heritage will plan rich and varied programs based on activities that support children's natural interest in exploration, play and inquiry. Toys and play materials will be accessible and available throughout the day to allow children to make their own choice of activity and exploration.

Where a child approaches an activity in a manner that is different from what was planned, the plan and/or activity will be amended to meet the child's interests and in consideration of the children's health, safety and well-being.

The environment will be set up to provide stimulating materials and experiences that hold children's curiosity and thinking through play based approaches. There will be a wide variety of play

Training and development to further our knowledge and understanding of Inquiry and Play Based Learning principles, child development and the main beliefs of "How Does Learning Happen" will be offered to staff and contracted home based providers on an ongoing basis.