



Compass ELC Program and Pedagogical Practice

(re: Program Statement, CEYA (2014) O. Reg. 137/15 s 46.1)

At Compass Early Learning and Care our programs offer a place for exploration, wonder and rich learning opportunities discovered through children's play. In partnership with families and children we provide a child centred, emergent curriculum that fosters and promotes the development of the whole child. Our days are guided by the interests of the children and carefully framed and negotiated by our educators and staff. Our strong view of children as capable, competent and curious about the world around them, guides the way in which we design our environments, experiences and interactions. The inspiration for our work comes not only from the children, but also from the educators of Reggio Emilia. We see curriculum as everything that happens in our days and consider each moment as an opportunity to build relationships and create an atmosphere that nurtures children and adults. We hold children and childhood in deep regard.

Parents as Partners

We know that parents are the child's first and best teacher. We believe that partnerships with families and their contributions are essential to each child's learning and development. We celebrate and honour the uniqueness of families and invite them to be a part of the life of the classroom. Positive relationships with families lead to secure relationships with children.

Children's sense of trust and security is strengthened when there are connections between home and our programs. We invite families to be active contributors to the life of the school and learn about their children's experiences during our family nights, daily communication, blogs, journals, portfolios and documentation panels. Families are invited to share their hopes and dreams for their children and contribute to all aspects of the program in ways they are most comfortable with.



Community

We promote and value a sense of personal integrity, social responsibility and respect for ourselves and our communities. Within our programs we promote the principles of democracy and social justice. We actively participate in and support local initiatives, early learning networks and school communities in each of our municipalities. We engage with local partners to provide support and resources for our children and families. Our children are active members of their communities and can often be found exploring their local neighbourhoods. We value opportunities to bring visibility to the competencies of young children and share stories and experiences from our classrooms through our blogs, newsletters, and the connections we make with people in and around our communities.



Life Long Learning & Leadership

We believe that growing children deserve growing educators. We hold a deep commitment for learning for both children and adults. Our staff and providers participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities that engage them in reflective thinking and build on our solid understanding of child development. As professionals we believe in continually seeking out the latest research and best practices as they emerge in our field. Our ongoing reflection of our work allows us to be more intentional and in turn, provide a curriculum that is responsive to the children and families. We offer a pedagogical orientation series for all employees that sets the foundation for their understanding of all aspects of a child centred emergent curriculum. Staff and providers regularly participate in book studies, program focused learning opportunities, action research, organizational communities of practice, conference and institutes internally and externally. Compass ELC is seen as a leader in our province for quality early learning and open our doors to many study tours and institutes from visitors from across North America. The opportunity to reflect with other early learning professionals.



Environments

Our environments, both indoors and outdoors, play an essential role in our curriculum and are designed to inspire children's desires to explore and engage with others and build meaningful relationships. Our educators provide intentional, beautiful spaces that invite children into play. Our classrooms are designed with open-ended experiences such as blocks, art materials, recycled loose parts, books, dramatic play props, sensory experiences and more. These materials engage children in the natural exploration of literacy, numeracy, scientific discovery, and imaginative play. Educators take great care and responsibility for not only creating spaces but also in supporting, extending and deepening children's learning. Educators see themselves as co-learners alongside children, carefully listening and observing so that their environments and experiences are responsive and reflective of children's interest and ideas. The flow of our days is in response to children's desires to have long stretches of time for exploration both indoors and out. Our environments and schedules honour children's natural rhythms and need for time for both active play, rest and quiet time.



Expression

Children are born learning and are powerful communicators right from birth. Through careful observations of children's verbal and non-verbal cues and gestures we create a responsive curriculum that engages and challenges children's thinking and deepens their understandings of the world around them. Communication also happens through creative expression. We encourage children to express their feelings, ideas and interests through the exploration of art, music and movement, and imaginative play. Educators collect visual traces of children's experiences and document their understandings and theories through photos, journals, documentation panels and learning stories. This documentation serves as a way to reflect, ask questions and make decisions about future explorations. We value documentation as a way to learn about how children think and learn. Our observations also serve as a way to develop questions for research in our classrooms. How do children show empathy to others? What approaches do children use for problem solving? Where are children exploring math in their play? Our questions help us to see the competencies of children and grow a curriculum rooted in building on strengths. Documentation also plays an important role in our relationships with families; by engaging together we learn more about each child.

We must not assess what the child knows,
or knows how to do, but what he or she could do IF . . .

WE are the IF...

The Educators of Reggio Emilia

Wellbeing

We understand that the foundation for life long health and wellbeing is established in the early years. Nurturing children's physical and emotional wellbeing plays a pivotal role in shaping the architecture of the brain in the first few years of life. Children thrive in environments where they actively engage their minds and bodies. Active play provides not only physical benefits but is also proven to enhance children's focus and attention, build problem solving skills, encourage creative complex thinking and fosters independence. Our environments both indoors and out are created to offer this important vigorous play. Learning happens best when children feel a sense of belonging, feel safe and have trust in their environment and when they are provided with opportunities to fully engage their lively minds.

We nurture that feeling of trust and emotional wellbeing and honour each child's unique ways of exploring their ideas and building relationships. The children's safety is our first priority; we also know the importance of children building risk competence and invite children to take safe reasonable risks.

Children in our care are treated with respect and dignity. Each child's unique personality is nurtured in our programs. Building and learning about relationships is an important part of growing up. We strive to provide spaces that reduce children's stress, and support children's abilities to self-regulate so that they can fully engage in learning and growing together. We respect each child's learning journey and provide consistency and developmentally appropriate limits and practices to support each child's learning and development.

We provide nutritious and delicious foods that not only meet the needs of every child and family but also surpasses those required of us in the "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide and Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants". Dining with children is a time to not only nurture physical wellbeing but also nurture relationships and build a sense of community. Children and staff dine together family style, serving themselves and contributing to the dining experience. The building of independence is an important part of the daily life of the classroom.



Our program statement is a living document that is implemented through parent and staff surveys, daily and annual staff reflections, and regular program and team meetings. Our dedication to our values and those of Ontario Pedagogy for the Early Years, How Does Learning Happen? fosters a culture of intentional practice that strengthens our commitment to the highest quality of care for our children, families and educators.