



REKSAP Centres For Early Learning

Program Statement

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At REKSAP Centres for Early Learning, we believe in quality early learning and care for families and the sense of community. This is created through providing warm, responsive and inclusive relationships. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) play multidimensional roles within the program. RECEs work collaboratively guided by the 'Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice' set out by the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). Educators (RECE's and Educational Assistants) at REKSAP Centres for Early Learning have embedded the principles of Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and How Does Learning Happen (HDLH) into all aspects of the program. These documents provide pedagogical approaches that support children's learning, development, health and well-being. Pedagogy refers to the process of understanding and supporting learning (how learning happens). Through pedagogical understanding of relationships between children, families, environments and Educators; REKSAP Centres for Early Learning optimizes learning and healthy development; thus, supporting belongingness, engagement, expression and well-being.

REKSAP Centre for Early Learning's program is licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) of the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE). The centres are required to meet all regulations of this Act including health, safety and fire regulations as dictated by the City of Ottawa Department of Public Health, the Ottawa Fire Services, and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). The MOE Program Advisor monitors annually the standards for safety, staff training, program quality and compliance with the CCEYA.

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning **promotes the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children**. Children have a sense of health and well-being when they are confident in their growing abilities. When children are increasingly able to take initiative, face challenges with enthusiasm and persistence, they can cope with and adapt to change. Educators understand that children are capable and enthusiastic learners with unique personalities, skills, and interests. Children are encouraged to learn about each other's individual needs and responsibilities (such as food allergies). They then can develop skill sets that are related to their own capabilities and success. Through set boundaries, children know that they are safe and can explore their curiosities with confidence. Proper nutrition provides children with a good foundation, allowing them to explore the world around them. It improves concentration, promotes growth, builds strength, provides energy, and establishes healthy eating habits. Preschool children are provided with lunch and all children are provided with two snacks chosen from a wide

variety of family and cultural preferences; introducing new food items that they might not be familiar with. This provides the opportunity to comfortably try new food. Educators are encouraged to eat with the children, thereby modelling proper nutrition. Following Ottawa Public Health guidelines, children are provided with a positive eating environment.

Positive and responsive interactions among children, parents and staff are essential in quality early learning and care. Educators work collaboratively with families and colleagues to plan meaningful learning experiences and support problem solving and decision making. The children, when responded to on a consistent basis, will build strong and caring relationships with their Educators. Children are supported in situations where they need assistance in finding a new way to achieve their goals; allowing for the building of self-regulation skills. Educators guide them when necessary (e.g. Giving children time to be persistent when they are trying to accomplish a task, using phrases such as, “I see the task you are working on is difficult. You seem frustrated, is there something you need.”) Modelling language and labelling emotions gives the children an example of societal expectations and how to interact with peers. Peer interactions are encouraged and our School Age leaders are requested in all classrooms at different times for various tasks. Children are encouraged to treat peers and Educators in a respectful manner. This is done by responding positively to children’s cues; supporting the development of secure relationships. Building rapport with parents and families is of utmost importance. Educators have conversations in person with parents about their children on an ongoing basis and build relationships as set out by the CECE’s Code of Ethics and Standard of Practice.

Encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and supporting their ability to self-regulate is a goal REKSAP Centres for Early Learning has. Children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Educators work together to help children develop their sense of self-regulation and recognize their feelings. Time is given to allow children to express themselves so they may feel listened to and to foster listening skills during conversation. Educators guide the children in a variety of ways including restorative justice, logical consequences, redirection, and emotion coaching. Restorative justice, also seen as self-regulation (e.g. When a child hurts another child they are not asked to apologize; they are to see if the hurt child is okay, what the hurt child needs to feel better then reflect how the situation could have been done differently) develops empathy. Logical consequence is when the children are an active partner in the process of choosing consequences (e.g. If a child is angered by another child and while walking away, they dump a bucket of toys, the Educators allow that child the time necessary for them to calm themselves, then that child cleans up the bucket of toys). Redirection is used as a child guidance method. It can be used in many ways such as humor, distractions, responsibilities, and challenges; (e.g. A child is throwing cars. “I didn’t know these cars had wings, let’s take the wings off and make sure the wheels stay on the tracks.”, “Let’s see how fast the car travels from one side of the carpet to the other on its wheels.”). When we emotion coach, children learn how emotions work and how to react to feelings in a healthy way. The child feels understood. Educators start by asking the child if they would like to talk about what happened (“No.” is an answer and the situation can be revisited when the child is ready.) The Educator then labels the feeling, “You are feeling sad”. Next, elaborate on the situation that caused the emotion, “You are feeling sad because you wanted a turn to paint and you are being asked to wait. Painting is fun and waiting is hard.” After that, offer comfort and work together to come up with a solution.^{P}_{SEP}

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning adheres to the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) regarding

prohibited practices.

Prohibited practices

48. No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premises where it oversees the provision of child care,
- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
 - (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
 - (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
 - (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
 - (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
 - (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34.

To **foster children's exploration, play and inquiry**, Educators use observation and pedagogical documentation. With children's input, the environment is mindfully setup to allow for exploration and engagement providing a safe and appropriate supervision of children based on age, development and environment. A flexible schedule, accessible materials, equipment and furnishings, allow the children to develop the independence to fully and freely explore their environment, while taking risks that Educators feel are acceptable through observation of each individual skill level of each child. They can inquire about items and topics that have been set out according to their interests. Using an interest board that parents and children can see and contribute to, the children guide their own learning. Educators support, research, observe, provide tools, and ask questions. To enrich learning experiences, the Educators as co-learners with children, use verbal guidance and resources such as books, websites, games, personal experience, peers, families, field trips and special events; thus, **providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences**. This also provides children with a strong base to begin their life experiences.

Reflective practice is used when **planning and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported**. It ensures a quality learning environment for children that respects their abilities, special talents, interests and individual differences. Reflective practice refers to the "systematic, reflective, collaborative process used by early childhood educators to plan, evaluate, make decisions and create and implement change through

consideration of relevant literature, current practice learning environments, observations of children's development, behaviour, social interactions, learning and knowledge of families" (Ministry of Education, 2007). Educators use knowledge of children's development and meet frequently with team members to discuss strategies, goals, environment and resources to enhance learning through play. Using ELECT and HDLH as a framework for planning allows Educators to evaluate the goals set out for the children. Through collaboration, teams decide how to rejuvenate or modify the environment adapting to the children's changing and growing interests as well as their abilities. Educators support children's attempts to take reasonable risks, test limits, and gain a sense of their own abilities through play and social interactions. **Indoor spaces** include our classrooms, where gross motor activities are also available. These may include but are not limited to; boogie boards, body breaks, bouncing toys, mini trampolines and large wooden blocks. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning uses the gymnasium on a regular basis. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning is fortunate to be in an area of Ottawa where there is an abundance of cultural diversity. This enhances our program by incorporating celebrations, decorations, photographs and information from a wide assortment of cultures and gives the children a sense of belonging. Children can educate their peers as well as staff of their family traditions. This allows them to proudly express themselves outside of their family setting.

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning **provides outdoor play, free play, rest and quiet time giving consideration to the individual needs of the children.** REKSAP Centres for Early Learning ensures that learning happens anywhere at any time! The Regina location is fortunate to have the Mud Lake Conservation Area within walking distance. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning at Regina also has many gardens; including the garden in the both preschool and school age yards. There is an area called The Britannia Garden nearby that the community upkeep. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning at Regina has use of an outdoor classroom in an enclosed courtyard where children are encouraged to learn and explore. The outdoor classroom has natural materials such as stumps, rocks, trees, plants, mulch, wildlife and insects. Our Severn location is fortunate to be near many green spaces and parks. These include Frank Ryan and Elmhurst Parks, both of which have forested areas. The children benefit from these experiences allowing them to explore, observe, document and investigate in an in depth, hands on approach. All outdoor programming is weather permitting. Preschool children are outside a minimum of two hours daily. Once kindergarten and school age children arrive from school, outdoor time is flexible, but mandatory. During full day programming, kindergarten and school age children are outside for a minimum of two hours. On instructional school days, kindergarten and school age children are outdoors, weather permitting, for 30 minutes, as per MOE legislation. Children of all ages enjoy free play, music, story, snack, creative and group games outdoors. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning has multiple safe and stimulating outdoor spaces and toys for preschool, kindergarten, and school age for intentional active play. These spaces and toys are individualized and adapted, as needed; offering challenges that are within each child's ability. The health and well-being of active children benefit from a provided rest time, during which their sleep is recorded using a sleep chart that parents can look at daily. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning incorporates a rest time into daily programming. Two hours of rest for preschool children, one-hour rest for kindergarten children; and school age children have access to quiet areas. Preschool children can rest on cots with sheets and blankets. Once they have rested, they are able to choose from a variety of quiet activities. Considering sleeping children, different areas of the classroom may be available until the children that are sleeping have woken. Kindergarten children have a one-hour quiet activity time, and may request a sleep mat, should they choose. Quiet activities include creative, reading, puzzles, play dough, file folder games, quiet manipulative toys and Educator directed games.

Fostering the engagement and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children is of utmost importance. When parents are introduced to the program, they are informed of the use of Storypark as a tool for preschool children to document their child's learning. Kindergarten children have portfolios and progress report books that parents are welcome to look at. They are shown each program's bulletin boards with the displays of how ELECT, HDLH and the children's interests are incorporated into the rooms. Documentation panels and storyboards displayed, gives families concrete examples of what the children are learning within each classroom. Families are encouraged to add family to Storypark and contribute to them. Families are appreciated as unique and diverse. Families are viewed as competent and capable, curious and rich in experience. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning's Educators welcome families upon arrival and invite them into the classrooms. Educators and parents can arrange times when they can meet formally or simply have a quick conversation when dropping off or picking up their children. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning encourages parents to join us for special events. Family members that have skills or talents that they wish to share and will benefit the children, and are invited to come in after obtaining a Vulnerable Sector Check as per Ministry regulations. Our Board is comprised of parent volunteers and community members.

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning is involved with **local community partners and encourages those partners to support the children, their families and staff**. From parent volunteers, to local performers and grocers, the children are exposed to many rich experiences. This shows the children that when they contribute to the world around them, they have a place in their community; thereby developing their sense of belonging. Parent volunteers help the children gain knowledge of sports, sportsmanship, and belonging to a team. Community partners welcome the Educators, the children and the families as one community. This helps the children to understand why they are there and what the impact and purpose of these places have in the community. This includes having the children follow the same rules as the school has set out for them. The children at the Regina location take walking trips to the local Farm Boy, Fire Hall, parks and green spaces. There are walks in our neighbourhood to go to the mailbox. The location at Severn also takes walks in the neighborhood to the mailbox, tennis courts, bus stops and forests. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning at Regina is located within Regina Street Alternative School; Severn is located within Severn Avenue Public school. Both centres are very involved with the schools they are in. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning's Educators and children are invited to school events and presentations. Through community partners, the children can discover the many wonderful local people, businesses and areas.

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning **supports staff in relation to continuous professional learning**. It is an ongoing process which extends beyond everyday expectations. Information on workshops, webinars and seminars that are available in our sector is provided regularly. Staff attend workshops that are integral in enhancing the program and knowledge of the Educators. When a staff member attends a workshop, they are given the opportunity at a staff meeting or via email to share what they learned. This allows time to field any questions that anyone may have. Educators are professionals and use each other as resources. Educators encourage one another, sending articles, providing websites, lending books/magazines, and having regular meetings to discuss the programs. Educators support each other as a team. Through building strong bonds, Educators can support the children, the families, and the staff at the centres.

REKSAP Centres for Early Learning **documents and reviews the impact of different strategies** monthly. This is done with both locations meeting as a team and ongoing within partnerships. Staff

meetings are set and everyone attends, thereby getting input from the team. Educators discuss any concerns, techniques, questions, and information that have been gathered. The Educators collaborate and discuss the program's strengths and what needs to be strengthened. Educators are encouraged to bring any new information to these meetings and all have input on what is discussed. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning builds the program goals and expectations as a team. Everyone works together keeping the four foundations in mind (Belonging, Engagement, Expression and Well-Being). This provides the children, families and Educators the best chance at success.

All Educators, Educational Assistants, supply staff, volunteers and students are required to read and sign the Program Statement prior to employment and/or prior to being in the program with the children. This will happen not only on an annual basis, but as the Program Statement changes. Reading and signing the Program Statement gives staff an understanding of practices at REKSAP Centres for Early Learning.

All expectations set out in the Program Statement are followed through by every staff member. These are implemented in each classroom setting. Through observation and documentation, supervisory positions ensure staff are implementing the expectations set out in the Program Statement. Ensuring all staff are supported by having discussions at staff meetings and team meetings, as well as keeping documentation will maintain the high standards REKSAP Centres for Early Learning has for its staff.

Educators are required to keep documentation on programming and the children within their programs in support of showing that they understand the Program Statement.

Executive Directors and Program Supervisors will review the sign off sheets annually and support the staff should they have any questions or concerns regarding the Program Statement (including Educators, Educational Assistants, supply staff and students). Educators will review the document How Does Learning Happen and ELECT on a regular basis, reflecting on their roles as Educators within the program and reviewing their documentation on children. Throughout its 30+ years in the community, REKSAP Centres for Early Learning has dedicated Educators who are passionate about early learning and have professional pride. REKSAP Centres for Early Learning are a prime example of quality early learning and care and creates a vibrant learning environment. Positive growth and development of both the children and Educators are reflected through the solid reputation within the child care community in Ottawa.