



PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM STATEMENT “To play is to learn”

Play is the natural way a child learns, therefore play lies in the heart of Bright Beginnings Educare (BBE) Curriculum. We believe every child is a unique individual with their own pattern for learning socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically, therefore, our environment, activities and interactions are flexible to meet each child’s needs.

Nurturing staff are role models through kindness and positive interaction and we strive to create warm relationships with each child in the program. Our schedule is predictable yet flexible in order to encompass each child’s needs. For example, we may lengthen free play time and shorten group time when children are engaged in exploration and discovery in order to promote and strengthen learning opportunities that are relevant to children at that moment.

The learning opportunities we provide are hands-on, where children act upon what they are experiencing and feeling. We provide a minimum of two periods of 60 minutes of uninterrupted free play time in our schedule daily where children choose who and what to play with.

The environment is set up to promote the idea of individuality and independence by encouraging children to explore on their own and make choices within a safe environment. For example, children are able to choose between 2 or 3 options that are appropriate for them. They can choose to participate in an activity, such as art, dramatic play, or science where items are placed at a child’s level so that they are able to reach independently. Children are encouraged to help themselves to drinking water if they wish throughout the day.

Children are encouraged to play in a variety of environments that are developmentally appropriate and which promote and foster friendships, critical thinking skills and sharing with their peers. This play takes part through-out the day both indoors and outdoors. Examples may include children working together on an art project to display on our walls, playing house in the dramatic area or spending time outside in the sandbox working together to build roads with other children from different rooms and utilizing a wide variety of materials such as shovels, construction play equipment, buckets, wood, or pipes. Outside, children often pull each other in wagons or sleds around the playground. During nap time, children who do not nap, may move together from different rooms to participate in a variety of activities such as block play, building puzzles or exploring together in a science area.

Children are offered both staff-led or discovery self-oriented activities in a warm environment that provide opportunities to grow in all areas of development. There is time for active play, small group activities, creative art, movement, dramatic play, story time, outdoor play, community interaction, singing and snack. Through well-developed and carefully thought-out play activities that staff have planned, children learn essential life skills. For example, children learn spatial awareness, logical reasoning, and respect for others when building blocks with peers. While using flexible and open-ended materials in the art centre, they learn self-expression, creativity and build self-esteem. Sensory opportunities such as pouring water and mixing sand promote fine motor skills such as dexterity, hand-eye coordination, as well as tactile experiences. Responsibility, self-help skills, self-worth and feeling socially accepted are learned when children clean up toys after play time, after a meal or when they put their jackets

in their own lockers after outdoor time. Self-discipline and self-regulation skills are practiced while waiting for a turn with a favourite toy.

We ask open ended questions to stimulate children’s language and reasoning during their play and throughout the day. These questions help to draw attention to the concept being explored, awaken the children’s curiosity and deepen their thinking. For example, we may set up the water table near the sand table and then ask “What do you think will happen if we mix water into the sand table?” “How can we mould and structure the sand?” Then, “Why do think this happened?”

Throughout the centre and in rooms information is posted for parents and staff as a resource that provides a list of skills gained while using the materials in particular area.

Observing children’s play by watching, listening, taking notes, joining in and taking photos are all important tasks for our staff. By doing so, we are able to use this information to expand on the curiosity of each child and create meaningful learning opportunities. We use these observations to help us plan our interactions, the play space and materials, and activities that help each child learn and develop at their own pace. For example, after observing a child talking with peers about a new pet, the housekeeping area was modified to represent a veterinarian’s office.

We share children’s learning experiences with families through electronic journals and an electronic bulletin board on a monitor as well as send notes and interact directly with each other at arrival and departure times. Other forms of communication include newsletters, updates, and collections of artwork. Feedback and open communication is valued and families are welcome to spend time in the centre at their convenience. Pictures are shared from the center with the family and family pictures are encouraged to be brought in from home. We treat the family as a whole with interest given to all members (siblings, parents, grandparents, all extended family). Children are observed on a daily basis and information is shared with parents and programs may change to meet the needs of the children as they are growing.

An important goal of BBE is to draw upon the diversity of the families to enrich the children, parents, and staff. We encourage parents and families to share their professions and cultures by coming into the center to provide learning opportunities for the children and staff. We also enrich our environment by including materials showing race, gender, family dynamics, culture, ability and age in the play space. For example, our house keeping area includes a selection of dolls from different races and multi- cultural play food. Another example is the library area where we offer a selection that includes books about grandparents and people using specialized equipment. Our snack and lunch programs incorporate a variety of foods that are multi-cultural. Exposure to different languages and cultural celebrations are encouraged amongst the families and facilitators. Parents are welcome to meet with each other daily at pick up and drop off times, special events and the AGM.

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