

## HOW DOES LEARNING HAPPEN document summary:

How Does Learning Happen (HDLH) is a professional learning resource that provides a common framework to help childcare centres focus on knowledge from research, theory and practice on what is most important for children.

It encompasses a broad range of program philosophies and approaches, and reflects the view of children as being competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

The HDLH program statement describes the goals that guide PCDC's programs for the children and the approaches that will be implemented in the program to meet these goals.

The program statement tells families, educators and others what our childcare centre is striving to achieve (*goal*) and what actions are going to be put in place to achieve these goals (*approach*). The program statement is a living, breathing document that will continue to evolve with the program as our learning and understanding expands, our processes change and our families, educators and children change.

See <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf> for more information.

## PALMERSTON COMMUNITY DAYCARE CENTRE PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM STATEMENT

At Palmerston Community Daycare Centre (PCDC) our philosophy is to guide and support the growth of a child as an individual within a co-operative, child-centered environment. Children are viewed as competent, eager and active learners who benefit from a variety of experiences.

These experiences provide opportunities for exploration, skill development and relationship building, all components which lead towards the discovery of their own identity.

PCDC promotes individual freedom within a structured framework, thereby providing the child with the opportunity to make choices, to respect themselves and the rights of others and to understand that their input into decision making is valued and respected.

Learning experiences are play-based and with the guidance of our experienced Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) and ECA staff, children engage in opportunities that stimulate communication, the development of social skills, and fine and gross motor development both indoors and outdoors.

In addition, self-esteem, decision-making capabilities, independence, natural curiosity and desire for learning is sparked.

A knowledge of, and sense of community is built through outings, social functions and exposure to various ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

PCDC promotes anti-biased behaviour in all aspects of its program. Children are encouraged to participate in all activities equally and in a non-violent manner. We support constructive problem-solving, both in interactions between children and between children and adults.

Our program encourages respect, regardless of gender, race, religion, class, age, sexual orientation, marital status, physical limitations, ethnic origin or citizenship.

Communication among staff, families, children and community partners is vital in creating and sustaining a warm, safe environment that allows the children of PCDC to grow and learn.

## THE FOUNDATION OF PALMERSTON COMMUNITY DAYCARE CENTRE'S PROGRAM

*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* is a pedagogical document that helps educators focus on the interrelationships between children, families and staff in an early years environment and is the foundation of PCDC's program.

To facilitate PCDC in achieving the principles of its philosophy and program statement PCDC follows the guidelines of Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (How Does Learning Happen?). <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf> PCDC recognizes that the four foundations of HDLH? (*refer to following paragraphs*) must be present in the program to allow the children to succeed and grow towards independence and self-identity.

Foundations, Goals for Children and Expectations for Programs:

1. **Belonging** – children develop a sense of belonging so that he/she feels connected to others and can contribute to their 'world'. PCDC will support and encourage the development of respectful relationships to help create a sense of belonging between the children, adults and community around them.
2. **Well-Being** - children develop a positive sense of self, self-care and self-regulation skills; and learn to recognize the importance of physical and mental health wellness. PCDC will provide learning opportunities for the development of habits of good health; nurture and support children's developing sense of self.
3. **Engagement** – children become active and engaged in the world around them by exploring with his/her senses, minds and bodies. PCDC will provide experiences to engage children's curiosity and exploration in meaningful learning and discovery.
4. **Expression** - as capable communicators, children learn to express themselves in a variety of ways. PCDC will provide opportunities for exploration of a variety of materials, support problem solving and decision making scenarios and developing emerging communication skills, and foster creativity,

In addition to the foundations of HDLH?, PCDC's curriculum also recognizes and utilizes the following guiding principles of Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) in the development of its programs. Weekly programs reflect the *Continuum of Development*, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/continuum/> which "outlines the sequence of skills that children can be expected to acquire as they develop. It covers a broad range of developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, communication/language and cognitive). It is a base for observation and discussion of children's growth and learning in which staff observe, interpret and plan a curriculum based on interest and capabilities to share with families and caregivers."

1. **Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior and health.** PCDC provides varied and stimulating day to day experiences to set the child on a path of lifelong learning; developing positive interactions with peers and adults and making healthy choices for mind and body.

2. **Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.** PCDC encourages and supports families' participation in their children's early learning environment and provides opportunities for regular communication and involvement.
3. **Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children's rights, optimal development and learning.** PCDC recognizes its families' diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and provides learning opportunities and celebration of the diversities within the centre and community which then enrich the environment for all its members.
4. **A planned curriculum supports early learning.** PCDC's trained staff provide specific goals for children that support self-regulation, identity building, social interactions, development of language and cognition skills, fine and gross motor skills through observation of children's interests and capabilities.
5. **Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.** PCDC recognizes that play is how children make sense of their world and provides programming that captures children's attention and challenges them with age appropriate experiences and opportunities that promote learning through play.
6. **Knowledgeable, responsive early childhood professionals are essential.** PCDC's experienced and qualified staff provide an environment that respects the diversity, uniqueness and capabilities of the children in its care. They participate in continuous professional learning, implement programming that is both challenging and play focused and maintain open and regular communication with parents and caregivers.

## PALMERSTON COMMUNITY DAYCARE CENTRE'S GOALS AND APPROACHES

1. To promote health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children:
 

*Health and Safety* - PCDC is a childcare centre licensed under the Ministry of Education (MOE), and meets and exceeds all health and safety requirements of the MOE, Toronto Public Health and local bylaws.

  - Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are in place and reviewed annually by staff. This information is available to families and caregivers through the Parent Handbook given out at time of registration and posted on our website.
  - Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans, allergies and dietary restrictions are updated regularly, posted and reviewed by staff annually
  - Health and Safety resources are posted in each of our rooms and links to Health and Safety resources are forwarded to families with the monthly calendar or through email correspondence.
  - Notices of Communicable Disease outbreaks and protocol during outbreaks are posted as required.
  - Staff conduct a daily physical assessment (DPA) of each child upon arrival to the centre. This involves a visual observation and follow up with a parent/caregiver if required.
  - All children must be escorted into the centre by an adult and signed in and out with a staff member present. Identification must be presented to a staff member upon a first time pick up.

*Nutrition and Well-being* – PCDC strives to promote healthy eating habits and educating children on healthy food choices. We recognize the important link of healthy choices to the development of healthy minds and bodies.

- PCDC provides a nutritious lunch daily from M.Halpert Catering ([halpertcatering.com](http://halpertcatering.com))
- Menus are reviewed by a registered dietician and current menus posted.
- Snacks are prepared on site following Canada's Food Guide <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- Meals are culturally sensitive and accommodate allergies, dietary restrictions, preferences and religious food requirements.
- Staff role-model positive food choices and eating habits
- Programming includes weekly cooking activities and children actively participate in the creation of snack once a week.
- Notice of food recalls received from [cfiamaster@INSPECTION.GC.CA](mailto:cfiamaster@INSPECTION.GC.CA) are passed on to staff and families when applicable
- Children are provided with the opportunity to engage in daily physical activity, contributing to the development of healthy minds and bodies
- Staff role-model by engaging in physical activity with the children.

2. To support positive relationships among children, families and staff: PCDC recognizes the importance of creating a sense of belonging for children and families and the development of positive relationships begins before children are even enrolled at the centre. These relationships continue throughout the families' stay at PCDC. The following are ways in which PCDC establishes and maintains relationships:

- Potential clients are provided with information and/or a tour. Upon confirmation of enrolment, orientation sessions are arranged between parent(s), child and staff.
- Each child is recognized as having equal rights in being an active participant at PCDC; the uniqueness of each child and family is respected and recognized, including gender, race, religion, class, age, sexual orientation, marital status, physical limitations, ethnic origin or citizenship.
- Programs are planned to support an inclusive learning environment and reflect capabilities, interests and differences.
- Children and their families are greeted daily upon arrival by name.
- Staff communicate with parents/guardians on a daily basis, sharing observations and reflections.
- Annual parent-teacher information exchange sessions are scheduled for the sharing of children's ages and stages of development in preparation for kindergarten.
- Arrangements are made for staff to meet with parents/guardians when required or requested.
- Children are provided with opportunities to develop personal responsibility, social skills, problem-solve by coming up with their own solutions, and respect peers and the adults in their environment.

3. To support positive self-expression, communication and self-regulation:  
At PCDC children develop a sense of belonging within our inclusive environment.
  - Regular Show and Share sessions encourage communication and the development of self-confidence by allowing children to bring in and describe an item of relevance in their world to peers and teachers.
  - Children are provided with opportunities to articulate ideas, and communicate in group discussions, through artistic expression, the creation of newsletters, and through photo documentation.
  - Small group transitions and experiences support the 'reluctant' child and provide opportunities for confidence building, identity development and more individualized teacher-child interactions.
  - Self-regulation is supported by providing a safe and calming environment; allowing children to visit a 'quiet zone'; providing healthy food choices and opportunities to rest help a child to remain calm, alert, and ready to learn.
  
4. To foster play-based exploration and inquiry:  
The play-based programming at PCDC provides opportunities for children to engage in experiences that stimulate communication, the development of social skills, and fine and gross motor skill development both indoors and outdoors.
  - Programming is based on children's interests and recognizes the individuality of each child.
  - Play is unique to the individual child and their decision of when, where, and how to play is based on their interests and curiosity.
  - Materials are accessible and varied and reflect diversity, and a broad range of interests and abilities.
  - Children are active participants in the program, involved in role-playing, experimenting with a variety of materials and objects, constructing and creating.
  - Families and community partners are welcome to participate in our program, sharing skills, cultural traditions, and talents with the children.
  - Play-based curriculum provides opportunity to explore, problem solve, inquire and engage in critical thinking.
  
5. To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences to foster development:  
At PCDC children are invited to participate actively in contributing to the program plan by sharing their ideas, interests and experiences with staff and peers.
  - Staff observe and listen to the children and build upon their interests and capabilities.
  - Play is child directed and children are encouraged to explore their ideas in all areas of the program, both indoors and outdoors.
  - Play is enhanced by the staff by providing materials, objects, and resources to support the children's interests and learning experiences.
  - Open-ended materials and 'loose parts' are available to further encourage exploration and self-expression.

6. To provide opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development:  
PCDC encourages and supports the growth of a child as an individual within a co-operative, child-centered environment by -
- viewing children as unique, competent, eager and active learners who benefit from a variety of experiences.
  - providing opportunities for exploration, skill development and relationship building, all components which lead towards the discovery of their own identity.
  - providing curriculum based on the principles of ELECT; (*see previous paragraph for details on ELECT principles*).
  - regular communication between staff and the sharing of observations, ideas and experience for planning based on children's interests.
  - utilizing available resources such as the Resource Consultant assigned to PCDC to establish IPP's (individualized program plans) in consultation with parents.

7. To incorporate a range of indoor and outdoor play, active play, and quiet play experiences:  
PCDC recognizes that active play is an important part in the development of healthy bodies and minds and that the outdoors is the best place for children to practice and master emerging physical skills. Children have the opportunity to:
- experience motor skills like running, leaping, and jumping, practice ball-handling skills, like throwing, and catching.
  - perform manipulative skills such as pushing a swing, pulling a wagon, and lifting and carrying movable objects.
  - develop cognitive and social/emotional skills through the invention of games and learn about the world in their own way.
  - feel safe and in control, which supports decision-making and organizational skills.
  - invent rules for games and develop an understanding of why rules are necessary and improve communication skills and vocabulary as they invent, modify, and enforce rules.
  - develop numeracy skills by keeping score and counting
  - develop social skills by learning to play together and cooperate
  - utilize all of their senses while engaged in the outdoor environment
- During inclement weather gross motor play is implemented in an alternate space such as a vacant classroom or hallway.

Opportunities for rest are available to provide a balance of active and quiet time activities. To facilitate the transition to rest or quiet time, PCDC provides books and puzzles, as well as soothing background music. Staff may read a quiet story and dim the lights. PCDC considers the individual needs of the children and requests by parents around rest time and where possible provides alternatives to remaining in a darkened sleep room.

8. To foster parent engagement and communication:  
PCDC recognizes that parents know their children best and that the sharing of knowledge is vital to the success of their child. Supporting the value of 'parents as partners' PCDC provides opportunities for:
- parents and staff to meet through either formal or informal meetings and encourages and supports conversation at drop off and pick up times.
  - regular communication through its Parent Link program, in which a parent representative from each program sends out 1 or 2 emails per month to participating parents of a class, reminding them of, or outlining details of events for the month, i.e – celebrations, field trips, etc.
  - parents to receive a photo of their child engaged in a particular activity during the month by email.
  - parents to receive a monthly calendar highlighting upcoming events for the month, with accompanying newsletter summarizing the activities of the past month.
  - parents to attend Board meetings and PCDC's Annual General Meeting and encourage parents to join the Board as a representative of their child's program.
  - annual teacher-parent sessions for the sharing of and exchange of information about their child; arrangements are made for teachers and parents to meet any time they are requested or required.
  - 1 or 2 workshops per year on topics of interest to parents.
  - parents to provide feedback through online survey forums on a variety of topics, issues, or concerns.
  - families to gather in a celebration of diversity and cultural holidays at its annual Festival of Lights event in December.
  - a celebration of its Graduates by inviting families to attend the annual Graduation ceremony and start to summer BBQ in June.
  - new and returning families to attend its annual end of summer, back to school Pizza Party. This event provides new families with an opportunity to meet the staff, children and other parents of PCDC for the first time.
  - families to become involved in the planning of its annual Fallfest fundraiser and volunteer at the event which provides an environment where families socialize and meet their child's peers and other families in their community in a festive atmosphere.

9. To involve local community partners:  
PCDC engages and involves local community partners in supporting its children, families and staff. The local community is usually the child's first experience of a broader world outside of the family home.

As a long-standing institution in the community, PCDC is recognized for its commitment to and support of the children, families and local community partners.

PCDC provides opportunities for:

- visits to the local Public Library to engage in planned and unplanned reading and learning opportunities
- visits to the local grocery store to explore a variety of fruits, vegetables and other foods, promoting and encouraging discussion on healthy food habits and multicultural foods



- participating in invitations from Palmerston Public school to attend assemblies, parades and other school events.
- volunteers and ECE students to engage in practical work experience and enhance the learning experiences already provided to the children.

10. To support staff in continuous professional learning:

- PCDC is an equal opportunity employer and aims to select the best qualified individual for each position in accordance with PCDC's Anti-Bias Policy.
- Staff can expect to be treated fairly and with respect.
- PCDC staff are committed and skilled professionals who recognize and understand the requirements necessary to support and facilitate children's development and growth.
- PCDC staff possess effective communication and inter-personal skills and are able to relate to both children and adults. They have developed proficient skills of observation and insight over sharing reflections with other staff and parents.
- PCDC supports and provides its staff with opportunities for professional development through field-related agencies, facilitators and in-house workshops.
- PCDC maintains membership with **Umbrella Central Daycare Services**, (<https://www.umbrelladaycare.com/>) an innovative, creative organization created to assist with setting up, administering, and offering quality programs for young children and providing professional development opportunities for educators and the **Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare**, (<http://www.childcareontario.org/>) an agency that advocates for affordable, high quality, not-for-profit child care in Ontario.
- PCDC makes arrangements for staff to participate in webinars and online training opportunities.
- PCDC's ECE's are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators (<https://www.college-ece.ca/enand>) are supported in their Continuous Professional Learning requirements.

11. To document and review the impact of the strategies outlined in the goals 1 through 10:

PCDC recognizes and supports the ideology that pedagogical documentation is an effective tool for staff to discover and record how children think and learn. Staff make daily observations of the children to facilitate their future planning. Documentation provides an opportunity for:

- visually displaying children's learning experiences and development toward self-identity
- a snapshot summary of a child's 'world' and their role in it
- initiating dialogue with families about their child's daily learning experiences
- parents to add their own experiences about their child's learning
- children to be included in the planning process
- staff self-reflection as they continue to engage in professional learning

\*The purpose of observations and documentation is to "help to create a holistic picture of children's experiences, development and learning, and help to support

planning that is meaningful to each child.”

“Documentation is a tool to make children's learning visible. It can help practitioners gain greater insight into children's thinking throughout everyday experiences. It is also used to reflect children's thinking, to help them generate new ideas, learning, and discoveries. Documentation allows us to gather, share, and discuss evidence of development and learning with parents, children and other practitioners.”

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/observation/>

PCDC provides written documentation, visual displays and photo documentation of children's learning experiences to parents as a means to gain insight into How Learning Happens at PCDC every day.

PCDC was established in 1980 and is recognized as playing an active role in the Annex neighborhood and being a vital service to the community for over 35 years. PCDC's professional and experienced educators and staff are recognized for their dedication and long-term commitment in making it a warm, safe and thriving 'home' for its children.

#### ANNUAL STAFF REVIEW OF PALMERSTON COMMUNITY DAYCARE'S PROGRAM STATEMENT:

PCDC management and staff will review the Program Statement annually to:

- ensure that PCDC's program statement reflects its philosophy; and ensure that as best practices change and evolve the program statement reflects any changes
- ensure that program statement is consistent with actual practices
- ensure that the program statement conforms to current requirements; and new information and updates in the field of Early Childhood Education are included
- ensure that the language of the program statement is clear and understandable, and that staff members can utilize the program statement as a tool to guide them in the performance of their professional responsibilities