



GINGERBREAD CO-OP NURSERY SCHOOL
2022/2023 PROGRAM STATEMENT

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GINGERBREAD CO-OP NURSERY SCHOOL PROGRAM STATEMENT

Gingerbread Co-op Nursery School has refreshed the curriculum with a well-established, research-based approach to early learning. Our curriculum supports the idea that children learn through play and has been implemented in our morning program for our preschool children. We know that the foundation of quality care starts with the Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), as we are supportive and responsive to the children we care for and with each child's family. We want to support all areas of development through play experiences and interactions, as we view the child as capable, curious, competent and rich with potential.

“Play is really the work of childhood” – Mr. Rogers

Children are curious and they explore their world through play. Play is full of benefits when it is process oriented, unrestricted, enjoyable, spontaneous and open-ended. When this natural activity is supported, the child's competence, capacity and potential are maximized.

Playing Benefits Your Child's Development

- **Language skills:** talking, singing, reciting rhymes
- **Emotional health:** acting out situations that cause anger, fear, anxiety
- **Thinking skills & problem solving:** building with blocks, working with puzzles
- **Small-muscle skills:** stringing beads, making clay figures, using scissors
- **Creative skills:** making up stories, playing dress-up
- **Knowledge base:** identifying and pursuing interests
- **Large-muscle skills:** running, playing ball, climbing
- **Social skills:** making friends, bonding
- **Self-control:** taking turns, coping with frustration, following rules
- **Self-esteem:** there is no failing when you play



<http://hoopschildrens.org>

Image from

Quality Teachers

The RECEs are true professionals, who pour their hearts into their job of educating, nurturing, inspiring, and helping children grow to their fullest potential. They ensure the surroundings are conducive for discovery, play and learning by preventing physical injury while promoting an emotionally safe environment that builds independence, positive self-esteem, self-worth and self-image.

The teachers at Gingerbread Co-op Nursery School...

- Understand child development and how children grow and learn as they create and provide new play opportunities through interest areas and activities
- Introduce new ideas, concepts, experiences, information and skills to broaden the child's knowledge
- Document the children's play, learning and experiences on a daily basis, and record each child's emerging or mastered skills and other significant behaviours etc.
- Protect children from harm while demonstrating appropriate behavior guidance techniques and providing space and opportunities for the child to self-regulate
- Recognize child care advocacy issues and how they impact families, the community, women and children
- Adhere to the standards set by the CCEYA and the Durham Region Assessment for Quality Improvement
- Ensure children eat well using Canada's Food Guide and get enough exercise
- Realize that inclusive and diverse practices promote the feeling of belonging for children and their families
- Communicate, collaborate and connect with families daily
- Incorporate the community
- Form a trusting, respectful and honest partnership with each other so they may effectively work as a team to ensure unity and to set the tone for a warm and inviting environment for all children and their families
- Encourage each other and offer support and mentorship

Professional Development

With ongoing professional development, a quality teacher is able to keep their skills current and to offer new and refreshing ideas into their curriculum. At Gingerbread Co-op Nursery School, every paid staff is a Registered Early Childhood Educator with the College of Early Childhood Education; they attend workshops and seminars on an ongoing basis as recommended by the CECE, the AECEO and from the community.

HDLH implies that high quality programs provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth (p. 11). The supervisor is responsible for providing information for such training to the staff. The staff are responsible for covering all costs for professional development, however, reimbursement will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Copies of their certificates will be kept in their files as proof of attendance, with a minimum attendance of 1 workshop, seminar, training per school year (September to June).

Quality Program

“Learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators and their environments” HDLH

At Gingerbread, the staff are responsive to each child enrolled in the program; they are attentive, sensitive and demonstrate patience with the children. They get down on the floor and are involved with their play, encouraging exploration and inquiry. They engage in ongoing reflective practice in planning activities that integrate all areas of development while incorporating the unique strengths, needs and dispositions of each child, their families, their homes and cultural contexts in which they live.

Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families, and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgement to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being. (HDLH p. 19)

Pedagogical leadership starts with the supervisor, who is informed on current issues as they relate to how children learn and how to create the optimum environment to foster children's development to its fullest potential. By reviewing the weekly *Program Plan of Possibilities* and maintaining on going communication with the RECEs and the Board of Directors, the goals set in our program statement will be achieved. The supervisor will refer to the program quality indicators every 3 months to ensure licensing compliance requirements are not just met, but exceed expectations when applicable. Using the self-assessment tool will ensure highest quality of care to the children and their families.

Using the *Observations of Children's Learning and Skill Development: Doing, Saying, Thinking & Learning* template, the teachers will be able to record how children make meaning through their experiences which will be implemented in the weekly *Program of Possibilities*.

Using the *Continuum of Development* which outlines the sequence of skills that a child can be expected to acquire as they develop is the base for our program. We understand that each domain is interconnected, and we include opportunities for these skills to emerge throughout the daily activities.

Social Skills

Our interest areas promote interactions in small groups (table activities, art and sensory) and in large groups (carpet toys, circle). By having clearly defined areas of play, the children can chose where to play based on who is in the area, and the type of "game," which helps the child build peer group entry skills, make friends, develop empathy, co-operate and with teacher assistance, help the children with conflict resolution and social problem-solving skills.

Emotional Skills

We provide support and encouragement to help young children self-regulate and we attune ourselves to their individual cues and responses to stressors. By reminding children to use the washroom throughout the day, we help children gain control of bodily functions. For children who are learning to maintain focus, we offer quiet areas for individual play, and guide children to discover their own unique and effective strategies for managing powerful emotions (creative, sensory and dramatic outlets support the children's need to release negative emotions in positive ways). By naming emotions, we help the children articulate how they feel and with our guidance, extend that knowledge to empathy.

We build trust and resiliency in children by being a reliable, positive and consistent person in the child's life and we empower each child's sense of belonging by establishing and maintaining respectful, reciprocal relationships with each family and by providing meaningful opportunities for all families to regularly participate.

"When children are strongly connected to their caregivers, they feel safe and have the confidence to play, explore, and learn about the world around them."



(HDLH p.24)

We support identity formation by reflecting diversity into the program and incorporating opportunities to allow children to see how their families are the same and different through play materials, music, pictures, books, discussions, celebrations and language.

Language and Communication Skills

Literacy experiences are scattered throughout the play area, by including non-fiction and fiction books in the various interest areas, children are able to make connections between the written print and their play. Having writing tools available lets the children explore written literacy and extend their play.

“When reading is experienced with enjoyment, learning is reinforced and children are motivated to continue to expand their involvement in literacy” (ELECT p.49)

We are interpreters, helping children understand verbal and non-verbal cues of others, who may not be as clear in their communication. We encourage peer to peer interactions by arranging the interest areas so that there is opportunity for small group interactions.

By being a play partner with the children, we ask questions that encourage the children to give more detail or information and we offer descriptive language to describe events and objects, building new vocabulary and encouraging conversation. Our circle time helps model appropriate listening without interruption.

Cognition

Our program encourages children to freely express their ideas, test their theories and ask questions. We have one planned science activity a week that encourages children to test their hypothesis, see cause and effect, describe what they are seeing and use their senses to reach conclusions.

We ask “why?” questions as we play with the children, to see what they know about their understanding of their play. We offer puzzles and pose questions to foster problem solving skills, as the children brainstorm solutions and outcomes, think logically connecting consequences to actions and use language to represent thinking.

Our activities promote skills for representation, as the children imagine being someone else in a costume or through a puppet, they can use art media and tools, or building materials to represent their ideas, feelings and experiences.

Offering open ended materials to our regular day-to-day activities inspires creativity and problem solving as it invites children to manipulate and play while invoking the mind to invent, experiment, discover, engage and construct (Nicholson's Loose Parts Theory).

Physical

There are many opportunities to practice small muscle movements in every activity, from connecting puzzles to holding a paint brush at the easel. Using tools, such as forks and spoons, gripping markers, cutting with scissors, stringing beads, zipping zippers, and buttoning buttons not only builds hand-eye coordination, but also assists the child with self-help skills they will need for life.

We have a twenty minute window for large muscle movements at the end of each day, where activities are planned to support feet-hand-eye co-ordination (catching, kicking, bouncing, tossing),

balancing, endurance, kinesthetic movements, jumping and sense of speed. Open ended materials and various styles of music are available throughout the morning, to encourage creative movement and dance.

Mondays we do yoga with the children and Fridays we do a special active game (obstacle course, parachute, group games that involve large muscles).

The Program Plan

By assessing the environment, materials, transitions and individual moods, the staff can see where or how the program needs adjustments to ensure it is meeting the needs and interests of each child and the group.

Using the *Continuum of Development*, we observe the children's growth and learning, and incorporate this into the program plan, along with observed conversations, interests, strengths and notable behaviours.

Our programed activities are linked to the *Continuum of Development* and the *How Does Learning Happen* (HDLH) resources. They are posted on the Monday for families to read.

We prepare a weekly program plan that we refer to as the *Plan of Possibilities*. Activities are based on the children's interests and suggestions and we can alter the program at any time should the children's interests wane from what is written. We offer challenges that are within each child's ability to master.



“Program adaptations and physical accommodations can be made to allow every child to participate and be challenged in meaningful ways.” (HDLH p.29)

Quoting HDLH and ELECT you will see the “why” we do what we do with the children

- Activities are developmentally appropriate and based on observations that reflect both the needs and interests of the children and of the group.
- Not all activities are planned, as they occur spontaneously, however, we will follow the child's lead and expand upon their involvement with materials and plan activities based on these types of interactions
- Children are given choice to select where to play and with whom, they are encouraged to choose their own materials and use them in ways that are meaningful to them. They chose what to learn and how they want to learn it.
- There is a balance of active and quiet play, large group and small group activities, child initiated and teacher supported activities, and both the children and teachers can be co-learners.

Teachers are involved with the children as they play through exploration, asking questions, modeling pro-social behaviour, helping children integrate into playing with others, and engaging in genuine conversation with the children as a group or individually.

In addition, you will see documentation highlighting your child's learning through their play experiences on our *THIS IS HOW WE PLAY* display board as well as a compilation of specific achievements in a personalized scrap book highlighting each child's unique experience while at Gingerbread. We document daily and your child's skills are written in his/her daily log book.

Family Involvement

As a co-op, parents are encouraged to participate in various tasks to ensure the nursery school runs smooth, but our parent involvement extends beyond duties and into enriching the children's lives, by sharing their ideas, skills, passions, stories and knowledge into the program plan.

Each family is our partner, we all learn from each other. Just as we see children as competent, curious, capable and full of potential, we also see our families this way. The family is the bridge between home and school and the school and community.

Parents will be offered resources outside of the centre to help them cope with the variety of challenges facing families today, such as:

- Food banks
- Welcome Centres for newcomers to Canada
- Counsellors
- Shelters
- Domestic Violence Outreach programs
- Early Year's services
- Speech therapists
- Medical Centres
- Subsidy
- Legal Aid

A resource booklet of community partners and programs is currently being created for our families and will be available September 1, 2016.

Ways parents can be involved:

- Book sharing
- CD sharing
- Fundraising
- Involvement in content for the program plan
- Invited to monthly meetings
- Encouraged to join the board of directors
- Leading an activity and sharing knowledge
- Joining us on field trips

Every individual who works with the child will have a completed Vulnerable Sector Check and updated Immunizations, as required by law CCEYA.

Feedback is always welcome as we have an open door policy. We will make time to sit and listen, especially when it relates to the quality of our program and care. Should someone wish to remain anonymous, they can leave a message on our website in the Contact Message Box. Feedback and suggestions can be delivered in private message on Facebook, by email, by phone, or in person.

Nutrition

Following the Canada's Food Guide, children will be served one snack which includes 3 of the 4 food groups.

Menus are changed seasonally and rotated monthly. Each family receives a copy of our menu plan in the Fall, Winter and Spring newsletter. They are posted on our parent board and reflect changes

made due to certain circumstances. Parents can offer suggestions or recipes that inspire a culturally diverse taste of foods.

We are a Peanut Free zone and all food is prepared on premises.

To promote self-regulation, the children will have unlimited access to drinking water, as children may experience thirst at different times throughout the morning. By supporting each child's effort to self-serve, we are reinforcing the value that each child is competent and capable.

A group snack will be offered at 10:30. For children not wanting to eat, quiet activities (books, colouring etc.) will be available as an alternative activity.

Children will be monitored to ensure proper hand washing before and after eating.

Well-Being

We promote healthy well-being by offering nutritious snacks as recommended by Canada's Food Guide and establishing positive eating habits. The children have access to clean drinking water throughout the day, and taps are flushed for lead complying with the regulations set out by the CCEYA, Ministry of Education and the Durham Region Health Department. The West Shore Community Centre also tests the water to ensure it is in accordance with its regulations under the Ministry of Environment.

We give opportunities to children to practice self-help skills based on their abilities throughout the day.

We encourage children to be physically active and manipulate the materials around them. We are a program that runs for 2 ½ hours a day, and we incorporate 20 minutes of child initiated exercise/active play on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 40 minutes of exercise on Fridays, combining one teacher supported game/activity and child initiated materials that support choice and gross motor play.

Through our media outlets (Facebook and Twitter) information is shared with our families on how they can extend wellness into their homes and daily routines as well.

By observing traffic patterns and toy conditions, we will help reduce hazards that may cause injury.

To minimize the children's stress, we will be attentive to environmental issues as they relate to sensory input (smells, noise and visuals) and how they interfere with the children's ability to focus, play and feel calm, and make changes as needed. We will also limit transition times.

All staff, volunteers and students will review the information in the Nursery School's Policies and Procedures, including: Medication Policy; Anaphylaxis Policy; Behaviour Guidance Policy and Child Protection Policy

Finally, any parental preferences in respect to diet and food restrictions will be posted where food is prepared and on the attendance clip board

Guiding Children

Any practice based on a negative control technique goes against Gingerbread's Behaviour Management Policy.

Prohibited practices include:

- corporal punishment
- harsh or belittling discipline including verbally belittling or threatening
- depriving basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will
- confinement which includes
 - locking the exits of the child care centre for the purposes of confining a child
 - using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children
 - restraint for the purpose of limiting a child's movement

The performance of a prohibited practice, as specified above, will justify immediate for-cause termination of employment in the case of a teacher, or immediate cessation of Duty Day volunteer privileges in the case of a Duty Day participant.

Staff members will sign off on this understanding prior to employment. Participating families will acknowledge this understanding during orientation by signing off on the Behaviour Management Policy that will be kept in their file. Any participating family asked to switch to non-participating due to the contravention of Prohibited Practice would be subject to fees related to a non-participating status.

The supervisor will ensure that a written record of the monitoring of all employees, volunteers and placement student's child guidance practices is completed annually, or immediately following an observed or reported prohibited practice. All written records of monitoring will be kept on file for three years.

The Community

“When educators establish positive, authentic, and caring relationships with families and provide a safe, non-judgemental environment for shared learning, everyone benefits.” (HDLH p.31)

We intentionally incorporate the unique perspectives and talents of parents, caregivers and extended family into our curriculum and program planning.

We invite special guests in to visit the children and we plan field trips out into the community.

We maintain ongoing outreach to various community organizations and build relationships with them, and in turn, they assist us in supporting our fundraising events and augment our program by donating materials/loose parts.

We collaborate with other professionals in similar fields, both locally and globally via Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, where we share professional development opportunities, resources, knowledge and experiences and create supportive and positive relationships.

We understand that children and families who see themselves reflected in the environment support a sense of belonging, and therefore, we demonstrate respect, sensitivity and inclusion for ALL members of our community

Annual Review

The Program Statement will be reviewed prior to starting employment or volunteer services at Gingerbread, and will be reviewed annually, or when revisions are made. All stakeholders (board members, staff, volunteers, placement students and parents) are required to read and adhere to the *Gingerbread Co-op Nursery School Program Statement*, and will sign and date that they have done so.

Our Policies and Procedures must also be reviewed prior to starting employment or volunteer services at Gingerbread, and will be reviewed annually, or when revisions are made. All staff members, volunteers and placement students will sign and date that they have read, understood and will comply with these measures as set by Child Care Early Years Act, Durham Region Health Department, Durham Region Operating Criteria and the Ministry of Education.

Program Statement Implementation and Compliance Policy

Prior to the implementation of the Program Statement, every staff will review Gingerbread Nursery School's Program Statement, sign and date that they have read and understood it. Once all signatures are present, the Program Statement will be initiated and will be reviewed every 3 months and modified when or if needed. On-going observations will be performed to ensure compliance with the Program statement.

Failure to comply with the Program Statement will result in the staff/volunteer/student meeting with the Supervisor to review the Program Statement and address any areas that are unclear or that the staff/volunteer/student has trouble implementing. The Supervisor will offer materials, ideas and resources to help. Documentation will be made, indicating what was discussed and how the issue will be resolved. Both parties will sign and date the form.

Should the staff behaviour not change after the first meeting, a second meeting will be held with the Supervisor and Board of Directors. The staff/volunteer/student will be advised to attend a How Does Learning Happen Workshop and will be expected to show proof of attendance by submitting the original Certificate of Completion. This meeting will also discuss that failure to comply upon completion of the workshop will be considered wilful misconduct, as the staff/volunteer/student is being disobedient and the effects of such behaviour will result in termination from their position at Gingerbread Nursery School. They will be warned that this is the second offence, and that one more may result in termination from their position. The discussion will be documented, dated and signed by all parties.

If the behaviour continues, the Supervisor and Board of Directors will review the staff/volunteer/student's job performances from the first meeting to the present date, to determine if there have been any changes in the right direction to comply with the Program Statement. If none have been made, it will be deemed that Gingerbread Nursery School's Program Statement is not a good fit with the staff/volunteer/student, and termination will be imminent.

Where there has been some progress, the staff/volunteer/student may remain, but he/she will receive on-going observation and support.

In the event that the Supervisor is non-compliant with the Program Statement, he/she will meet with the Board of Directors, for the first, second and third meeting where the same procedures will apply. By the third offence, the Board of Directors will review the Supervisor's job performances and will determine the best outcome for the Nursery School.

Gingerbread Co-op Nursery School Goals, Implementations and Outcomes

Below is a chart that summarizes our goals, how we will accomplish them and the impact we hope to achieve in meeting our goals.

GOALS	IMPLEMENTATION	OUTCOME
<p>1. All staff will promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of each child</p>	<p>Health Follow Canada's Food Guide Offer gross motor play at the end of each morning with a special Monday yoga and Friday group game</p> <p>Safety Observe play area, toys, transitions times and make changes when needed</p> <p>Criminal Back Ground Checks/Vulnerable Sector Screening completed by everyone who will be in contact with the child and an offence declaration in every calendar year there after</p> <p>Ensure everyone who will be employed/volunteering with Gingerbread has read, understood and signed the program statement, policies and procedures</p> <p>Well-Being Build genuine relationships with children and their families</p>	<p>Health Children will be better able to focus on their learning and self-regulate when they are not hungry and have proper nutrition in their bodies</p> <p>Safety A safe learning environment for every child</p> <p>Ensures everyone is on board with the direction of the program and has the knowledge of practices that keep the children safe.</p> <p>Well-Being When educators establish positive, authentic, and caring relationships with families and provide a safe, non-judgemental environment for shared learning, everyone benefits</p>
<p>2. All staff will support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and child care providers.</p>	<p>The Supervisor and Board of Directors will hire qualified, responsive, and well trained Early Childhood Educators who know the importance and benefits in collaborating with families, children, staff members</p> <p>All staff will build a climate of trust, honesty and respect in the workplace</p>	<p>Children will feel empowered to see their families and teachers communicating and cooperating</p> <p>Working collaboratively provides a safe, secure, healthy and inviting environment for all children and their families</p> <p>Building and maintaining healthy professional relationships encourage growth and offer support and mentorship</p>
<p>3. All staff will provide the experiences, support and encouragement that help young children learn to self-regulate.</p>	<p>We will attune ourselves to the child's individual cues and responses to stressors</p> <p>We will remind children to use the washroom throughout the day and will offer quiet areas for individual, quiet play.</p>	<p>We build trust and resiliency in children by being a reliable, positive and consistent person in the child's life</p> <p>Children learn to control body functions and focus their attention</p> <p>With our guidance, children will</p>

	<p>We will provide activities that support the need to release negative emotions in positive ways – creatives, music, drama, sensory etc.</p> <p>Give names to emotions</p>	<p>discover their own unique and effective strategies for managing powerful emotions</p> <p>By naming emotions, we help the children articulate how they feel</p>
<p>4. All staff will foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry</p>	<p>Introduce new ideas, concepts, experiences, information and skills to broaden the child's knowledge and to build upon their current knowledge</p> <p>Ask open ended questions</p> <p>Offer a variety of interest areas with open ended materials and loose parts</p> <p>Allow the child to make choices</p> <p>Observe the children and use that information to plan and create a positive learning environment that is based on the interests of the child, and supported by all the adults in the child care environment</p>	<p>Offering open ended materials to our regular day-to-day activities inspires creativity and problem solving as it invites children to manipulate and play while invoking the mind to invent, experiment, discover, engage and construct</p> <p>Daily observations are a way to maintain ongoing communication with families and to ensure activities reflect each child's emerging or mastered skills and support other significant behaviours etc.</p>
<p>5. All staff will partake in professional development that further broadens understanding of early childhood development, effective practices and current pedagogical approaches to the field</p> <p>GOAL</p>	<p>Staff will attend workshops and seminars on an ongoing basis as recommended by the CECE, the AECEO and from the community</p> <p>Minimum 1 per school year</p> <p>Certificates will be kept in their files</p> <p>engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice</p> <p>IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>Professional development of all staff ensures a high quality program</p> <p>OUTCOME</p>
<p>6. Incorporating the community</p>	<p>A resource booklet of community partners and programs will be available to our families</p> <p>We will continue working with community organizations and build strong relationships with them,</p> <p>We will invite community members in as special guests in and take the</p>	<p>The community will assist us in supporting our fundraising events and augment our program by donating materials/loose parts.</p> <p>We understand that children and families who see themselves reflected in the environment support a sense of belonging,</p>

	<p>children out into the community for field trips</p> <p>We will collaborate with other professionals in similar fields</p> <p>we demonstrate respect, sensitivity and inclusion for ALL members of our community</p>	<p>Other professionals offer insight, understanding and mentorship</p> <p>My making families, children and others feel accepted, they will be more receptive to participating in the program</p>
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Note: References and information are extracted from:

1. "How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years; and
2. "Early Learning For Every Child Today (ELECT): A framework for Ontario Child Care
3. Durham Region's Best Start, Pedagogical Inquiry Exploring "How Does Learning Happen?"
4. The Ontario Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA)
5. YMCA Children's Services
6. Heritage Green Childcare Centre

