

## Your Wooden Treehouse, Belle River Program Statement

**Our Guiding Principle:** To exceed the expectations of the families and the children in our care.

Your Wooden Treehouse excels at providing a safe, inclusive, caring environment for children, families, and staff. We thrive at supplying an atmosphere where all can learn, thrive and grow to their full potential. Your Wooden Treehouse utilizes emergent curriculum and incorporates the foundations and concepts of How Does Learning Happen. The areas focused on are belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

Emergent curriculum is a way of planning curriculum that is based on the children's interest and passion at a certain point in time. Children thrive and learn best when their interests are captured. Learning occurs naturally. Planning emergent curriculum requires teacher observation, documentation, creative brainstorming, flexibility and patience on the part of the Early Childhood Educator.

Rather than starting with the lesson plan which is repeated every year regardless of the age, developmental level or interests of the children, emergent curriculum starts with the children's interest. In short, it is a child-directed and teacher facilitated approach to planning the curriculum. Emergent curriculum summons a lot of creativity and flexibility on the part of the teachers. There is no knowing where the learning will end up but this openness makes the curriculum more exciting for both teachers and children. The emergent curriculum process starts when a teacher observes an interest "emerging" in the child. Once the "emerging" interest has been identified, the teachers brainstorm different ways for the children to study the topic in depth. The end comes when the children have moved their interest to another topic and a new "emerging" interest has again been identified. Children are viewed as being competent, capable, curious and rich in potential

**Belonging:**

Your Wooden Treehouse encompasses an environment of caring that promotes a sense of belonging involving children, adults and the world around them. Which includes things such as; making ourselves available for parents, greeting our children and their families on a daily basis, and holding family events throughout the year. Your Wooden Treehouse has a facebook page that shares pictures and information for parents and guardians to see. Learning stories are posted and available to take home or view for parents to share what the children have done through the day.

Families are required to read the parent handbook completely and fill out registration forms prior to starting at Your Wooden Treehouse. These forms identify the child, address any dietary needs, health concerns, and tell us about their family. The staff then uses this information to encourage a sense of belonging by making the child feel comfortable in their surroundings throughout the daily activities.

Your Wooden Treehouse uses photos of each child on their sign in/out sheet to give the children a sense of responsibility in their arrival and departure time. Photos of the children are also used within learning stories, photo books and on our family tree wall. Placemats with the childrens names and photos are used at breakfast, snacks and lunch time.

To further create a stronger sense of belonging each child is provided with a cot in a specific area they can call their own. Each child is encouraged to bring a blanket from home to rest with daily.

**Well-Being:**

Your Wooden Treehouse provides programming that promotes children's development of their sense of self and well being, in a healthy and supportive environment.

Our staff will conduct a daily "wellness check". This entails a visual assessment on each child every time the child attends the childcare center and documents the findings.

Our centre has implemented "The Healthy Eating Tool" along with Canada's Food Guide to plan and implement healthy breakfast, snack and lunch menus



offered to the children. The centres cook and additional staff are trained in the Food Handling Course to ensure proper measures are taken when handling food.

We provide daily breakfast, am snack, hot lunch, pm snack and make every effort for meals to be homemade.

Children are encouraged to choose from a wide variety of foods, pour water or milk for themselves and scrape dishes. We welcome families to bring in simple family recipes for us to work into our four week seasonal menu. At meal times staff model proper table manners and set examples to be followed by the children.

The washrooms in preschool are within the children reach so they have easy access. Doing washroom routines infants are changed as required or every two hours. Toddlers are brought as a group to observe washroom routines, be diapered or participate in toilet learning. Staff support is available as required to promote bathroom routines and toilet learning.

Children are given the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities. This takes place an hour each morning and afternoon, weather permitting. Outdoor ride on toys, excavating toys and sports equipment are all available for children to utilize. Occasionally walks will take place outside of the daycare through our community giving the children opportunity to explore their surroundings.

A variety of different areas are available to help support the children self regulate, communicate and interact. These include; quiet centers with books and comfy chairs, construct cognitive areas, open ended toys and self directed individual activities.

### **Engagement:**

Your Wooden Treehouse provides opportunities for creative, experiential, and inquiry based play.

We bi-weekly introduce new toys to the daycare setting and rearrange the centers of the daycare as needed to provide new and fresh areas for exploration and learning. As a staff we also use ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale) ROSIE (Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments) and POEMS

(Preschool Outdoor Environment Measurement Scale) These are program tools that allows for us to take a survey of the daycare environment, inside and outside, and find where changes, if any, should be made to improve the setting of the facility bi-annually.

We encourage participation of indoor and outdoor activities that spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges that are responsive to individual capabilities to help children extend the boundaries of their learning. This is provided through a wide variety of opened ended materials as well as open ended questions to further our exploration.

Children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves, change their boots to shoes upon arrival, departure and outside times. Repeating this activity regularly will strengthen the childrens self help skills.

Your Wooden Treehouse continually observes and documents children's interests and concerns to plan activities to expand upon these observations. Both concepts of teacher facilitated and child led learning are incorporated in daily routines. We use the document titled How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years (2014), to guide our practices. Daily routines include such things as small group activities, large group activities, fine motor, gross motor, singing, dancing, free play, dramatic play, story time and quiet time.

We look at ourselves as co learners. That rather than just teaching the children we are learning and experiencing things along with them.

### **Expression:**

Your Wooden Treehouse strives to provide an environment that promotes communication and expression in all forms.

This takes the form of many activities such as reading, singing, and dance into our daily routine and planning.

We continue to encourage communication between families and educators. We believe in becoming more aware of many languages children use to communicate and providing individualized support so children of all abilities can express themselves and be heard. Available to parents on a daily basis is a suggestion box. This is available for any question or suggestion, anonymous

or otherwise to be given at the parent's convenience. These suggestions are read frequently and those that require it are addressed.

Families are encouraged on a regular basis to provide feedback on curriculum, environment and over all atmosphere. Annually a parent survey goes home to give a basis for growth and future learning. Outcomes of these surveys will be documented and reviewed to make revisions to our program statement.

Staffs are required to obtain eight hours of professional development workshops and are encourage to attend more. We believe that we are continuous learners and want to be equipped with as many tools as possible. Your Wooden Treehouse believes in an all inclusive learning environment. This includes pairing with outside support systems when needed to support children and their families, including but not limiting to Childrens First, Talk to Me and St. Clair College. We understand and believe that each child has their own voice and as educators we will take the time to get to know each child and their ways of communicating. We will provide the tools necessary to encourage expression.

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