



VALUING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

Grounding our Work in How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years

Vision: A community where children, families, and professionals are inspired and empowered with unlimited opportunities to develop to their maximum potential.

Mission: Discovery Early Learning and care is a not for profit charitable organization dedicated to providing children, families, and professionals with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play.

Values: Play, Lifelong Learning, Leadership and Inclusion. Our intent is that these values are visible throughout our programs, environments, relationships and communication.

Program and Policy Rationale:

Discovery Early Learning and Care values the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*. In our relationships with each other we strive to consider the Foundations of the Ministry of Education’s pedagogical document including:

- Belonging*
- Well-Being*
- Engagement*
- Expression*

The Foundations present themselves in “Goals for Children” and “Expectations for Programs” and it is within each of these that we acknowledge what children, parents and Discovery Early Learning and Care teams deserve with regards to learning, growing, and caring for young children and ourselves:

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
<i>Belonging</i>	<i>Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.</i>	<i>Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a</i>



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		<i>sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.</i>
Well-Being	<i>Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.</i>	<i>Early childhood programs nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.</i>
Engagement	<i>Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.</i>	<i>Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.</i>
Expression	<i>Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways.</i>	<i>Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.</i>

Discovery Early Learning and Care sees children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential, we value and build on their strengths and abilities.

Discovery Early Learning and Care's Values include Play, Lifelong Learning, Leadership and Inclusion. Our intent is that these values are also visible throughout our programs, environments, relationships and communication.

Discovery Early Learning and Care is an inclusive program where the uniqueness of each child, family and educator is considered in our daily practice. "If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." – Ignacio Estrada

Discovery Early Learning and Care sees families as experts who know their children better than anyone else and have important information to share, we value and engage them in a meaningful way.



Discovery Early Learning and Care sees *Educators as knowledgeable, reflective, resourceful, and rich in experience, we value the experiences and environments they create for children.*

Discovery Early Learning and Care takes pride in our Leadership and values our ability to support each other, our children and families and our community. “A leader is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.” – C. Maxwell.

Discovery Early Learning and Care has grounded these perspectives from *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* into this policy document, with the intent to demonstrate them in our visioning, planning, work, play, and thinking as we build on our relationships with children, families, community partners, and each other.

Discovery Early Learning and Care values the care we offer to all stakeholders and believe that our learning environments should be visible of the work and thinking of those who build relationships within them.

Discovery Early Learning and Care values inclusive environments that is dedicated to the safety and well-being of children, families and staff with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play.

Discovery Early Learning and Care strives for authentic relationships that support positive and responsive interactions among the children, families, RECE’s and support staff, and the Administrative and Leadership Team. We know that in building these relationships we must offer time and opportunity for reflection, questions and thinking about future possibilities in both our day to day work and in policy development.

Discovery Early Learning and Care values the thinking of all, and invites opportunity for further collaboration with regards to change and future policy development.

Play is the foundation of our early learning and care programs and embedded in our learning. “Play is the highest form of research.” – Albert Einstein

Discovery Early Learning and Care professional learning experiences are offered through Communities of Practice. All have a voice in our communities and we celebrate the collaboration and rich conversations that continue to challenge our thinking and provide opportunities for continued growth. Lifelong learning is valued and we also believe that professional learning can be offered “Side by Side” in the classroom



through a variety of means; mentoring, discussions, collaboration, and transfer to practice.

To enter into a style of teaching which is based on questioning what we're doing and why, on listening to children, on thinking about how theory is translated into practice and how practice informs theory, is to enter into a way of working where professional development takes place day after day in the classroom.

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Lifelong Learning is treasured at Discovery Early Learning and Care. We take pride in learning together and building stronger communities. "We cannot teach people anything, we can only help them discover it." – Galileo Galilei

Discovery Early Learning and Care strives to consider the rich teaching in this quote where we take time to reflect on our thinking and that of the children and families.

Discovery Early Learning and Care values relationships with community partners and professionals. Together with families, staff and community partners we plan for experiences and programs that build capacity and skills for all children through our community of practice planning experiences.

Discovery Early Learning and Care celebrates the richness of the research documents of the Ministry of Education, including, "Think, Feel, Act" and the ELECT framework. Both documents guide our work in building relationships with children and families and understanding the development of each unique individual. Through communities of practice we will continue to explore these gifts in helping us guide and understand children more deeply. The Leadership Team will continue to offer these tools along with How Does Learning Happen? to staff and parents who need additional support in thinking about possibilities in new ways.

Discovery Early Learning and Care's environments are welcoming with rich experiences and documentation that reflects the work of the children and staff. We invite families to share their home experiences with us and to add images, reflections of learning stories and time to our environments. Our environments should mirror what we believe in and what our image of the child, family and each other is. Invitations and provocations guide our play and inquiry based experiences and our environments offer opportunities for children to explore, experiment, question, and create driven by the children's thinking and interest.



Discovery Early Learning and Care has embraced Learning Stories and Ages and Stages / Ages and Stages Social Emotional as a means of capturing the thinking and development of the children to share with families and each other. We invite families to respond to our documentation as a means of engagement in building stronger relationships. Learning stories help guide our thinking in what we can continue to offer in building on children's interests and ideas.

We value children and their time with us and capture their learning experiences in their own Portfolio. When families move on from Discovery Early Learning and Care we are able to offer them their child's portfolio containing their learning stories, family responses, samples of creativity, images, learning goals (IPP) or speech and language goals and developmental checklists. Discovery Early Learning and Care invites families to build stronger relationships with our teams. When required or requested, we invite families to gather and share their story with us to help support the entire family. Communication through email, conversations, documentation and newsletters help keep families involved and informed.

Revisiting documentation, goal setting, program evaluation and review of all policies and procedures will ensure that Discovery Early Learning and Care is living true to our work in what children, families and staff deserve.

Discovery Early Learning and Care values the outdoor environment and incorporates both the outdoors inside and the inside outdoors. Moving equipment and furnishings outdoors and extending play experiences in the outdoors for longer periods of time increases physical activity and an appreciation of the world around them.

Discovery Early Learning and Care's program schedule is based around core periods of time. Minimal Child Care and Early Years Act requirements are followed as we consider the interests and engagement of children in their learning and play. Providing experiences for active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor, rest and sharing of meals is incorporated into the children's own schedules. Staff are flexible in their thinking in extending play or honouring children's work.

The Ministry of Education's website has made available a copy of the entire *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* at www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf



In transitioning with the Ministry of Education's direction in the Modernization of Child Care, the new *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and related regulations will begin the transformation with framework for programming and pedagogy across the province and here at Discovery Early Learning and Care as required by the Ministry of Education.

Discovery Early Learning and Care's Expectations for Learning and Care Policy, CCEYA Legislation and Prohibited Practices Legislation, enable us to be leaders in considering the needs of children and support staff in understanding opportunities to build skills in self-regulation, independence, and child growth and development. Continuing to question our role in co-construction of our learning with children will indeed build our own skills.

Professional Learning opportunities have been and will continue to be offered specifically around *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* to our teams.

Coaching and mentoring documents will intentionally reflect the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* along with legislated requirements and Discovery Early Learning and Care policies and procedures. This policy statement will be reviewed annually with Board of Directors and with all staff with understanding and acknowledgement.

Upon licensing visits with the Ministry of Educator Program Advisor, it is the expectation of the Ministry and Discovery Early Learning and Care's Board of Directors that all staff are able to demonstrate transparency in their work as reflected through this document.

Revised: January 16, 2017