

## Pre-School Curriculum Statement – W.K.

We believe that all children develop and grow through a variety of experiences. Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and Child Care Assistants (CCAs) provide a nurturing and stimulating environment by encouraging and supporting children to learn through play, sensory exploration and hands on experiences. We believe that all children are unique and learn at their own pace. We support all children by offering a wide variety of toys and activities that help support and meet all of their needs. Staff often take clues from children to modify activities so all children can participate. Staff share written information and verbally communicate with parents, as well as other ECEs/CCAs to ensure consistency in meeting the goals suggested by a team of professionals to support children with additional support needs.

Play is important as it allows children to explore and discover, repeat new skills and gain an understanding of the world around them. This happens all throughout the day during blocks of free play time, transitions and routines as well as activities offered. Based on their interests and curiosity, children have the chance to develop their own thoughts and ideas, leading to opportunities to choose and create their play. We recognize the value of both solitary play as well as interactions with their peers and caregivers. The children imitate, they ask questions to understand and they practice new concepts and skills both on their own and with the people in their surroundings. As the children interests emerge, so does the curriculum. We believe that learning and development occurs when play is meaningful.

The role of the ECEs/CCAs is to be responsive to all individual children within the group setting. Each room has a daily schedule that acts as a guideline for the flow of the day. This helps the children to feel secure and safe as they know what to expect yet offers flexibility as the ECEs/CCAs adapt it during the day depending on the children's play and interests. For instance, if the children are really involved in play, we may let them continue their play before transitioning to circle or another activity. Also, if it is time to go outside, we can take half the group out and let the other children finish their play before coming outside to join us. Through spending time observing children in play, asking open ended questions and engaging in conversations with them, ECEs/CCAs gain an understanding of the children's emerging interests. We then further enhance their play by offering more props and materials, as well as planned activities. We recognize that children learn both in different ways and different styles. To foster this, ECEs/CCAs provide ongoing activities and a stimulating environment. The ECEs/CCAs in each room are responsible for providing activities based on their observations of children's play and interests. They work collaboratively by keeping observations in a binder for each other to review and utilize in planning activities. Some of these observations, as well as samples or photographs of the activities that ensued are posted outside the rooms on bulletin boards for parents and visitors to see. As well, staff may put the photos or other materials into a child's portfolio. As new developments within the child care field are always arising, Sugar n Spice Kiddie Haven supports staff furthering their education and professional development by encouraging them to attend workshops and advance their understanding of children within a group care setting.

The ECEs/CCAs use space, materials and routines for constructing an interesting and enjoyable environment that encourages exploration and learning. The areas that we provide are:

1. **Dramatic play:** In this area the children can practice their social, emotional and verbal skills while role playing. We support this by adding different objects, such as dress up clothes, play food, kitchens, dolls of different ethnicity, props like doctor kits, clipboards, phones, shopping carts, large boxes, pets and kennels etc.
2. **Sensory play:** We provide a variety of textures and colors so they can make discoveries by touching, looking, listening, smelling. This also helps them to develop their logical and cognitive skills, as well as fostering social and emotional growth. Some examples are, water, sand, cornstarch magic, leaves, and bubbles etc. This leads to creative thinking and new discoveries. Our sensory tables are large tables that are low to the floor and left open throughout the day for the children to come and explore as they please. Another sensory experience that we offer is baking/cooking with the children this allows them to smell, touch and even taste. They visually see foods come together. There are also math and science elements with our sensory play; measuring, mixing, comparing, all while creating hands on experiences. Creating with play dough or using gak offers sensory play for the children.
3. **Science and technology play:** In this area we offer a chance for children to explore technology, develop computer skills, and understand cause and effect. We have computers, magnifying glasses for closer examination of objects, magnets, color paddles. We provide a variety of objects for the children to examine, sort, count, and touch. We bring objects in from nature such as caterpillars/butterflies, logs, mud and snow to let them explore in their own environment. We have stick bugs, fish tanks and plants throughout the center. Pursuing their curiosity and reasoning is developed as children use concepts and logical thinking.
4. **Outdoor play:** We have a natural play space, with lots of trees, shrubs, rocks, sand, grass and woodchips. There are opportunities for large muscle development; running up hills, climbing on rocks, and tires. Fine motor skills are developed by playing with the sand, running their fingers through the grass and collecting smaller objects. Outdoor play also encourages locomotion, coordination and using their imagination. We bring out bikes, trucks, balls and sand toys to help enhance the growth and play environment. Outside time also allows for children to play active games together and active role playing as they use their imaginations to act out scenarios. It also allows for peacefulness and quiet time as they may spread out and can have some alone time or read books on blankets.

5. Block area: A variety of blocks are accessible that are different sizes, textures and shapes. The children can use these to construct ramps, towers, houses and castles all by using their imagination and fine motor skills. We provide a variety of accessories such as people, vehicles, dinosaurs, and little people play sets. The children can work cooperatively with others to build, or can use this time to master their own fine motor and logical skills as they construct independently if they choose.

6. Art area: This area is a space to get messy, be creative and expressive and not need to have an end product. Art can provide choices through a variety of textures and materials that are used. Repetition can also be common with art. When a child has a large interest they may have a tendency to make the same end product while using different materials each time. The art area is a place where children can have a quiet time to themselves, using markers, crayons, paint, glue and scrap paper. There are also opportunities for large group experiences such as making murals, large thank you cards, cutting and pasting pictures and painting with their hands and feet. Art can help children interact with one another, express their feelings, create, explore and use fine and large motor skills.

7. Quiet Thinking area: Each room provides a comfortable and quiet spot for the child to curl up and look at a book with a friend or by themselves. We also provide a wide variety of books that are rotated from time to time. There is a variety of puzzles available for the children to choose from. They range in box puzzles, board, textured or wooden, and may have many pieces or just a few. This area promotes literacy as well as small motor skills. It also offers children a chance to relax with comfortable pillows, stuffed animals or on a couch and have some alone time if they so choose.

8. Music & movement: Each room has an assortment of musical instruments for the children to use throughout the day to use spontaneously and express themselves. When we are having group time, songs, finger plays and action games are often incorporated. This supports literacy as they develop language skills, as well social interaction and emotional expressions. We feel that the environment where children spend their time at SNS needs to be stimulating and interesting, as well as orderly and safe. ECEs/CCAs will either enhance an area by adding more to it, switching around or eliminate items as they see the children's interest indicates. Toys and other items are evaluated for suitability, rotated, and cleaned regularly. The layout of the room in relation to other areas is considered as to how it will impact their play. ECEs/CCAs are able to be aware of and monitor play as they recognize that the environment is an element of learning. To foster their play, we provide different play experiences through having an environment that is reflective of the children in our care.

In addition to our regular days, we also provide children with the opportunity to have special event days. This includes in-house visitors, excursions to neighborhood parks and field trips beyond our community. At times, some of the groups will have spirit week or theme days for extra enhancement. Since we are currently located in a high school, our centre is also fortunate to have many chances to interact and be involved with some of the high school children as we visit their program and they visit ours. This is beneficial to the children as it promotes a better understanding and awareness of others.

We feel the consistency of staff adds to the program. Parents will typically see the same caregivers in the morning when they drop off their child(ren), and when they pick their child up at the end of the day. This enables mutual relationships to develop as they exchange information about the children regularly. Keeping staff in the same room and on the same shifts allows the staff to get to know the children and allows for a better curriculum.

We strive to build strong connections with our families by keeping them informed about the occurrences at SNS via daily verbal communication, general written reminders as needed, weekly postings of photographs and brief write ups, and monthly newsletters. There is a bulletin board to share important information with parents. We encourage and invite family members to volunteer for outings. At times, we have special theme days where parents may be invited to join us for a tea party or to visit while making crafts within their children's rooms. We have welcomed parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to our Christmas concert, as well as inviting them to a graduation for the children who are going to kindergarten. We have had parents such as firefighters or police officers come in and give a presentation to the children on their profession. Every June we have a community bbq where the staff volunteer and families are invited to participate in activities and have the chance to socialize. Our centre is run by a volunteer board of directors which consists of parents that meet monthly to represent and maintain that the needs of our families are met.

The interests and abilities of the children will guide the ECEs/CCAs to provide an environment with a variety of play based activities for the children to choose from. We believe that the variety and quality of play experiences the children have at SNS along with the relationships they form with their peers and the ECEs/CCAs will lead to them become happy, healthy individuals. As their play emerges and they develop, the curriculum evolves and changes. Through the variety of play experiences and interactions with others, we believe that children develop and grow. We recognize the value of play as it is central to providing us with strategies to support and enhance children's daily activities while at Sugar n Spice to learn through play, sensory exploration and hands on experiences.