



## **PLP 100 Program Statement**

### **Our Philosophy**

For over 30 years, Park Lawn Preschool Inc. (Park Lawn) has offered a play-based, emergent curriculum for children ages 18 months to 12 years of age. We believe that **children are capable, competent individuals** with an exceptional pattern of abilities, interests and aspirations. These qualities are nurtured in a healthy and safe environment in which the child can develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. Our focus is to support children in becoming life-long learners, by providing them a stimulating early learning and care experience that inspires their natural curiosity and energy. We encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their abilities to self-regulate.

In order to inspire exploration, inquiry and discovery, all aspects of our program are supported by a **creative, positive and nurturing environment**, planned with each child's interest in mind and using the environment as a third teacher. Staff plan child-initiated, as well as, adult-supported experiences for children, indoors and outdoors. In addition to a planned daily program, children are offered time for rest and to participate in quiet activities. We enhance these learning experiences by challenging the aspirations and emerging capabilities of each child. The individuality of each child shall be recognized, respected and developed to its full potential.

**Park Lawn Preschool Inc. strives to meet the needs of every child in our care.** Parents are encouraged to communicate with our staff when their child may have more individualized needs. Our staff will work with the family to support the child, in order for the child to have a positive experience in our programs. As every child experiences life at their own pace, our Registered Early Childhood Educators and Assistants record daily observations and plan purposeful play activities that stimulate children's engagement, natural curiosity and energy.

**Our child care centres all offer an inclusive learning environment.** Children who may need additional support in our program may have access to Resource Consultants through many services offered by Toronto's Children Services and The George Hull Centre for Children and Families.

**Knowledgeable, empathetic, skilled, and caring staff** are essential to Park Lawn Preschool Inc.'s child care programs. Our Early Childhood Educators and Assistants are co-learners, interacting with children and engaging in every day play with them while responding to their needs. As responsive practitioners, staff also document children's play and learning experiences through words and pictures and share these experiences with parents.

Park Lawn is committed to fostering the social and emotional well-being of all children in our care by fostering the development of **positive interactions and relationships**. This is achieved by recognizing and accepting each child's individuality and developmental level; demonstrating mutual respect, acceptance and caring among children and adults; encouraging socially acceptable behaviours: self-regulation, cooperation, respect, and conflict resolution; setting clear and consistent expectations and limits for children, offering positive redirection and reinforcement.

As stated in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)*, the following practices are NOT permitted:

- **corporal punishment of the child;**
- **physical restraint of the child**, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the

purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;

- **locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child**, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- **deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child** or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child **that would humiliate**, shame or frighten **the child or undermine his or her self-respect**, dignity or self-worth;
- **depriving the child of basic needs including food**, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, **clothing or bedding**; or
- **inflicting any bodily harm on children** including making children eat or drink against their will

**Parent partnerships** are fundamental to our child care programs. We believe in open communication with families, sharing the day to day happenings in the program and stories about their children. We also encourage parents to volunteer in our child care centres and become involved by becoming a member of the Board of Directors. Our **community partnerships** offer endless learning experiences for children. Our staff plan a variety of community-focused activities, including inviting visitors, taking community walks, and organizing field trips to expose children to the world around them.

### **Our Goals and Approaches**

**Park Lawn's** goals and approaches are designed to meet the requirements of the CCEYA, 2014 and to be consistent with the Minister of Education's policy statement which names "*How Does Learning Happen?*" *Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (HDLH) as the document to guide programming and pedagogy. We understand that learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, staff, and their environments. We believe that for children to grow and flourish, the following four foundational conditions need to exist (HDLH, 23):

- A sense of **Belonging**: Park Lawn programs "*cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them*".
- A sense of **Well-Being**: Park Lawn programs "*nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self*".
- Opportunities and support for **Engagement**: Park Lawn programs "*provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry*".
- Opportunities and support for **Expression**: Park Lawn programs "*foster communication and expression in all forms*".

Park Lawn has set out the following goals to guide our programming. As this is a "living document", approaches are continually being developed or modified to achieve these goals and support the creation of the four foundational conditions.

1. **To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children.** Some of the approaches we use to accomplish this goal:
  - Compliance with the Toronto Public Health procedures and practices, including proper hand hygiene, diapering and toileting routines, washing & sanitizing of the environment, toys and equipment.

- All play equipment, furnishings, and learning environments are developmentally-appropriate and safe for our children, while still allowing children to explore and take reasonable risks to build their sense of accomplishment and self esteem.
- Staff are aware at all times of the number and names of children that are in care, through frequent head counts, as well as, immediate and accurate documentation of arrival, departure and transition times on the main and transitional attendance forms.
- Guidelines for children encourage safe, developmentally-appropriate electronic media usage including, a sign-up sheet, frequency & duration of use, monitoring of internet usage and games brought from home.
- Encouraging children to have a healthy respect for food and eating through discussion, food-based activities, and role-modeling while ensuring good nutrition and safe food preparation and serving.

**2. To support positive and responsive interactions among children, parents and staff.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Snack and meal times are positive learning experiences that promote social interactions, self-help skills, and a time to engage and develop relationships with and between our children.
- Modelling positive, inclusive approaches to all interactions with all children, peers, parents and other adults in the room throughout the day.
- Promoting the use of individually tailored strategies to diminish the need for behaviour guidance , emphasizing listening, responding to, and building on, child-initiated communication and conversation.

**3. To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Children are aware of how the day is planned which allows for consistency, continuity, self-regulation, minimizing negative behaviours (ex. visual schedules).
- Staff develop an awareness of each child's cues while children further develop their self-regulation and self-help skills during transitions times (ex. dressing for outdoors)
- Balancing verbal and non-verbal interactions with children to model positive communications between children and support all forms of expression.
- Promoting interactions with children that foster self-esteem, support learning self-regulation of their emotions, and build empathy by helping them recognize and label others' feelings and how to help others.
- Educating parents on positive behaviour guidance and conflict resolution strategies through role-modeling, discussions and providing resources.

**4. To foster children's natural curiosity with an environment that invites exploration, play and inquiry.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Providing varied open-ended materials that engage children and can be used to investigate, imagine, think, create, and problem-solve.
- Using materials that reflect sensory, science and nature to spark the child's natural curiosity and encourage them to explore through cause and effect experimentation and observation.
- Exposing children to open-ended materials, accessories and activities to promote language and literacy development - vocabulary, questioning skills, recall abilities, print awareness, printing skills, and imagination.
- Providing an ample selection of blocks and props for children to build, explore concepts, develop spatial awareness, manipulate two- and three-dimensional materials and problem-solve, as well as, develop social skills, such as co-operation and turn-taking .
- Providing ongoing opportunities for imaginative play with unlimited role-playing possibilities.
- Recording observations to plan activities based on each child's cues and interests and scaffolding on their skills and knowledge.

**5. To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported, including child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Recording and using observations, past knowledge and the cues of the children to extend learning and create opportunities to support the child's individual learning path.
- Creating a visual environment through displays that are inclusive and are changed regularly to reflect the recent interests and artwork created by the children, supporting each child's developing sense of belonging.
- Providing independent creative experiences through different mediums for children to promote self-expression and individuality, and ensuring the Daily Schedule allows for flexibility to allow time to complete or extend the creative process.
- Providing a cozy and inviting quiet area to encourage natural opportunities for language and literacy development, including accessible props to enhance storytelling experiences (ex. puppets, felt boards).
- Exposing children to an assortment of cultural music and musical genres to promote skills, such as, language development, rhythm awareness, self-regulation and self-concept.
- Supporting children to initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, make choices, and act spontaneously through play and following the child(ren)'s lead.
- Using the Emergent approach, planning adult-supported activities that reflect the children's interests by using recorded ongoing observations of individual children and group interactions.

- Recognizing that adult support is different for every child and tailoring the degree and approach of the support to complement the child's abilities, knowledge, temperament and interests.

**6. To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, active play, and rest / quiet time into the day, while giving consideration to the individual needs of each child.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Promoting daily active physical play experiences for children to support their well-being and develop independence, perseverance, self-control, confidence and self-esteem.
- Children are able to engage safely in developmentally appropriate outdoor play experiences by making sure sports equipment is in good condition and accessible to children. This allows opportunities to learn turn-taking, communication, sharing, good sportsmanship and gross motor skills.
- Being flexible with the routines of the room based on the cues of the children (ex. parent guidance in sleep routines), as appropriate.

**7. To foster the engagement of, and ongoing communication with, families about the program and their children.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Parent and staff reviewing the child's Individual Schedule form together to identify any specific needs and updating it, as needed.
- Encouraging families to be active participants in their child's care by assisting in the program (ex. reading, sharing aspects of their culture, participating in fundraisers and social events).
- Offering daily communication at drop off and pick up time between parents and teachers to share information regarding the child's day, verbally or on a daily chart.
- Reminding parents to check the centre's Parent Board, to read monthly newsletters, and to pick up resource materials to stay current on centre news, community events and child-related topics.
- Offering parents the opportunity to provide input and feedback on our programs and their child's care and learning with surveys and discussions with the Supervisor and staff.
- Inviting parents to share their diverse backgrounds and experience by volunteering to be part of our Board of Directors.

**8. To involve local community partners, allowing them to support the children, families and staff.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Inviting community members to be part of our Board of Directors.
- Inviting community workers to visit the program (ex. Fire Fighters).
- Participating in community events (ex. food or clothing drives).

- Attending Toronto Public Library programs to support the children's literacy, language, social and research skills.
- Considering Resource Consultants as part of our team and working together on children's individual support plans.

**9. To support our staff and others who interact with the children at the centres in their continuous professional learning.** Some of Park Lawn's approaches to accomplish this goal:

- Offering regular in-house workshops on topics that are relevant to the current needs of the staff and children.
- Ensuring all staff maintain current certification in Standard First Aid & AED and CPR C and providing annual WHMIS training.
- Encouraging staff to attend workshops and conferences relevant to the profession.
- Providing staff with informative resources in print and online (Staff Newsletter, articles, studies, publications).
- Sponsoring staff to complete apprenticeship training to obtain their ECE and RECE certification.