

# Happy Tots Day Nursery Program Statement

## OUR MISSION

**Meeting the current and future needs of the Durham community through co-operation, innovation and service excellence.**

At Happy Tots we view children as capable, competent, curious and rich in potential. We are committed to collaborating with children, their families and with educators to create high quality early learning and care environments that take a strength-based approach to learning and development where children, parents and educators are co-learners.

### How Does Learning Happen? Forms the Basis of our Program.

Following the common framework articulated in **How Does Learning Happen?**, Happy Tots Day Nursery strive to support the children to achieve the following **goals** and will meet the **expectations** for programs building on the four **foundations** for healthy growth and development:

<b>Foundations</b>	<b>Goals for Children</b>	<b>Expectations for Programs</b>
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he/she is connected to others and contributes to his/her world.	Cultivate respectful relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with her/his senses, bodies and minds.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and learning.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express himself/herself in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

### Our Key Strategies

Our center has incorporated and embedded the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) principles, along with the provincial pedagogy for early learning, to strengthen the quality of our programs and ensure high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children

Working collaboratively, Happy Tots Day Nursery will plan for and create positive early learning environments that:

## **1. Promote the health, safety and well-being of young children, families and educators.**

You will see:

- Photographs and names of all the staff posted, and staff at Happy Tots will have a photo ID badge.
- Well organized environments, with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children – the children will not have to ask for materials that they need;
- Healthy menus, following Canada’s Food Guide.
- Children and staff washing their hands frequently throughout the day to promote good hygiene and to prevent the spread of illness.
- Snacks are available to the children. Water is always available to the children throughout the day.
- At meal times, the educators sit and eat with the children; which provides the opportunity for conversation.
- Children are provided opportunities to serve themselves and encouraged, but never forced to try new foods.
- Lots of opportunities for gross motor play; children are encouraged to use their entire bodies to explore the world.
- Positive language that emphasizes accomplishment and effort.
- The centre is kept clean throughout the day and cleaned professionally on the week-end.
- Computers and tablets are available to the children during quiet time.
- Educators follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and the Durham Region Health Department.

### **Healthy Food and Active Play Make a Difference**

Additionally, opportunities for rest and a balance between active and more reflective play are strategies that will be implemented to support positive interactions and facilitate healthy development.

## **2. Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children and families.**

You will see:

- During the process to enrol your child at our centre, the Supervisor or designate will provide you with a tour of the facility, introduce you and your child to the Educators, complete the Nipissing Developmental Screening Tool and compile information about your child’s specific needs, likes and dislikes, and what comforts your child. This will allow staff to begin to build an understanding of your child’s individual needs.

- Our Parent package provides details of our programs, hours of operation, fees and payment processes, policies, so families know what to expect when they choose our services.
- Educators who greet and welcome you and your child upon arrival at the program.
- Educators using calm voices and at the child’s level for face-to-face interactions;
- Parents and educators talking together, sharing information and knowledge about each child.

## **Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions**

Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there are a range of interesting, intriguing and developmentally appropriate activities options to engage children. Educators are reflective practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual children and child development supports positive behaviours on the part of children, educators and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.

Questions educators ask themselves:

- How do I **engage** with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing “wrong”?
- Am I **learning** too? How do I respond when a child asks me something that I don’t know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: “Let’s find out together!”
- Am I **moving away** from viewing play as just something children do and **moving towards** viewing play as intentional and inquiry based; a way for children to **express** themselves in multiple ways?
- Am I having fun? Is at least a part of each day filled with a **shared sense of joy** that is the wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?

## **Supporting children to Manage their Behaviour**

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach. Educators focus on helping the child understand their feelings and emotions and provide support to help children regulate their behaviour.

The following are unacceptable behaviour management strategies and are not permitted at any time under any circumstances.

- 1) Corporal punishment;
- 2) Deliberate harsh or degrading measures that may humiliate or undermine a child’s self-respect and self-esteem;
- 3) Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing or bedding; and

- 4) Confining a child by locking the exits of the centre or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children.

### **3. Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.**

You will see:

- Many different ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings including:
  - Painting, drawing, modelling with clay, plasticine and other art and creative/ sensory materials;
  - Telling or writing stories;
  - Singing, dancing
  - Talking with educators;
  - Talking with other children
  - Building with blocks and other building materials;
  - Conducting experiments; and
  - Solving problems.
  - Planned excursions outside of the centre site, to promote children's connection to their local community

### **4. Foster exploration and inquiry that is play based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.**

You will see:

- Children making sense of the world around them through play.
- Play that is supported by caring adults in environments with materials, space and time that encourage complex thinking and aid children to gain essential skills. These skills include: creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These are foundational activities that promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skills.

### **Supporting Healthy Development and Learning**

At Happy Tots Day Nursery each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are identified. Educators set goals through individual attention, inquiry play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is supported. Educators focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative and cognitive development in a holistic way. This approach will be strengthened by:

- 1) Preparing the environment to foster learning and development;
- 2) Building on the children's ideas, questions and theories as observed in play;

- 3) A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion amongst team members about how to support deeper exploration; and
- 4) Inviting and engaging others in the continuing process of program development including parents, the children themselves and other community partners including but not limited to educators within the school system.

Children learn through exploration, play, and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful conversations with children, which encourages them to interact and communicate in a positive way, and promotes their ability to self-regulate. We use the Nipissing District Developmental Screen, children's portfolios, learning stories, pictures and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities on an ongoing basis to study; interpret, make visible and help inform children's learning and development, as well as the overall program.

## **5. Provide both child initiated and adult supported experiences to foster development.**

You will see:

- Weekly Program Plans posted with a variety of Educator planned activities that will be added to throughout the week as the children expand on the activities or move forward in new directions.
- The number of transitions during the day are limited; children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place;
- Times when the child takes the lead in planning the activity and times when the educator builds on observation to develop and implement activities that support each child to stretch his/her skills and abilities.

## **6. Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development.**

You will see:

- Children actively engaged in activities, usually in small groups;
- Children and staff are smiling, laughing and having fun; playing and learning together;
- Educators observing and making documentation about children to build experiences.
- Educators discussing the documentation with the children
- A focus on learning through play with educators encouraging and supporting questions, answers and problem solving on the part of the children.

## **7. Incorporate a range of different experience modalities including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of children.**

You will see:

- Well stocked toy shelves and creative materials available to the children.
- Quiet comfortable spaces for reading or quiet individual activities or rest
- Children engaged in a range of different activities throughout the day;
- Children taking the lead; actively shaping the play;
- Educators listen and learn from the children as much as the children listen and learn from the educators,
- Educators encouraging children to explore nature and their natural environments
- Quiet activities provided for children who do not require a nap during rest times.

## **8. Foster engagement of /and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.**

You will see:

- Educators seek out opportunities to talk with parents without ignoring the needs of the children;
- For Toddlers, daily information sheets will be completed by the Educators for parents
- Educators will complete the Nipissing Developmental Screening Tool in collaboration with parents upon child's entry into the early learning and child care program and then continue to assess each child's development with the results being shared with parents;
- Opportunities, both planned and informal for parents and educators to share ideas about how best to support each child.
- Portfolios for each child which are accessible to parents.
- Accident / Incident reports completed if your child has an accident to provide you with information as required.
- Notes posted as reminders for parents about upcoming activities
- Newsletters for parents sharing information about our programs

### **Parents as Partners**

Educators foster engagement and ongoing communications with families regarding the program and their children. We strive to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in our daycare centre – as we are partners in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children.

A strong, respectful and equitable relationship with parents is the key to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and with their families. To this end, we seek out opportunities to engage parents in a way that meets their needs and builds on strengths while respecting the

challenges that face young families including: long commutes, time pressures and the busyness inherent in raising a family. Strategies include but are not limited to:

- An “open door” policy that welcomes parents to drop off and pick up at the times that work best for their family within the hours that the daycare is open and allows them to drop-in to observe whenever convenient for the parent.
- Informal discussions on a daily basis
- Posted documentation of activities, interactions and engagement
- Use of the Nipissing Developmental Screening Tool and parent/educator interviews
- Sharing resources and materials about community supports and activities
- Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum; to share cultural and family experiences
- Social and open house activities
- Suggestion boxes

Key ideas and messages we share with parents:

- Our program is **play and inquiry based** because research tells us that this is the way children learn best. A play based program provides the kinds of opportunities that children need to be fully **engaged** and to learn how to **express** themselves many different ways. We will be sharing our learning with and about your children in many different ways.
- What do you think is important that I know about your child to support his/her **well-being**?
- These are our **goals for your children** and this is what we will be doing with your child to support the achievement of these goals (outline the program expectations).
- How can we support your **engagement** with our program so that you feel that you **belong**? What works for you, your schedule and your family?

## **9. Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.**

You will see:

- Parents are welcomed at any time and are encouraged to drop in when and if they have time to do so.
- Planned excursions to community services and programs such as the local grocery stores and other neighbourhood locations.
- Use of community partners as a resource and support to families, children and staff.

## **10. Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning.**

You will see:

- Staff expected and supported to attend professional development;
- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) are required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators to commit to their own ongoing professional learning
- New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program;
- Materials and research shared with parents.

### **Continuous Professional Learning for Educators**

We provide an environment that support educators, and others who interact with children, to continually self-reflect, have discussions, foster ongoing collaboration, and engage in continuous professional learning, in order to provide the best possible learning environment for children. The Staff are provided with many mandatory health and safety related training sessions, such as First Aid and Infant Child CPR, and WHMIS. In addition,

- Staffs are expected to participate in up to three professional learning opportunities each year, based on their learning goals.
- Staff have scheduled planning time
- Staff meet together to share ideas and information and to develop programs.
- Staffs are encouraged to participate in community learning opportunities through Capacity Building and the Durham Region Child Care Forum.
- RECE's are required to participate in the College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning Program.

## **11. Use many languages to document and review the experiences of the children and the educators in order to:**

- Provide an ongoing record of development;
- Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on the impact of their activities and strategies; and
- Provide a visual and oral record that enables parents to review and explore the developmental trajectory of their child.

You will see:

- Documentation posted on the walls that tells and shows you what the children are doing;
- Different methods of recording observations about what the children are accomplishing



## **A Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

All new staff, students and volunteers are required to review the program statement prior to interaction with children in our care, and any time the program statement is updated. All staff are required to review the program statement on an annual basis. This will be accomplished at a year-end all staff meeting which provides an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year and to set goals for the upcoming year.