



# Lakeshore Co-operative Nursery School

*Working & Playing Together*

## Lakeshore Co-Operative Nursery School Program Statement

At Lakeshore Co-operative Nursery School our programs reflect our philosophy and belief that children learn best through play.

A co-operative nursery school is a non-profit organization of parents that band together for the purpose of setting up and maintaining an early years program for their children. A co-operative school is a family project with each member participating and valued for their unique contributions to the programs. Everyone is given a voice which creates a sense of belonging among members. Families and teachers share responsibilities and decision making. Interactions between children, between children and adults, and among adults are based on a philosophy of respect. Children and families of all backgrounds and abilities are welcomed to our programs. A co-operative school is a valuable project that contributes to the wider community.

*"How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years", (2014)* is a professional learning resource guide about learning through relationships for those working with young children and families. It is intended to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in early years programs."  
(HDLH, 2014, p.5)

At LCNS we use the four foundations: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression outlined in the *How Does Learning Happen?* document to create a curriculum and environment to promote the learning and growth of children.

### **Belonging- Goals for Children**

- Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.  
(HDLH, 2014, p.23)

At LCNS we believe children should be active participants in creating their environment. Pictures of the children and their families are displayed in our room, as well as the children's artwork. They can see these pictures and creations and are encouraged to help adults in the room decide how they should be displayed.

Allowing children to make choices is important to their sense of belonging. At LCNS children make choices such as where to sit, where to play and who to play with.

Children's rituals and traditions create a sense belonging. This can include celebrating holidays that are important to the children and their families or simply children bringing comfort items into the classroom if needed to help them feel safe.

Children should be given opportunities to help within the classroom setting. The children at LCNS help by tidying up toys and their own snack. The room is set up so children can easily find where things go and be successful in their attempt to help.

We believe children feel that they belong through building relationships with each other and with adults in the classroom. These relationships are built through conversations. We encourage conversation between children, facilitating when needed. Conversations between adults and children are an important aspect of children feeling they belong. Listening and responding to their conversations helps build a relationship with the child. We want children to feel they are being heard. We show we are listening by getting on their level when responding to conversation and by learning their cues.

At LCNS one of the most valuable ways we can make children feel they belong is by making sure we greet the children each day. We want each child to know we are excited to see them and hear how they are that day, as well as acknowledging them when they are leaving for the day.

### **Well-Being- Goals for Children**

- Every child is developing a sense of self, health and well-being. (HDLH, 2014, p.23)

At LCNS we believe children are competent and capable. We believe when children develop a sense of self and independence it helps with their overall well-being. We provide opportunities for children to strengthen their skills in self-care, self-regulation, cognition, and physical and emotional well-being.

We foster independence and emotional well-being by arranging the classroom to promote success. Shelves are labelled with pictures and words to help children recognize where their things belong. The children are invited to join in activities, not forced. They can decide when they want to play, make a craft, take a rest, use the washroom or have a snack. We believe children are capable of making these choices for themselves. We offer an emergent curriculum where all activities are open and available including a free flow snack instead of a set time for each activity.

The snack offered at LCNS includes healthy choices from at least two of the four food groups. The children are encouraged to wash their hands independently and shown proper hand washing techniques by the adults in the room. The children wash their hands both before and after snack. We also want to promote children's independence by getting them to tidy up their own snack dishes and dispose of their leftover food and napkin in the green bin.

We believe children thrive when they are given opportunities to engage in physical play in a natural outdoor space. Children are encouraged to dress themselves for outdoor play. Our outdoor environment provides children a safe place to explore, manageable levels of challenge, and opportunities for risk taking. We believe outdoor play strengthens perception, creative problem solving and complex thinking.

At LCNS we allow children to talk things out rather than step in quickly. We feel children are very capable of problem solving when given the chance to try. When children are dealing with a conflict we get down to their level and encourage them to talk it out, facilitating if necessary. When children are too young to do this, we will give them the words by modelling what they could say or do to solve the problem. We acknowledge their feelings and teach ways to express them appropriately. When children are having a difficult time within the program and need assistance to make more positive choices we offer these options through redirection to another area of the classroom and maintain a close presence to provide extra support if needed. At LCNS we understand our program should be flexible and change as the needs of the children change. This means at times looking at the arrangement of our room or schedule and making changes as necessary.

Mental health and wellness is also an important part of our program. Each child and adult in our program should feel mentally healthy and well. Recognizing when a child is not coping well is key. Giving opportunities to children to have a quiet area to rest or be alone when needed can sometimes help them feel less stress within the program.

We partner with agencies within the community and they are invited into our classroom when needed to offer information and support to children and families. Our teachers will help families to access these supports.

### **Engagement- Goals for Children**

- Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with mind body and senses. (HDLH, 2014, p.23)

At LCNS we feel engagement with children shows them we are authentically interested in what they are doing.

At LCNS we want our teachers to feel genuinely engaged with co-workers, families and the environment. We encourage our teachers to share ideas and collaborate with each other and the parents in our program. The teachers in our program have the full support of LCNS to participate in workshops to promote continuous professional learning. This gives our teachers the opportunity to share ideas and strategies learned at these workshops with other professionals working in the field of Early Childhood Education, as well as with each other and the parents in the program.

LCNS is a co-operative school making engagement with families an important part of who we are as a school. The parents are directly involved by working in the program and helping to make decisions for the school. The families at LCNS are an important part of our classroom. Parents are directly involved in the classroom by participating on their duty days. They help with snack, craft, and engage in play with the children. The parents being in the room helps us to build strong relationships with them as well as their children. They also build relationships with each other by working together within the classroom or on various committees. We believe these relationships are important and try to facilitate by providing opportunities for families to come together socially as a group both within and outside of school. We do this by organizing events such as, Christmas concerts and parties, an annual family party, muffin mornings, field trips where the parents are welcome to attend, and our annual year end parties.

Having families be part of our curriculum is important to us and we encourage this by asking parents to come into our class and share special hobbies, customs or jobs they may have. We also ask parents to contribute to our classroom environment by donating craft supplies or other items we need.

All parents at LCNS are given a voice in a number of ways. The parents at LCNS are considered members of the school. As members parents are given the opportunity to vote on school matters at our bi-annual mandatory meetings. Parents can choose to be on our Board of Directors. Parents are able to address any questions or concerns regarding their child or the program at any time to one of our board members, class representatives or teachers. The parents also participate in an annual survey regarding the school and how it is run. Open communication between teachers and parents is important to us. We take the time to talk with parents about their child and their individual needs.

We promote ongoing communication with the families at LCNS by providing a monthly newsletter which outlines what is happening within our program and school. E-mail reminders about special events are sent when necessary as well as a calendar in our main entryway outlining all special days and happenings within the school.

At LCNS we believe engagement with our surrounding community to be an important aspect of our program. We invite people working within our community to come in to visit our classroom and share interesting things about their jobs. Some examples of visitors we have had are police officers, firefighters, and visitors from the library and Humane Society. We also plan a variety of field trips throughout the school year so children and their families have the opportunity to visit places within our community. Some of these include the pumpkin patch, tree farm, museum and local businesses.

At LCNS we work to provide an environment to engage children and allow them to explore, be active, be creative and inquire. We believe our educators help to engage children by being engaged themselves, by observing children and asking questions, not assuming. We stop, slow down and ask questions about the play and let children explore at their own pace. We document observations and reflect on these observations to gain a sense of what the children in our program are interested in. We use this documentation to capture children's learning and growth throughout the year and share it with their families in the form of picture displays and learning stories. We provide open-ended materials based on our observations to spark children's creativity. Open-ended materials are toys or other items that can be used in many different ways. We provide these items both indoors and outdoors. Providing such materials allows the children to be creative and use their imagination.

At LCNS we value the environment as an important part of our program. We consider the classroom to be the third teacher. We strive to provide an inviting, home-like environment. We do this by providing less harsh lighting by using lamps, twinkle lights and making use of natural light and displaying photos of the children and their families throughout our room. Our environment provides areas for children to engage in social interactions, problem solving, pretend play, storytelling, gross motor, fine motor, art and quiet activities. We feel that these areas can cross over and children and toys can migrate from area to area. We believe providing an organized and predictable environment is essential.

### **Expression- Goals for Children**

- Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many way (HDLH, 2014, pg. 23)

At LCNS we believe every child is capable of communicating their wants and needs. Children express themselves through language, art, music and movement. At LCNS we believe facilitating communication and relationships between children is important. We let children communicate with each other their wants and needs and step in when needed to help model when necessary. We respect and respond to what children are trying to communicate both with their peers and the adults in the room. At LCNS we believe respecting different languages of the families in our program is important and we are willing to learn words from these languages and make them part of our environment.

Some of the children at LCNS use basic sign language to communicate and we use simple signs for such words as "more" or "all done". We also label shelves where toys or other items are kept using the picture and word to promote language.

Children express themselves through art. At LCNS we encourage this by providing a variety of craft experiences. Children are given different mediums to create with such as paint, chalk, crayons and markers. We provide opportunities for the children to explore using all their senses. We do this by making the materials exciting and inviting. We provide the chance to manipulate materials with their hands such as play dough, clay or finger-paint. We explore with the sense of smell by providing scented markers, paint or play dough. Children are given open access to the art supplies kept in child accessible drawers in which they may choose the materials they want to use. Crafts are open ended not teacher directed. Children are given the materials and the freedom to express themselves as they wish.

At LCNS we provide many different items to promote expression through dramatic play. Our kitchen centre is set up with familiar and realistic play food and items the children may see at their own homes. We provide puppets and costumes to dress up in to allow children to act out familiar situations and scenarios from their own lives and experiences.

Music and movement provide children with a way to express themselves. We provide a daily group time in which to sing songs, listen to music, dance with scarves or use instruments, as well as read stories. At this group time we also encourage children to tell us stories about what is happening in their world outside the classroom and to share their interests with us and their peers.

At LCNS we feel it's vital to be constantly evaluating our program. We self-reflect and share ideas with each other about children's engagement and growth within our program. We address concerns and make changes where necessary to better serve the children and families in our school.

One of our core beliefs as a co-operative nursery school is that we are a community that works together as team to provide an engaging and educational environment for the children who come to Lakeshore Co-operative Nursery School. We work, and play together and have a lot of fun!!!

This program statement will be reviewed with any new staff, student, volunteer or other person working within our program upon starting in the program and annually thereafter. It will also be reviewed if any modifications are made to the program statement.

Annually all staff and volunteers will be monitored within the classroom to ensure compliance with the program statement.

Last revised Jan. 2017