

Don Valley Christian Child Care Program Statement

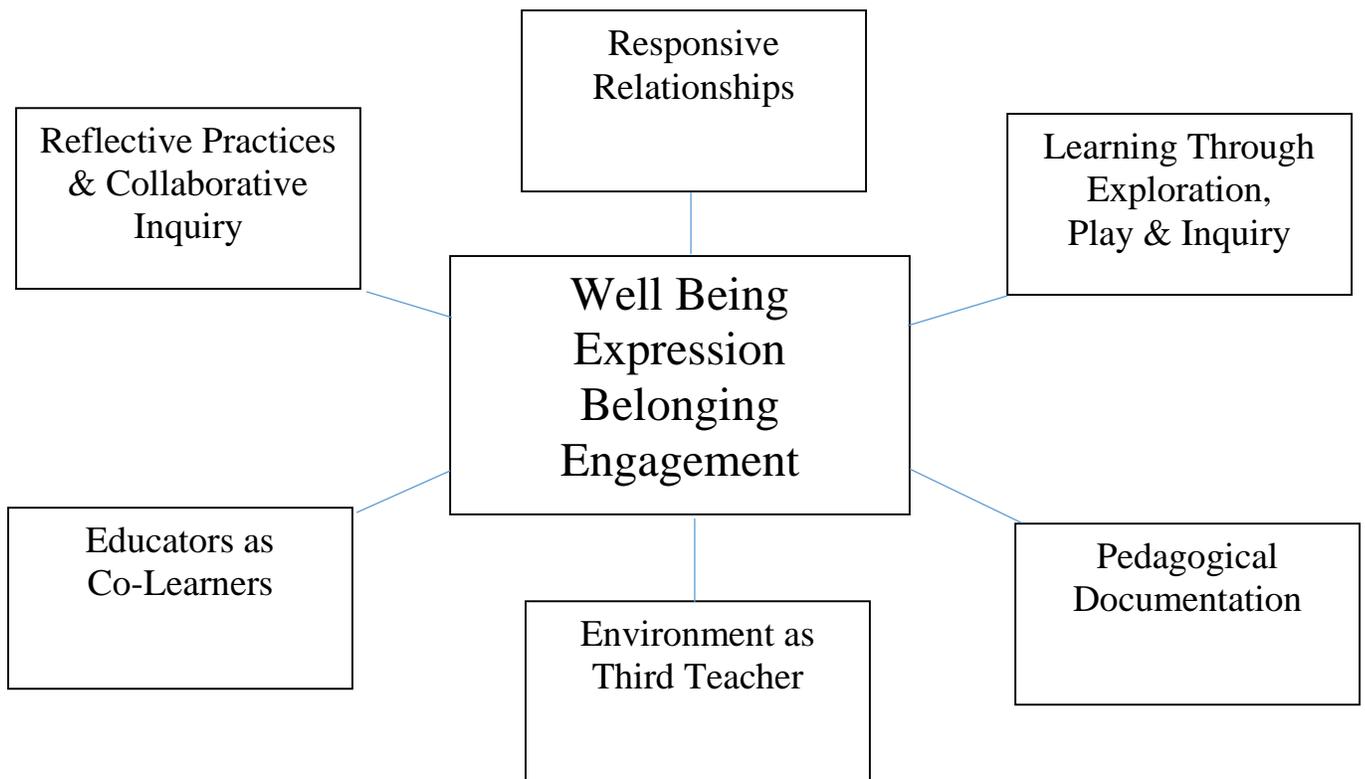


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Program Statement

Don Valley Christian Child Care follows a play based learning program model that reflects the *Early Learning Framework (ELF)* and *How Does Learning Happen?* (HDLH), Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, and the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on programming and pedagogy made under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

What is Pedagogy?

Pedagogy is the ways that children learn and what an educator does to support their learning.

In DVCCC, we believe that children learn best when they are interested and engaged in play and experiences that encourage and support active exploration and manipulation of materials. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) and Assistant teachers develop and implement learning experiences on a daily basis that are based on documented observations of each child; in addition, to the knowledge and training RECEs have of child development and learning. We view children as competent, active, curious and capable learners, and rich in potential.

Our programs support each child's personal well-being, health, safety and nutrition with a team approach that includes Registered Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Assistants, Supervisors and support services; including, an Early Childhood Resource Consultant.

At DVCCC, every child belongs and we are committed to providing fully inclusive environments that support the health and well-being of every child in our care. With support from the Toronto Special Services Unit, we provide programs that meet each child's developmental needs.

Daily learning experiences (activities) are developed and adapted to reflect and support children's individual stage of development and interests. Each element of the children's day, indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time are considered by DVCCC to provide unique and valuable learning, developmental experiences, and opportunities that are supported by planned programs and child initiated learning.

What is How Does Learning Happen?

How Does Learning Happen?, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years is a professional learning resource for those working in child care. This resource inspires critical reflection and discussion among those who work with children and their families in early years' settings. It includes goals for children, expectations for programs and questions for reflection. It provides a starting point for thinking about the environments, experiences, and interactions that bring out the best in children, families and educators.

HDLH? identifies four (4) foundations that are important for children to grow and flourish to their optimal development:

1. Belonging
2. Well Being
3. Engagement
4. Expression

DVCCC programs strive to support optimal development by ensuring that these four conditions are considered in all aspects of our programs in partnership with parents.

Our services are based on the six (6) guiding principles of *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT) and the four *Foundations of Learning and Development (Ways of Being)* from *How Does Learning Happen?*

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This chart outlines the approach DVCCC uses to respond to the Six Guiding Principles from ELECT in all children's programs.

The Six (6) Guiding Principles	Our Approach to Each Principle
Responsive Relationships	Educators build trusting relationships, positive and nurturing interactions, take cues from children, reinforce positive social skills and demonstrate positive role modeling.
Learning Through Exploration, Play & Inquiry	Children are capable, competent and curious learners. They learn best when they are engaged in play-based learning experiences and using materials that they are able to freely explore, manipulate, theorize, question, and share their thoughts and ideas. When children are having fun, they are engaged and learning.
Educators as Co-Learners	Educators learn with the children, asking meaningful and thoughtful questions, providing a variety of new and challenging materials, and learning experiences to enrich the children's learning.
Environment as Third Teacher	The play based environments (playrooms, playgrounds and centre) are designed to enable children to make choices and be independent. They stimulate learning and encourage skill development. They provide a natural, aesthetically pleasing and calm place to learn as well as a variety of types of space for children to explore.
Pedagogical Documentation	A quality planned program is developed using: documented observations of children throughout their day, input from families, and the knowledge and experience of the educator. Documentation may include written and photographed observations and children's creations (e.g. art work, writing).
Reflective Practice & Collaborative Inquiry	Educators reflect on their own practices and collaborate through open discussion and enquiry with other educators to implement best practices and to ensure a high quality early learning and care program.

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The following chart identifies the Four (4) Foundations of Learning & Development from *How Does Learning Happen?*, and the practices DVCCC implements to support children and families.

The Four (4) Foundations of Learning & Development	How We Support the Four Foundations of Learning & Development
<p style="text-align: center;">Well-Being</p>	<p>In DVCCC we encourage mindfulness throughout the day by enabling children to have time to finish a task and practice new skills (i.e. learning to do up a zipper) and by moving through transitions in a small group format.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Expression</p>	<p>Teachers encourage children's self-expression through their play, art mediums; painting, clay creations, music and movement, the use of open ended questions and by providing time for children to reflect, hypothesize and share their responses.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Belonging</p>	<p>To support children and families to have a strong sense of belonging, educators develop environments and planned programs that reflect the diversity of the families, children, and communities they serve.</p> <p>Materials, photographs, posted material and resources reflect diversity in race, culture, family composition, abilities, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement</p>	<p>Planned programs are developed to reflect the children's interests and individual development enabling children to choose the learning experiences, materials and play partners they want to engage with. Educators encourage and support children to make their own decisions, solve problems, experience logical consequences and hypothesis through their play to support children's feelings of engagement and value within the program and with others.</p>

DVCCC Play Based Learning Model

DVCCC programs use a play-based learning program model to support children's optimal learning and development. Research confirms that play is the primary way that all children learn. In DVCCC, we believe children learn when they are engaged, active, interested, challenged and having fun. Learning experiences are both planned and spontaneous based upon the children's interests and developmental needs. Programs support learning and development in all areas: physical, social/emotional, cognitive and language and literacy development.

The Value of Play

While children are engaged in play, they are learning and developing a variety of skills:

- Literacy,
- Numeracy,
- Emotional and social skills,
- Learning new cognitive concepts, and
- Developing their small and large muscles through physical movement.

We provide a variety of materials for children to explore and manipulate in various areas and at various times of their day. Children learn when they engage in:

- pretend play,
- creative and sensory experiences,
- games and puzzles,
- small and large group times,
- physical play experiences,
- singing, and
- story telling.

The opportunities and experiences are endless. Our educators support children's learning in each of these play areas by providing materials that extend and challenge their learning.

Children learn through repetition. Children need many opportunities to explore and manipulate materials to figure out how they work, to develop and refine their skills and abilities and to gain knowledge. As children explore materials, they learn more about them and they improve their skills. The more experiences and time children have to play independently and with others as they manipulate and explore materials, the more opportunities for learning take place.

The Role of Registered Early Childhood Educators to Support Children's Learning

Our educators and Supervisor are Registered Early Childhood Educators, responsible for developing and implementing planned and responsive programs.

They do this by:

- observing and documenting daily activities and behavior of children,
- developing and implementing planned daily programs with a wide variety of challenging and stimulating learning opportunities and experiences for children,
- creating environments that enable children to actively explore and learn independently and with adult support,
- supporting children's learning through positive interactions as play partners and co-learners,
- sharing information and resources with parents,
- partnering with the community to engage children to learn about and understand their world,
- adapting the program and materials to ensure all children are able to actively explore and engage in play on their own and with their peers,
- working with external partners to ensure the program meets the needs of children with extra support needs,

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- implementing individual program plans to support children who have extra support needs,
- working in collaboration with their team partners to evaluate, develop and implement the planned program, and
- being active, life-long learners.

Our Supervisor, RECE's and Child Care Assistant Teachers work in a team approach to provide for children's needs and to support their learning and development by:

- supervising children's play and daily routines,
- documenting general care information,
- following the child's lead to extend and enhance learning and development,
- responding to children's individual needs,
- developing positive, supportive relationships with each child,
- demonstrating respect and empathy for children's emotions and challenges,
- encouraging problem solving,
- supporting the development of positive peer relationships,
- establishing positive relationships and partnerships with parents to fully support children's learning and development,
- modeling the behavior they wish to teach children, and
- establishing professional and positive relationships with their colleagues in the rooms and centre in which they work.

Planned & Responsive Programs

DVCCC values the benefits of a planned program. Educators document observations of children throughout the week in the children's individual Observation Booklet/Portfolio to help track the children's interests and developmental needs.

The *Continuum of Development*, an excerpt from *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)*, describes predictable sequences of development for children from birth to eight years of age within the broad domains of development. The continuum assists educators to observe and document children's emerging skills, based on an understanding of child development and supports the development of a planned program responsive to the development, needs and interests of each child.

A weekly program plan is posted inside of each classroom. The *Continuum of Development* is also posted to identify the root skill and the learning experience that is being supported.

Educators follow the lead of the child. Planned learning experiences are adapted by children as they play and explore; bringing new materials and ideas to their play. Educators also adapt this planned program to support children's spontaneity, abilities and interests. The educator expands the children's interests by adding materials, asking open-ended questions and building on to the children's learning by providing new challenges, materials and ideas.

DVCCC teachers discuss regularly how their programs, interactions and procedures support the Four Foundations of Learning and Development from *How Does Learning Happen?, Well-Being, Expression, Belonging and Engagement*.

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The Supervisor considers and reflects on the Four Foundations and Six Guiding Principles to guide the development of policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to respond and reflect the best interests of children and families, and current research in the field of early learning and care.

As strong pedagogical leaders, the centre Supervisor review the planned program plans each week along with the documented observations to ensure that they meet our Program Statement requirements. The Supervisor demonstrate pedagogical leadership by:

- providing resources,
- on-site training,
- observing each program on an on-going basis, sharing information and resources with parents,
- interacting with children and employees in the program, and
- engaging in discussions with educators about how the children are learning, what they need to learn, and what are the best strategies to support learning.

Outdoor Play - A Critical Part of Learning

In DVCCC, we value the learning opportunities as well as the health benefits outdoor play provides children. Children in full day care are required by the Ministry of Education to participate in outdoor play for a minimum of two (2) hours a day, weather permitting. In Toronto, we are fortunate to have four seasons to enjoy the outdoors and in DVCCC we support children to participate in all of them.

In DVCCC, we provide children with a variety of opportunities to develop their large muscles skills as well as athletic skills, such as throwing, kicking and catching a ball, riding a tricycle, and playing basketball, to support them lead a healthy active lifestyle for long term health and wellbeing.

Our outdoor play environments provide space and opportunities for active and restful play, loud and quiet play, individual and group play, as well as, opportunities to develop large muscle strength and skills through planned learning experiences and free play. Children's interactions with nature support their knowledge of science and nature and help them develop an understanding of the fragile nature of the environment, and how they can care for and nurture it. Educators closely monitor the weather and the children's activity levels to ensure their health and well-being. Areas of shade as well as drinking water are provided throughout the year. Learning is extended to the outdoors from the indoor playroom and reaches out to the local community through local walks or off-site activities for older children. The outdoor learning environment provides extended opportunities for all elements of learning; from physical activity, nature exploration, independent and cooperative games. When children are unable to play outdoors due to weather conditions, alternate indoor active learning experiences are provided in a space identified for this purpose.

Children's Learning Environments

The children's play environments (playrooms and playgrounds) are set up in a child friendly manner that encourages free exploration and manipulation of materials along with learning experiences that they may engage in independently, with a peer or in a small or large group. The playroom furnishings and decor are chosen to reflect elements from nature (e.g. wood, plants) and are child size for the comfort and safety of the children. In DVCCC, we believe that an environment that provides for quiet, thoughtful play, as well as loud, active play are essential to support children's individual needs and ways of expression.

The materials in the rooms are set up in a manner that enables children to easily find and return materials independently. They provide a variety of stimulating and challenging learning experiences to engage children and to support all aspects of the children's development.

Program Enrichments

DVCCC programs strive to extend children's learning and development through the implementation of program enrichments. Program Enrichments are learning experiences that are presented on-site by professionals in their specific field. This may include, but is not limited to theatre and music, hands on crafts and physical movement experiences that are brought into our programs to support the children's learning.

Parents are invited to share their skills, knowledge and abilities with their child and their peers. They do this by reading a story or singing a song in their home language, cooking a variety of dishes, playing a musical instrument or engaging children in a craft.

Planned program enrichments for each program are posted in advance for parent information and input.

Prohibited Practices

All DVCCC employees and students are to use behaviour guidance strategies that support children to develop appropriate social and emotional skills and must comply with the DVCCC Program Statement. DVCCC and the Child Care and Early Years Act prohibits the following practices:

- a) corporal punishment of the child,
- b) deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect,
- c) depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding,
- d) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child,
- e) using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children, or
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Approved Practices

Children need the opportunity to explore their environment and discover their abilities. This sometimes involves testing limits and experimenting with social interactions, and may include behaviour that is dangerous or inappropriate.

When negative or unacceptable behaviours occur, they are considered to be learning opportunities where educators support children to identify and express emotions and issues appropriately. Building strong, healthy relationships with each child will help educators to know what works best for each child.

When these situations occur, the role of the staff is to assist the child by helping them identify acceptable behaviour. They establish limits, to maintain the health and safety of all children and follow through with logical consequences when reasonable expectations are not met. Consequences of behaviour should be calmly addressed with children, keeping in mind tone of voice, body language and facial expressions.

Strategies to Support Infants and Toddlers

In DVCCC, we support infants and young toddlers to develop self-regulation skills and positive behaviours through the use of redirection. Staff bring the child's attention to a different play area or material to minimize the child's opportunity to repeat or engage in unwanted behaviour and support them to experience more positive experiences with others.

Infants and toddlers are at developmental stages where they can't yet understand verbal direction concerning their behaviours and emotions and tend to be egocentric (at the "me" stage). Staff will reframe the stressful or emotional situation and redirect it into a positive one; for example, providing them with another toy or engaging them in a different and more positive learning experience.

Strategies to Support Preschool Children

Educators support preschool children to problem solve, communicate their issue or needs and use conflict resolution strategies to resolve issues with others. Educators support children to work through problems or anger by supporting them to talk about their feelings and issues. Children will learn to use strategies when they are actively involved in the solution.

Children are, by nature, problem-solvers. Staff use a problem-solving approach which is simple and meets the developmental level of children to help them think about the problem and develop a solution.

This process involves supporting children to:

- identify the issue,
- think of alternatives, predict consequences, and
- make decisions/develop solutions.

Self-Regulation Skills

One of the most important set of skills that children need for future success are those relating to self-regulation. This includes the ability to wait their turn, share materials, listen to others, demonstrate empathy and kindness and communicate emotions and thoughts to others in a positive and constructive manner.

In DVCCC, our view of the child as capable, competent and curious is critical in supporting children to self-regulate and demonstrate behaviours that are positive to developing positive social relationships, self-esteem and confidence. Most unwanted/negative behaviours demonstrated by children are due to the inability to self-regulate. Skills children have not yet developed, and those they need support to develop and refine.

When children demonstrate unwanted or negative behaviours, we look to support them to learn how to manage their response to various situations; such as, the need to tidy up when they don't want to, to join play with other children in a positive way or to communicate their emotions with words or gestures rather than using aggressive physical or verbal behaviours.

Rather than "managing" children's behaviours, DVCCC promotes the use of positive, developmentally appropriate strategies and techniques using a proactive approach to support children in learning and demonstrating positive behaviours on a consistent basis.

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In DVCCC, children are encouraged to learn to respond in a positive manner and resolve situations in the future by giving back a toy they took from their peer, helping a peer rebuild the creation they broke or being gentle and using their words the next time they are upset, rather than hitting. Children will learn to feel and demonstrate empathy to others as they learn through their own experiences and observe adults role modeling positive social skills.

Sharing is a concept that is very challenging and nearly incomprehensible for children under three (3) years of age; therefore, we strive to have a number of the same materials available to the children to minimize the need for children to share, and we help children to learn to wait for their turn through redirection and verbal support.

Social Skills

Studies have identified five core competencies that lead to positive life outcomes.

The five (5) core competencies are:

1. a positive sense of self,
2. the ability to practice self-control,
3. effective decision-making skills,
4. a moral system of belief of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and
5. positive connections with others.

Children who develop these five competencies are better equipped to become happy, productive adults.

As children begin to develop language skills and a better understanding and awareness of others, educators use a variety of strategies; such as, conflict resolution, learning experiences, natural consequences along with redirection to support children's development and the development of strong social skills.

When children have the required communication skills and understanding, they are engaged in developing ways to support themselves to self-regulate their behaviours by planning how to deal with stressful or difficult situations, or suggesting their own consequences when they have acted inappropriately; such as, helping a peer re-construct a broken creation or taking some time to be quiet and meditate with the support of educators.

Challenging Behaviours

When a child is having a challenging time, demonstrating behaviours that may hurt them or others, educators may be required to remove other children from the play space to provide that child with privacy and time to resolve their issues, with the support of an educator. For the safety of both the child and educator, another educator will provide support and relief to the educator supporting the child, if required. Physical restraint is only used when a child may endanger themselves or others, and is used as minimally as possible. When physical restraint is used, the educator will document the situation and report to the Supervisor and parent/guardian to develop a plan to support the child and minimize the recurrence of such situations.

Child Development

Our goal is to encourage and support children to reach their optimal development and future lifelong success. Our play based program is planned to enable each child to interact with materials, learning experiences, peers, adults and the outdoors at their individual stage of development and through their own interests. Staff extend

and adapt learning experiences to challenge and stimulate children's interests, inquiry, skills, abilities, and knowledge through the use of documented observations, team work, research, resourcing, and sharing information and knowledge with parents.

Educators will complete a Nipissing Screening Tool (link to Nipissing) on each child at specific age identified intervals to help ensure they are meeting basic developmental milestones. We encourage parents to work with staff to complete this tool or to complete it at home and share the findings with staff. We will provide a blank copy of the screening tool, which is age appropriate, and will share the completed tool with the parent and discuss any areas that may need to be addressed.

At times, some children need additional support from specialists such as resource consultants, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, etc. If the child's educator feels that the child would benefit from additional supports, they will meet with the parent to discuss what services may be available and how they may be arranged. In DVCCC, we model the [Every Child Belongs](#) philosophy and welcome all children to participate in our programs in a meaningful way!

Routines & Transitions

Children's days are filled with lots of time to play and explore in the playroom and on the playground, but their day also includes a number of personal care routines; such as, meal time, washroom and cloakroom time. As children move through these routines each day, educators support children's learning through positive and supportive interactions. Children develop self-help and fine motor skills, an understanding of the importance of good health and hygiene, as well as communication and social skills, as they interact with peers and adults.

Transition times, such as, to/from the playground or washroom are designed to be safe, positive learning experiences for children through planned and spontaneous songs and experiences. We divide larger groups into small groups, each with a staff member to support the children's physical and emotional well-being, facilitate individual learning, encourage trust and attachment, and support children's ability to manage routines and self-regulate effectively.

Children's Sleep & Rest Times

Children's work is play and their day is very active so it is important that they also have time to rest and re-energize. As younger children require more frequent rests, infants rest according to their own individual schedules. Educators work with parents to determine a daily schedule of rest and monitor the child's individual needs throughout the day, providing time for rests in their individual crib. Staff monitor resting/sleeping children regularly to ensure their safety and well-being.

For their safety and well-being, all infants are put to sleep in their individual cribs. Infants under one year of age are put to sleep on their back.

Children attending a toddler or preschool program will be provided with a period of up-to-two hours per day to rest or sleep on their individual cot; depending on their individual needs for that day. Quiet learning experiences are provided for children not sleeping after one hour of resting on their cot and as they gradually wake.

Technology

In DVCCC, we strongly believe that children learn by being engaged actively in play; therefore, we limit the amount of screen time children participate in during their time in the program.

DVCCC incorporates Video/DVD materials only if they are supporting/extending children's learning and interests such as, science and nature videos and stories with valuable messages.

Music

DVCCC programs provide children with a variety of opportunities to engage in music experiences to support an appreciation and understanding of music through listening, singing, and playing musical instruments. Children are exposed to diverse types of music, including instrumental, classical, pop and culturally specific music. Opportunities are provided to listen to others sing or play musical instruments and to participate.

The educators use music to support children throughout the day; during transition times and routines by singing familiar songs, playing soft music to communicate to children that it is rest time and to encourage physical and creative movement.

Food and Nutrition

Our menus provide a wide variety of foods for the child to enjoy. Although providing nutritious foods to children is of the utmost importance to DVCCC, we also view meal times as learning experiences. Meal times enable children to interact with other children and adults, learn about different foods, learn their own likes and dislikes and develop self-help skills.

Educators interact with children during meal times to support their intake of adequate and nutritious foods as well as to support the development of a variety of skills and abilities, including social and self-help skills. Meal times provide a unique opportunity to build strong relationships and appreciation for new and different foods.

Our programs engage children in many learning experiences to support the importance of choosing healthy food options. Our centre has 2 vegetable gardens that provide children with opportunities to engage in planting, caring and harvesting their crops, as well as, creating healthy food items with their produce. Children learn cooking techniques, food preparation, self-help and social skills while they plan and prepare nutritious snacks to enjoy during their day and with families.

Parent Input to Children's Daily Schedules

Educators and parents work in partnership to ensure children's nutritional needs are consistently met, sharing and gathering information regularly through verbal and written communication.

In the infant and toddler programs, staff and parents share information on daily/weekly charts, documenting children's daily food and liquid intake along with general care items, such as, diapering and sleep times. Families are provided with documents to gather information concerning their children's nutritional and general care needs on a regular basis. Families are encouraged to share any observations or changes that may take place with their child/ren's needs as they arise.

Family Engagement

In DVCCC, we strongly believe that families are their child's best teacher and view parents as our partners.

It is our role to support families by providing programs where their child can grow and develop in a healthy, safe and secure environment that supports both the child and family's personal well-being and sense of belonging. We recognize that parent participation and involvement in their child's program is essential to ensure children's optimal learning and success. We strive to provide opportunities for parents to express their ideas, feelings and concerns as partners in their child's learning and care.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to spend time in their child's program. In addition, we implement regular parent involvement through program enrichments, information sessions, workshops and program evaluations, and daily written and verbal communication.

We strive to partner with families and parents to support their child's learning and development by sharing play experiences and how the child's play is linked to learning through our Weekly Program Plans, Individual Children's Observation Booklets and regular communication.

When parents are involved in their child's program, the child is able to see themselves and their family in their room which provides a sense of belonging and engagement. Photos, diverse materials, the use of home languages and learning experiences relating to diverse families and people further support children and families' sense of belonging.

Employee Professional Development & Training

DVCCC is committed to the ongoing professional development of all staff. All DVCCC staff participate in mandatory training as required by the Child Care & Early Years Act, 2014, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and by the City of Toronto, including, Standard First Aid & CPR Certification.

In addition, staff participate in position specific training both in-house and off site to support their professional learning and development, and to ensure they have a strong understanding of current policies, procedures and research materials. Registered Early Childhood Educators are required to meet the Standards of Practice and Continuous Professional Learning requirements of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE).

Program Review & Evaluation

DVCCC programs ensure they meet the Child Care & Early Years Act, 2014 regulations to provide high quality early learning and child care services to families. DVCCC strives to meet/exceed the City of Toronto's [Assessment for Quality Improvement \(AQI\)](#) in all programs..

The program statement will be reviewed and signed off by all staff, students and volunteers prior to commencing employment/unpaid placement with DVCCC and annually thereafter, and at any time, when a change is made. The review will be documented on the Annual Sign-Off Form. A hard copy will be retained in the individual's file for a minimum of three (3) years and a scanned copy posted on the employee's file on the Children's Services' Staffing System.

Compliance and Contravention

Compliance and contravention of this policy and procedure will be monitored as per the Employee Compliance & Contravention Monitoring Policy.

Resources/References:

1. Child Care & Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)
2. How Does Learning Happen?
3. City of Toronto Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI)

Copies of the DVCCC Program Statement are provided to all families at time of admission and when any significant changes are made. This document is also available on the Do Valley Bible Chapel website www.dvbc.com for families and members of the public.