

Ryerson Early Learning Centre

**Inclusion Policy and
Procedures**

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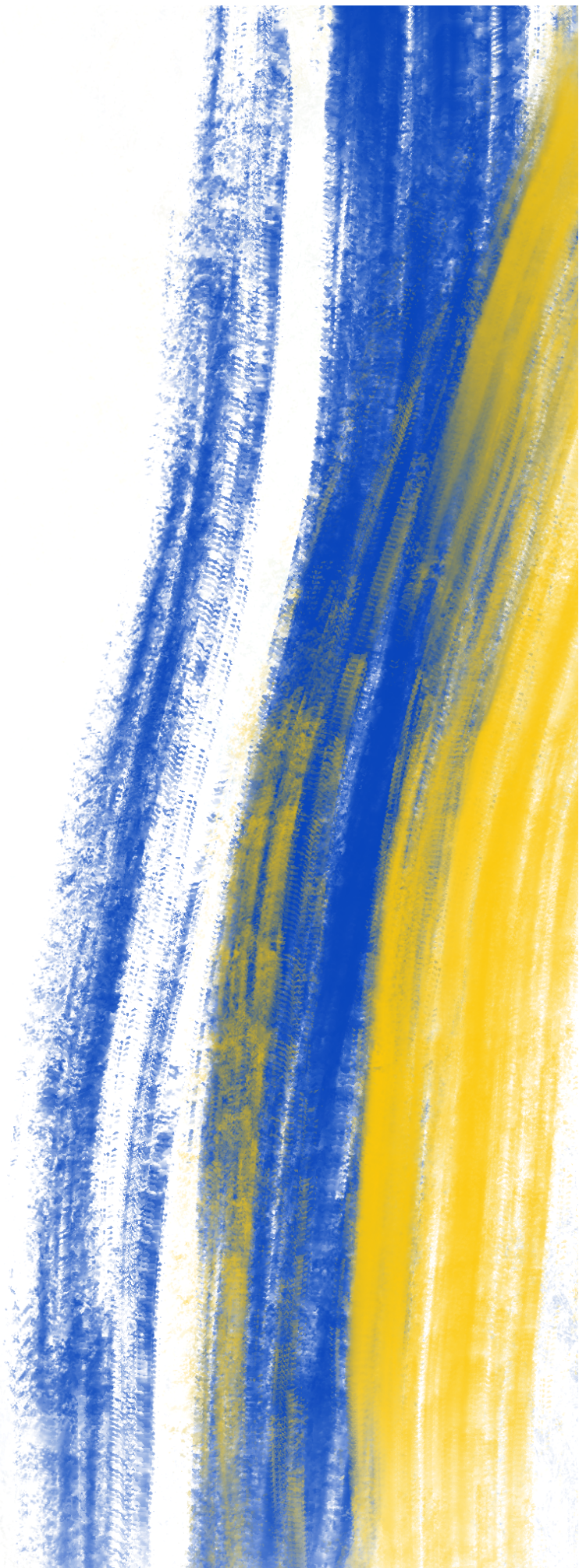


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Mission Statement

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) values the inclusion of all children into the program and strives to ensure children and families are active participants in the ELC community.

We acknowledge that:

- **Families are an integral support and decision maker for their children.** In keeping with our philosophy of equity, diversity and inclusion, we respect and acknowledge each family's culture, values and unique needs.
- **Families are the most important influence in their children's lives.** We strive to establish partnerships with families to strengthen our ability to meet their children's needs, to understand their personal contexts for learning, to enhance our program and to create an inclusive environment for all members (UNCRC, Article 14 (1,2)).
- **Each child is an individual and a member of the community.** We recognize and appreciate that children have an innate curiosity and a determination to understand the world around them; children are competent, capable, and curious beings who have a right to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people (UNCRC, Article 29 (1.d)).
- **Each child has unique ideas and perspectives, and ways of reflecting and sharing them with others.** By understanding the child, we promote the development of social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. Children have the right to express themselves freely and we provide opportunities for children to seek, receive and impart information through a variety of mediums including print, orally, art and media (UNCRC Article 13 (1)).
- **Each child has the right to participate fully in their home, community and Early Learning program.** We promote this inclusive practice through ongoing interactions, observations and reflection, to examine the main inquiries that children are exploring about their world. As co-investigators with the children, their families and community, we collaboratively create a supportive environment to foster this participation (UNCRC, Article 23 (1)).
- **Play is the child's primary medium of learning, which promotes problem-solving, decision making, and positive interactions with others.** Children benefit from both indoor and outdoor environments where they can rest and leisure, explore cultural life, the arts, nature, and take safe risks (UNCRC, Article 31 (1)).
- **All children, family members, students, staff, and faculty should be regarded and valued as unique individuals.** In partnership with the Faculty of

Community Services at Toronto Metropolitan University, we offer opportunities to share these values through ongoing collaborative projects, interactions and student placements.

- **Creating responsive and positive interactions between and among adults and children promotes opportunities to practice self-regulation and socially responsible attributes.** We encourage leadership behaviour in young children by providing opportunities for social learning through modeling and peer training. Children have the capacity to develop and enhance their sense of responsibility, empathy towards others and environmental stewardship (UNCRC, Article 29 (1, e)).
- **Well-being, engagement, expression and belonging are embedded within all aspects of a high quality Early Learning Program.** These four pillars of the Ontario Ministry of Education document *How Does Learning Happen?* are interdependent and work together to offer a foundation of learning and engagement.

Purpose of an Individual Support Plan



Individual Support Plans (ISPs) are an important component to ensuring collaborative, inclusive and diverse programming is provided for children with identified developmental needs and who are attending the Early Learning Centre. Young children's development is best supported through a flexible, inclusive and adaptable program delivery model that has a well established collaborative approach to ISP planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The ISP learning team refers to the small group of individuals who consult and share information relevant to the child's developmental strengths and needs. This group includes the family, child, classroom staff, the Supervisor and external professionals as needed.

ISPs are developed for children between the ages of 18 months to 5 years of age with mild, moderate or severe disabilities and/or delays, and for children who are gifted or talented. The ISP acts as an evolving, flexible, future-oriented plan that is created and reviewed in collaboration with the family and is not intended to be used as a daily program plan, but rather:

- Meets the individual needs of the child
- Promotes the development of the child's dispositions by building on the child's independence, competence and meaningful participation in daily activities in a variety of environments.

- Addresses the specific priorities of the child through functional goals which guide the program's experiences and routines.
- Summarizes essential information to support program planning, room design and required adaptations.
- Is developed, implemented and evaluated by a collaborative learning team that includes the family, the child (when appropriate), RECEs, the Supervisor and third party professionals as needed.
- Provides an ongoing record to monitor and communicate the child's growth and ensure goal implementation continuity.
- Guides planning for transition.

The ELC is committed to ensuring appropriate support is in place to offer an environment that fosters the child's dispositions, growth and social engagement by ensuring meaningful and purposeful participation in the program. In collaboration with the learning team, this ISP will ensure:

- The goals and objectives are current, relevant and meet the needs of the child
- Collaboration with the Resource Consultant and other professionals to ensure the RECE's programming and environmental design align with the ISP goals.
- The program is flexible, adaptable and offers adequate staff to meet the needs of the program.
- As appropriate, supports, aids, adaptations and/or other modifications to the physical and learning environment are completed in a timely manner. This could include specialized/modified furniture or equipment, rearranging room layout, visual aids or noise reduction.
- As appropriate, goals support the child's social experience and promote the development of positive communication and engagement skills. This could include goals associated with encouraging eye contact, entering and exiting play, requesting items or attention and expressing wants and needs.
- As appropriate, the goals outline instructions on how the child will use or interact with the supports or adapted materials within the learning environment. This could include ways to use modified feeding utensils, mobilization equipment such as a walker or additional play equipment added to the space such as a vibrating mat or SIT cushion.
- Supplemental documents may be included with this form (e.g. additional individualized plan developed by a resource consultant).
- The ELC maintains confidentiality of children's medical history including diagnosis. Sensitive or confidential medical information and detailed reports from medical professionals are not included in the plan unless consent, in writing, has been given by the parent.

Procedures

The Early Learning Centre will ensure that an updated individual support plan (ISP) is in place for each child with identified needs enrolled in the program. The ELC will ensure that the program is structured in a way that accommodates the ISP goals and strategies in such a way that all children and families are active participants in the early learning community. The following procedures are outlined to ensure all children requiring an ISP has access to additional support needs as required:

- If a special need is identified during the course of enrollment or during the child's tenure with the centre, the Supervisor will inform the family about the Individualized Program Plan (ISP) policy.
- With verbal consent and after an initial meeting with the family, the ISP process will be initiated.
- If the family does not consent to the ELC initiating an ISP, the family will sign the ["Consent for the Refusal to the Development of an Individualized Support Plan"](#). This will be housed in the child's record and the family's rights will be respected.
- In preparation for ISP Meetings, the designated RECE and Supervisor and/or Program Director will review available records, program observations and documentations to identify the child's strengths and needs. This information will be shared with the ISP team at the meeting.
- A meeting will be scheduled with the family. An invitation to attend the meeting, with parental written consent, will be provided to any regulated health professional or other person who works with the child in a capacity that would allow the person to help inform the plan (Reg 52(2)).
- The family, in collaboration with the Supervisor and RECE, will complete the initial [ISP form](#).

The ISP will include

(as per CCEYA, 2014 Reg. 52(1)):

- A description of how the ELC will support the child to experience **meaningful and purposeful participation** in the program and ELC community.
- A description of any **support or aids**, adaptations or other modifications to the physical, social, and learning environment that are necessary to achieve the child's opportunity to meaningfully participate in the program.
- Instructions relating to the child's use of the supports or aids or, if necessary, the child's use of or interaction with the adapted or modified environment.
- The plan will be signed by the parent/guardian of the child to indicate their participation in the plan.

- Plans will be reviewed by the Ministry of Education Executive Director / Program Manager at the time of site visit, if they are not in attendance at the initial meeting.
- The plan will be housed in the child's file as per the centre's record keeping policy. A copy of the ISP will be provided to the family and a copy will also be located in the child's classroom for frequent referencing.
- The strategies identified on the ISP will be embedded into the program. Information from the plan may be utilized in documentation posted in the room without identifying information.
- If requested, a copy of the plan may be provided to a service provider with parent/guardian written consent.
- The plan will be reviewed at one (1) month and six (6) months from the date of the ISP Planning meeting.

Prior to the child entering the program

We believe that every family has the right to high quality early learning and care that meets their needs. Prior to entering the program, if a family has identified needs or concerns about their child, upon the family's request a meeting will be scheduled with the Supervisor/Designate, classroom RECE, and family and paraprofessional (when applicable). Families will have the opportunity to discuss the strengths and needs of their child; highlighting the strategies that work well and what their child's preferred activities are.

During the meeting, the family will have an opportunity to learn about the support, resources and strategies the centre can offer to ensure the child has an opportunity to engage in all aspects of the program. A **plan of action** will be developed to outline resources, training and strategies that need to be put in place prior to the child starting at the centre. The meeting will be documented to ensure the plan is clear, listing next steps and a date for a follow-up meeting.

Once the child is enrolled in the program

As part of our Curriculum Framework, it is the responsibility of the RECEs to observe, reflect and document all children's responses and engagement in the program. This process guides inquiry and scaffolds children's developmental growth and interests.

RECEs complete a [Looksee](#) checklist with all children aged 15, 18 and 24 months old. In consultation with the Supervisor, educators may complete the Looksee checklist for children between the ages 3-5 years. This information is then shared with the supervisor prior to scheduling a meeting with the family to discuss strategies, resources and next steps.

In addition to ongoing observations, the RECEs may feel the need to capture additional milestone data using the [City of Toronto](#) communication checklists, the [Ages and Stages Questionnaire](#), or the Early Identification in Toronto [Red Flags Guide](#). The outcome of these tools are discussed with families in a meeting.

When needs of the child are identified, a meeting takes place with the Supervisor, RECE, and family to discuss services, resources and next steps. At this time, the Supervisor may request consent to refer the family to a Resource Consultant through the City of Toronto's "Every Child Belongs" initiative. Simultaneously, the RECE and Supervisor will introduce the process for the [Individual Support Plan](#) (ISP) to the family. Together, the RECE, Supervisor and family discuss goals, strategies and resources pertaining to inclusionary practices, developmental growth of their child and relationship forming. The ISP strength based goals are embedded into the child's regular routine and the strategies are implemented by all staff members in the centre. External community professionals may be accessed in order to support staff skill building, as approved by the family.

ELC Inclusion Pathway

Educators conduct observations/complete domain checklist (toddler only)/implement general program strategies.

Educators discuss their observations and concerns with the internal team, including the Supervisor.

Educators meet with the Supervisor to plan agenda for family meeting (i.e. Resource Consultant request, service coordination).

The Supervisor schedules a meeting with the family and educator to discuss strengths, needs and goals.

At the meeting, the Supervisor introduces the Individual Support Plan (ISP) process and Resource Consultant service to the family. In collaboration the Supervisor, educator, and family create a plan and set a date for a follow-up meeting.

The Educators start the ISP process and share the information with the Supervisor and family for input and strategy suggestions.

Training

Training of RECEs is integral to the success of an inclusive program. It is necessary that the RECEs are educated, knowledgeable and trained professionals in order to meet the

individual needs of the family and child. The training of the RECEs is derived from a family-centred approach from which they make every decision in conjunction with the families' concerns and wishes. Studies and training of all staff can include but is not limited to specialized feeding implementations, medical conditions, physical adaptations, and extended behaviour guidance support.
College of ECE Practice Guidelines - [Inclusion of Children with Disabilities](#)

Review

Through ongoing observations, the RECEs log the child's progress as outlined on the ISP goals. The ISP is a working document which the RECEs review continuously. The long-term objectives and short-term objectives can be modified based on the child's progress, and in consultation with the family. The trans-disciplinary team meets every six - twelve months to discuss progress and update the goals.

Transition

Transition to school

The REECE can assist families with the child's transition to school. Once the family has enrolled their child in a Kindergarten program, they have a variety of options for the REECE to share information with the school pertaining to their child's developmental progress. The Family is encouraged to speak with the manager about these options. Meetings with the school team should take place between February - April to ensure the appropriate supports are in place for the child prior to starting at their new school. The family is responsible for arranging these meetings and signing consent for the centre to speak with the school.

Resources

- Alberta Education. (2006). Individual Program Planning. Retrieved from <https://education.alberta.ca/media/384992/individualized-program-planning-2006.pdf>
- College of Early Childhood Educators. (2019). Practice Guidelines: Inclusion of Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from: https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Practice_Guideline_Inclusion.pdf
- Macaulay Child Development Centre. (2014). Including children with special needs: a guide for family resource programs (2nd ed.) Retrieved from: <https://macaulaycentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/including-children-with-special-needs2.pdf>
- Ministry of Education. (2021). Child Care and Early Years Act. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11>
- Ministry of Education. (2019). Child Care and Early Years Act Licensing Manual. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-centre-licensing-manual>
- Nxumalo, F. & Keys Adair, J. (2019). Social Justice and Equity in early Childhood Education. The Wiley Handbook of Early Childhood Care and Education, First Edition. Edited by Christopher P. Brown, Mary Benson McMullen, and Nancy File. (pp. 661-680).
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014c). How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years: A resource about learning through relationships for those who work with young children and their families. Toronto: Author.
- Shanker, S., (2012). *Calm, alert and learning: Classroom strategies for self-regulation*. Don Mills, ON: Pearson Education Canada.

Definitions

Child with identified needs - The Early Learning Centre will create an ISP for any child with identified needs as per the definition of “Special needs” set out in the CCEYA with states, “a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child” (Child Care and Early Years Act Reg. 137/15, Part 1;1(1)).

Dispositions- Dispositions are combinations of children’s emerging knowledge, skills and attitudes towards learning. Dispositions for learning include courage and curiosity, trust and playfulness, perseverance, confidence and responsibility. Dispositions for learning also include the way children approach learning, for example taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty, challenge and uncertainty, and expressing a point of view.

Meaningful and purposeful participation in the program - all children will have the opportunity to display their strengths, dispositions and interests while engaging in all aspects of the learning environment supported by the staff utilizing the support, aids, adaptations and modifications outlined in the child’s ISP to facilitate belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

Self-regulation - is having the ability to attain, maintain, and change one’s level of energy to match the demands of a task or situation. The ability to regulate one’s emotions is about having the ability to engage in a variety of social interactions and show interest and care for others feelings (Shanker, 2012).

Support Aids - Support Aids may include but is not limited to environmental supports (physical space, programming activities, and transitions), staffing supports (training, attitudes and perceptions) and skill building (supervision, mentoring, modelling).

Acknowledgements

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