**Program Philosophy and Statement**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York strives to deliver stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that enhances a child’s social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development. This enhancement happens throughout a child’s daily routine which encompasses a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, quiet time, lunch, and snack times.

Play is the cornerstone of our curriculum, understood to be essential to the healthy social and cognitive development of children. Our curriculum takes a child initiated and adult supported approach that focuses on play-based learning. This play-based curriculum allows children to take the lead and allows them to focus on their interests through intentional observations, interaction and engaged communication. When this approach takes place alongside staff’s understanding of child development, each child’s learning and development is supported. As a result, children’s competence, capacity and potential are maximized.

Our curriculum encompasses the following Government of Ontario documents as guides: Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT), Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI), Think Feel, Act, and How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH)

HDLH is a professional learning resource that provides a common framework to help programs focus on knowledge from research, theory, and practice on what’s important for children. This policy statement, together with the O. reg. 137/15 are intended to strengthen the quality of programs and ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children’s learning, development, health and well-being.

HDLH is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish. These four foundations are:

* Belonging
* Well-Being
* Engagement
* Expressions

These four foundations serve as a vision for the future potential for all children and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. They are conditions children naturally seek for themselves.

ELECT is a framework for Ontario’s Early Childhood Settings and is recognized as a foundational document in the early year’s sector. The framework sets out six (6) principles to guide practice in childcare settings and Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York embraces and uses these principles to plan, implement, and encourage a positive learning environment for all children.Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York views all children as being competent, curious and rich in potential.

1. **Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-Being of Children**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York promotes the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of all children in its care.

*Health and Safety:* As a licensed Child Care Centre we meet and exceed all health and safety requirements of the Ministry of Education, Toronto Public Health Department and Toronto Children’s Services Division. All staff, students, and volunteers working with the children must have a valid standard first aid certificate, including infant and child CPR. All staff, students, and volunteers are required to obtain a criminal reference check that includes a vulnerable sector screening. The vulnerable Sector screening must be updated every five (5) years. Board of Directors members need to have a police Clearance Letter.

*Nutrition:* Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorkprovides only nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages to the children. All food and drinks provided to the children meet or exceed the recommendations set out in the latest version of Health Canada documents and Canada Food Guide. Our food is catered by ***Food for Tots,*** who designs andsupplies healthy meal choices set out by a registered dietitian. They provide food options to accommodate any food allergy, sensitivity and/ or preference. Our goal is to always maintain a healthy and nutritious meal for all of our children.

*Well Being:*We record correct arrival and departure times of children, encourage proper hygiene, ensuring that all equipment and furnishing are in good repair and provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children at all times throughout the day.

1. **Positive relationships among children, parents, childcare providers and staff**

Through daily written and verbal communication with families we encourage ongoing responsive interactions and consultations regarding the child care program and each child’s developmental needs. We believe that communication between our families, staff, supervisor and community is the key to great success in encouraging and nurturing the child’s development and meeting their essential needs.

1. **Encourage positive self-expression, communication and self-regulation of children**

All staff, students and volunteers encourages the children to interact and communicate in a positive manner, while supporting their ability to self-regulate. We document the many ways in which children communicate and express themselves. We also reflect children’s home language and culture in our programs. Teachers ask the children open ended questions, model positive behaviors and encourage the children to self-regulate. The skills of conflict resolution are important to lifelong learning. As competent individuals, children are active participants in resolving conflicts. We encourage them to come up with ideas and solutions to problems that may arise.

1. **Fostering children’s exploration, play and inquiry**

Weekly program plans are displayed in each classroom. Our program plans offer more details on events and activities in the child’s classroom. We encourage parents to use this tool for involvement by bringing in resources, such as books, pictures, costumes, or music to enhance the program. Our program focuses on play-based learning as the way that children naturally learn best. When children are acting out roles, or experimenting with different materials, they are engaged in learning through play. Play-based learning enables children to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, and engage in critical thinking.

1. **Providing Child-Initiated and Adult-Supported Experiences**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York staff plan and implement learning opportunities based on observation of the children at play. Through positive adult-child interactions, the staff works closely with the children to extend their knowledge of the environment. Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York staff develops a planned program that supports early learning. The staff knows when to stand back and observe and when to enter children’s play to stimulate thinking. Staff actively engages with children as co-learners as they explore their environment Staff make a commitment to building self-awareness, regularly reflecting on practices and engaging in new learning experiences, both individually and with colleagues.

1. **Create Positive Learning Environments and Experiences**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorkis a centre of inclusion. We believe that every child deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and equality. It is our duty to ensure that every child is given the opportunity to flourish physically, socially, mentally, and emotionally. We strive to create positive learning environment and experiences which support each child’s learning and development.

Here are a few examples on how we foster an inclusive environment:

* Recognize each child as having equal rights to participate in program activities and events
* Recognize and respect the unique qualities of each child and family, including ancestry, culture, ethnicity, race, language, socio-economic status, religion, and developmental abilities and needs.
* Create strategies that value the culture and first language of all children.
1. **Incorporating Indoor and Outdoor Play, Active Play, Rest and Quite Time While Giving Consideration to the Child’s Individual Needs**

Learning is extended to the outdoors from the indoor classroom. The outdoor learning environment provides extended opportunities for all elements of learning: gross motor development, nature exploration, sensory exploration and independent and cooperative games. When the weather is inclement and unpredictable, alternate activities for the children are provided in one of the school hallways. Staff will ensure that each child is given a minimum of 2 hours of outdoor play per day/day and 2 hours of rest/nap time based on each the child’s needs and not exceeding more than 2 hours a day (infants are the exception).

1. **Parent engagement and communication**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York provides positive and responsive interactions amongst children, parents, and our staff, which is essential to the success of our program. We foster open communication with parents about their children as well as our programming during drop-off and pick-up times. We also communicate through HiMama messages. Weekly program plans are displayed in each classroom. Our program plans offer more details on events and activities in the child’s classroom. We encourage parents to use this tool for involvement by bringing in resources, such as books, pictures, costumes, or music. Weekly observation of developmental skills is done on HiMama where parents get to see and add their feedback, which supports the individual child’s needs. Both the staff and supervisor will be available to meet with the individual parent/family if there are any concerns, questions, or suggestions.

 Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorkinvolves parents on a variety of events throughout the yearincluding parent workshops, pancake breakfast, and an end of summer pizza party. These events allow parents to meet a get to know each other.

1. **Community partners**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorkoften involves local community partners to help support and enhance the development of children. We also provide positive and helpful resources for our parents, families, and staff. Each classroom has a section for parents to openly and freely take any pamphlets, letters, or information sheets that may be relevant to them.

We also provide learning opportunities to the members of the community through recruitment, training of ECE students from the local colleges as well as high school Co-op students.

J) **Supporting staff in continuous professional learning**

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorkis open to all support services and workshops that are offered in our community to train our staff, or contribute to individual program plans or work in the program as additional support in the classroom. Our staff will work cooperatively in a professional partnership with all services in place for the well-being of the children. Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North Yorksupports our staff in continuous professional learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and to stay current in their profession through regular workshops, online web seminars and/or conferences. Formal professional learning is vital, but we also know that the most professional growth happens day to day, as our staff co-learn with the children and each other. In each room, there is at least one staff working with the children that has completed studies in the field of Early Childhood and is registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). All part time staff, full time staff, students and volunteers who work at the centre must complete and maintain their Standard First Aid Level C-CPR (infant child and adult). RECEs will be responsible to upgrade their portfolio, on-going RECE training and staying current with learning practices. It is the individual staff members’ responsibility to keep up with their membership in the College of ECE.

K) **Documenting and reviewing the impact of NHELC program statement**

 At Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York, we understand that pedagogical documentation is a way for our staff to learn about how children think and learn. Our staff makes daily observations of the children throughout the day and use this information to enhance their future planning.

 The purpose of our documentation to provide:

* An opportunity to make children’s learning and understanding of the world visible-to themselves, to other children, to their parents and other families, to the program staff.
* A way to reflect on development growth over a period of time.
* A process for program staff to co-plan with children about learning.
* A self-reflection opportunity for program staff, as they participate in continuous professional learning.

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York ensures that all staff, students, and volunteers review this Program and Philosophy Statement prior to interacting with the children. In addition, all staff, students and volunteers will review this document annually or any time it is modified.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Please print name) have read the Program and Philosophy Statement for Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York, and agree to comply with all aspects outlined. In addition, I understand my responsibilities and what is expected of me as a staff, students, and/or volunteer while in the classroom.

 Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_