



# Parent Handbook

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## Mission Statement



The Wellesley and District Co-operative Preschool is a community resource providing families with an opportunity to enhance a child's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development through exploration and discovery in a nurturing and safe environment. Wellesley Preschool acknowledges that it is funded in part by the Region of Waterloo.



## Quality Initiatives Program

Our preschool participates in the community standards program within the Region of Waterloo called "Early Years Engage- Continuous Quality Improvement". It is a program designed for licensed childcare centres and is a governed program that both recognizes and supports best practices in child care delivery. We have participated since 2017.

## Our Goals



- ❖ To help children understand the world around them
- ❖ To help children develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and independence
- ❖ To encourage respect, honesty, and trust
- ❖ To foster co-operation, sharing kindness and group skills
- ❖ To improve physical co-ordination and fine motor skills
- ❖ To enable children to express themselves through singing, speaking and art
- ❖ To involve children in philanthropic activities and service to others



## Roles of Parents in the Program

The Wellesley and District Co-operative Preschool is a non-profit, co-operative organization. As such, it is a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Once your membership fee is paid, you become a shareholder in the co-operative corporation with all its responsibilities and obligations. The preschool bylaws mandate that we have 55% of members attend general meetings to have quorum and conduct preschool business. General meetings are held the last week of May and August.

In a co-operative preschool the Board of Directors, staff and parents all play a role in the school's success. The Board of Directors meet monthly (except December and July) and is responsible for setting policies which will enable the co-operative to function effectively on a day-to-day basis. The teacher is responsible for the preparation of an educational program which will meet the needs of the children and for training the parents in the implementation of this program. **The parents are responsible for understanding the co-operative philosophy and assisting in the implementation of the goals of the program and of the operational policies of the co-operative.**

The most important aspect of a co-operatively run preschool is the input a parent has on their child's introduction to the schooling process. Parental participation is essential for the quality experiences that a co-operative preschool provides to children and parents. At no other time in your child's education is a parent able to play such an active role. Without your involvement, the preschool would be just another school.



When you are helping at the Preschool on a volunteer day, you are assisting the teacher. Your co-operation and involvement with the children is important. Please check the preschool calendar for your volunteer days. A parent with a cold or infection should make alternative plans for their volunteer day.

Parents with other children at home must make other childcare arrangements for their non-registered children on their volunteer days.

Another integral part parents play in a co-operative preschool is the responsibility of choosing to be on the board of directors. The Board meets once per month and makes decisions regarding the everyday running of the preschool. The Board works with the Supervisor/Teacher to provide a high quality program for your children.

## **Staff**



The Registered Early Childhood Educator graduates who are hired by the Wellesley and District Co-operative Preschool are highly qualified professionals. They must undergo a vulnerable sector criminal reference check before being hired to teach at the preschool. RECE's must also be a member of the College of Early Childhood Educators as well as having an up-to-date certification of the First Aid and CPR qualifications as required by the Child Care and Early Years Act and participate in regular professional educational workshops.

## **How Does Learning Happen?**

Wellesley Cooperative Preschool feels that learning can be made more visible to families by sharing photos and documentation through daily pic collages, regular emails and on the Google Classroom. This "visible" learning gives children and their families a sense of belonging, highlights what the children are engaged in, addresses their well-being, and helps to establish a way for everyone to be able to share ideas and communicate with each other.



## Licensing

The Preschool is licensed by the Province of Ontario and adheres to all regulations and standards set down by the Child Care and Early Years Act. The license is reviewed annually and regular inspections are made by a member of the Ministry of Education (MEDU)

## Enrolment and Withdrawal



All forms for your child and those who wish to be a volunteer parent must be completed and returned to the Membership Chairperson two weeks prior to your child's first day of preschool. All information must be complete, including immunization records and emergency contact person to ensure the safety and security of your child. Medical certificates must be completed by the child's parent/guardian each year for all children, including those that are returning for a second or subsequent year. All monies (Coop Fee(non-base fee), and first month's tuition) must be paid before your child can be placed into the program. If you decide to not send your child to the Preschool, you will be refunded all of your first month's tuition if you inform the preschool one month before your child's start date. You will receive a 50% refund if the preschool is informed two weeks before your child's start date. After this, no refund of the first month's tuition will be given.

A "Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees/Providers/Volunteers in a Child Care Setting" must be completed for each volunteer parent. All volunteer parents must have an up-to-date immunization for Tetanus/Diphtheria within the last ten years. An up-to-date TB skin test within one month of the start of Preschool is not needed but is recommended. **No one will be allowed to do a volunteer day until these requirements are met.** An exemption form may be obtained from the Membership Chairperson for those who have not been immunized due to religious beliefs or a statement of conscience.

A vulnerable sector criminal reference check (VSC) is also a necessary part of our registration procedure for all volunteer parents. **This check must not be requested earlier than 6 months prior to the start day of your child.** Once your VSC has been completed it is valid for 5 years provided you remain a Member or Associate Member of the preschool and a Declaration of Offence is signed each year. Please note that all persons who will be participating in volunteer days for your child must complete all forms including the immunization record, medical certificate and VSC. **Again, no one will be allowed to do a volunteer day until all these requirements are met.**

Should you wish to withdraw your child from the preschool program, one month's notice is required to be sent to the Membership Chairperson.



While every effort is made to accommodate each child, there may be occasions where a child's particular needs cannot be met by our program. In that event, the Board may ask that the child be withdrawn. You will be given withdrawal notice of one month in this rare case.

All members of the preschool are expected to be a member in good standing, ie. having a general cooperative spirit, adhering to the program statement and using respectful communication in all dealings regarding the preschool. If at any point during the school year, a member is deemed NOT in good standing, conversations will take place to resolve any issues. In a worst-case scenario, membership may be revoked without notice and any remaining fees will be reimbursed.



## Registration and Orientation Procedures

### Applying to the Preschool

In accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014), the following wait list policy was developed to provide a clear overview of how Wellesley Preschool determines the order in which children on the wait list are offered admission into the program and how waitlist information is managed. Parents/Caregivers are provided with their child's wait list status when requested, and can view the preschool's Wait List Policy below.

\*Parents/Caregivers must apply to the wait list by submitting an online application through **OneList Waterloo Region**. ([www.regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com](http://www.regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com))

\*Through the online application, some details regarding the program are available for parents. Once the application has been completed on OneList, an application date is automatically generated in the online system which will help to determine your child's status on the wait list at the preschool. In addition, once the application is completed, an email notification is generated to the preschool waitlist administrator, advising them a new application has been completed. The administrator will log in to view the application and will send out a welcome email to the parent confirming that the application was received, and an idea of the potential wait list time, within 1 week of receipt of the application.

\*Parents can login to their online application at any time to view their current applications, update any information, or withdraw their application. There is no fee charged to parents to apply to the wait list and parents/caregivers can apply to up to 10 childcare programs online.

### Waitlist Management

The preschool waitlist administrator reviews wait list information online through the OneList Administration site on an ongoing basis. Any conversations with parents/caregivers on the wait list are noted in the comments section of the wait list application within the online administration site for reference purposes.

If a parent/caregiver enquires about the status of their application on the wait list, administrators will provide information about the program and spaces that are available, or may be coming available, but personal information about wait list applications is never disclosed to maintain privacy and confidentiality for all families.

As childcare spaces become available at the preschool, administrators follow up with parents to offer childcare spaces in priority order.

- Children already enrolled or siblings of children already enrolled have first priority
- Once a parent has been contacted regarding an available space, parents are asked to provide confirmation that they want to register within one week
- If a response is not received from a parent within the specified time frame, the administrator may remove the application on the OneList Administration site.

- Families that respond after the specified time has expired, and confirm that they want to register, would have their application moved back to "active" on the OneList Administration site, with their original application date reinstated, and be placed in priority for the next available space, if the original space offered has been filled.
- In the event that a parent/caregiver confirms that care is no longer required or just requests to be removed from the wait list, administrators can remove the application, noting the conversation with the parent in the comments section.

Once enrolment forms are received, registration and first month tuition fees paid and a start date is in place for the child, the child is "placed" in the program and removed from the "Active" wait list online within the OneList Administration site.

Administrators will follow up with applications that are older than one year to inquire if care is still required. If no response is received, a second follow up advises the parent that their application to the wait list has been removed.

Registration will first be held within the preschool membership for currently enrolled preschool children who are returning or their siblings. A second registration will then be held through OneList Waterloo Region. [www.regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com](http://www.regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com) Registration packages must be filled out and the registration and tuition fees paid - only then will a spot be held for your child. Registration can take place at any time during the year provided a vacancy is still available until March 1. Each year, there is a limited number of spots for fully participating and partially participating families. Once these spots are filled, families will have to sign up for the non-participating level.

A family who registers their child/ren with a **start date** after January 1 of the ongoing preschool year, will have to sign up as a NON-participating family, unless classroom needs are not being met by current admission numbers. There would simply not be enough time for the new members to perform the responsibilities of a partial participating or full participating family in the few remaining months left in the school year.

Children who are 2-2½ years of age (as of January 1) will not be accepted into the preschool program after a start date of January 1. No new students will be accepted after March 1 for that school year.

We believe this represents best practice and meets the needs of children of varying ages during the transition to preschool. Staff will use their discretion to determine the needs of the class and the usefulness of employing a second, short term teacher. There may be additional circumstances when a teacher helper may also be utilized in this type of short-term manner to aid in transition, depending on class size and ages and needs of the children. This decision would be made in consultation with the teacher and with approval from the Board of Directors.

The preschool will admit into the program a child who has been designated a "child with disabilities" according to the definition applied by the Ministry of Education if circumstances allow. Admission will be made once all assessments and approvals deemed necessary are completed.

Many children are able to enter preschool with little or no complications. However, this transition can be difficult for some children. Our teacher will do everything possible to help both the child and the parent/guardian overcome the anxiety of separation. Experience has shown us that children will quickly calm down and begin to explore their environment once the parent has left. Families are encouraged to visit the preschool prior to the child's first day to assist the child in becoming familiar with the environment. In September, a staggered entry week occurs, which requires an adult to remain with each preschool child for their first day of preschool.



## **Associate Memberships**

An associate membership is available for families who have a one-year gap in between children attending preschool. Associate membership allows families to maintain communication with the Preschool during the year before their next child registers. It also enables a member who was a qualified duty parent in the preceding year to continue to do duty days. An associate member is entitled to the following privileges:

- ✓ Maintain communication with the preschool
- ✓ Attend general meetings (no voting privileges)
- ✓ Register their child/ren prior to general public registration at the same time as families who are currently enrolled.
- ✓ Act as a teacher helper adult provided that the associate member was a general member in the previous year and a vulnerable sector criminal reference check is on file with the preschool
- ✓ Serve on the Board of Directors or other special committees with voting privileges

If an associate member has a vulnerable sector criminal reference check on file with the preschool and has been an associate member for a maximum of one year in between being a member of the preschool, the VSC will still be valid when the associate member becomes a general member again providing it has not been more than five years since the last VSC and an offence declaration form has been signed.

Associate membership spaces are available upon the payment of a non-refundable fee which will be determined annually by the Board of Directors. The deadline to become an associate member is October 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year in which you will hold the membership.



## **Hours, Holidays and Closures**

The preschool is open Tuesday - Friday; 8:30 - 12:00; September to mid-June and will follow the Waterloo Region School Board public school holidays (not including P.D. days). The following holidays are observed:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Labour Day (September)                | Thanksgiving (October)                       |
| Christmas Break (December to January) | Family Day (February)                        |
| Spring Break (March)                  | Good Friday / Easter Monday (March or April) |
| Victoria Day (May)                    |  |



If Waterloo Region schools are closed due to inclement weather, then the preschool will also be closed. If Waterloo Region Buses are cancelled, the preschool will be open, unless teachers are unable to make it to the preschool. Families will be notified as soon as possible with this information. In some instances, unforeseen circumstances, such as a funeral at the church, may also close the preschool. Other emergency closures may also be made at the discretion of the President. In such cases, parents will be notified by email. **There will be no reduction of fees for closures.** In an extreme emergency, ratios may be affected. An attempt to find a replacement teacher, parent, etc. would be made, but depending on circumstances, this may not always be possible. In the event of unusual circumstances (ie. COVID) the preschool board may decide to override the WRDSB schedule regarding in-person/virtual learning. Communication with preschool families will happen as needed if schedule changes are being discussed.



### **Fee Payment Policy and Payment Options**

A place in our program will be reserved for your child upon receipt of a completed registration package and one month's tuition and Coop fee (non base). First month's tuition will be refunded in whole if you change your mind about attending one month prior. 50% will be refunded two weeks before and none refunded after that.

Monthly fees, due the first of each month, will be determined by your level of participation in the preschool and how many days per week your child attends. The remaining tuition fees are payable to Wellesley and District Co-operative Preschool Inc. two weeks before the August general meeting. Payment can be made by ten post-dated monthly cheques or by e-transfer. Tax receipts will be issued by the treasurer. Non-payment of fees by the student's start date could result in the lapse of the student's enrolment.



Please note that in the event of a payment being returned NSF, the full amount of the NSF cheque plus \$15 handling charges (non-base) will apply for the first NSF. The second NSF will be charged \$30 (non-base). After the second NSF, cash will be required. Reimbursement must be made within 7 days. Further action may be taken as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors if this policy is not adhered to. The preschool will accept Email Money Transfers (EMT) for fees including tuition, fundraising and cooperative fees. In the event of prepayment for cooperative fees (instead of postdated cheques) the fees will be refunded, if applicable, at the end of the school year. As well, if an EMT is forgotten, a first reminder will be given and payment is due within 48 hours. If there is a second occurrence, a \$15 penalty fee (non-base) will be charged and payment is due within 24 hours. After a third occurrence, a \$30 penalty fee(non-base) will be charged, payment will be due immediately and no more EMT's will be allowed.

**\*\*\*For those families that meet their requirements, we have a subsidy agreement with the Region of Waterloo Child Care Division. Please contact our Membership Chairperson or Treasurer for more information. Your confidentiality is assured. \*\*\*\***

The Wellesley Co-op Preschool also has a compassionate program which states that the Board of Directors may waive school fees and tuition for individuals that are experiencing financial hardship and/or unique circumstances and/or are without means to enroll or continue to keep their child in the preschool program. The Board of Directors will use discretion in determining need on a case-by-case basis but must agree unanimously to waive fees and tuition. (Wholly or partially)

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)

Wellesley Coop Preschool has been approved in CWELCC. This means that Base Fees (Monthly Tuition) for children under the age of 6 years were reduced by 52.75% as of January 2023. CWELCC is provided by the Federal government and is being delivered through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Region of Waterloo. Non-Base Fees (Co-op Service Fee, Non-Sufficient Fund Fee, Late Fee, Finance Charges for NSF and late EMT's, fieldtrip costs, associate member fee) are not eligible for the CWELCC reduction.

In a co-operative preschool, parents play many important roles. They join as a team to provide an enriching environment for their children to learn and grow. Some parents/guardians volunteer in the classroom and help on the Board. However, there may be parents who choose not to or are unable to participate in the classroom or on the Board. The following chart outlines the duties associated with the various levels of participation:

	Participating	Non-Participating
General Meetings	*2x\$50 coop fee	*2x\$50 coop fee
Volunteer Task (Board Position)	*	
Volunteer Days	optional	optional
Monthly Tuition with 52.75% reduction	1 or 2 days/week \$76.59	1 or 2 days/week \$101.59
	3 or 4 days / week \$153.18	3 or 4 days/week \$203.18

As a member of a cooperative preschool, you are required to attend two meetings per year. Meetings are typically held in May and August. A missed meeting fee of \$50 per meeting will apply for any meeting not attended. Two posted dated cheques dated June 1 (current year), and September 1 (current year) will be collected with your registration package or \$100.00 EMT. The corresponding cheque will be returned to you following each meeting you attend or the appropriate funds by EMT at the end of the year. If you miss a meeting, without an appropriate reason (at the discretion of the board), your cheque will be deposited. This is known as the "Coop Service Fee".

## Absences



Parents should let the preschool know when the child will be absent due to illness or vacations. Fees will not be reduced or deducted for absenteeism due to illness or vacations.

## Fundraising

Fundraisers will be done from time to time at the discretion of the board to generate funds for the preschool. These funds will be used to support the program with items and services for the children that are not otherwise covered by government funding.



## Health and Safety

Ontario's Child and Family Services Act as well as the Early Childhood Educator Code of Ethics clearly states that professionals who work with children have a legal obligation to report promptly to a children's aid society that a child may need protection. Therefore, staff are trained in the identification and reporting of suspected abuse and must follow the center's policy when reporting this suspected abuse.

Health care is of great importance. Although some illness is inevitable in groups, the preschool tries to minimize this by practicing good hygiene, hand washing upon entrance to the preschool, disinfecting toys regularly and careful cleaning of the preschool. If a child's illness prevents them from participating or being comfortable in normal program activities (inside or out), the child will be considered too ill to attend preschool. If your child becomes ill during class time, you will be contacted to pick up your child. **If you notice symptoms such as diarrhea, fever or vomiting before your child's preschool class, please keep them at home. Your child may return to preschool once they have been free from these symptoms for 48 hours.**

To maintain a good standard of health, a daily health check is completed upon each child. The preschool follows the Public Health as well as the Child Care and Early Years Act guidelines on illness and exclusion policies. Children showing signs of a communicable disease such as untreated pink eye, undiagnosed rash/skin disease must be kept at home. Should a child become ill during the day his/her parents/guardians will be contacted and the child will be sent home. The preschool is not equipped to attend to the needs of a sick child.

Any changes to your child's medical history must be reported to the teacher. Any communicable disease in the family should also be reported.



The Ministry of Education requires that an immunization information sheet be completed for each child registered in the preschool. If a child has not been immunized due to religious beliefs or statement of conscience, then the parent must sign an exemption form available from the Membership Chairperson. Please note that if a disease outbreak occurs at the preschool due to an infection covered by immunization, your child may be excluded until the outbreak is over with no refund or reduction of fees.

Accidents and young children seem to go together. Children often fall and always seem to have bumps and scrapes. If your child gets hurt at preschool, a written report will be completed and shown to you for you to sign in acknowledgment and this will then be placed in your child's file. A copy of this report will be given to the family to keep. If there is a serious accident that results in the need for medical attention, the preschool will contact you and arrangements will be made for you to pick up your child or meet your child at an emergency facility. If you cannot be reached, your emergency contact will then be called. **Upon registration an emergency contact, someone other than the parents, must be given on the registration form. In an emergency, staff will always attempt to contact the parents first.** If a child must be taken to the hospital in an emergency, parents are responsible for any related charges.

As per the Child Care and Early Years Act, every staff shall be certified in First Aid and CPR (infant and child).



Children are required to wash their hands with soap or sanitizer as they first enter the preschool room as well as after they have gone to the toilet and before snack. Adults escorting children to the washroom will wash their own hands with soap after the children have washed theirs.

The preschool believes in encouraging the children to be as independent as possible. Therefore, only in extenuating circumstances will physical support be given to children who need help in the washroom. This could include if a child wets or soils their clothing or is physically ill. If physical assistance is given, the teacher will notify the child's parent. Parents are asked to dress their child/ren in clothing that they themselves can easily remove (outer and inner wear).



If the children are outside playing and one needs to use the washroom, the teacher needs to be notified. The teacher assistant will escort the child into the preschool, along with enough other children to maintain ratio. A volunteer should never be alone with a child.



## Serious Occurrences

The safety and well-being of the children at Wellesley Preschool is the highest priority. The Wellesley Preschool works diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. Despite all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place. To support increased transparency and access to information, a "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" will be posted in the centre beside the filing cabinet for 10 days. A serious occurrence could include a serious injury to a child, fire or other disaster on site or a complaint about service standard. The Form will give parents information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the preschool will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, where possible. Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that the preschool is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the childcare program.

## Guiding Children's Behaviour - Program Statement Implementation Policy



The Child Care and Early Years Act requires childcare centres to have a written Program Statement which is at the end of this Parent Handbook. Children are to be disciplined in a positive manner at a level appropriate to their actions and ages to promote self-discipline, health and safety, respect for the rights of others and to maintain equipment. A parent who is offering discipline to their own child should give the same treatment as they would any other child. **Every teacher will be observed once a year as to their interactions and whether they comply with the Preschool's program statement and approaches regarding the "How Does Learning Happen" document and the preschool's prohibited practices.** If at any time a teacher or parent volunteer does not follow the Program Statement, the person will receive a verbal reminder. A written reminder will be given if an occurrence happens a second time. If there is a third occurrence, that person will no longer be able to participate as a volunteer.

When volunteering it is important to be observant and to show an interest in the children and what they are doing without imposing your ideas on them. Never leave the children without supervision and inform the teacher if you must leave the room. Give children a chance to work out their own difficulties or make their own choices. Should it be necessary to offer suggestions, withdraw as soon as things are running smoothly. Accept each child for who they are and do not try to make them what you feel they should be. Do not make comparisons between children. Help them to understand the feelings of others. Refrain from discussing the children in their presence. Child guidance methods used can be found on page 25 of the Program Statement under Goal #3 as well as the following methods:

**Logical and Natural Consequences:** Striving to make children aware of the results of their actions.

**Limit Setting:** Developing boundaries for the children as a group

**Quiet Time:** A short time away from the activity, for the teacher and child to think and then work out the problem together.

**Anticipating Trouble:** Planning and preparing the environment.

**Ignoring:** Some inappropriate behaviour can be ignored and more emphasis given to appropriate behaviour

**Positive Reinforcement:** Encouraging children

**Removal:** A child may be removed from the situation if circumstances warrant it.



The following forms of discipline **will not** be used.

1. Corporal punishment of the child.
2. Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Locking the exits of the childcare center or home childcare premises for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.
4. Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
5. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding.
6. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

**If any of the above are observed the person exploiting them will be asked to leave immediately.**

All discipline must suit the behaviour that is to be corrected. All disciplinary practices should be followed by a discussion with the parent of the child involved and an explanation to the child of the reason for the imposition of a disciplinary measure.

## **Playground Safety**



Outdoor play is an important part of our program and we spend some time outdoors each day, weather permitting. Outdoor play will be cancelled when the teacher feels that the weather is unsuitable to be outside. (eg. rainy or if it is colder than -18 degrees Celsius). Otherwise, if you do not wish your child to participate in outdoor play, they should be picked up prior to outside play at 11:00 a.m. Occasionally, we will walk to a park for a change of outdoor play. A note will be posted on the door at the beginning of class so you will know where to pick up your child.

Supervising the children on the playground consists of ensuring a safe outdoor play environment and promoting creative and constructive play for children. Active supervision involves keeping an eye on all children and moving through the play area regularly, while positioning yourself strategically throughout the playground. Staff ratios cannot be reduced on the playground and must be in accordance with the ratios as set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act.



### Procedure for Moving Children from the Preschool to the Playground

After the children are dressed for outdoors, they will line up at the door. The teacher will take a head count and verify that number with the attendance record. The teacher will then check to see that no cars are moving in the parking lot and then lead the children to the corner of the preschool. A parent volunteer would be in the middle of the line of children and a teacher will be at the end of the line. When everyone is at the corner of the preschool, the group will continue to the playground. If the attendance numbers are low enough that only one teacher is required, the teacher will be at the head of the line. The teacher will count the children as they enter the playground and verify the number with the attendance record.

Who May be in the Playground - No children other than those currently enrolled in the preschool will be allowed in the playground.

Any new equipment or renovations, repairs or replacements will be installed to meet the CSA Standard. Documentation must be kept on file to verify that all changes meet the Standard and is verified in writing by a certified Playground Inspector.

Daily Playground Check - A playground safety log must be maintained in which any playground injuries, the daily visual inspection, the monthly maintenance inspections, seasonal maintenance inspection and annual maintenance inspection are reported. **A daily visual inspection is done by the designated teacher helper in the morning and identifies any defects or emerging problems. The playground must be inspected for any hazardous litter or debris, damage to equipment caused by vandalism, and checking for and removing any strings or ropes.**



Monthly maintenance inspections are done to identify any hazards or defects which require immediate attention or a plan of action to resolve. This inspection includes checking for any damage or wear. A seasonal maintenance inspection is done to assess the playground site and equipment in preparation for summer or winter use. This should be completed prior to the season change in approximately November and April. A comprehensive annual inspection and written report must be completed by the playground safety committee. This inspection must be conducted in May and the report submitted to the Board of Directors. The results of this inspection and a plan of action shall be entered in a permanent record for examination by the Ministry.



### Safe Arrival, Departures and Release of Children from the Program - Late Fee

Our morning preschool program operates between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. If you arrive at the preschool prior to 9:00 a.m. you are requested to remain upstairs until 8:55 a.m. at which time you may proceed downstairs. Children must be brought directly to the classroom with their outdoor clothing removed and shoes put on by the parent. Under NO circumstance should a child be sent into the centre alone and expected to find the classroom. Parents must ensure that the teachers are aware of your child's arrival. The preschool's responsibility begins when the child is signed in.



Every child shall wash their hands before entering the preschool room either at the sink in the washroom or with sanitizer at the downstairs coat rack.



If anyone other than the usual person is picking up your child, please give written notice if possible or call the preschool. Your child will only be released to persons on your authorized pick up list and with proper photo identification. In the event of custodial disputes, the preschool must have legal documentation regarding child custody arrangements. An authorized person should be 18 years or older. **Please make sure your child is picked up promptly by 12:00 p.m.** as it is very unsettling for a child to be left at the preschool after other children have gone home - it also interferes with the teacher's efforts to close the school. Late fees are not eligible under the CWELCC program and are a non-base fee. If late, you will be asked, by the teacher, to sign a late pick up form. **The charge will be \$1.00 per minute past the dismissal time, according to the preschool phone's clock. The payment of this fee is required before the child may return to preschool;** if there are any disagreements, please speak with the president, as the teachers are simply doing their job. If you are ever late for pick up due to an emergency, please call the preschool to let them know. Wellesley Preschool will not release any children from care without supervision. As well, where a child does not arrive to the preschool as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedure set out below.

#### **Accepting a Child into Care:**

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, staff in the room must:

\*Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardian or usual authorized individual will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is named on the child's pick-up list on file. Where the individual is not listed, staff must ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (eg. Note, text or email)

\*Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.

\*Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

#### **Where a Child has not arrived in Care as Expected:**

1. Where a child does not arrive at the Preschool and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (eg. A voice message, text message or email) staff in the room must:

\* Commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 9:30 a.m. Staff shall send a text message to a parent/guardian and if no response is received by 9:45 a.m. another text message or phone call will be sent to an alternate contact.

\*If by 10:00 a.m. no contact has been made confirming the child's absence, the emergency contact will be called with instructions to call the preschool back concerning the whereabouts of the child.

2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

3. If staff are unable to contact any of the above-mentioned contacts and are unable to confirm the child's absence from the preschool, police will be contacted.



### **Releasing a Child from Care:**

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or usual individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the preschool may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child

\*Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.

\*Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

### **Where a Child has not been Picked Up as Expected (before centre closes)**

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up within 30 minutes of expected time, staff will send a text message to the parent/guardian and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.

\*Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorised individual who was to pick up the child, the staff shall wait until the program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed".

### **Where a Child has not been Picked Up and the Center is Closed**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 12:05, staff shall ensure that the child is given an activity to do, while awaiting their pick-up.

2. Staff shall proceed with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first, then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.

3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact the emergency contact person on file for the child.

4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file by 12:30, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) in Kitchener at 519-576-0540. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.



## Changes in your Child's Life

It is important to let the preschool teacher know of any changes in your child's life that could affect his or her situation/behaviour at preschool. Please inform the teacher about any significant or permanent changes such as immunizations, allergies, addresses, phone numbers, the death of a family member or pet, etc.



## Children's Belongings

Preschool is supposed to be fun and sometimes fun means getting dirty, so please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothes so they don't have to worry about ruining an outfit. Please make sure your child always has a change of indoor clothing in their bag, in case of accidents. All removable items should be clearly labelled with the child's name. Any items without labels will be placed in the "lost and found" and after a period, any unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

Children are welcome to bring toys from home if needed for comfort. However, the preschool asks that very special home toys are kept home to prevent them from getting broken or lost. The teacher and/or preschool will not be responsible for ensuring that toys are not lost or damaged if you choose to send toys to preschool with your child.

Children will be given a preschool bag in which their personal belongings are to be brought to preschool each day. (Extra clothes, snack items, shoes) These bags are to be hung up on the coat rack downstairs where their name and picture are posted.

## Snacks



Snacks which follow Canada's Food Guide recommendations for healthy eating, will be provided by the preschool, but parents are responsible for sending a water bottle, a clean spoon and container with a lid for their own child daily. Reusable water bottles (filled with water from home) will be available throughout the session. Tables will be cleaned with a mild disinfectant prior to and after serving snacks. Fruits and vegetables are to be washed and prepared in the preschool kitchen and brought out to the snack area to be served. Hands must be thoroughly washed before preparing and serving snack. If a child has special dietary needs, or such severe allergies which cannot be accommodated by the preschool, then parents may request, in written form, that they will provide their child's snacks. (Either all or in part). All containers, lids, etc. must be labelled with the child's name. Families will be made aware of any allergies or food restrictions that children may have. **Please note that the preschool is a peanut aware center and food items with peanuts or any nut products are not allowed.** The teacher and helpers will take care by reading labels before any snack is served. For children who will be bringing their snacks from home, extra non-perishable snacks shall be kept on hand at the preschool in case the child forgets to bring a snack. If a snack from home contains allergens, it will be returned home and a safe snack kept at the preschool will be given to the child after obtaining permission from the parents/guardians.

## Administration of Medications and Individual Plans (allergies, diabetes, etc)

Parents must make their own arrangements for medical treatment (other than emergency first aid - eg. EpiPen). No drugs will be dispensed. When emergency treatment is required, the teacher will record it in the child's file. If there is a child with medical needs (ie. asthma, seizures, allergy, diabetes, etc.) then an individualized plan will be made. This plan will then be signed and posted in the classroom.

When a child is enrolled at the Wellesley Preschool, the parent/guardian will provide a written explanation of allergies. All allergies will be reported in the newsletter and posted at all designated areas. (Preschool room, kitchen, binder, playground). Parents are to advise the preschool teacher if their child develops an allergy and requires medication; if there is a change to the child's individual plan or treatment or if their child has outgrown an allergy and no longer requires medication.

### Sun Protection



The preschool does not supply sunscreen for your child. The preschool recommends a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 with protection against UVA and UVB rays. Parents should apply the sunscreen at home prior to bringing your child to preschool as sunscreen does last several hours. Parents are also encouraged to supply a hat each day.

### Personal Electronic Device and Photography Policy

Personal phone calls, as well as the use of Personal Electronic Devices (cell phones, iPods, iPhones, Smartphones, Digital Cameras, etc.) during class session time, can interfere with employee and volunteer performance and the safety of the children.

Employees and volunteers must restrict personal phone calls and may NOT use their personal electronic devices during class session time except in emergency situations. Employees and volunteers are asked to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Wellesley Preschool will not be liable for the loss of personal electronic devices brought into the school. Personal Electronic Devices must be silenced five minutes before the class begins and may not be used until the end of the class session time. Any violations of this policy by an employee or volunteer may lead to a warning from the board of directors and further disciplinary action.

**\*\*\*NOTE: Parents who are not volunteering may use their personal electronic devices as the occasion arises. However, only pictures of their own child/ren at special events, may be taken with these devices, according to the preschool's privacy and photography policies. As well, any photos taken by parents or provided by the preschool must not, under any circumstances, be posted on social media and/or the internet in any way. \*\*\*\*\***

## Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuation/Emergency Management



As outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act, we are required to conduct a monthly fire drill to ensure the safety of all children. Whoever discovers the fire pulls the alarm. The children are to be gathered into one group, do a headcount and exit the building as quickly as possible. The teacher will take the attendance book and emergency backpack. Once outside, the teacher will do a headcount. A teacher is to call 911. The children will be taken to the designated emergency shelter as stated on the posted Fire Drill Procedure downstairs. The preschool has an emergency management policy and procedure and parents will be notified by phone if any emergency occurs.

## Field Trips and Off Site Activities



Parents will be notified of any field trips and off-site activities through the monthly newsletters/calendars and postings. Parents are responsible for making arrangements for getting their child to and from the field trip location.

At times, off site activities such as walks are not always planned but occur to accommodate the interests and needs of the children.

Throughout the year we plan at least two special family events - a Christmas party and a Graduation party. There is also a special person day during which each child brings any special adult they desire to preschool for a morning.

## Parental Issues and Concerns / Confidentiality



The welfare of our children and community are important to us as a preschool and therefore, items of concern need to be dealt with in a confidential manner. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to take an active role in the preschool and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with the program. As supported by the preschool's program statement we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers and staff and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. If you have any issues or concerns regarding the preschool, feel free to contact the teacher or any member of the Board of Directors confidentially.

## Parental Issues and Concerns Procedure

1. A parent may contact the teacher or any member of the Board of Directors in person or by email. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the preschool and will be addressed. If the issue or concern is not resolved, it will then be taken to the next board meeting with written documentation provided by the parent.
2. Any staff member, if contacted about an issue/concern, should note the issue/concern in the daily logbook as well as communicating the issue/concern to the supervisor or a board member.
3. The teacher/Board of Directors/parents are only to discuss problems with the appropriate individuals and in the forum of a board meeting. Parents should not discuss the nature of the problem with others except for the Board Members to clarify the issue or to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate people.
4. After the Board has met and discussed the problem brought forth the parent will be given a response as to how the issue or concern will be resolved within 2 days of the meeting by the original board member or teacher contacted about the problem. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (eg. Local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, College of Social Workers, etc.) where appropriate.



### Volunteers and Students

The Supervisor/Teacher will act as a mentor for volunteers and placement students and is responsible for orientation and providing ongoing feedback. Orientation, including a tour of the facility, will be delivered to all teacher helpers, volunteers and students using the Orientation Checklist at the Fall

General Meeting and on an individual basis thereafter.

Teachers, college students and adult volunteers having direct access to children are required to show proof of a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check. Those in High School Co-op placements do not require a VSC.

All teachers, volunteers and students will review the Parent's Handbook, the Program Statement, the Program Statement Implementation Policy, the Serious Occurrence Policy, the Anaphylaxis Policy, the Playground Safety Policy, the Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check Policy, the Recording and Reporting Child Abuse Policy, the Snack Policy, the Volunteers and Student Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and the Photography Policy. All policy reviews will be followed by an annual written sign off form of understanding by each teacher, volunteer and student.

A Program Statement Implementation Observation will be completed for every teacher and student. This will be done annually by the supervisor/teacher.

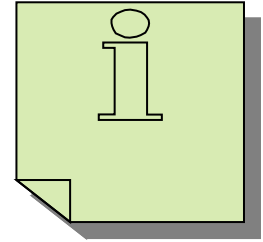


All teachers, students and volunteers will be encouraged to actively participate to the level of their comfort but will always be under the supervision of the teacher/supervisor. Volunteers and students may not be counted in the staffing ratios.

Every child in attendance at the preschool shall be always under the supervision of an adult. No child will be supervised by a person less than 18 years of age. Direct unsupervised access to children is only permitted for staff of the Wellesley Co-op Preschool. Volunteers and students will not be left alone with a child. It is the volunteer and students' responsibility to report to the supervisor/teacher any injuries or concerns to themselves or children they are working with as soon as possible.

## Parent Communication

Wellesley and District Co-operative Preschool will strive to build trusting relationships with parents/guardians involved in our welcoming preschool. The preschool will encourage parent participation while respecting their diverse beliefs, values and child rearing practices.



The preschool knows that it is important to have regular information regarding your child's experiences. This is not always possible in the rush of drop-offs and pickups. However, there are many opportunities at the preschool to ensure communication and the sharing of information between parents/guardians and staff.

1. **General Meetings** - It is mandatory that all members attend the August meeting (vulnerable sector criminal reference checks handed in, payments submitted, teacher information handed out, orientation given) and spring meeting (election of Board of Directors and committee positions assigned).
2. **Family Events** - Families are encouraged to participate in special events offered throughout the year. Parents are invited to visit the preschool and participate in the program whenever possible.
3. **Program Evaluation** - Parents are requested to complete an evaluation at least annually. Feedback, comments and suggestions are welcomed at any time. Members may also be asked for input on other matters as they arise. A suggestion box is located on the bookshelf at the entrance to the preschool room.
4. **Newsletters/Calendars** - Calendars and newsletters are distributed monthly. Your contributions and suggestions are welcomed.
5. **Open Communication/Documentation** - The preschool believes that your child's education experience must be shared between parents and staff. A variety of opportunities will be provided to ensure effective communication between you and our teacher(s).
6. **Information and Reference Materials** - Parents will receive several policies and other materials for reference upon registration and periodically thereafter. Guest speakers, CPR courses, etc. may also be offered. The preschool also has a selection of books and videos available in the parent library.
7. **Daily Pic Collages** - These are sent home daily so you can see what the children have been doing during the day (daily learning, songs, stories, etc.) As well, on the daily attendance sheet, there is a spot for more specialized details beside your child's name.
8. **Portfolios** - A portfolio is kept for each child throughout the year with pictures and anecdotes outlining their learning. This portfolio will be given to each child at the graduation ceremony.

**We look forward to being involved in your child's educational growth!**

**\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE KEEP THIS HANDBOOK FOR FUTURE REFERENCE\***



# WELLESLEY AND DISTRICT COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM STATEMENT

Welcome to the Wellesley Coop Preschool! Our program statement describes how our program supports and fosters early learning. It will outline the preschool's view of the child, its philosophy and pedagogy as well as its goals and approaches used to ensure healthy child development.

It will also outline how we support the educators (the Registered Early Childhood Educators) who work with the children - and the parents who participate as teacher helpers and who are considered staff/ teachers.

The Preschool's program statement is reviewed annually to ensure it is aligned with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement and that it continues to reflect the values of the preschool. All educators, staff, students and volunteers shall review this statement prior to working at the preschool or whenever the program statement is modified.

The Preschool will ensure that all the approaches as stated in this program statement are implemented at the preschool by organizing an orientation meeting prior to the start of the preschool year, during which the educator delivers a short presentation of the expectations of the parents/staff. All members and staff, volunteers and students will sign off acknowledging the goals and approaches of the Program Statement. Once, during each preschool year, every educator, staff, volunteer or student will be observed as to their actions regarding the implementation of these approaches.

**Philosophy** - The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.

**Pedagogy** - The method and practice of teaching - how learning happens.

**Educator** - A registered early childhood educator. Staff - In the cooperative preschool, a parent is considered as staff.

**Orientation** - Familiarization with something

## **Our View of the Child**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool believes that each child is an individual who is competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. The Preschool appreciates each child's uniqueness and recognizes the necessity to include all aspects or domains of development to understand the whole child. At the preschool we know that children learn through play, which is an activity of enjoyment! Children can be self-learners and do not require an adult to choose what or how they should learn. When a child's natural activity of play is supported by caring and responsive adults in positive learning environments, a child will flourish!

## **The Cooperative Aspect**

The cooperative preschool was established to provide social opportunities for children as well as education for parents. In a cooperative, parents have the opportunity to become involved with their child's experiences. A lot of commitment and juggling is evident on the part of the parents as they work part-time, stay-at-home, are on maternity/paternity leave or try to balance a demanding career while devoting time to the co-op experience.

Wellesley Coop Preschool is a non-profit, democratic organization where each family shares in the planning and operation of the school. The efforts of parents and their direct involvement make the preschool a unique educational endeavour.

For children, cooperatives provide the time, place and people to meet their need for love, understanding, relationships, responsibility, learning and creativity.

For parents, cooperatives provide support and a sense of belonging. It is a place where they can have the opportunity to observe their child and where they can both be learners and teachers. They can be genuinely involved with their child's education.

In this environment the educator also learns when sharing in the goal of providing what is best for the children. Our cooperative preschool believes that each child's family knows their child best, and the educator will work in partnership with families to ensure the best outcomes for all.

**Domains of Development** - The categories which are used to manage the vast amount of information about human development. These include the areas of: motor/physical; cognitive; social/emotional; communication/language; self-help.

**A Cooperative** - An organization that is owned and run jointly by its members, involving mutual assistance in working toward a common goal: every member has clearly defined tasks in a cooperative enterprise, in which members share in the benefits of the organization.

**Learning** - The process of changing existing understanding to accommodate new ideas; acquiring new knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions; discovering through play.



## **Our Philosophy Regarding Play**

Wellesley Coop Preschool values children learning through play and so play is the most important element in our program! Through play children learn what no one can teach them and are able to reach their full potential. They have the opportunity to develop skills such as independence, resourcefulness, curiosity, creativity, resiliency and responsibility. Play is a child's work! Children learn through their play, interests and meaningful interactions with others.

Play propels learning and development - they are intertwined; neither precedes the other. All domains of development are supported by play, which is self-initiated and therefore enjoyable. Play provides a way for children to be healthy in body and mind.

Play is physical and increases activity levels, fitness, balance, gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

Play is directly linked to the child's learning. A child's cognitive development and academic success is enhanced by the play experience.

Play is social and aids in language learning while supporting social skills development. Self-concepts and emotions are better understood through play. Important self-regulatory skills may be acquired and reinforced through play.

Play builds resilience and can help children manage stress. There are often therapeutic benefits to play. Typically, children direct their play in ways that address their own socio-emotional issues through dramatic play.

**Resiliency** - The ability to recover quickly from difficulties.

**Gross Motor Skills** - Learned actions involving the large muscles of the body. (eg. kicking a ball)

**Fine Motor Skills** - Learned actions involving the small muscles of the body. (eg. cutting with scissors)

**Self-Concept** - An idea one has of oneself.

**Self-Regulation** - The conscious or unconscious control of your body, relationships and other aspects of yourself.

**Dramatic Play** - A chance to act out everyday skills and events in a play setting.

## **WELLESLEY COOP PRESCHOOL :**

### **GOALS AND APPROACHES**

#### **1. To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children:**

Keeping children healthy and safe is a priority at the Wellesley Coop Preschool and we understand that the well-being of their child is a parent's #1 concern.

Ways in which the Preschool fosters health and well-being:

- \*providing healthy snacks which contain items from two of the four food groups and letting the child decide how much and what they will eat.

- \*providing opportunities and the time to practise self-help and self-care skills based on each child's capabilities. (at snack, in the washroom and while dressing)

- \*providing daily opportunities for children to be physically active (either indoors or outdoors) and to explore the world around them with their bodies, minds and senses.

- \*recognizing children's efforts to take reasonable risks and letting them test their limits in order to gain increasing competence and a sense of mastery through active play and social interactions.

- \*reaching out to all families, including those who may be experiencing stressful and challenging circumstances, and helping them to make connections to formal supports (community agencies) and informal supports (connections with other families)

- \*participating in professional learning to ensure the program fosters social and emotional well-being and resilience for children and families.

**Goal** - An aim or desired result.

**Approach** - A way of dealing with something

**Sensory Exploration** - The process of discovering, acquiring and interpreting sensory information.

**Family** - A number of people who decide to live together or who are bonded by birth-ties, who share a home and who share common values and similar lifestyles; adults taking on a parental role, and one or more children living and functioning as a unit.

## **2. To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff:**

Wellesley Coop Preschool understands that young children flourish in all areas of development when they are in positive and responsive relationships with adults. Educators and teachers build a foundation of trust with children by being available, sensitive, responsive, caring and genuine.

The Preschool creates an inclusive and respectful environment to foster positive and fair relationships by making children feel safe, secure, valued and that they are a contributing member of their world. This is done by interacting with children at their own level and by allowing children to bring toys/items from home. When this occurs, children are able to explore, discover, try new things, grow, learn and develop.

To support your child's care, growth and development, the educator at the preschool interacts and communicates with parents on a daily basis sharing observations, documentations and reflections through regular conversations and emails. The Preschool also maintains an open door policy.

**Responsive Caregiving** - The process of offering consistent, reliable care by the careful observation of cues.

**Documentation** - A collage/display of material that provides information or evidence or that serves as a record of observation, analysis and reflection.

## **3. To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate:**

Wellesley Coop Preschool believes that it is the role of the adult in a child's life to support them in learning how to interact effectively with the world around them including other children, adults and the environment.

Some of the approaches which should be used by educators and teachers include:

- \*role modelling inclusive, respectful and collaborative interactions with children and other adults.
- \*re-directing and guiding children into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity
- \*striving to make children aware of the results of their own actions.
- \*ensuring the learning environment is flexible in order to respond in the moment and build on the children's interests.
- \*ensuring toys, equipment and materials are plentiful and available to children at most times
- \*giving children the freedom to make choices.

\*engaging as a play partner and therefore being able to demonstrate pro-social skills including promoting discussion and problem solving when conflict arises and understanding how their actions affect others.

\*providing small group experiences that allow for more individualized adult attention

\*having educators attend trainings that address self-regulation and resilience.

**Role Modelling** - Demonstrating appropriate behaviour that can be seen by the children so that they can observe and internalize what they see; showing how a particular role is conducted.

**Collaborative** - Produced or conducted by two or more parties working together:

**Pro-social** - Learned behaviour that is positive, helpful, and intended to promote empathy and consideration to another person.

#### 4. To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry:

Children learn best when fully engaged. This happens in play that comes from a child's natural sense of curiosity and wonder. As parents and educators, we watch children explore their world through their senses, repetition of tasks, imitation, asking questions, testing theories, solving problems and pretending. When children do this, they are putting together all the pieces of how the world works. The Preschool program provides environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry by:

\*creating opportunities that spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges which help children push the boundaries of their learning

\*connecting with families and the community and inviting their participation to ensure that the preschool reflects and is relevant to the children's everyday lives. (field trips, visitors)

\*providing a variety of interesting objects and open-ended materials for children to manipulate and investigate.

\*planning the morning routine with as few as possible interruptions and transitions and providing large amounts of time for the preschool children to engage in sustained, complex play and inquiry.

\* participating with the children as a co-investigator, co-learner and co-planner.

\*questioning and testing their thoughts and ideas and their understanding of the world around them in meaningful ways.

\*working with families and community partners to provide equal learning experiences for all children. (this may include a resource teacher)

\*ensuring that opportunities provided promote play and inquiry that will help children discover and develop an increasing awareness and understanding of key concepts, including those associated with literacy and numeracy development.

\*documenting and making children's learning, thinking and competence visible to children, families and others. At Wellesley Coop Preschool, children decide where, when, what and how they wish to play. Their decisions are based on their interests and curiosity. The educator responds by adapting the environment by adding new toys, materials and equipment, posing questions and being a play partner. The teachers role is to support play so that learning and development flourishes.

**Engagement** - A state of being genuinely involved and interested in what one is doing.

**Inquiry** - The act of asking questions in order to gather information.

**Sensory Exploration** - The process of discovering, acquiring and interpreting sensory information.

**Play Partner** - One or more individuals playing together with a shared interest; in the case of adult-child play partnership, the adult allows the child to take the lead.

#### 5. To provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences:

At the Wellesley Preschool, the focus is NOT on teaching a body of knowledge or a predetermined set of topics. Learning is focused on supporting the development of strategies and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry.

Educators engage with, observe and listen to the children. They hear the suggestions made by the children and respond by discussing with the children, their families and caregivers, the possibilities for children's further exploration in more complex ways. Educators and staff can then, in turn, provide more suggestions, ideas and materials to the children and therefore all are co-learners, constructing knowledge together. Curiosity - Mental interest that leads to behaviours of discovery and learning. Strategy - A plan or method of achieving a goal. Skill - A learned behaviour. Observation - The action or process of watching something or someone carefully in order to gain information.

**Curiosity** - Mental interest that leads to behaviours of discovery and learning.

**Strategy** - A plan or method of achieving a goal.

**Skill** - A learned behaviour.

**Observation** - The action or process of watching something

6. **To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported:**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool understands that the parent is the child's first teacher, the preschool teachers are second and that the third teacher is the environment.

The Preschool will plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans.

The Preschool follows the "How Does Learning Happen" document which is organized around four foundations - four conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish and which children should experience each and every day. These are belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

The Preschool provides learning centres - specially prepared places where materials are provided to respond to children's interests or to trigger new ones. It also provides soft furnishings, quiet areas and accessories that are intended to make the children feel comfortable and safe.

The Preschool sees the child as a whole child - with all of the developmental domains interacting. The educator understands that building in the block room involves gross motor and fine motor skills but that the play that children engage in while building involves many more - like communication and social skills.

Therefore, you may find books, as well as pencils and paper in the kitchen area, because the children might be using these items to write orders for a restaurant or be reading a menu to make cookies!

**Environment** - Aspects of the immediate surroundings or conditions in which a person operates. The presence or absence of objects, furniture, light, colour, toys and play things and the inclusion/exclusion of indoor and outdoor space.

**Belonging** - A sense of connectedness to others - of being valued and of forming relationships with others as well as making contributions.

**Well-Being** - The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

**Engagement** - A state of being genuinely involved and interested in what one is doing.

**Expression** - Communication which is to be heard as well as listened to

7. **To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving care:**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool's daily schedule has been designed to meet the needs of the children and provides for a balance of activities throughout the morning.

The daily schedule is not rigid and operating in small groups occurs - e.g.. one small group of children might make play dough for the class, while another small group of children is planning and building in the block room.

Periods of active and quiet play are interwoven throughout the morning both indoors and outdoors.

At Wellesley Preschool, we like to go outside in all kinds of weather! The children love to bundle up in warm clothes and head out to jump in puddles or make snowballs. However, in very poor or cold weather active play takes place upstairs so that the children get the physical activity their bodies require.

Transitions from one activity to another is kept to a minimum so children get to play more.

However, young children thrive on regular schedules and feel secure when they can predict what will occur throughout the morning. Therefore the general sequence of the preschool morning is kept the same.

**Schedule** - A plan for carrying out a process or procedure, giving lists of intended events.

**Transitions** - Aspects of the planned and unplanned day that create changes from one type of activity to another.

8. **To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children:**

Wellesley Coop Preschool understands that a parent is the most important person in a child's life. Educators and parents communicate on a daily basis about the child's activities and health.

The Preschool informs and includes families in what and how their children are learning and developing by several ways:

- \*daily highlights of each morning which include observations of children's interests and also activities introduced by the educator

- \*pictures sent by email documenting the connections to learning

- \*anecdotes sent by email as well as being put into children's portfolios

- \*celebrations, field trips and special events \*displays of children's artwork and creations

- \*family posters and a turn to be the Star of the Week

9. **To involve local community partners and to allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff:**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool views the community as a valuable resource and plans learning opportunities involving the community into its program. (Visitors and field trips)

The preschool also works closely with community agencies and partners in order to support the children and their families. (KidsAbility, KWHab etc.)

**Communication** - The two way process of sending and receiving information to reach a shared understanding.

**Portfolio** - A set of pieces of creative work and/or various photographs collected by someone to display their skills.

10. **To support educators and the staff in their continuous professional learning:**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool is committed to the ongoing professional development of its educator. What the educator learns guides best practices which is then passed onto the children.

The Preschool provides opportunities for the educator to attend learning workshops and conferences.

The Preschool also provides legislated training requirements such as Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR to all staff and educators.

On a day to day basis, the Preschool educator is responsible for the leadership, mentorship, coaching and development of the staff. The educator helps staff to be more effective in assisting the educator while in the classroom, by sharing materials including links, articles and various readings.

**Best Practice** - Professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective.

**Mentorship** - The guidance provided by a mentor, especially an experienced person in a company or educational institution.



**11. To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in goals #1 - 10 on the children and their families:**

The Wellesley Coop Preschool educator reflects in a continuous cycle of observation:

- documenting play and its significance
- determining the children's interests
- planning activities that support the interests
- reflection that informs the planning of activities and the environment

This cycle will be reflected in the toys, materials and equipment provided in the play area, the creative work of the children, the activities the children are engaging in, the daily highlights posted daily for parents to read and discuss, in photos and written descriptions of activities and in monthly newsletters.

This continuous cycle is called reflective practice. On a daily basis, the educator is observing and engaging with the children, evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment to build on the children's interests. Weekly the educator is reviewing planning and ensuring they are supporting children's learning and development. Monthly, the educator reflects back on what did and didn't work and then plans for the future.

The Preschool values reflective practice and therefore it engages in regular reviews with consideration given to the input of the members of the preschool through parent surveys.

**Planning** - The act of preparing and designing experiences and activities.

**Reflective Practice** - The capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning.

**Parent Survey** - Questions to investigate the opinions and experiences of the parents of the children.

**Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy**

<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/programCCEYA.pdf>

**"How Does Learning Happen?" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

**Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf>