Extended Day Program - Program Statement

Name: WRDSB Extended Day Program
Date Policy and Procedures Established: April 6 2022
Date Policy and Procedures Updated: August 14 2025

Purpose

At the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), our Extended Day Programs recognize that every child is competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. We are committed to offering inclusive, safe, and nurturing environments that extend the school day with consistency and care. Rooted in the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?*—Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression—our programs support children's development through responsive relationships, play-based learning, and thoughtful environments.

Our qualified Designated Early Childhood Educators co-learn with children, designing meaningful experiences that invite exploration, creativity, and connection—both indoors and out. We strive to build strong relationships with children, families, and school teams, recognizing that collaboration and consistency support children's sense of self and success across the day.

Our seamless-day model—where educators work closely with the school community—creates continuity for children and strengthens relationships. Consistent routines, aligned expectations, and collaborative planning between school and Extended Day staff foster a smooth and supportive transition between core-day and Extended day.

Through active play, social-emotional learning, and positive guidance, we support children in developing independence, self-regulation, empathy, and problem-solving skills. Our programs celebrate diversity and the unique strengths, identity and interests of every child.

Our Program Statement is a living document and the north star that helps us set intentional goals and approaches for the educators in our programs and is reviewed annually with DECEs.

Program Goals & Educator Approaches;

The approaches listed below each goal describe the actions we will take to achieve the goals and are grounded in a philosophy of equity and building connections through positive responsive relationships that foster a sense of belonging for every child.

Support Well-Being

- Prioritize emotional, physical, and mental health through caring relationships, responsive routines, and safe environments.
- Acknowledge children's feelings and support them with solving problems.
- Provide opportunities for children to practice problem-solving and develop self-regulation strategies to support self-advocacy and resilience.

- Using the play materials budget plan for and provide inclusive and accessible materials that reflect children's abilities, interests, and cultures.
- Support children helping each other and forming friendships across ages and groups.
- Educators get down to children's level—engaging, playing, and listening.

Promote Health, Safety and Nutrition

- Educators supervise and support children to ensure that they are healthy and safe by following Public Health, First Aid, and Emergency procedures.
- Programs provide nutritious snacks, including substitutions for allergens.
- Educators respond to children's individual physical, social, and emotional needs
- Ensure safe arrival to programs and safe transitions between school, extended day, and home.
- Educators actively supervise all areas (indoors and outdoors) with awareness and intention.

Foster Engagement

- Educators offer meaningful, play-based experiences that invite exploration, problem-solving, and deep learning.
- Daily routines include opportunities for children to engage in indoor and outdoor active play that supports physical activity.
- Environments that include open-ended materials (e.g., blocks, art supplies, nature items) accessible to children.
- Opportunities for children to engage in different types of play are provided.
- Educators observing and extending children's ideas and interests.
- Programs have access to shared spaces within the school (e.g., library, gym, playground, community partner events, where applicable) to enhance children's experiences.

Nurture a Sense of Wonder

- Educators plan for experiences that spark curiosity, imagination, and joy in everyday moments.
- Programs offer a wide variety of open-ended play materials in loosely defined areas so that children can freely use the materials to support their exploration, inquiry, and play.

Encourage Expression

- Educators provide opportunities for children to communicate and express themselves in diverse ways—through language, art, movement, and play.
- Spaces where children's voices, choices and perspectives are visible.
- Encouragement of both verbal and non-verbal communication styles.
- Children sharing songs, stories, or greetings in their home language during group time

Promote Equity and Social Justice

- Educators, Program Supervisors, and the Manager actively work to identify and remove barriers to participation and inclusion; challenge bias and foster fairness.
- Educators foster an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and inclusive culture where all children feel seen, heard, respected, and have the support and resources they need to flourish
- Programs are committed to Equity and Inclusion and actively incorporate equity and inclusion in our interactions with children, families, and staff, professional learning and pedagogy.
- Programs are committed to the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), which affirms the legal responsibility of service providers to recognize the dignity and worth of every person and to provide equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. We value and uplift the differences among people, encompassing race, ethnicity, age, ability, gender, sexuality, and beyond.
- We recognize and support the deep connections that Indigenous Peoples have to this land in which we are situated (The Haldimand Tract, the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chonnonton Peoples). We consider how to build ongoing, positive relationships with local Indigenous families, community partners and make every effort to address the harms caused by colonization and the residential school system.

Practice Inclusive, Respectful & Culturally Responsive Care

- Programs embrace diversity, respect the lived experiences of children and families, and uphold equity in every interaction.
- Educators have an awareness of the many languages that children use to express themselves and provide opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways.
- Educators engage in conversations about family traditions and celebrations and include children's lived experiences, heritage, and cultural celebrations throughout the year.

Implement Pedagogical Documentation and Program Planning

- Educators observe, reflect, and document children's play and learning to make thinking visible and inform program planning. Educators and children post visual documentation of learning on the walls (photos, children's words, work samples).
    - Educator strategies used are visible in the documentation and documentation illustrates how the program statement is being lived out and the impact of the programs goals and approaches on children and families.
- DECE supervisors discuss the program plans during program visits and follow up where programs need support in this area.
- Educators recognize that children learn best when they are interested and engaged in play and experiences that encourage and support active exploration and manipulation of materials.
- Educators document children's questions and use them to plan experiences.

Support Staff Growth through Reflective Practice & Professional Development

- Opportunities for educators to participate in professional learning during the work day on designated professional development days.
- Supervisors demonstrate pedagogical leadership. Some examples of this include providing resources, on-site training, observing each program on an on-going basis and sharing information with educators.
- Each team collaborates to reflect on the program and observations. Some examples include educators across classrooms meeting when children are picked up to share ideas collaboratively and adapt the program and environment to best meet the children's needs. Educators reflect on their interactions, planning, and environments in order to plan with intention.
- Educators are up to date in First Aid and CPR training.
- Designated Early Childhood Educators receive BMS training.
- Designated Early Childhood Educators participate in fall orientation training which includes a review of the program statement.
- Educators uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (CECE, 2017) and uphold a commitment to life long learning.

Value the Child as Capable and Competent

- Educators recognize that children are curious, full of potential, and bring valuable ideas and perspectives to their learning.
- Educators work with children to develop a set of agreements to support them to choose the best way to deal with challenging situations. All "rules" are worded positively identifying ways children will support positive social interactions with their peers.
- Educators share control with children by providing opportunities for child-led experiences and choice.
- When a child is having a challenging time, demonstrating behaviours that may hurt them or others, educators may be required to remove other children from the play space to provide that child with privacy and time to resolve their issues, with the support of an educator.
- Support children with problem solving strategies by modelling solutions, encouraging independent thinking and allow children to make mistakes. “It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated. Want to talk about it?”

Build Strong Relationships

- All program staff prioritize connection—with children, families, and school teams—to promote consistent care, collaboration and communication.
- Educators regularly reflect on how their programs, interactions and procedures support the Four Foundations from How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years; Well-Being, Expression, Belonging and Engagement.
- Educators communicate and engage in play with children on their level, engaged in dialogue with children that support problem solving and co learning.
- Educators build strong connections with families and communities, and encourage their active participation in the program.

Strengthen Family Partnerships

- Educators understand that parents are experts in their child's care and welcome families as partners, supporting ongoing communication and collaboration.
- Educators welcome parents into the program and greet them by name, sharing information about their child's day.

Encourage Environmental Responsibility

- Educators foster a connection with nature and support sustainable practices like outdoor play, waste reduction, and environmental stewardship.

Use Technology Thoughtfully

- Programs incorporate technology in developmentally appropriate ways that support connection, documentation, or learning — not as passive entertainment.

Other Resources:

Ministry of Education: Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children

CECE Practice Guidelines: Supporting Positive Interactions with Children

The Child Care and Early Years Act (2014)

The Education Act

Ont. Regulation 221/11 Extended Day and Third Party Programs

Ministry of Education Policy Memoranda

Before and After School Programs Policies and Guidelines for School Boards

How Does Learning Happen?: Ontario's Pedagogy for the early Years (HDLH)

The College of Early Childhood Educators

Glossary

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the program

Staff (Employee): Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff)

DECE: Designated Early Childhood Educator

Pedagogy: The method and practice of teaching

Anti Oppressive Practice: seeks to identify strategies to construct power in a way that will address the systemic inequalities that are operating simultaneously at the individual, group and institutional level, as opposed to producing and reproducing oppression.

Anti Racism: Anti-racism is structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions which are intended to dismantle racism.

Goal: An aim of desired result

Approach: A means of attaining a goal

Social Learning: The process of acquiring knowledge about individuals and groups by observing, imitating and interacting with others.

Emotional Development: The complex changes within the individual over time that involves the self and feelings and regulating behavior

Learning: The process of changing existing understanding to accommodate new ideas; acquire new knowledge, skills and or dispositions

Skill: A learned behavior

Well Being: The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy

Responsive caregiving: The process of offering consistent, reliable care via careful observation of cues