



MLCP PROGRAM STATEMENT

(Regulation 46)

MLCP's interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)?*" It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' where HDLH describes children's activity as 'play' but the activities, as experienced by a child, are one in the same.

This program statement will be reviewed with childcare staff and volunteers annually or whenever an amendment is made. The Program Statement sign off sheet will be signed each academic year, or whenever changes are made and at the start of employment.

MLCP holds the view that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential in agreement with HDLH.

This Program Statement describes our goals for children at MLCP and the guidelines that we implement to meet those goals.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. Registration forms include all requirements for individualized information. Students not receiving immunizations must submit the Medical Exemption Form available from the Ministry of Health website.

As per the Smoke Free Ontario Act, tobacco, medical marijuana and electronic cigarettes are not permitted on the premises.

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff by communicating, promoting and adhering to our 'Values' and our 'Code of Conduct.' These are communicated in our staff policies and in the General Information and Guidelines handbook. They are applied to all members of the MLCP community - staff, students, parents, volunteers, and interns.

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate by having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years where possible. This provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and with adults and through the opportunities in watching staff behaviours and reactions. Positive terminology and opportunities for supported problem solving are part of each day. We also have a Discipline Contract that is applied consistently throughout the school but according to the maturity of the children involved.

Prohibited Practices are never condoned - we encourage positive, supportive interaction with the students rather than negative or punitive approaches. No staff, volunteer or intern at MCLP shall engage in any of the practices mentioned below:

- a) corporal punishment of the child;
- b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, 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;
- c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care 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;
- d) 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;
- e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

We foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori environments where many activities are present for the full range of ages in each room. There are activities that assist children to become independent, to assist in care of the self, care of the environment and care of others (Grace and Courtesy). Activities are encouraged that explore and refine the senses as well as encouraging the discovery of sequencing and order. Activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading are also presented. Activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry and even rudimentary algebra concepts are offered. Many activities to introduce the cultural variations in our world are shared, along with beginning geography, history and science exercises. In addition, there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, etc. Children understand where everything is kept and they are able to choose, work with and return things when tasks are completed independently or with their friends.

We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. All Montessori materials are introduced to a child by an adult or by another child, and while the Montessori adults are always observing children to see what support each child might need, they are very sensitive to allowing children to use their own initiative—resulting in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in the work that they choose. Staff are always trying to find exactly the right moment to introduce a child to something new. It is important that they have enough time to master an activity but are also always being gently challenged.

We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported by using the international Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups. Children are all individual beings and Montessori can effectively reach students at all developmental levels within each group and, as such, encourages and supports inclusivity of children who can benefit from our program and materials.

We 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 by allowing the children to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying things or building things, or sit quietly at a table moving intricate pieces. Children can choose to have snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. We have large, well-equipped, outdoor playgrounds that children access in groups each day.

We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children by having regular group meetings with parents to explain what is happening in the classrooms, inviting parents in to observe their children, writing weekly memos and sending home mini observation notices. Annual report cards are prepared for each child with term end reports for the Elementary students. Parents can access their child's teacher by leaving a voicemail or by chatting briefly at the door during arrival and dismissal. We also have many school events where the parents of the younger children can meet and discuss their child's experience with parents of older children.

We involve local community partners through community service with our upper elementary students (helping in local businesses and retirement homes), local food drives, fund raisers, and recommendations that local businesses are supported and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff as appropriate. We welcome specialists from CCAC and other such agencies and find spaces for them to work with our children and we meet with the parents and these specialists as necessary. We liaise with The Bridge - Church for All Nations which serves as our Emergency Refuge.

We support our staff with continuous professional learning offering subsidized professional development opportunities throughout the year including First Aid and CPR training. MLCP is a member in good standing in a number of organizations offering a variety of relevant seminars and workshops which staff is encouraged and supported to attend. Changes and implementations are communicated via staff meetings and staff memos. Weekly memos cover past events and upcoming dates and staff room postings ensure another means of communication. Annual "beginning of the year" staff meetings ensure upcoming goals and expectations, support for achievement, and general event dates for the year. The office offers an open door policy that gives staff easy access for immediate issues which may arise.

Should any differences among staff members occur they should be dealt with away from the public arena by confronting and discussing the situation with the person involved, discussing differences with the supervisor - i.e. Head Teacher, and discussion with Principal or Vice Principal as necessary.

Parents are encouraged to bring concerns, questions or issues to Classroom teachers or the office. Only when aware of situations can we work together to better them.

The "beginning of the year" meeting allows an opportunity for staff to complete any annual training updates and review and complete all necessary documentation required. This also is the time that compliance issues can be generally addressed while specific compliance instances are discussed at the time of infraction.

Parent evaluations and student-teacher evaluations are conducted regularly. Parent concerns, requests or comments are welcomed at any time. Inter staff as well as admin evaluations are conducted each year allowing the ongoing monitoring of compliance with the Program Statement. We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings, surveys, etc.

