

Waterloo Infant Toddler Daycare Association

Our Program Statement

Waterloo Infant Toddler Daycare Association (WITDA) is dedicated to providing a welcoming, healthy, stimulating environment for all of our families. Our organization has a diverse team of qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and Apprenticeship ECEs dedicated to each child's well-being. Our holistic approach engages children in all domains, including cognitive, social, communication, emotional, and physical development. WITDA is committed to being inclusive and evolves to meet the needs of our children and their families. Our educators nurture the individual needs of each child, supporting and gently guiding children in their learning by incorporating the document, *How Does Learning Happen: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. This document consists of four foundational elements, including: belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. To learn more, please visit [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#).

Families are important, and we prioritize building strong relationships with each and every one. Our open-door policy creates a supportive and enriching program through non-judgmental and responsive communication between children, families, and staff. This is achieved through documentation, daily interactions, and planned meetings with families. Through family engagement, we are cultivating authentic relationships, which strengthen our community and create a sense of trust where we can support, collaborate and learn from each other.

Our organization believes that each child is a unique individual and is competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. Through observations and documentation, educators provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences, which deepen our understanding of the children's needs and interests. They use and adapt the environment for all children in the program as a tool to deepen learning and allow each child to be successful in their own unique way. This can be seen through provocations and open-ended materials that foster the children's natural curiosity. We use the environment as the third teacher to nurture every child's confidence, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation, so they can take risks and are not afraid to make mistakes. We provide opportunities to repeat and expand experiences, promoting growth. Our educators role-model positive behaviour, patience, and understanding, and acknowledge the children's feelings by creating a safe space. Through daily interactions in the classrooms, children learn respect, empathy, and acceptance of the environment, all creatures and all people.

WITDA strongly believes in the importance of having time outdoors. We spend a minimum of 2 hours each day in our outdoor environments, weather permitting. We feel there are many opportunities for children to explore and expand their knowledge in all developmental domains through manipulating the indoor and outdoor environment. We support the children's learning by bringing outdoor play inside and incorporating indoor learning centres outside. Our local forest area is an additional resource where our certified Forest School Practitioners facilitate programs that reinforce our commitment to making connections to nature and the land. Our goal is to help children develop a love and respect for the natural world. Through meaningful experiences in our forest, playgrounds, and community, children learn how their everyday choices can care for the environment and the land we share. Guided by the teachings and wisdom of our local Indigenous communities, we encourage children to become thoughtful stewards of the Earth and develop a lifelong connection to nature. WITDA is equipped with an indoor space for active play where children can work on their gross motor skills and abilities.

We take pride in and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures in our community. We use different languages to help new children transition into our programs and support them as they are learning English. We work with parents to learn key phrases in their home language, and will use Google Translate when needed to help children learn the routine and become more comfortable in their learning environment. We celebrate the diversity of our community and invite families to share their culture with us to enrich our programs. Classrooms promote literacy in many different forms throughout the year to excite and engage children's interests. We want children to love reading so their minds can reach their full potential. In our bilingual school program, we promote French and English on a daily basis to expand children's knowledge of both languages.

Children will have the opportunity each day to rest in a calm, relaxing environment, and educators are mindful of the College of ECE, the Ministry of Education and CCEYA guidelines, family requests (within reason), and children's individual needs. Every child is provided with a bed and blanket, and rests in a peaceful room with quiet music playing. For children who do not sleep, we provide quiet bed activities to play with until rest time is over.

WITDA has a strong commitment to nurturing the body with carefully planned snacks and well-balanced meals in accordance with Canada's Food Guide. We work with families to accommodate as many dietary restrictions and allergies as possible for the health, safety, and well-being of the child. Meal and snack times are wonderful opportunities for children to build friendships, practice kindness, and develop important social skills. Educators sit with the children during meals, modelling healthy eating habits, good table manners, and respectful conversations. We encourage children to engage with one another, fostering a welcoming and inclusive mealtime experience where everyone feels valued and supported.

In keeping with the College of ECEs Code of Ethics, throughout the year, we mentor ECE students from a variety of educational institutions. We believe that mentoring students today will help maintain and grow high-quality care in the future. We also mentor post-secondary students, high school co-op students, and volunteers, so they can gain experience that they can use in their future careers.

Community support agencies are an essential part of our organization. They each bring their own knowledge and skill sets to support children, families, and educators by inspiring new learning strategies and opportunities. We work alongside them, integrating new ideas, equipment, and behaviour guidance techniques to support the classroom as a whole. We value the different perspectives each community member brings forth.

Staff are provided with professional learning opportunities that will help further their knowledge of new theories in child development. Staff are able to attend workshops that align with their yearly professional goals. WITDA feels that continuous professional learning empowers the staff and promotes growth throughout the organization. We commit to challenging our prejudices and biases by unlearning the history as educators; we continually reflect on our own beliefs and perspectives, engage in ongoing learning, and work alongside community leaders to deepen our understanding of diverse cultures, histories, and experiences. This commitment helps us foster a sense of belonging where every child feels seen, valued, and respected.

WITDA's team regularly reflects and reviews our Program Statement to ensure it remains relevant and supports high-quality care. Teams review it monthly, with annual staff and family feedback to help guide improvements where needed.