

Pre-School Curriculum Statement

The University of Winnipeg Students Association Day Care has an open space concept that enhances our emergent curriculum program in many ways. Staff can freely communicate, observe, and share information about all children. They are able to work together with a real sense of team spirit.

Children are able to see themselves as belonging to our day care community and have opportunities to interact with everyone throughout the day. Our PS123 and Preschool Room children are placed in separate groups. Our PS456 children, not in specific groups, travel from room to room. But, depending on circumstances, all children will have opportunities to take turns in each of the rooms throughout the day.

The open space concept also allows for a creative and fun curriculum. This Curriculum Statement tells how we support children's learning and development.

Our Program is based on four key components:

1. Interactions and relationships between staff and children
2. Interactions and relationships between staff and parents
3. Environments indoors and outdoors
4. Experiences child and staff oriented

And strives to promote children's growth in five crucial areas:

1. Thinking skills
2. Body awareness
3. Social Competence
4. Emotional well being
5. Creative expression

Interactions with Staff

We promote healthy self-images in children by valuing and celebrating them as individuals.

We want children to see themselves and their families reflected in our program. One way we show children they are valued is by displaying photos. Pictures of each are posted at their lockers. On the bulletin boards and in the hallways, they will see pictures of themselves engaged in play experiences. And children may leaf through the albums of family photos we compile. Through these photos, our posters on the walls, books, puzzles, and dolls, the children see their own faces and those of all kinds of people.

We see each child as both a member of a family unit and as an individual with capabilities and qualities to be treasured. We promote respect for all through what we do and say. We talk to the

children about how each family and child is unique in some ways and the same in others. We guide children to have respect for themselves and others.

Staff model how to show respect and patience through their words and behavior. Children are encouraged to do the same. A set of guidelines fair to all is offered so children learn to get along with others.

At our centre, children are encouraged to acquire the social skills that will help them get along with their peers. They are given opportunities to develop a sense of fairness, patience, tolerance, kindness, inclusiveness, and cooperation. This happens when children share, take turns, help others, play together and alongside each other, and speak respectfully to all.

Children are helped to understand their feelings when staff label and talk about them.

Children are supported in their feelings. Staff let children know that all feelings are acceptable, and help them find ways to express them appropriately. Examples are: “I see you are upset and would like a turn with that toy. You can use your words to tell your friend,” and “You seem sad. Would a hug help you feel better?”

Based on their observations and their interactions with children, staff create a stimulating environment designed to support development and keep children positively engaged. Staff respond to children’s behavior and interests with active listening and open-ended questions.

Interactions with Parents

Respecting their role as primary caregivers, we want to work collaboratively with parents and aim for clear and consistent communication.

The input of families is always welcome. Staff share details of the children’s days and are able to offer their experience of child development.

Parents are encouraged to share their talents with the people at our centre. Some parents have entertained us with music, dance, and song. Others have contributed to our science curriculum.

Parents can read about and see pictures of their children’s daily experiences and learning on our emergent curriculum documentation boards.

We welcome families to spend time in our program. They may browse our resource library, spend quiet time reading with their children, or chat with others.

We plan several family events throughout the year. Examples include: Family Literacy, Family Fun Day, Mother’s Day Tea, and Father’s Day Breakfast. All parents and family members are welcome to attend.

Parents also receive newsletters about our program which include information about day care events, routines, expectations, and pertinent policies.

The University of Winnipeg community plays an important role in our centre. We have invited people from various faculties to bring their expertise to the children. Some examples include learning about science, literature, and how our bodies move through dance.

Our centre participates in the University of Winnipeg's recycling and composting program. This is one way we teach children about the importance of respecting our environment.

The members of the U.W.S.A. play their part by sharing resources, volunteering their time, and supporting staff.

Environment

We believe children learn and grow through a playful exploration of a safe and stimulating environment.

Indoors, our naturally lit play spaces provide opportunities for both active and quiet play, social interaction and privacy. Children have opportunities to explore the curriculum areas of music, art, literature, dramatic play, science, nature, and physical activity, both indoors and out.

Our learning centers are set up to promote independence and creativity.

All toys and materials are easily accessible to children. They are free to choose what they please. The various centers are set up in a way to encourage imaginative play. For example, children can use trucks, blocks, and traffic signs to set up a construction site. A baby doll picnic can happen alongside.

Learning centers also reflect the diversity of our families. Our Daily Living Centre contains household items and clothing that represents many communities in our neighbourhood.

Toys reflect the children's interest and are rotated as those evolve or change. Through words and pictures, staff record their observations and findings on the emergent curriculum bulletin boards.

Because we value the process of creativity, art materials such as clay, playdough, various types of paint and brushes, and an assortment of painting surfaces, glue, and collage supplies are available to be used in an open-ended exploration. Skills learned from their use include imagination, experimentation, invention, making choices, self-confidence, and experiences of sensory pleasure.

Outdoors, the children are free to explore the natural elements and physical challenges provided by our playground. They can engage in activities such as sampling strawberries and grapes from the vine, rustling in the tall grasses, rolling down hills, balancing on logs, and exploring the properties of sand, water, and rocks.

Children also take walks to the University of Winnipeg RecPlex Centre. Spending time at the gym means playing active games, running, and using the various equipment provided: balls, parachutes, and climbing apparatus, etc.

Experiences

We believe fun and play are great teachers.

Planning for play experiences is based on watching the children at play, noting emerging play themes, and holding “gathering times,” in which children’s ideas are generated and recorded. Children decide what they want to know more about and what they would like to play. They then have a say in what toys will be set out and what play experiences will be provided for. Examples include props for fire-fighter dramatic play, dinosaurs in the sand table, and a stage for puppets.

Along with the ideas that the children share with us, observations of their play is recorded in photos and in words and displayed on our bulletin boards and walls for all to see.

We provide staff-directed and child inspired experiences which can be either planned or spontaneous and are designed to promote children’s learning and development. Children will then have opportunities to share their ideas, help others, and gain a sense of autonomy.

Spontaneous activities happen when staff notice children engaged in and enjoying a particular play experience. For example, when some children begin to dance together, staff may join in, and invite others to as well. Props such as dancing scarves or pompoms may be introduced. An activity such as this introduces skills such as rhythm, body awareness, self-expression, and coordination, spontaneous change in movement to music, and listening.

Staff-directed play experiences occur when new ideas are introduced to the children’s play themes. An example would be, after talking to the children about their interest in tigers, staff plans for a “jungle walk” through the day care. Skills such as sharing ideas, verbalizing, following directions, and role playing arise from this.

Many of our staff-directed experiences involve acknowledging the days that are special to our families. **National Aboriginal Day**, Diwali, Festival du Voyager, Thanksgiving, Cinco de Mayo, and Passover are some examples. We do this through art activities, music, games, and sampling foods.

Every week, from September to May, a music teacher spends time leading groups of children in fun activities that promote musical literacy. The children are engaged in fingerplays, songs, dance, creative movement, and making their own music with rhythm instruments.

Our P456 children have the opportunity to go on field trips that include, visits to Car Town, the Millennium Library, and our neighbourhood parks.

We also invite special guests to our centre. Local children’s entertainers such as magicians and musicians as well as ambassadors from Folklorama enrich the experiences of the children.

The schedule is dependable yet fluid. A good portion of free play time allows the children to more fully develop their play interests. It is important to be flexible with children's learning because uninterrupted free play gives children time to more fully develop their play themes, gain a sense of accomplishment, and more actively engage with their peers. Children learn that they are respected for their ideas and input.

All experiences offered through the day build upon the children's needs and interests. Changes to the schedule are based on listening, observing, and documenting the children's activities.

Emergent curriculum is an ever evolving process at the U.W.S.A. Day Care Centre. Staff and children are co-learners and partners in fun!