

## **Children's Circle Montessori School**

### **Inclusion Policy**

#### **Mission Statement**

**To provide an environment rich in purpose and experience so as to inspire, motivate and empower children to reach their full learning potential.**

Children's Circle Montessori School welcomes a diverse community including those that are diverse due to age, culture, race, beliefs, gender, ability, appearance, class, lifestyle, life status, sexuality, family composition and language. All members of the community will be treated with equality, fairness and dignity.

Children's Circle Montessori School believes an inclusive child care program provides belonging, acceptance and developmentally appropriate practices. In an inclusive environment, children develop skills with classmates, children learn when and how to use skills and children have an opportunity to develop friendships with peers. Children are provided opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Each child is inspired, motivated and empowered to reach their full learning potential
- Each child is permitted to work/play at their own pace
- Each child is encouraged to work/play to the best of their ability
- The Montessori environment is peaceful and welcoming
- Each child has access to and participates in the curriculum and activities
- Changes may occur in daily routines and environment to match a child's needs

Children's Circle Montessori School understands, complies and practices legislation set forth by governing bodies such as College of ECE's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Canadian Human Rights Act, Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and Ministry of Education.

Children's Circle Montessori School's primary source of guidance, advice and support is PIRS (Peer Inclusion Resource Services). Children's Circle Montessori School is guided by the steps prepared by PIRS and designed in the best interest of the child.

Each situation is unique; therefore, the steps are only to be used as a guideline. The purpose of the steps is to ensure Children's Circle Montessori School has done everything it can to strengthen relationships and ensure social inclusion, participation and a sense of belonging for each child and family.

#### **Children's Circle Montessori School's Guidelines:**

Identify the child's strengths, challenges, needs and interests. Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member.

Assess the environment, schedule and program. Are there any changes that could be made that would be helpful to the child or the child care provider/classroom staff members? Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member, Education Director, School Director and/or School Supervisor.

Consider the following: Have there been changes in the home routine? Does the child arrive and depart from the child care program at consistent times – does he/she have an opportunity to engage in the program consistently? Does the child feel well – would a visit to the family doctor, pediatrician or dentist be warranted? Has the child had hearing, vision, speech and language assessment/screening? Have there been changes in the child's bedtime or sleep patterns? Is a referral to a screening clinic appropriate? Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member and the Education Director.

Begin to make some informal observations and record data that will identify patterns of behavior. Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member.

Discuss observations/concerns with the child's parent(s), including both positive comments and constructive feedback related to issues of concern. Discuss potential for support services (e.g. PIRS, speech therapy, etc.) Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member and the Education Director.

Create an Individualized Support Plan (ISP) based on the child's goals and needs. Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member, the Education Director, the child's parents and the professional providing support, if appropriate. If the child has been referred to PIRS, the Resource Consultant will create an Individual Program Plan along with the Lead Classroom Staff Member, the Education Director and the child's parents. The Individual Program Plan may take the place of the Individualized Support Plan. (Two plans are not required).

The ISP will...

- include how the school will support the child to function and participate in a meaningful and purposeful manner
- describe any supports or aids or adaptations or other modifications to the physical, social and learning environment that are necessary
- provide instructions related to the child's use of supports or aids or interaction with the adapted environment

Implement all, agreed upon, strategies and suggestions in the Individualized Support Plan (Individual Program Plan). Keep records based on observations and progress. Alter the goals and strategies based on the child's progress. Action taken by the classroom staff.

Conduct a follow up meeting(s) with the child's parents and the PIRS Resource Consultant, if appropriate, to review and evaluate progress. Action taken by the Lead Classroom Staff Member and the Education Director.

If all these capacity building steps and actions have been taken and it is found that the child's needs cannot be met within the program, the Children's Circle Montessori School may recommend withdrawal of care. A reasonable period of notice will be

provided to the family. During this time, in consultation with the PIRS Resource Consultant, Children's Circle Montessori School will explore options regarding other community resources to support the child and family.

Staff members will be offered Inclusion-related workshops, webinars and conferences in order to continually develop skills, learn from peers and share thoughts and ideas.

Staff members are required to review ISPs on an annual basis or when there is a significant change to one.