



# Program Statement

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

DATE APPROVED: 2017-01-17

LAST REVISED: 2020-05

**Silver Creek Centre for Early Learning & Development** is a community-based early learning centre with over 40 years of experience and commitment to providing an enhanced, specialized and therapeutic early childhood education program to children ages 18 months through 5 years of age. Approximately 80% of the children who attend Silver Creek Pre-School have a physical and/or developmental challenge, while approximately 20% of the children are typically developing. We meet each child where he/she is at, and we are ready to provide the 'next best challenge' to support early learning in all areas of development—motor, social, communication, emotional, and cognitive.

We believe that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. At Silver Creek, children are encouraged to PLAY as their form of work. By playing in an environment where their health and well-being is paramount, children make sense of the world through experimentation, trial and error and the guidance of creative adult partners. Our staff have the expertise to acknowledge, support and be excited about that potential in each child.

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are the foundation of each classroom and support children's learning, development, health and well-being. The therapy team adds to the emergent experience and capabilities of each child by providing therapeutic services (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language, and music) that assist the children to access the learning opportunities. The teamwork that happens among these caring and responsive adults results in a quality program that allows children to succeed as they engage in active learning.

Silver Creek believes that families know their children best. They are key and pivotal to children achieving their unique potential and thus families are considered active participants and contributors to the program offered to each child. Our Parent Advocacy and Support program supports and empowers families to manage the challenges of raising a child, especially one with special needs. All of our practices are family-centred and focus on a holistic and strengths-based framework for thinking about child's health and development that emphasizes **Function, Family, Fitness, Fun, Friends and Future**.

Silver Creek is guided by the Ministry of Education's Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) a framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings and the 2014 professional learning resource "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years." Our curriculum and practices are designed with the following five principles of the ELECT document in mind:

1. Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.
2. Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.
3. Demonstration of respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for optimal development and learning.
4. Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.
5. Knowledgeable and responsive early childhood practitioners are essential to early childhood settings.

Our professional teaching team tracks and records the learning needs, skill levels, and interests of each child and strives to ensure that all children have a sense of belonging at Silver Creek and a sense of themselves. Classroom activities are designed and set up to reflect the many skills and attributes that each child contributes as well as their diverse needs.

To learn more about the ELECT and "How Does Learning Happen?" document, please speak to your child's teacher or visit these sites:

- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/continuum/continuum.pdf>
- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/EducatorsEN.pdf>

## SILVER CREEK'S SPECIALIZED PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM WILL:

### A) Promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children

Silver Creek fosters the well-being of all children by providing a program that nurtures children's healthy development through:

- Physical play.
- Healthy snacks that reflect cultural, medical and nutritional requirements as identified by families and are delivered in a safe, clean and positive environment. Our staff are aware of each child's medical conditions, allergies and food restrictions.
- A variety of play environments geared towards the children's learning needs.
- Program and environmental adaptations that allow every child to participate.
- Support in learning to making healthy and safe choices for self.
- Support in recognizing and managing stress, emotions, attention and behaviour.
- Family-centred practices.

### Silver Creek's ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Indoor gym
- ✓ Accessible, naturalized playscape
- ✓ Individualized feeding program

## **B) Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, students, volunteers and staff**

Silver Creek takes into account the need for positive interaction with all important contributors to a child's well being. Forming trusting relationships with children and their families is paramount to creating a happy, safe and challenging daily experience. These relationships are achieved by:

- Engaging children and staff as co-learners.
- Honouring and respecting the unique characteristics and gifts of each child and family with respect to their beliefs, culture, language, gender and life experiences.
- Family-centred practices; including but not limited to, the intake process and goal setting.
- Providing opportunities for parent/team/community social interactions.
- Policies and procedures that reflect and stress the importance of positive interactions; for example, Silver Creek's Code of Conduct, Inclusion and Behaviour Management Policies.

### Silver Creek's ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Parent in Classroom
- ✓ Open Door Policy for parents/guardians
- ✓ Walkathons and special events
- ✓ Volunteer orientation and training

**C) Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate**

Silver Creek values the importance of every child and family feeling safe, connected and that they belong at the pre-school. Children are provided with support and understanding of their emotional and sensory needs in order to communicate and interact in a positive way by:

- Supporting and providing for verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.
- Supporting children in managing their behaviour and emotions.
- Encouraging children to test their limits and thereby increase their competencies.
- Supporting children's ability to manage stress and recover.
- Creating an environment that is inclusive, calm and stress free.

Silver Creek's  
ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ A total communication approach
- ✓ On-site communication team including a Speech and Language Pathologist and Communicative Disorder Assistant, as well as active partnerships with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital's Communication and Writing Aids Service
- ✓ Sign Language Course for parents/caregivers
- ✓ Self-regulation tools and strategies including Snoezelen Room, Zones of Regulation Program and small rooms to optimize learning

## D) Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry

Silver Creek respects that play is a child's primary work. Silver Creek's modified Emergent Curriculum supports children's learning by providing for their interests; viewing staff and children as co-learners; and providing materials and experiences that allow a child to learn in a meaningful and safe manner. In these ways, we support engagement, belonging, expression and well-being. The individual learning of each child is encouraged by:

- Ensuring that the space and experiences provided promote play and inquiry based learning and increase awareness and understanding of key concepts such as literacy and numeracy.
- Recognizing that the learning styles and needs are different for each child.
- Providing equipment, adaptations and support to ensure all children participate to the best of their abilities within an inclusive learning environment.

### Silver Creek's ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Advanced studies/Resource teacher certifications for staff
- ✓ Adapted toys/materials/equipment
- ✓ Extensive specialized equipment for positioning and mobility

## E) Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

Silver Creek views our team as co-learners with the children. Respecting the child as a curious learner, we support the child's sense of belonging, well-being and expression by:

- Participating with children as a co-investigators, co-learners and co-planners.
- Seeking new ideas to facilitate children's exploration and understanding of the world around them.
- Working with families and community partners to facilitate optimal learning experiences.
- Providing a modified emergent curriculum.

### Silver Creek's ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ High ratio of staff to children in the classroom
- ✓ Parent in the Classroom program
- ✓ Provision of information to parents regarding opportunities in the community; i.e. the Silver Creek Community Resources Guide
- ✓ Snoezelen Room
- ✓ Accessible, naturalized playscape

**F) Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported**

Silver Creek believes every child is rich in potential. It is our goal to create the environment and opportunities for inclusive, creative and inquisitive learning and development through play by:

- Planning and providing active and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that are creative, relevant and meaningful to each child.
- Providing materials and activities that are open-ended and that encourage literacy and numeracy.
- Providing daily routines that are seamless and require minimal transitions.
- Documenting each child's interests, activities and learning outcomes.
- Providing an environment and program adaptations that support children to participate and that acknowledges and values diversity.
- Supporting children as co-planners.
- Developing and establishing goals in collaboration with each family; i.e. including parents as partners.

Silver Creek's  
ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Adapted toys/materials/ equipment (e.g. communication and mobility devices)
- ✓ Learning Outcome Binders for each family
- ✓ Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Pathology and Music therapy on site
- ✓ Small group learning opportunities (e.g. Pathways to Printing program, Music and Movement groups)
- ✓ Gesturetek virtual play system
- ✓ Transportation service available to and from Silver Creek

**G) Provide indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, in the day and give consideration to the individual needs of the children**

Children's health, well-being and engagement are fostered both indoors and outdoors, while respecting and being aware of each child's physical and developmental strengths and challenges. We provide regular daily opportunities for children to be physically active, limiting activities where children are sedentary for an extended period of time by:

- Using our naturalized, accessible play space as the classroom
- Making changes to our indoor gross motor room environment to keep it stimulating and engaging for children with various interests, abilities and needs in each classroom.
- Being flexible in providing for the daily needs of the children; e.g. active vs. quiet activities, being attuned to children's varied sensitivities and arousal states.
- Changing the classroom environment/set up to facilitate necessary quiet areas vs. active play.

Silver Creek's  
ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Self-regulation programs and strategies
- ✓ Music Therapy
- ✓ Snoezelen Room

## H) Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

Silver Creek recognizes that parents are the first and most powerful influence in their children's learning, development, health and well-being. We endeavour to engage the child and family in these critical early years, creating a sense of community and empowerment as well as increasing parental knowledge of and access to services by:

- Daily written communication with toddler families.
- Learning Outcome Binders with photos. These are available to families daily and sent home monthly and families are invited to comment on the documentation.
- Daily program observations are recorded and are available to parents.
- Twice yearly Parent-Team meetings, to establish goals and discuss progress.
- Twice yearly written reports to parents regarding their child's progress in the program.
- Provision of School Transition support, including School Board case conferences.
- Use of email communication with consent.

### Silver Creek's ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Established website with program services information, including current events
- ✓ Silver Creek Facebook page
- ✓ Parent Social evenings
- ✓ Parent Workshops
- ✓ Community Resources Guide for families
- ✓ Parent in the Classroom program/outreach
- ✓ Weekly facilitated parent drop-ins
- ✓ Monthly opportunity for parents to enjoy coffee together at a local coffee shop ("2<sup>nd</sup> Cup on Us")
- ✓ On site space for parents to use every day (Parent Room)
- ✓ Provision of information management tool for parents—The KIT™ (Keeping it Together binder)

**l) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and program staff**

Silver Creek welcomes community partners to collaborate and share in developing the physical and mental health of the children, with written permission from parents/guardians. In this process, we expect collaboration and sharing from the community partners. This collaboration serves to promote the overall health and well-being of the children as well as create a sense of community and belonging through:

- Partnering with outside agencies and medical professionals.
- Providing opportunities to expose the children to such community partners as the library, police, firemen and neighbours.
- Welcoming and mentoring high school, college and university students.
- Facilitating connections to community co-learners including volunteers, service groups, and businesses.

Silver Creek's  
ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Community partners include but are not limited to:
  - Communication and Writing Aids Service (CWAS) through Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
  - Blind Low Vision Services (BLV)
  - Toronto Pre-School Autism Services (TPAS)
  - Infant Hearing Program consultations
  - Early Abilities
  - Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
  - Surrey Place Centre (SPC)
  - Orthotics clinics
  - Fundraising supporters
  - City of Toronto—Every Child Belongs (ECB)
  - Early years programs reciprocal visits
  - School Team site visits including Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), Peel Region School Board, York Region School Boards
  - W. Ross McDonald School
  - Transportation services to and from Silver Creek, within a specific geographical area

**J) Support the staff who are working with the children by providing daily program support as well as professional development throughout the school year.**

Silver Creek values the expertise of its interdisciplinary staff and encourages each professional's creativity, innovation and forward thinking in order to build a sense of engagement and belonging and ultimately an optimal service to children and families. We accomplish this by providing:

- Professional development via continuing education courses
- First Aid and CPR training
- Policy and Procedure reviews
- Speakers
- Team Building day
- Time for staff meetings and team-specific meetings
- Time for planning
- Daily mentoring and classroom support from the Teacher Supervisor and Executive Director
- Staff work space and on-site technology

Silver Creek's  
ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Support with enhanced resources/time out of classroom
- ✓ Fundraising to support 'wish list' of staff
- ✓ Opportunities to collaborate with other early years settings such as child care centres and Junior Kindergarten classes

**K) Provide documentation and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (A) to (J) on the children and their families.**

Silver Creek's Executive Director and Teacher Supervisor will provide documentation through our monitoring form that looks at concrete, achievable outcome markers for evaluation of responsibilities under program statements (A) through (J) by:

- Including monitoring of performance on the program statements in the annual staff evaluation and behaviour management processes.
- Surveying families regarding their satisfaction, and obtaining their input.

All staff (new and returning), students and volunteers will review this program statement annually, prior to interacting with children and whenever the statement is modified.

Monitoring will include staff discussions and be a standing item on bi-weekly staff meeting agendas and on Teacher Meeting agendas.

Silver Creek will continue to look at our Program Statement as a living document and make changes and additions that reflect our true practice and the expectations of "How Does Learning Happen?"

We encourage our families to refer to our Parent Handbook for other pertinent information about the structure of your child's day at Silver Creek, the staff who are working at Silver Creek, and policies and procedures that guide our practices. We will be responsive to your questions and concerns and appreciate your input into your child's first early learning experience.

