## Mission, Vision, Values and Program Statement

**Mission**

We provide quality childcare and early learning through forest school education, embracing the whole child, nurturing a connection to nature and inspiring a love of life-long learning.

**Vision**

Leadership in learning through nature. Growing Bright Futures for our Community.

**EaB Values**

Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre employees, students and volunteers are committed to providing child care and early learning guided by these values. To better understand Emmanuel’s values, we have articulated them through behaviour statements:

**FAMILY**

Family is relationships based on love, support, and trust. By this definition, we at Emmanuel are a family and treat each other as such. We prioritize and respect Emmanuel families according to their values. We care for children the way their families want us to.

**BELONGING**

We are responsive to the essential need to feel accepted and loved for who we are and to feel included and part of the Emmanuel family. We celebrate the whole child and the whole person, including all interests and dimensions of diversity, not only to ensure equity and a safe space for all, but to learn from each other and grow in our knowledge as a community.

**COMMUNITY**

Our approach to learning embeds the child within the broader community, Emmanuel and beyond. We enhance leadership skills illustrating that everyone has a role in contributing to community wellbeing and instilling social responsibility. We engage the children, employees, families, volunteers, neighbours, partners, the city, the region, and other key stakeholders for learning, development, planning, and giving back to the community.

**NATURE EXPLORATION**

With the view of each child as being capable and competent, we provide opportunities to explore, make discoveries, and support risky play in the natural world. We foster a child’s natural sense of curiosity and inspire a life-long love of learning through emergent forest and nature pedagogy, as well as land based Indigenous teachings; enhancing connection to self, others, and the world around them.

**NURTURING CARE**

Through authentic interactions that are emotionally supportive and responsive to the needs of each child in our care, we promote physical, emotional, social and cognitive development to enable individuals to reach their potential.

## **Program Statement**

Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre (EaB) is dedicated to growing bright futures for our community. Our Program Statement outlines our goals and approaches to ensure the create the best possible foundation for each individual child’s learning, development, health, well-being, and creative expression.

At Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre, our philosophy of learning celebrates each child and their individual learning style, personality, skills, and interests. While we believe that learning happens everywhere, special attention is paid to the creation of intentional environments that foster rich learning through play, exploration, inquiry, and relationships with others. Our learning environments are inspired by the four foundations of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (HDLH): Well-being, Belonging, Expression and Engagement.

Children are active stewards of their own learning. We view them as competent, capable, curious, rich in potential by:

* using the guiding principles of [Forest and Nature School Canada](https://childnature.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/FSC-Guide-1.pdf)  and [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years](http://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf), we provide emergent curriculum experiences that follow children’s interests and build on their strengths and abilities.
* embracing the benefits of safe risk taking
* providing emergent curriculum experiences through rich environments following the children’s interests with a focus on free play, ecological identity, exploration, inquiry, and relationship building.
* creating natural play spaces that reveal the authentic respectful approach to the learning process.
* connecting to sophisticated land-based wisdom of Canada’s First Nation’s, Metis and Inuit cultures.

At EaB, we promote health, safety, nutrition, well-being of children by:

* creating safe and healthy environment providing ample outdoor free play opportunities for all ages, naturally establishing optimal health, with a focus on nutrition and well-being.
* keeping accurate records (ie attendance, allergy sheets, etc.)
* adequately supervising the natural play spaces and indoor environments and completing visual checks of sleeping and resting children
* providing additional staffing as needed for each group and regularly in our Forest and Nature School Program (FNS) for each enhanced activity involving specific equipment and practices.
* seeking family input to ensure that each individual child’s well-being and overall health needs are being valued.
* assessing and analyzing safe risk-taking opportunities according to practices outlined by Forest and Nature School Canada’s requirements.

At EaB, we share in the belief that authentic, caring relationships are at the heart of a healthy and purposeful learning community.  We support positive, responsive interactions and communication among, children, parents, and staff by:

* encouraging parents and families to participate in all aspects of our program as experts on their child and their child’s learning, development, health and well-being; recognizing parents and families as competent, capable and curious about their child’s learning.
* ensuring confidentiality and professionalism are the cornerstone of our approaches and practices.
* forming strong relationships with our families providing opportunities for each family to share information about their child(ren) in a professional and supportive manner.
* paying special attention to communicating the many exciting things happening day-to-day within our Centre, including pedagogical documentation, portfolios, class visits, learning stories and communication books.
* ensuring respectful and sincere communication are highly valued within our community, and opportunities to problem-solve, make suggestions and provide input happen in a variety of ways to best meet the needs of each child, their family and our staff.

The children form relationships and practice behaviours that are foundational to effective lifelong communication and assist in creating a sense of belonging. At EaB we encourage positive communication/interaction and self-regulation by:

* encouraging children to develop an understanding and competence in emotional expression, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation.
* reducing the sources of stress to create optimal support for learning experiences for all ages and abilities.
* focusing on positive, respectful, supportive interactions when communicating
* supporting expression and communication through observation, listening, and pedagogical documentation
* encouraging child directed, positive communication and recognizing how it creates pathways to self-regulation and problem solving.

The children inspire us, and each other, with their natural sense of curiosity, capacity for creative play and their unique and individual ways of constructing knowledge.  At EaB, we foster exploration, play, inquiry by:

* supporting the children’s experiments and discoveries by providing age-appropriate provocations and materials
* recognizing and promoting the value of uninterrupted free play through providing ample time and space; implementing flexibility into our schedules and daily rhythms of life.
* recognizing the environment as a third teacher
* researching and implementing Forest and Nature School Canada’s ethos.
* collaborating throughout pedagogical documentation

Together, educators and students co-create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that both find inspiring and positive. At EaB, we provide child initiated and adult-supported experiences by:

* striving to create diverse, positive learning environments that meet each child’s individual abilities.
* promoting child-initiated curriculum and opportunities to research the children’s previous knowledge, reflect upon learning experiences, expand upon the children’s thinking, and invite experts from our community to join our projects to broaden our learning.
* promoting the theory of loose materials in creating child directed materials to support emerging projects.
* supporting partnerships and relationships through child directed learning experiences.
* respecting the children’s inquiry and thought processes, scaffolding the learning gracefully as initiated by the children.
* staying current on research informed practices

We balance active play, indoor and outdoor play, quiet time, rest periods and meal times. The daily schedule is designed in response to the diverse abilities and interests of our learners. We do this by:

* providing ample outdoor natural play spaces that give children the opportunity to explore, discover, participate in healthy risk taking, and make meaning from the natural world.
* ensuring every child feels that they belong and are a valuable contributor to their surroundings
* embracing unpredictability and flexibility within our programs
* creating Pedagogical Documentation that communicates learning processes to the children, families and our community.

Local community partners play an important role in our dynamic at EaB. We are involved with and support our local community partners by:

* continuing to enrich our community relationships we have built throughout five decades of our history.
* fostering and building upon community partnerships with local universities, colleges, high schools, the Perimeter Institute, and a variety of government-sponsored programs.
* supporting students through their professional work placement practicums and provide inclusive volunteering opportunities for members of our community.
* engaging in communities of practice based on our professional collaboration system with other centres in the Region of Waterloo and beyond.
* connecting with Forest and Nature School Canada and participate in and share research projects.

**Program Statement Implementation Policy**

Our centre has a Program Statement that is consistent with the Minister’s policy statement on programming and pedagogy referred to in How Does Learning Happen? The Program Statement reflects the view of the child as being competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Our Program Statement describes the goals that guide our program for children and the approaches that will be implemented in the program.

* The leadership team will ensure that the educators, volunteers or students are fully aware of, and fully understands the Program Statement and its implementation as well as the policies.
* Our program uses pedagogical documentation to illustrate how the approaches are being implemented into the program. This will provide evidence that the approaches in the Program Statement are being implemented (e.g. learning stories, child portfolios, Parent Portal)
* Our daily practices, program plans and classroom environments are aligned to the Program Statement. The leadership team will use observations, interactions and conversations to monitor and ensure that our educators, students and volunteers are engaging with the children in a positive and supportive manner, and to provide them with the relevant feedback when necessary to increase their awareness of their interactions with the children in their care.
* Contravention of the Program Statement and Policies will be documented in the appropriate staff file and may result in disciplinary action. This Policy must be reviewed with staff, volunteers and students, prior to commencing employment and on a minimum of an annual basis or when any changes take place. Records pertaining to the monitoring of our Program Statement and policies are retained for a minimum of three years.