



## Curriculum Statement

Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc. recognizes that play is essential for optimal development and learning in every young child and for that reason we offer a play-based, developmentally appropriate and responsive curriculum. Play fosters all aspects of a child's development. In honoring child's play, we honor the whole child.

Prairie Nature CC is an inclusive Centre, children of all abilities have equal access to participate in learning experiences provided through the interactions and relationships, the environment and the experiences we provide (more information included in PNCC's Inclusion Policy).

Prairie Nature recognizes and respects diversity. Diversity strengthens a child's self-esteem, confidence and emotional development. Opportunities are provided to help children learn that individuals are different and they also have some similarities. We do this by having a variety of materials available to the children such as books, photos, and dress up clothes, dolls, and toy people that represent various cultures, race, age, abilities and gender. We also plan activities and serve foods that reflect the cultural diversity of families in our program and community. To enhance our relationship and knowledge of the community, children may go on fieldtrips in the neighbourhood such as Winnipeg Harvest, the grocery store and take a bus to the Legislative Building.

### **Interactions and Relationships**

The staff at PNCC interact with children and their families in a warm, sensitive, responsive manner so we can develop relationships with one another. PNCC's staff understand the importance of building relationships with individual children. This is done by finding common interests, spending time with each child and observing their learning styles.

Prairie Nature CC regards physical contact and closeness with children as natural and essential. Touching shows that the caregivers are at ease with a child who wants to sit on their knee, hold their hand, or share a hug. (More information is included in PNCC Touch Policy) It is important for children to feel safe and secure so that they can develop a sense of trust.

Staff show enjoyment being with children and are enthusiastic about children's efforts. They are positive role models by using positive language. Staff see all children as capable, competent, motivated learners. Staff are developing into pedagogical leaders so they take on more of a role of a researcher rather than a teacher. They decide whether to lead or follow children's interests, when to provoke a new interest, when to work side by side with a child, to give verbal encouragement or when to stand aside and observe or wait to make the most of children's learning opportunities. We see children as delightful little scientists, explorers, acrobats, and scholars who use all of their senses, their whole bodies and their behaviours as tools for investigating the world.

Staff learn from and support children's learning by observing (not interrupting unnecessarily), by giving encouragement when they provide materials to expand children's play and by giving ideas and choices. Staff may take photos of children doing interesting things. Staff listen and may record quotes from children. These forms of observations are shared with the staff and families and they may be used for a future learning story, book or a



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part of an Instagram post for families. Staff use this information to learn from the children. Staff will also use this information to determine the interactions, play space and materials and experiences to provide. While staff interact with and observe children they ask open-ended questions and make comments to stimulate children's reasoning. For example, "Why do you think that is happening? Is there another way to do that?" Staff at PNCC form positive and trusting relationships with families. We do this through conversations and sharing. Open communication with parents is important; this is done through parent boards, invitations into the classroom (for example, volunteering opportunities, potlucks) and our web site. Families are welcomed into our programs and can expect a short orientation as well as a program overview when their child begins. Children will have easy access to family pictures to ensure feelings of security. This is another way of keeping families connected while they are separated. We describe how we support children's learning through our documentation- notes, photos and children's artwork are displayed to show parents and visitors purposeful planning, implementation and responsive developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Prairie Nature's curriculum provides opportunities for group play and other social interactions. This helps children learn to self-regulate and respect the comments, thoughts and opinions of others. Children are encouraged to talk to each other to solve problems and will show creative thinking when staff don't solve all problems for them. We also refer children to other children for learning opportunities, helping the children to become the expert in this form of peer role modeling. For example, a child has just explained to a group of children how he helped his mother bake cookies last night. This child now can help his friends learn to bake cookies.

### **Environment**

Prairie Nature provides a welcoming atmosphere where children are motivated to learn. The children are provided with a variety of developmental areas for their learning and development such as: dramatic play area - where children learn to negotiate roles and imagine; fine motor space - where children develop dexterity and hand control; large muscle (outdoors and the gym) - where children practice balance and coordination; block and construction zone - where children can develop numeracy and decision making skills; science area - where children learn to predict and solve problems; water and sand space - where children can regulate emotions and get along with others; a music area - where children develop language and literacy; art zone - where children develop self-esteem and creativity. We encourage children to become independent explorers by making materials and play areas accessible in our play space.

Staff will place labels on shelves and toy bins as well as children's names on personal items such as lockers which assist children in their independence and literacy skills. Exposing children to books and sight words will also help them learn pre-reading skills such as recognizing their own name.

Learning centres and invitations to play are set up using the information staff find in their observations. They change the materials when children seem ready for a new experience. For example, we listen to what children are talking about such as a child who has just returned from a hospital visit, we can now talk about what we would need to set up a hospital in the dramatic play area.

Prairie Nature Children's Centre recognizes and values and importance of children actively exploring, engaging and experiencing natural environments and wild spaces. We understand the importance of providing



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opportunities to play, explore and learn in the outdoors and with nature. Being outside provides children with the opportunity to be more active and physical as well as develop a deep appreciation for the natural world. Giving the children extended time to connect with natural materials is critical to their personal growth both physically and emotionally. Connecting Children with Nature fosters an appreciation and respect for the environment, a platform for healthy living, enhanced wellbeing and the grounding for creative independent and resilient children. This commitment includes recognizing the importance of supporting sustainability.

### **Planned and Spontaneous Experiences**

A carefully planned schedule is an important part of Prairie Nature's curriculum. Long uninterrupted periods of free play time are available throughout the day so that children can explore toys and relationships in more depth. The daily schedule is reviewed periodically to minimize transitions. A picture schedule is posted for children to follow. When children see and follow a schedule, they learn about pre-math skills like order and sequencing. Both planned and spontaneous play experiences are provided to children to make the most of learning opportunities. During these experiences whether they are indoors or outdoors, and at any given time throughout the day, staff use observations or documentation of the children's play to identify and expand the curiosity of each child and create a learning opportunity. From that experience, staff plan related activities to expand play and enhance further development. Spontaneous experiences happen in the moment and planned experiences take more time to prepare.

Planned experiences are thought out and planned beforehand. For example, staff may provide a tent and camping equipment for play opportunities because a child shared his excitement about his family camping experience.

Spontaneous experiences are unexpected events that capture children's interest. They provide a teachable moment to enhance children's learning and development. An example may be seeing an injured animal while the children are walking around the community which might lead to the group immediately talking about it. If the children continue to talk about this event, we may use this spontaneous moment to plan other interactions, the environment, or experiences.

Digital photography is used to enhance several areas of PNCC's interactions, environment and experiences. Photos are also used to capture children's achievements and thus give children the opportunity to build self-esteem.

At Prairie Nature CC, each child feels accepted, understood, supported and respected by the staff. The children enjoy positive relationships with one another and generally find the experiences provided interesting, engaging and satisfying.

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