

# Edward Jost Children's Centre Inclusion Policy

## Our Basis and Philosophy for Inclusion

- ☞ We believe all people are of equal value and that all education and care providers have the responsibility to make high quality, balanced provisions for all people to help them to achieve their full potential.
- ☞ We believe inclusive early childhood care and learning environments are an effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes and contribute toward the creation of welcoming and inclusive communities.
- ☞ We believe that all people benefit from the opportunity to participate and learn in inclusive and diverse communities. We recognize the right of all children and families to participate regardless of ability, gender, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation or economic status.
- ☞ We strive to ensure that young children and families in our community have access to a quality early learning and care environment that is developmentally and individually appropriate regardless of differing abilities and needs.
- ☞ We believe successful inclusion is based on increasing participation by removing barriers, building bridges and celebrating human diversity.

## At Edward Jost Children's Centre our inclusion policies are based on the following principles:

1. **Zero reject:** Every child is welcome. No child will be excluded based solely on level or type of disability.
2. **Naturally occurring proportions:** The centre provides a mainstream setting. The proportion of children with disabilities accepted into the program is roughly that which occurs in the surrounding community (10 – 15%).
3. **Same range of options:** All children and families will have the same enrollment options with regard to days and hours of attendance.
4. **Full participation:** Necessary supports will be provided so that each child can participate, in some way, in the whole range of learning, play activities and daily routines offered at the centre.

5. **Parent participation:** All families are welcome. The parents', or guardians', role in the care, well-being and development of their child is honoured and supported. Parents will be able to participate in the program to the full extent of their comfort level.
6. **Advocacy:** Staff, board and families promote inclusive, accessible, affordable, quality childcare – at the centre, in the community, and as public policy. The centre advocates on behalf of individual children and their families so that funds for necessary and appropriate supports will be made available to allow for their inclusion in the program.
7. **Successful Inclusion Process:** Inclusion is successful when it is a positive experience not just for the child and family but also for educators, peers and program. The centre will actively problem solve with all participants to achieve an inclusion process that is positive for all involved.

### **Supported Funding**

At Edward Jost we recognize that in a quality childcare program many of the features that support inclusion are already in place. The board and administration understand the positive impact that reasonable wages, benefits and professional development opportunities have on the recruitment and retention of well trained staff. The centre runs with a lower than required ratio and smaller group sizes to help facilitate inclusion and provide for higher quality. Through participation in programs such as Partnerships for Inclusion, Building Blocks and the Canadian Childcare Curriculum Project we seek to improve program quality for all our children, families and teachers.

Disability specific supports such as special equipment, materials, professional development and inclusion support staff are added with funding from the Supported Child Care Grant Program, Early Childhood Development Services. (The purpose of the Supported Child Care Grant program is to provide a stable source of funding to assist in the creation or enhancement to existing inclusive childcare programs for children with special needs.) Centre administration reserves the right to determine how supported childcare funds are best used to facilitate the inclusion process for all children with special needs who are enrolled in the program.

Edward Jost Children's Centre prides itself in the efforts and commitment to being Inclusive, including the financial obligation to top up our supported funding through our operational budget to ensure the high quality programming is maintained.

### **Individualized Programs**

Programs at Edward Jost Children's Centre are based on principles of **developmentally appropriate practice**. There is a mix of child and teacher initiated activity with the largest part being **child initiated**. Daily routines and **play based**, child-directed activities provide the foundation for an **individually**

**appropriate** program that grows out of each child's learning style, interests, personality, and strengths. Our goal is to respond flexibly and creatively in providing for all the children, and in meeting the needs of each child. At Edward Jost each child has the right to the opportunity to achieve success.

Our Early Childhood Educators work with others on the inclusion team to identify the child's strengths and needs and then identify opportunities throughout the day to achieve developmental goals. In consultation with the child's family, the Resource Teacher, and other team members, they identify learning strategies that are specific to the child. The Resource Teacher turns this information into a **routine based plan** that becomes the basis for intervention and support at the centre. When the Progress Centre for Early Intervention is involved with a child our staff works closely with the early interventionist and will typically adopt their routine based plan for the child. For a further description of our roles and responsibilities please see the attached job descriptions for the Resource Teacher and Program Assistants.

**Activity-based interventions** reflect our belief that self initiated activities and interactions are more likely to stimulate, motivate and hold a child's attention. Our role is to be active, aware, observant, responsive and supportive of the child's activities while incorporating teaching and intervention strategies that support the child's development of skills.

Learning opportunities grow out of the child's demonstrated interests. The teachers can then use those interests to give the child more opportunities to learn and practice skills by providing materials and structured learning opportunities that support and extend the child's activities.

If there difficulties we use the **RAIDE process** as described by the Building Blocks Program to help us understand the issues and identify possible solutions. The goal of our interventions is to increase the child's independent, and appropriate, participation in all his or her physical and social environments. For us that's what successful inclusion is all about.

### **Working with Community Supports**

At Edward Jost Children's Centre we take a leadership role that supports the active involvement of parents, staff and other community members in the inclusion process. We see ourselves as a key player in an interdisciplinary team that will include our Resource Teacher, Early Childhood Educators, Program Assistants and parents/guardians. The team may also include early interventionists, therapists, itinerant teachers and other professionals or para-professionals.

Bearing in mind issues of confidentiality and parental consent the centre is open to team members visiting for observation, intervention and support purposes. Arrangements for visits are made with the Centre Director or the Resource Teacher.

We are a daycare. We offer group learning and care. Pull-outs may occasionally be accommodated but the goal of our inclusion program is to have the child active, involved and included with peers in learning, play and routine activities. The centre will not accommodate one-on-one pull outs if they are

disruptive to the group or the program, if the child is regularly missing other learning opportunities, or if they are carried out in a manner that is not congruent with our inclusion or program philosophy.

The centre will make every effort to support staff participation in team meetings provided we are able to maintain appropriate ratios in the classroom. We generally try to send one classroom teacher and the resource teacher to team and school transition meetings. We are also able to make meeting space available at the centre.

On occasion the resource teacher may accompany families to appointments to observe new teaching and inclusion strategies or to facilitate information sharing. When it is deemed necessary by the team, and centre administration, the resource teacher may accompany the family more often as a family support. We are not able to transport children or families to appointments.

### **Improving Inclusion Practice**

At Edward Jost Children's Centre we are committed to the principle of life long learning. We routinely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our inclusion practices. We appreciate opportunities to develop new skills and grow in our understanding of best practice in inclusive early learning and care environments. We welcome the mentoring and skill development offered to us by our partners in the inclusion process.

We are happy to share our positive experiences and knowledge of inclusion in early learning and care. We welcome students, visitors and others in the ECE community who are interested in learning about how inclusion works at Edward Jost. When possible we also provide volunteer and work experience opportunities to community and education programs that work with youth and adults who have special needs.

We look forward to opportunities to celebrate and share the achievements of the children, families and staff involved in our program. At Edward Jost Children's Centre we celebrate each other. We've been mainstreaming children since 1988. We know that inclusion works and that we're all richer for it.