

Program Plan Reflection Tool

This document is intended to be used as a resource to assist in the development and implementation of the required Program Plan for Facility-Based Programs. This companion resource sheet is not required to be submitted with the Early Learning and Child Care Program Plan Template.

Before completing the program plan, you may want to consider reflecting on your program's vision, values and goals with respect to offering quality child care.

- What areas of the program plan do you feel confident in with regards to implementing quality and best practices?
- Are there any areas that you need to work on or gain a better understanding of in order to ensure quality child care in all aspects of your program?
- What supports do you anticipate you will need in order to be successful?

The reflective questions and tips below will help guide you through each section of the Program Plan Template:

❖ Philosophy (refer to numbers 1 & 2)

What is it about the Early Learning and Child Care field that is important to you?

Have you implemented any curriculum? How is it reflected in your child-centered practices?

How is your philosophy connected to the Principles and Matters to be Considered as per the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#)?

How does your philosophy fit with the parents' beliefs and values?

Consider both child-led and staff directed activities, and how programming will meet the needs of the whole child.

What types of play experiences and opportunities will your program offer?

How will you offer flexibility in your programming to support each child's interests, needs and abilities?

Check out pg. 18 of the [Licensing Handbook on Program Plans](#).

❖ Developmental Needs of the Children (refer to number 3)

• Mental Needs

What are some ways that children will be given opportunities to build confidence?

What are some ways the program will support the growth of brain development skills such as: thinking, reading, learning, remembering, reasoning and focusing?

Click [here](#) for information on Promoting Positive Mental Health in Children.

What are some ways that your program will support interpersonal and social skills with children?

Click [here](#) for more information on early brain development.

What considerations would you make in your daily programming for the different age groups in regards to the children's intellectual/cognitive needs?

What is important about creating a safe and positive environment for children?

What will your staff do to ensure children feel safe and secure?

- **Emotional needs**

What are some ways that your program will promote self-regulation with children in their daily routines?

Learn about the importance of [serve and return](#) interactions with children.

What does being a "responsive caregiver" mean to you? What is important about this?

What do you hope the children would say about the staff?

How would parents describe the staff-child interactions?

How will the staff observe and adapt their practice to meet children's emotional needs?

How will staff help children recognize how they are feeling and label it?

What strategies and supports will staff use to nurture caring connections and meet children's emotional needs?

Consider how your program structure and room arrangement will support children's fluctuating needs throughout the day (e.g. calm and quiet sensory spaces, open spaces for gross motor games etc.).

- **Spiritual needs**

Consider the impact on children's safety, security and well-being when their spiritual beliefs are reflected in the program.

What is important about ensuring children's spiritual needs are valued, protected and supported?

How will the program identify and celebrate the uniqueness of each child?

How will the program encourage and honour children's natural curiosity?

What are some ways that your program will provide children opportunities to explore individual belief systems and values?

How will you provide opportunities for children to learn about the influence of their community and the world in which they live in?

- **Physical needs**

How will the staff provide intentional and meaningful activities both indoors and outdoors that promote physical activity (e.g. age appropriate fine and gross motor activities)?

How will the program encourage exploration in outdoor play environments which are safe and appropriate to the child's age and development?

Visit the [Alberta Health Services](#) website to review the guidelines surrounding food handling, play equipment, sleeping areas and more.

How will the program provide flexibility within the daily routine based on the individual needs of each child?

How will the physical environment be set up to encourage rest (e.g. lighting, soft music, bedding etc.)?

How will the staff promote rest and relaxation based on children's physical needs?

What strategies will staff use to ensure safe & smooth transitions?

What is the program's approach to meal times (e.g. family style)?

What is the program's nutritional plan?

How will the unique nutritional needs for infants be communicated and carefully monitored?

How will you ensure that the manner in which children are fed are appropriate to their age and development?

Meal times are a great opportunity for building social-emotional connections, role-modelling appropriate behaviours, and supporting independence.

❖ **Inclusive of all children including those with exceptional needs (refer to number 4)**

Consider the types of screening tools staff members have access to and/or training to identify the [milestones of growth and development](#).

What is the importance of inclusion for all children in the program?

How will your program recognize and value diversity?

How will staff be supported during challenging situations or naturally demanding periods throughout the day?

What considerations will staff make for children with exceptional needs?

How will your program adapt to ensure children of all abilities are provided equal opportunity and are respected and valued (e.g. teaching sign language)?

How will the program collaborate with families in order to meet their child's exceptional needs?

❖ **Supporting the child's familial, Indigenous or other cultural, social, linguistic and spiritual heritage (refer to number 5)**

How will your program collaborate with families to ensure that each child's heritage, including a child's indigenous background, is honoured and respected?

How will the children see themselves reflected in the program?

How are staff supported in their understanding of inclusion and cultural awareness?

It is a good idea to self-reflect on individual biases when it comes to diversity and cultural practices.

What opportunities will children be offered in the program that honour and foster their individual values, beliefs and traditions?

❖ **Engaging with community organizations, members and resources to support the child's optimal development (refer to number 6)**

What community connections does the program have that will support children's development?

What is the value and benefits in establishing community partnerships and resources?

How do you plan to support vulnerable families in your program?

With respect to the children and families that you serve, consider the vulnerabilities within the community (e.g. socio-economic status, newcomers to Canada etc.), and what protective factors are available.

Visit www.alberta.ca website for information on Family Resource Networks and to locate nearby supports and services.

What resources will you make available in the program for families?

How will the community and available resources enhance programming in your facility?

❖ **Parental involvement and engagement (refer to number 7)**

In what ways will parents be involved and engaged in the program?

What opportunities will the parents in the program have to provide feedback?

What would parents say is important about developing supportive and respectful relationships within their child care program?

How will families be supported in resolving conflicts within the program when they arise?

What engagement opportunities are available for staff and parents (e.g. open house, potlucks, cultural celebrations etc.)?

Think of accountability when it comes to developing your program plan. How might you involve staff, parents and stakeholders in this process?

❖ **Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the child care program (refer to number 8)**

What tools will your program use to gather feedback from staff, parents and stakeholders?

How will feedback be shared within the program?

How are you going to support staff to keep current with best practices and research in early childhood?

How would you know that you were successful in engaging parents to support accountability and monitoring of the program?

How will parents be informed on what quality child care looks like?

What would indicate that the program was successful in meeting goals for ongoing improvement?

It is important to ensure your goals are SMART:

S – Specific
M – Measurable
A – Achievable
R – Relevant
T – Time

STAFFING PLAN

❖ List of staff positions and responsibilities (refer to number 9)

The staffing plan should list all staff positions (e.g. primary staff, program supervisor, cook, driver etc.) that will be needed to meet the operational requirements of your program.

What child care certification levels will be required in your program to meet the minimum staff qualifications?

What are the day-to-day responsibilities of each role?

What information would the staff need to be successful in their role?

How will the staff be monitored and assessed on their ability to perform in their role?

What would be important about obtaining staff feedback regarding their duties and responsibilities?

How will staff be provided time for program planning?

Information on Child Care Certification can be found on pg. 34 and 35 in the [Licensing Handbook](#).

❖ Screening of staff and volunteers (refer to number 10)

What is the program's process for hiring and screening staff and volunteers?

How do screening procedures ensure the safety, security and well-being of the children?

What would parents say is important about screening staff and volunteers?

What process will the program use to track criminal record checks including a vulnerable sector search for all staff and volunteers?

Who is responsible for overseeing the hiring and onboarding process for all staff?

What education and professional experience, over and above Regulation, will your program require for new staff?

❖ Staff orientation (refer to number 11)

How is a staff member oriented to the program's administrative policies and procedures?

What is important about overseeing and supervising new staff in the program?

How will the staff be educated on the Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulation?

What additional support and/or specialized training will be provided to staff?

How will staff be included in the ongoing development and implementation of the program plan?

What is important about staff member's values aligning with your program plan?

❖ **Primary staff required to meet the staff-to-child ratios for the desired program capacity proposed (refer to number 12)**

What are some situations where your program might implement enhanced ratios (e.g. transitions, off-site activities etc.)?

How will your program ensure maximum group sizes are maintained with each age group when it comes to large play spaces (e.g. room set up, programming, small groupings)?

Consider that these ratios are the minimum, and that the staffing needs may fluctuate depending on the group and the children's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs.

❖ **Staffing plan and staff-to-child ratios during rest periods (refer to number 13)**

Rest periods are an opportunity for nurturing and strengthening connections through one-on-one and small group interactions with children.

What is your staffing plan to ensure that the program will maintain the staff to child ratios during rest periods?

What is the plan if the children awaken and primary staff have not returned from breaks?

How will the program ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the group during rest periods (i.e. sleeping and awake)?

What developmentally appropriate activities will be provided to children that do not sleep?

What are the expectations of the primary staff during these periods?

What is the role of the Program Supervisor during rest periods to monitor the implementation of this plan?

❖ **Mixed-age groups – staff-to-child ratios and meeting the needs of the children (refer to number 14)**

What age groups will be combined?

What times of the day will the program be mixing age groups?

What will the staffing plan be to ensure that the staff to child ratios are met?

What does the primary play space where mixed-age groupings will be offered look like?

Review the definition of Mixed-Age Groups on pg. 9 of the [Licensing Handbook](#) to determine whether you will need an exemption.

What are the safety measures that will be put in place to address mixed-age groups and the differing needs based on their growth and development?

What is important about providing a secure environment that provides consistency for children (e.g. room staff, times of day, rooms used etc.)?

What developmentally appropriate toys and equipment will be provided to ensure safety in the group?

What is important about considering the differences in ages and varying abilities of children that will be combined (e.g. differing routines, programming, room setup etc.)?

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

❖ **Child Guidance Policy (refer to number 15)**

Click [here](#) for a resource on positive Child Guidance.

What is important about positive child guidance?

How will children be protected from all forms of physical punishment, physical and verbal abuse, and emotional deprivation?

How do primary staff engage children in conflict resolution and problem solving?

What prevention and intervention strategies do staff use?

What tools do staff use to manage the room effectively?

How can the environment be set up to support child guidance and meet children's developmental needs?

What strategies do staff use to manage challenging behaviours?

What Child Guidance training has been provided to staff?

How do staff support children and create an environment in which children can express their emotions safely?

How will the Child Guidance policy be shared with the parents, staff, and children in a developmentally appropriate way?

What is important about including parents in developing positive child guidance strategies that will be implemented with their children?

What is important about the children understanding expectations within the program?

*What is the expectation should a parent or staff identify concerns with child guidance in the program?
What steps will the Licence Holder take?*

How will the program monitor the staff to ensure that the Guidance Policy is followed?

Refer to pg. 7 of the [Licensing Handbook](#) for a definition on Child Guidance.

❖ **Off-site Activity (refer to numbers 16 & 17)**

What information will parents need to ensure that they have been fully informed of the off-site activity?

What is important about having a planned activity or purpose for the outing?

What is the staffing plan for off-site activities?

How will the program ensure the safety and well-being of children while off-site?

Describe in detail how the program will use one time consent forms for regularly occurring off-site activities (Who, what, when, where, why and how)?

The requirements for written consent for off-site activities can be found on pg. 12 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

Consider sharing maps or photos of the location and/or the route that will be used to access the off-site space.

How will the program effectively supervise the children to ensure safety at all times?

How are you ensuring that the off-site outdoor space is safe and free of hazards prior to use?

What additional planning will be required when utilizing an off-site outdoor play space?

How will the staff maintain communication with the program while off-site?

How will the children be introduced to the space?

What guidelines will be shared with the children about safety?

How will the staff be made aware of which children have consent to go off-site to the outdoor play space?

❖ **Medication and Health Care (refer to numbers 18-20)**

How are all staff (including relief staff) made aware of any children requiring medication and/or with allergies?

How are staff oriented to the medication policies and child-specific procedures (e.g. location of medication, consent etc.)?

What information is required to be documented after medication has been administered?

How will the program communicate with parents about the administration of medication?

See pg. 12 of the [Licensing Handbook](#) for the definition of Written Consent for Medication and Emergency Medication Plans.

Consider storage for medications on-site that may need to be refrigerated as well as those that don't; multiple locked containers may be required.

Where is medication stored that will be inaccessible to the children?

Who will be responsible for overseeing medication accepted into the program and ensuring accurate documentation on the consent form?

What specific information would be important to obtain regarding a child's emergency medication plan?

How will staff be made aware of emergency medication plans?

How will this medication be transported to ensure it is always accessible by the staff and child (e.g. off-site, school)?

Who is responsible for regularly reviewing and maintaining medication in the program (e.g. checking for expiry dates, assessing need for medication)?

Consider the child's age and developmental level when it comes to accessing their emergency medication. It is important to have ongoing communication with the child's parent when developing and implementing the plan.

❖ **Menus (refer to number 21)**

Nutrition is required to be in accordance with a food guide recognized by [Health Canada](#) or [Alberta Health](#).

Where will the menu be posted in the program?

How will parents be made aware of where the menus are posted and any changes?

How will you ensure that the menu meets the children's nutritional needs?

What food guide will be followed?

How will your menu reflect options for children with allergies and special dietary considerations?

❖ **Accident or Illness (refer to numbers 22-24)**

How will parents and staff be informed of the program's Accident or Illness policy?

Who will be responsible for contacting parents in the case of an accident or serious illness?

What information will be documented in the case of an accident or serious illness of a child?

A "serious accident or illness" is defined on pg. 11 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

Any incident that seriously affects the health or safety of a child must be reported to Child Care Licensing. Information on Reporting Incidents can be found on Pg. 33 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

How will staff receive assistance in the case of an accident or serious illness of a child to ensure the safety of all children in the group?

How will your program support staff in becoming equipped to respond to an accident or serious illness?

What is the program's system for reviewing, tracking and analyzing accidents?

What is important about including the primary staff in the analysis of accidents?

What strategies will the program use to encourage reflection and obtain feedback with regard to any accident or incident that occurs?

❖ **Supervision Policy and Practices (refer to numbers 25 & 26)**

What does effective supervision look like?

How will the staff adapt their supervision practices based on the children's age, level of development, and environment?

What is the program's expectation of staff's level of engagement in play with the children?

Click [here](#) for a resource on Effective Supervision in Child Care Settings.

How will staff be made aware of the program's effective supervision strategies?

What are some circumstances or times during the day that present challenges for staff in regards to supervision?

Who will be responsible for monitoring primary staff member's supervision practices?

How will the staff ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and hazard-free prior to use?

Discuss the program's supervision strategies for sick children?

What tools and systems will the staff use to track the children both on and off-site?

What is important about ensuring attendance documents are kept up-to-date?

How will the staff ensure adequate supervision to ensure safety when transporting children in a vehicle?

❖ **Informing Parents of Postings (refer to number 27)**

Who will be responsible for maintaining these documents?

How will informing parents of required postings and Licensing reports increase children's safety?

How will your program's orientation process support parents in understanding the requirements to post, and what information is included?

Information on Duty to Post can be found on Pg. 29 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

❖ **Transportation – If Applicable (refer to number 28)**

The requirements for written consent can be found on pg. 12 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

What is important about ensuring that parents are aware of the transportation policy?

What details will be included in transportation agreements to ensure parents are well-informed?

How will you be transporting children to and from school? (e.g. walking, bus, van etc.).

What will be the expectations of the parents when it comes to informing the program of absences?

How will absences be documented and shared with staff?

What information will the program obtain from the parents regarding transportation to and from their child's school?

What is important about ensuring children have a clearly designated meeting spot?

What considerations will you make based on the children's age and level of development (e.g. meeting spot, walking arrangements etc.)?

Visit the [Alberta Transportation](#) website for information on commercial vehicle requirements.

What is important about establishing connections with the schools that your program provides transportation to and from?

When does the responsibility of the program start and end in regards to the care and supervision of children?

What is important about establishing clearly defined times and circumstances under which the transfer of care takes place?

How would the program respond to an unexpected absence of a child (i.e. missing child)?

How does the program ensure staff are familiar with the procedures for missing children?

What steps would staff take if an accident occurs while transporting children?

❖ **Overnight Child Care – If Applicable (refer to number 29)**

What is the need in the community you serve for overnight care?

How will the staff collaborate with families to ensure the individual needs of each child are met (e.g. bedtime routines, emotional comfort, nutritional needs, health considerations etc.)?

What will the program do to ease the transition for the children accessing overnight care?

What will the program do to support and reassure parents during the transition to overnight care?

What will parents be required to provide in a child's overnight bag?

How will the program address situations where a child does not arrive with the appropriate belongings?

How might the crossover between daycare and overnight care impact the children? (e.g. children sleeping in the program overlaps with when day care children arrive)

What is your staffing plan for overnight child care?

How will the program orientate the staff to overnight responsibilities and expectations?

How will staff be monitored and receive support when needed?

How will the program ensure smooth transitions and effective communication between staff on the night shift and day shift?

What is important about having an emergency plan for the child if parents are unreachable due to work restrictions?

Visit the [Alberta Health Services](#) website to review the guidelines on diapering, personal hygiene and sleeping requirements.

❖ **Records (refer to number 30)**

Consider how designated staff will have easy access to paper or digital files to ensure they are readily available for inspection.

What is important about ensuring records are up-to-date and accurate?

How will the program track and maintain up-to-date records?

❖ **Emergency evacuation procedures (refer to number 31)**

What resources will you use to develop your emergency evacuation policy?

How will your plan differ for each age group or times of day (e.g. rest periods)?

What are some strategies that staff will use to teach children about evacuations and what to expect in an emergency?

How will the children's feelings of safety and security be considered in your evacuation procedures?

How will the program ensure staff are well-versed in and have a clear understanding of the emergency evacuation policy?

How will you meet the children's needs in all kinds of weather during an evacuation?

How will you communicate with staff both on and off the program premises to ensure all staff and children are accounted for during an emergency evacuation?

What is the process for informing parents of emergency evacuations?

Consider the means of communication that will be used between staff in an emergency, the methods used to track the children both indoors and outdoors, and the accessibility of portable records in each room.

❖ **Useable Play Space (refer to number 32)**

Refer to pg. 40 of the [Licensing Handbook](#) for information on determining useable play space and diagram requirements.

How does the layout of the program support effective supervision?

How will the environment be set up to ensure children's safety (e.g. furniture and space considerations)?

How will each room differ in its physical layout to reflect the age of the children in the group?

How will the physical layout of the program support children's well-being and development (e.g. lighting, interest centres, and noise considerations)?

How would you know the physical layout of the program was successful in meeting the children's developmental needs?

How will your program adapt the environment to facilitate the varying activities throughout the day?

❖ **Outdoor Play Space (refer to number 33)**

Day Care

How will staff incorporate meaningful programming in the outdoor environment that supports children's developmental needs?

Out of School Care

How will staff ensure children are safely transported to and from the outdoor play space?

What is important about providing opportunities for daily outdoor play?

Consider the physical layout of the outdoor play space and how it will support supervision practices, the age and development of children using it, the age appropriateness of toys & equipment, and how children's exploration and early learning will be promoted.

Preschool Care

“Safe and easy walking distance” is defined on pg. 11 of the [Licensing Handbook](#).

*If your program incorporates outdoor play, what will that look like?
What considerations would you make in regards to the suitability of the outdoor play space? (e.g. location, method of transport, age appropriate playground equipment etc.)*

SCALING QUESTION:

On a scale of 0 to 10, how confident are you that the plan you have created will provide a quality program for children and families and can be implemented as described?	
10 – you are very confident that your program plan can be implemented, you have the tools and supports you need in order to be successful, your program plan has embedded quality child care that aligns with the Principles and Matters to be Considered, and complies with the <i>Early Learning and Child Care Act & Regulation</i> .	0 – you are not at all confident that your program plan can be implemented, you do not have the necessary tools and supports in order to offer the described program plan, you are uncertain of how to implement quality child care in your program, and you are unsure if the plan complies with the <i>Early Learning and Child Care Act & Regulation</i> .

What brought you to your number? What can you do to bring your number higher?

Looking at the reflective questions at beginning of this document, how has your confidence and understanding changed?

What are your next steps?

For further assistance regarding the application process and required documents, please contact your [local Licensing Office](#).