

Instructions and Tips for Creating Compliant Policies and Procedures: Program Statement (O. Reg. 137/15, ss. 46 (1-3))



Mandatory Information:

Section 46 in Ontario Regulation 137/15 under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) sets out that every licensee must have a program statement. In order to comply with the requirements under the CCEYA, your child care centre's and/or home child care agency's program statement **must**:

- Be consistent with [Ontario's policy statement on programming and pedagogy](#) which names "*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014)" as the document for guiding licensed child care programs
- Reflect a view of children as being competent, capable, curious and rich in potential
- Describe the goals that guide the program that:
 - promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children;
 - support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff;
 - encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate;
 - foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry;
 - provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences;
 - plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported;
 - incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care;
 - foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children;
 - involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff;
 - support staff, home child care providers or others who interact with the children at a child care centre or home child care premises in relation to continuous professional learning; and
 - document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) on the children and their families; and
- Describe the approaches that will be implemented in the program to achieve the goals.

Other Considerations:

The following are tips and other considerations for developing/reviewing your program statement. These tips are not mandatory, but are intended to support the development of a more comprehensive and high-quality program statement to strengthen programs and ensure high-quality experiences for children.

1. When Developing your Program Statement:

a) Reflect on your Program

- Examine how your program's current philosophy, policies and practices reflect the view of the child outlined in HDLH as a starting point.
- Examine how your program's current philosophy, policies and practices reflect the four foundations in HDLH and outline how your program will reflect these foundations.
- Consider the services offered and describe what makes your child care program unique in your program statement.

b) Collaborate

- Have conversations with other licensed child care programs and with learning communities to gather ideas, examples and strategies to help build the foundation of your program statement.
- Consider reviewing existing program statements that other licensed child care programs have developed as a reference and for inspiration.
- Engage in intentional conversations about what is happening or what you want to happen in your program. Reflect on why these practices are important and how they impact children.
- Engage with and collaborate with others with various perspectives on the program in different ways (e.g. team meetings, parent nights, surveys, recommendation boxes, etc.), including staff, students, volunteers, home child care providers, and other persons who may interact with children when developing your program statement to:
 - brainstorm and gather ideas about goals, approaches and desired impacts and outcomes for children, families, community partners and those working with children;
 - discuss the mechanisms and actions that those working with children currently undertake in their daily work to provide the best experiences for children; and
 - welcome feedback and new ideas about how the program operates and evaluate what the program can do to enhance its goals and approaches to respond to those recommendations.
- Use a collective and collaborative approach to develop a shared vision of the program to ensure everyone is invited and committed to putting the vision into practice.
- Collaborate with other licensees/providers to reflect on different experiences, perspectives and ideas in developing your program statement.

c) Consult Resources

- Consider incorporating any municipal quality assurance mechanisms or measures, where applicable and appropriate.
- Refer to the following resources for information on developing, reviewing and implementing a program statement:
 - E-Module: [Putting How Does Learning Happen? into Practice: Program Expectations for Licensed Child Care](#)
 - Early Years Portal
 - Minister's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy
 - How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
 - Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children

2. When Developing Program Statement Goals:

- Goals are desired outcome that describe what your program is striving to achieve.
- There are several options that may be used individually or in combination to develop and articulate program statement goals, such as:
 - Using the actual language set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 ss. 46(3)(a-k);
 - Using one or more of the "Goals for Children" set out under the four foundations from HDLH (belonging, well-being, engagement or expression); and/or
 - Setting out your own goals in your own words.
- Some goals may overlap and can be grouped together in developing the program statement, as shown in the example provided at the end of this tip sheet.

Reflect on the following questions and use the answers to set out your program statement goals:

- Who is the audience for the program statement?
- Will those individuals (i.e. parents/guardians, educators, home child care providers etc.) understand the language used?
- Is the goal clear and can it be easily identified in the program statement?
- Are the goals realistic and achievable in the program? Are they aligned with the requirements set out in ss. 46(3)(a-k)?
- Are the goals consistent with the view of children, families and educators, as described in HDLH?
- Have the opinions and perspectives of families, educators and others who interact with the children been considered and reflected in developing the goals?
- What is the meaning of the goals for those involved with the program?
- Do the goals reflect the unique and authentic nature of the child care program?

- Do the goals reflect the program's mission, vision and values?
- Will the goals help to strengthen the quality of the program and experiences for children?

3. When Developing Program Statement Approaches:

- Approaches describe what actions will be put in place to achieve the program statement goals. They should describe what staff, students, volunteers, providers and other persons who interact with children in the program do to achieve the goals and they should reflect your program's practice.
- The approaches should be observable for educators, families and Ministry staff and should clearly connect to achieving the program statement goals.
- Some approaches may overlap and can be grouped together in developing the program statement, as shown in the example provided at the end of this tip sheet.
- Consider pedagogical approaches outlined in HDLH which provide the means ('how to') for working toward achieving goals for children. Grounded in research, theory and practice, these approaches may include, but are not limited to:
 - Responsive relationships;
 - Learning through exploration, play and inquiry;
 - Educators as co-learners;
 - Environment as third teacher;
 - Pedagogical documentation; and
 - Reflective practice and collaborative inquiry.

Reflect on the following questions and use the answers to set out your program statement approaches:

- What are those who are involved in the program already doing to support the achievement of the goals?
- Do the approaches align with your program's philosophy/pedagogy?
- Will the approaches directly support staff, students, volunteers, home child care providers, etc. in achieving the goals?
- Can those who read the program statement understand and implement the approaches?
- Will you be able to observe and assess that these approaches are being implemented in the program?
- Do the approaches reflect the unique and authentic nature of the child care program?

4. After Developing your Program Statement:

- Treat the program statement as a living document that evolves with the program as learning and understanding expands, processes change and families and children change, and that responds to changing community and program needs.
- Discuss and reflect on the written goals and approaches on a regular basis with these groups to ensure they remain current and relevant and that the program statement continues to reflect the program as it may change and evolve over time.

Program Statement Example

The example of a program statement excerpt below demonstrates how a goal and an approach can meet requirements for more than one provision set out in subsection 46(3) (a-k) of Ontario Regulation 137/15:

Program Statement

Our programs strive to:

1. meet the individual developmental needs of the whole child; [goal that meets ss.46(3) a, f, g]
2. promote child-led and active exploration opportunities in carefully planned learning environments; [goal that meets ss.46(3) d, e, f]
3. foster positive relationships, maintain communication and support continuous learning between staff, children, families and community partners; and [goal that meets ss.46(3) b, c, h, i, j]
4. document and reflect on the effectiveness of our program. [goal that meets ss.46(3) k,j]

In our programs you will see:

- a wide variety of open-ended play materials in loosely defined areas so that children can freely use the materials to support their exploration, inquiry and play with bodies, minds and senses. [approach that supports achieving goals #1 and #2]
- periodic visits from and to community partners (e.g., librarian, local market) to enhance the children's experiences. [approach that supports achieving goals #1 and #3]
- pictures of the children engaged in play, learning stories that documents the children's experiences and feedback from parents posted on the parent information board. [approach that supports achieving goals #3 and #4]

In our programs you will hear:

- dialogue between staff and children that support problem solving and co-learning throughout the entire day. [approach that supports achieving goals #1 and #3]
- daily communication and the exchange of information with families and staff. [approach that supports achieving goal #3]