**Understandings to Look for in an Early Years Teacher**

This document has been prepared to support understandings of the responses for the interview questions

**Philosophy of Early Learning**

* Young children arrive in early learning programs from diverse backgrounds and with a variety of experiences.
* Children develop through similar stages but at individual rates, and they need differing amounts of time and support to develop common understandings.
* Early Learning programming recognizes and supports each child’s prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning pace, personal traits, interests and goals, and preferred learning styles.
* Child centered- all decisions are made in the best interests of the child(ren) involved.

**Emergent Curriculum**

The ability to follow students lead by determining and building upon their interests, scaffolding them to explore deeper learning and learner outcomes.

**Inquiry based learning**

Young children are naturally curious and eager to learn. They are active learners who learn through a variety of means. Children experience a range of appropriate experiences and interactions that enable them to add to their knowledge, learn new skills and practise familiar ones through self-initiated and structured activities. Through organized activities and purposeful play, children explore and experiment with their environment. They clarify and integrate information and concepts encountered in their previous experiences.

**Importance of Play**

Play is a young child’s work, it is the way they make sense of the world Uninterrupted play is foundational to development of executive functioning skills, critical thinking, problem solving, social-emotional development and relationships. • Purposeful play is an important mode of learning for children. Children at play are highly motivated and capable of intense concentration.

**Teacher’s Role**

The teacher facilitates intentional, rich opportunities through responsive listening, questioning, and observations. The teacher scaffolds learning while allowing children to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers facilitate and model, responsive interactions through observations, listening, provoking and questioning. The teacher must deeply understand the curriculum as well as child development.

**Play Based Environment**

A play based environment is intentionally created to allow children to explore and discover through a balance of child-directed and teacher directed activities. Adults in the program intentionally scaffold student learners to a higher level as students co-construct knowledge with peers and adults.

**Schedule**

Long blocks ofuninterrupted play time- **minimum of** **45 minutes**

Lots of small group activities- promotes more adult to child interaction

Balance between teacher directed and child directed activities

**Early Learning Environment**

We create learning environments that are responsive to children’s diverse needs; capabilities; learning styles; dispositions and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds

Varying seating, limited tables/chairs, playspaces- outdoor classrooms, accessible materials for children, loose parts (ability to transport materials from one center to another) are all developmentally appropriate for early learners.

**Strategies to Develop Literacy and Numeracy**

Developing oral language and vocabulary through active engagement is foundational

Embedding literacy and numeracy throughout all activities by providing many opportunities to listen and speak, read, write, draw, view, visualize and represent. rather than teaching isolated letters and numbers

Provide language rich environments to develop numeracy vocabulary and academic language.

Implementation of 5 key elements - phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension from The National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000)

Exposure to many mediums for writing development- not just paper print, writing tools

Joy of story, poem etc- retell, play, dramatize etc.

**Behaviour Intervention**

* Prevention through- Choice,ensure regular active breaks, appropriate expectations for developmental levels, Teaching acceptable ways to interact
* Redirect child’s attention to acceptable options
* Behaviour is communication- try to determine what the child is communicating or needs, then teach acceptable ways to meet their needs
* **ACT-** Acknowledge the emotion, Communicate the limit, Target the required action
* **Tantrum** Know the individual- Respond appropriately, Calm child down, talk quietly, reassuring voice or provide time and space for child to self calm
* **Time-outs** Are not an acceptable way to deal with behaviour challenges
* Punishment vs logical/natural consequences- must be developmentally appropriate
* Time- away – by choice to self regulate or calm
* **Self-Regulation**
	+ The ability to manage emotions and behaviour, handle challenges and remain in a calm and alert state, ready to learn. At times some children will need calming, others will require energizing.

**Self-regulation strategies**

* Relationship development
* Limiting noise and environmental stimulation
* Learning how calm body- yoga, breathing, physical activity, etc
* Outdoor connections
* Music

**Communication**

**Key Messages**

* Importance of play
* Individual development
* Honouring diversity and creativity
* Process more important than product
* Provision of rich environments and activities-
* Emergent curriculum and documentation of learning

**Modes of Communication**

* Good news phone calls
* Social Media
* Newsletters
* Class website
* Documentation panels
* Individual on-line documentation eg Freshgrade, Seesaw
* Portfolios
* Book Creator app (can load to Drop Box)

**Parent Conversations**

Early Learning programs support and respect the dignity and worth of the family as parents play a central role in the lives of their children. Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers and family influences are lifelong. The values and beliefs of the home are acknowledged, and the cultural diversity of families is recognized.

Start conversations with positive affirmations of child and their strengths. (Share the positive, the meat of the matter, and the positive = sandwich messages)

**Upset Parent**

Ensure that the parent feels heard. Listen to their concerns without becoming defensive. Seek to understand.

Try to determine the parent’s goal. Paraphrase what parent says to ensure understanding. Ask clarifying questions. Gently remind parent that you both share the goal of helping the child, your strategies may differ, but you are on the same side.

If extremely upset, suggest meeting the next day when you are able to both be more informed.

**Suspected Developmental Delay**

Conversations must take into account the individual needs of the family, with the teacher drawing out from the parent confirmation or rejection of specific teacher observations.

Present info using strength based approach. (Sticky note IPP model- strengths, weaknesses, goals and strategies from both the parent and school perspective)

**Team Development**

Team needs a leader who takes into account the strengths that each person brings to the group, while acknowledging the power of WE.

Work on developing a shared vision and sharing the responsibility for the success of the students by encouraging, accepting and validating others contributions and sharing accolades.

Teams are built through relationships - mentoring, modeling, and providing explicit directions to develop understanding and shared vision.