

What parents need to know

What is YMCA Playing to Learn?

The publication of *YMCA Playing to Learn* signals an important milestone in the history of the YMCA of Greater Toronto and an important development in the field of early childhood education.

YMCA Playing to Learn is a curriculum we have been developing and implementing over the past two years. The theoretical basis for this curriculum is

It delivers on our promise to continuously improve the quality of programs and services we provide for children.

well-known and accepted. It is based on what we – as child care professionals – know to be true. What is new is the framework and structure the YMCA

True play is the way children learn, and true play provides adults with insight into what a child – at that particular moment in time – is capable of learning.

is putting in place to train early childhood educators. This is, in and of itself, an exciting development. We are providing our early childhood educators with the opportunity to further their own education and skill at nurturing the development of young children.

We believe YMCA Playing to Learn is the best approach to ensure a child's continued enthusiasm and capacity for life-long learning.

YMCA Playing to Learn provides an understanding of how play provides the foundation for learning to read and write, and for learning mathematics, science and technology. It provides early educators with the skills to prepare spaces that are more conducive to learning, and the best practices to encourage quality learning experiences.

YMCA Playing to Learn combines three decades of experience in child care delivery, with the latest body of knowledge on how the brain develops and how children learn.

What will your child be doing?

All the things your child wants to do. There will be story time. Time to play with blocks. Opportunities to count and compare. To make pictures and to sing. To make-believe. They will experience the world. They will explore and investigate.

How will your child be learning?

Your child will be playing to learn. We have known for a very long time that child's play provides the foundations for language and literacy; for mathematics, science and technology; and for the arts. It is the type of play opportunities provided at the YMCA that determines what your child learns.

Foundation of the Arts

Music

Experiencing music through listening and participating provides a powerful means of expressing feelings, developing humor and supports the learning of language. The child becomes aware of, and appreciates the richness of unfamiliar cultures and traditions.

Visual Art

The visual arts in the early years involve picture-making, printmaking, sculpting, and two-dimensional artwork. Producing these works of art gives children an understanding of the elements of design.

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play is a fundamental activity for all children. It provides a means for children to learn those lessons that "no one could teach them." The child's make-believe play is a reworking of bits and pieces of experience to understand people and their actions.





Foundation of Language & Literacy

Language

Children need to be provided with many meaningful opportunities to talk and respond to language. Children recognize language not only as communication directed towards them, but, also between others. Socio-dramatic play provides the ideal conditions for language learning.

Reading

It is never too early to introduce books. Children who are read to find it easier to learn to read and write. Reading aloud in small groups invites participation and enables the educator to teach children the concepts of print.

Writing

Picture-making is considered to be a vital component of early writing. A child's scribble is a form of communication comparable to the babble of early talk. Children's early attempts at writing should be met with the same enthusiasm as their earliest talk.



Foundation of Mathematics, Science & Technology

Numeracy

The concept of number develops through many opportunities to count and compare. Making use of these opportunities encourages young children to expand their mathematical reasoning and learn the language needed to describe what they understand. Free play with a wide variety of materials and toys is essential.

Science

The preschool child uses intuition rather than logic, yet essentially uses all of the mental activities used by mature scientists in the process of inquiry. Inquiry is born of play and at any age, exploring materials, ideas and relationships refine the capacity to think.

Technology

Technology is an integral part of the everyday life of children. The methods of technology involve inventing or modifying structures, systems, or processes using exploration and experimentation. Block play integrates learning of mathematics, technology and science as children explore.



What will the YMCA early educator be doing?

Supporting you in your role as parent. Providing a safe environment for your child. Preparing spaces that are more conducive to learning. Carefully watching to determine what your child – at a particular moment in time – is capable of learning. Actively participating in your child's play experiences. Observing and documenting the milestones in your child's life to ensure age-appropriate development.

Through *YMCA Playing to Learn*, your child's early educator is more attentive, more involved and more aware of how your child is developing and what your child is learning.

In other words, YMCA Playing to Learn is a guide to the quality care and education of young children, from infancy to age six.



MISSION The YMCA is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth through participation and service to the community.

inclusiveness · health · respect
responsibility · caring · honesty

VISION The YMCA will be a leader in enhancing civil society, where people are respectful and supportive of one another, within Canada's most diverse community.



United Way

Your YMCA's charitable registration number is: 11930 7080 RR0001

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