

AVM KITCHENER

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Version 2.0, August 2020



learn. grow. achieve.™

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Philosophy

At Angus Valley Montessori Schools (AVM) our program, philosophy and approach to working with children are inspired by Maria Montessori. Children at Montessori Schools are active participants in their learning. We as educators provide the children with tools and resources that lead the child into self-directed learning and problem-solving.

At AVM we believe that every child belongs and is welcome. We understand that learning is an active process whereby opportunities to explore and interact with the environment are key components in a child's growth and development. Underlying this, we understand that a child's growth follows a development sequence, but within that sequence, each child grows and develops at their own rate and in unique ways.

At AVM we believe that learning is a shared responsibility between the home and the teachers. We know it's important to communicate relevant and important information about your child's experiences and accomplishments.

We at AVM accept and appreciate your participation and input in your child's development because we want to develop a seamless growth environment between home and Centre School House.

Angus Valley Montessori Schools are committed to providing a fully inclusive environment that supports the health and well-being of every child in our care in accordance with the provincial programming and pedagogy guidelines "How Does Learning Happen". This guideline is a professional learning resource that provides a common framework to help programs focus on knowledge – from research, theory and practice – of what is most important to children. It encompasses a broad range of program philosophies and approaches. We are proud to be a part of this pedagogy and to create a Centre that follows it closely.

The four foundations apply regardless of the child's age, ability, culture, language, geography, or settings.

Belonging refers to a sense of being connected to others, being valued and forming relationships.

Well-being addresses the importance of physical /mental health, self-care, sense of self and self-regulation.

Engagement occurs when children are involved, focused and able to explore their environment with natural curiosity and exuberance.

Expression or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words and use of materials.



Inclusivity

AVM is committed to the principles of equity. We believe that ethno-racial and linguistic diversity enriches and strengthens our community socially, culturally and economically, and that racism creates barriers for children, families and communities.

We foster inclusive learning by setting our children up for success in our diverse world, beyond the Montessori through exposure to different languages, family units, skin colours and abilities.

We believe that children are competent, capable and curious beings with endless possibilities in their lives. We are committed to providing a learning setting that encourages, nurtures and fosters early learning and balanced development.

In doing so AVM follows the six **Key Principles** outlined in the Early Learning Framework.

1. The early years set the foundation for lifelong learning, **behaviour, health and well-being**.
2. Partnerships with families and communities help early childhood settings to best meet the needs of young children.
3. Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are vital for optimal development and learning.
4. A planned program supports early learning.
5. Play/work is a means of learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.
6. Providing teachers with tools and learning to make them succeed.

Program Goals

Our goal at Angus Valley Montessori Schools is to provide a program that:

1. **Promotes the overall well-being of children. Health, safety and nutrition are crucial components of the program.**

Nutrition: We follow Canada's Food Guide when planning home-style cooked meals and snacks. We use locally grown (wherever possible), and seasonal vegetables and fruit purchased directly from the supplier. Teachers monitor lunches to ensure students are eating healthy, well-balanced foods.

Safety: All teachers and volunteers have Vulnerable Sector Checks completed before being on-site. The staff and students practice fire drills on a monthly basis to understand what to do in the event of a fire. We maintain a clean, safe and hygienic environment by using disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). AVM teachers are familiar with each child's medical information, exceptionalities, allergies, food restrictions, medication requirements, as well as parent's preferences with respect to diet, exercise and rest time. Children hold partner hands, keeping them safe and walking carefully while on outings.

Health: The program provides quiet time for rest and recovery; outdoor play providing gross motor movement, fun, exploration, and recreation; practices safe and regular hand washing to ensure germs are kept at bay.

2. **Encourages children to interact and communicate in a positive way and supports their ability to self-regulate.**

Approach: We give children advance notice on changes so that they are prepared for transition times. We understand that a child's growth follows a development sequence, but within that sequence, each child grows and develops at their own rate and unique way. Our classrooms are set up in a way where children are successful by having mixed age groups where children are free to develop at their own pace and learn from each other. There are also different "works" which promote learning of the same skills in different ways from easy to advance. Progress is tracked individually. One-on-one presentations are given to each child allowing the child-to-teacher relationship to grow and to have a better understanding of each child's learning style and individual

needs. We also allow children to take classroom activities outdoors so that they can use them in different surroundings. We discuss feelings when a child is upset and redirect. We encourage active play by going outdoors twice daily and teachers planning activities that provide opportunities for free and structured **play**, encouraging social interactions that develop the child **socially and emotionally**.

3. Supports positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, teachers, and staff.

Approach: Having an initial orientation with parents where they come into the class and see what is going on with their child's schedule, prior to starting. In class, we work in smaller groups or one-on-one with children. Constant observation allows teachers to have an intimate knowledge of the child's emotional, physical and psychological state. We have an open-door policy that welcomes parents to drop into the classrooms (in a non-disruptive way) at the end of the day so that they can see what their child has done and is working on.

4. Fosters engagement and ongoing communication with the parents about the program and their children.

Approach: We wish parents to feel comfortable calling AVM with questions. We also provide daily written communication, have holiday shows and family appreciation events. We ask parents to help with classroom activities such as collecting natural or recycling materials. By welcoming parents into Montessori, we create a sense of belonging. If parents feel like they belong, the children will be comfortable and well-adjusted individuals within the Montessori environment. Our goal is to create an environment that is a home away from home. Parents are also welcome to come in and read a book or speak about a job and at the end of each day. Parents can also come into the class to pick up their children, observe what they are doing or join the activity.

5. Involves local community partners and allows those partners to support the children, their families and staff.

Approach: We have many special guests from the community come in throughout the year to run special interest days for our children. We also welcome local specialists to work with our children when necessary. We meet with the parents and these specialists together to set up appropriate plans and strategies as needed.

6. Fosters the children's exploration, play and inquiry by offering activities that are open-ended in all areas.

Approach: The Montessori environment is designed to develop a foundation for creative learning and a sense of independence. The diversity of the Montessori materials, activities and experiences foster physical, intellectual, creative, social, and personal skills. We believe it is important that

children see there isn't always only one way to explore and only one outcome. We use different materials in art and allow children to access various others from the art area as they need. We also have projects that allow parents to get involved with activities. We believe that projects using recycled materials allow children to discover exactly what they want to do with the materials. We also allow children to leave their materials and later return to their play so that they can continue until they have finished exploring.

7. Provides child-initiated and adult-supported experiences by creating an environment that encourages staff and parents to get involved with their child's learning.

Approach: Our program plans are an offering of various open-ended activities that allow the children to discover that our teachers are there to ask questions. We use pictures to document activities within the classrooms so that parents can see what we are doing in the classroom and distribute monthly newsletters by email. We invite Casa parents into class to observe their children's work cycle once every year. We complete three progress report cards per year along with three parent-teacher conferences, where parents and teachers sit down to discuss the child's progress. Also, parents or staff have the flexibility to request a meeting at any time.

8. Plans and creates positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be encouraged and supported.

Approach: We do this by providing 30-45-minute music sessions each week with a professional music teacher or 20-minute French sessions twice a week in a smaller group setting. Various activities in the classrooms are available at different levels, keeping children with diverse interests engaged. We provide activities that allow children to explore and make mistakes. We do not limit what materials or activities children can use thereby allowing them to explore areas that they are interested in while still being surrounded by activities that may interest them at another time.

9. Incorporates the Montessori work cycle, indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time into the day and gives consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving childcare.

Approach: The daily schedule is a guide for outdoor playtimes and quiet times, as well as meals and snacks. With the exception of these scheduled times, all activities are open and available within the classroom.

10. Supports childcare providers, educators and other staff who interact with the children at school in relation to professional learning.

Approach: We support Montessori staff through in-class support and observation, having a developmentally appropriate curriculum to guide the teachers, observation sheets, reviewing teachers' performance, giving constructive feedback, bringing in speakers and making teachers

aware of available workshops through MOE and Public Health. We have at least three Professional Developmental Days scheduled in our yearly school calendar.

11. Documents and reviews the impact of the strategies identified in this program statement.

Approach: Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in goals one through 10 on the children and their families by, taking a minimum of 2 observations per week for Casa, a minimum 5 pictures each week for Pre-Casa and Infants, and posting them for families to see under “How Does Learning Happen?” All previous pictures are stored in a binder so that children and families can access them regularly.

Note: The Program Statement is reviewed by students and volunteers when they start their placement. The Board of Directors, staff and parents will review the Program Statement annually to ensure that it is aligned with the Ministry of Education’s policy statement.



PROGRAM STATEMENT

*Please sign and return to the office.
Thank you*

I/We the undersigned acknowledge that we have read the Program Statement of Angus Valley Montessori Schools.

_____ Please print name

_____ Teachers Signature

Office Use: Date received: _____

Administration Signature: _____