

Defining Your Philosophy

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

III. The Daily Program For Children

A. The family child care home has a clear philosophy and goals concerning the care and education of children.

1. The provider gives parents a written statement of the philosophy for the family child care home.



Cedar Glade Family Learning Center



Under the Willows Early Learning



Peluchitos Daycare

The Basics

What is a program philosophy? A program philosophy is an educational framework that guides what you do in your program. It is a set of beliefs, goals, and values about child development that informs everything from daily routines to guidance practices. A written philosophy defines the program's objective and mission and articulates its influence on children's development. The set of teaching beliefs lead the "how" of children's learning. Although all child care professionals share a common goal of nurturing children's potential, how each program achieves that goal is unique to the program's philosophy.

Why is it important? A written philosophy provides transparency and clear expectations for families, helping decide whether a family will be a good fit for a program. Having clear direction for supporting children's development is also a predictor of high-quality practice. In one study, a provider's degree of intentionality was one predictor of quality in family child care. *Intentionality* includes (1) being intentional in planning experiences for the children and (2) having a child-related motivation for engaging in the work. A program's philosophy should also be referenced and compared to current practice, allowing for adjustments to either, as a form of ongoing quality improvement.

How do I write my program's philosophy? Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

1. How do children learn through their relationships, environment, and community?
2. What do children need from their relationships, environment, and community?

3. What is important for children to learn?
4. When should children reach certain milestones?

Answers to these questions should inform answers to questions regarding selecting the daily routine, planning activities, determining guidance techniques, understanding the role of the educator, setting up the environment, choosing materials, and so forth. Although some programs adhere to a specific curriculum philosophy (e.g., Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, AnjiPlay, etc.), many take an eclectic approach, combining elements of different philosophies to create one unique to the program. See the I want to learn more section below for examples of written philosophy statements.

I want to learn more!

- [Creating Your Brand \(Mission and Philosophy Statement\)](#)
- [Creating an Inclusive Program: Developing Your Philosophy and Policies](#)
- [Sample Educational Philosophy Statement](#)
- [Predictors of Quality in Family Child Care](#)

Books available through Satellite's lending library:

(for Satellite participating programs only)

- *Family Child Care Contracts & Policies, Fourth Edition* (Copeland, 2018)
- *Teaching with Intention Defining Beliefs, Aligning Practice, Taking Action* (Miller, 2008)
- *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning* (Epstein, 2007)

