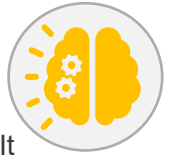


The Art of Writing a Program Philosophy



1. Research Stage

A Program Philosophy summarizes your program's teaching methodology, values, and beliefs. It also tells families, staff, community members, state agencies, and other businesses what your program wants children to learn and achieve.

The first set of actions you will need to take are:

- ✓ Identify or determine your program's teaching methodology
- ✓ Define your program's values and beliefs
- ✓ Determine what you want children to learn and how you want to teach them

Action Plan

- ✓ Read the Principles of Child Development and Learning development and Implications That Inform Practice developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to inform your program philosophy
- ✓ Read the Indiana Early Learning Standards to align to your program philosophy
- ✓ Read the document Types of Early Childhood Program Philosophies found on MSL
- ✓ Choose the teaching methodology(s) that best fit the needs of your program and families



2. Determine your Program's Pedagogical Values

Answer the following questions (Document your answers)

- What teaching methodology do you prefer and why?

Ex: My program uses a mix of play-based and emergent curriculum, because children learn best through exploration in the context of play.

- What are your program's values and how do they align to your philosophy?

Ex: *Intentionality is at the core of every decision we make.*

- What are your goals or outcomes for children?

Ex: 1. *To ensure that the children are equipped with the social emotional, cognitive, language, and physical skills necessary to succeed beyond kindergarten. 2.* *To help children build the foundational skills they will need to become active members of their future communities.*

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- What level of stakeholder engagement would you like to have in your program?

Example: Families are seen as experts and key partners in the children's development. Therefore, they are consistently engaged in the decisions and processes of the program. Educators are also decision-makers, and their opinions and views are also taken into consideration in the design and processes of the program.

- What type of curriculum is best aligned with your educational beliefs about young children?

Example: A curriculum that is child-centered and focuses on play-based learning and exploration.

Note: See the resource *Curriculum Comparison* on MSLL to learn more about the different curriculum options and their approaches

3. Put It All Together!



Combine the research you completed in Step 1 with all the statements you wrote on step 2 into a comprehensive program philosophy statement.

Example:

XYZ's philosophy is grounded in the teaching theory that young children learn best through positive and meaningful interactions in the context of play and exploration. Our program values families and sees them as critical partners of their children's development and learning experience. In our program, families, and educators are seen as contributors to the decision-making process. Intentionality in everything we do is our core value. That is why we strive to create a culture of learning where all our stakeholders are consistently engaged in learning opportunities that will enhance the lives of the children and their own. Finally, we pride ourselves on promoting an environment where all children, regardless of ability, have the same opportunities.

Try writing yours!

The Art of Writing a Program Philosophy



4. Communicate your Philosophy

- Make sure you share your program philosophy by communicating it consistently with families and educators using multiple media such as:
 - ✓ Handbook (staff and families)
 - ✓ Bulletin boards
 - ✓ Website
 - ✓ Social media profiles
- Build a learning culture around your program philosophy. Hold short training sessions with your educators and families to dissect your program philosophy and decide how does it look in action.
- Use your program philosophy to guide all your pedagogical decisions.

Action Plan

I will communicate my philosophy using the following media:

Targeted date of completion: _____

5. Revise your Program Philosophy



- Depending on the current situation of your program, your early education and care context, and research, you may have to rethink your program philosophy. Make sure you include your families, educators, and other stakeholders in the rethinking process to make sure your program meets the needs of your community.
- It is best practice to revise your program philosophy yearly after completing your staff and family's evaluations.