

CRICHTON ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Crichton Alternative Community School is committed to providing an enjoyable and stimulating environment in which a child may develop socially and intellectually to the best of his/her capabilities while engendering life-long love and enthusiasm for learning. Here we deal with the individual child's strengths and weaknesses, and his/her readiness or maturity to cope with a particular topic.

As a public school of the Ottawa Board of Education, Crichton follows the curriculum guidelines of the OBE to ensure that all required standards of instruction are met.

Evaluation is on-going at Crichton and parents are regularly informed of the progress their children are making. This is done through progress reports, interviews and informal discussion. Children are also encouraged to self-evaluate.

We have an enrolment for 1989/90 of 123 students arranged as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------|--------------|
| Room 1 A.M. | J.K. - 11 | Room 9 | Grade 1 - 14 |
| | S.K. - 10 | | Grade 2 - 9 |
| | | | Grade 3 - 6 |
| Room 1 P.M. | J.K. - 12 | Room 7 | Grade 4 - 8 |
| | S.K. - 8 | | Grade 5 - 11 |
| Room 8 | Grade 1 - 11 | | Grade 6 - 4 |
| | Grade 2 - 10 | | |
| | Grade 3 - 9 | | |

Children are involved not just in their own classrooms but in the school as a whole. Co-operation, making choices, freedom of movement, child-centred learning, both individual and group work, research and experimentation are all aspects of our school programme.

Our Goals and Objectives are:

- to provide opportunities for each child to acquire skills in reading, writing and mathematics;
- to develop life-long learning strategies, initiative, creativity, logical thinking, problem solving and decision making;
- to engender an awareness of the overlap and interrelationships of math, science, art and music;
- to promote each child's ability to pursue excellence in all activities;
- to foster a system that promotes strong self-esteem within each child;
- to develop each child's social and emotional skills.

Parents play a significant role in the child's school experience. Parents are encouraged to express their commitment by actively supporting the teachers, by participating in parents' special projects, by attending the meetings of the Parent Advisory Committee, by assuming leadership roles and by volunteering in the classroom. Parents commit themselves according to their interests and availability to volunteer time.

CHURCHILL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
 345 Ravenshill Avenue
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K2A 0J5

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Churchill Alternative School is a publically funded Ottawa Board of Education school opened in September 1984. It accomodates children from junior kindergarten to the end of grade four who live west of the Preston Street railway lines and within the city limits of Ottawa. In September 1989 a grade five class will be added and in September 1990 a grade six class will complete the school. Admissions are handled centrally by the planning office of the Board. As a public school Churchill operates in accordance with Ministry of Education requirements and Ottawa Board of Education policies and procedures.

Transportation is provided to kindergarten children who live 1.0 km from the school and for children, grades one to three, who live 1.6 km away. Eligibility for busing is determined by the transportation department of the Board.

The school is staffed by employees of the Ottawa Board of Education according to the hiring procedures and staffing formulae applied in all other Board schools. Class size is consistent with other Ottawa Board of Education schools.

Churchill Alternative School has one half day junior kindergarten in the morning. There are two kindergarten classes in the afternoon - a junior/senior kindergarten and a senior kindergarten. There is a grade one class, two grade one/two classes, and three grade three/four classes. There is a full time core French teacher, a .3 core French teacher and a half time librarian. Two half time special education resource teachers are assigned to the school and a speech correction teacher is available one half day a week.

Philosophy: The programme at Churchill is based on a philosophy that is derived from Jean Piaget's theory of personality development. It also contains components of "Open Education" and the "British Infant School". Informal, play-based, child centred, activity-oriented, hands on, experiential are all terms that can be used to describe the programme.

According to Piaget a child's thought progresses through a series of stages. Children progress through these stages at different rates. Piaget places a major emphasis on the role of activity and on the manipulation and exploration of objects. Therefore, concrete experience should precede learning from verbal explanations or written materials. He contends that social interaction with children and adults also helps a child to better understand the environment. Social interactions expose a child to

different opinions and points of view. In order to defend ideas, children must justify their opinions and clarify their thoughts. They need to be able to talk to one another, share experiences, argue and debate. To accommodate the individual differences in intellectual development the classroom is oriented more to the individual than the group.

Erik Erikson maintains that all life is conflict and that people are coping adaptors who interact dynamically with their social environment. A child's sense of self grows as the child adapts and deals with conflict. Erik Erikson has identified eight specific stages of personality development which are associated with certain periods of life. Erikson's theory supports the value of spontaneous, self-initiated play as an indispensable stimulus to a child's total development. It is through play in a safe, planned, child-sized environment that children develop a growing sense of competence and mastery.

The term 'Open Education' means a form of education organized to facilitate transactions characterized by freedom of choice and highly individualized activities. It stresses the development of initiative, creativity, and critical thought processes. In theory, the objectives, content and procedures for learning arise from a wide range of classroom alternatives that are the result of transactions between a teacher and children working together as joint decision makers.

The British Infant School approach is based on a new body of research and theory on how children learn. It discards the traditional classroom set up and the usual teacher/student roles for a freer, more informal and individualized learning experience. It is organized to reflect the child development research that children learn in different ways at different times, from things around them which interest them and from each other. Curriculum is flexible and interdisciplinary.

Although there are differences between Open Education in North America and the British Infant School model, characteristics common to both are as follows:

- a) decentralized classrooms
- b) learning areas for math, language, etc.
- c) freedom of movement throughout the classroom
- d) opportunities for children to work together
- e) a choice of activities
- f) opportunities for mixed-age groupings
- g) opportunities for individuals and small groups to work on their own or with another adult
- h) teachers serving as facilitators and guides to learning, helping children to set goals and to achieve them.

Curriculum: The curriculum of Churchill is developed in the context of:

1. Ministry of Education Documents
 - a) The Formative Years
 - b) Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions
 - c) Shared Discovery
 - d) Other support documents that accompany The Formative Years
2. Ottawa Board of Education Curriculum Guidelines
3. Research and theory
4. Interests of the children
5. Input from the parents
6. Input from the consultative staff
7. Current Events

Statement of Beliefs

The following statement of beliefs about children and how they learn has been developed for Churchill Alternative School.

1. Children learn in different ways at different times from things around them which interest them, from adults and from each other.
2. Learning involves the development of the whole child.
3. The subjects we study are increasingly related and it is through knowledge of the interrelationships that students gain an understanding of the world.
4. Learning occurs when students are agents and initiators of their learning.
5. Learning is a shared responsibility .
6. Human development is a lifelong, continuous, sequential and interactive process through which each person moves at a unique rate.

Mission Statement

It is within the context of what we believe that the school's mission has been stated below.

1. Each child will find success, self-confidence and independence in learning.
2. A positive atmosphere conducive to learning will exist throughout the school.
3. Creativity and a love of the arts will be fostered.
4. Parents will be partners in the education of their children.
5. Staff will engage in professional development activities creating an atmosphere of lifelong learning. ...4

6. Evaluation focusing on growth, will be used by children and teachers for program planning.

7. A sense of community will exist.

Goal Statements

The goals for each mission statement help to clarify and expand upon the mission statements. They provide a more specific focus for action. The goals for each mission statement follow:

MISSION # 1. Each child will find success, self-confidence and independence in learning.

GOALS

- 1 . 1 To encourage children to take pride in their work and to strive for excellence at a level that is developmentally appropriate.
- 1 . 2 To provide an informal, play-based, child-centred activity-oriented, hands on, experiential approach to learning.
- 1 . 3 To provide for unique characteristics of learners through a variety of instructional techniques.

MISSION # 2. A positive atmosphere conducive to learning will exist throughout the school.

GOALS

- 2 . 1 To create a learning climate built on mutual trust and openness providing challenges and freedom to explore interests.
- 2 . 2 To help children develop strategies that will enable them to relate positively to others and their environment.
- 2 . 3 To foster the development of critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities.
- 2 . 4 To allow learners to take risks.
- 2 . 5 To value routine and flexibility in balance.
- 2 . 6 To provide children with staff models who are positive, enthusiastic, open, knowledgeable, co-operative planners.

MISSION # 3. Creativity and a love of the arts will be fostered.

GOALS

- 3 . 1 To help children think creatively and imaginatively to openly explore their ideas.
- 3 . 2 To provide a rich classroom environment with a broad mix of resources.
- 3 . 3 To integrate music, movement, art and drama into the program.
- 3 . 4 To develop an appreciation of fine arts by exposing children to quality works.

MISSION # 4. Parents will be partners in the education of their children.

GOALS

- 4 . 1 To involve parents in the planning, organizing and implementing of programs.
- 4 . 2 To understand each child's background, environment, values and aspirations.
- 4 . 3 To inform parents of the significance of their role in their child's progress.
- 4 . 4 To inform parents of the most critical aspects of child development and learning theory.

MISSION # 5. Staff will engage in professional development activities creating an atmosphere of lifelong growth.

GOALS

- 5 . 1 To value risk taking in each creative endeavour.
- 5 . 2 To accept responsibility for personal and professional growth.
- 5 . 3 To remain current with educational research and societal trends.
- 5 . 4 To recognize the role of the principal as the instructional leader in the school.

MISSION # 6. Evaluation, focusing on growth, will be used by children and teachers for program planning.

GOALS

- 6 . 1 To involve the learner in assessing personal progress and achievement.

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APPENDIX D

TO HERALD A CHILD
Laurier L. LaPierre
O.P.S.T.F., 1981

In 1977 four Ontario teachers' federations (Association des enseignants franco-ontarien, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and Ontario Public School Men Teachers' Federation) commissioned an inquiry into the education of young children. The commissioner, Laurier LaPierre, travelled across the province holding public hearings and in 1981 the report, entitled To Herald a Child, was published. Among the 92 recommendations are a number especially relevant to the parents establishing and sustaining the O.B.E.'s four alternative schools:

8. Schools.... should accept the view that they are partners in the educational enterprise and as such have an important part to play in values and moral education as well as in facilitating the child's intellectual and social growth.
9. Formal instruction should be the exception rather than the rule in the education of young children.
10. Play should be considered an essential part of the educational program for all children in the primary division.
11. Kindergarten and Primary Grade children should be given large blocks of time and activities in which they can become totally immersed without constant interruption.
12. Young children should not be required to sit still and remain silent for any length of time in order to learn. They should be allowed to interact with their environment through movement and language.
13. The provision of physical education, art and music activities should be regarded as major components and not as frivolous aspects of the school program.
14. Decisions as to class size should be made by the teacher together with the Principal and should depend on the teacher's experience, the characteristics of the pupils, the program, the support available and the environment.
15. Letter grades and marks should not be part of the evaluation process. The evaluation should be formative rather than summative and should focus on the progress that the child has made rather than how he compares with his peers.

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16. Teachers should understand that reading programs have to be custom-designed to fit individual students and should not subject entire groups of pupils to the same material.
 17. The Ministry of Education as well as local schools should begin to train parents and the general public to see that an age expectation for reading is unreasonable and can be damaging to children.
 18. Teachers should be encouraged to remain with a group of children for at least a two year period.
 24. Principals.... should assume responsibility for introducing volunteers into their schools and should encourage and assist teachers to work with these volunteers.
 36. Where possible the young child should be given the opportunity to become fluent in his mother tongue before being required to learn in another language.
 51. Parents should accept that they have a moral obligation to take an active part in the education of their children.