How to Write a Program Philosophy

1. Establish Program Philosophy Team—Identify stakeholders who are interested in establishing the program’s philosophy
   - Administrators (special education/general education)
   - Teachers/staff (special education/general education)
   - Parents of children with and without special needs
   - Community stakeholders (i.e. community centers, family resource centers, regional centers, school districts, etc.)

2. Program Discussion
   - Discuss the type of program you have or would like to have (parent participation, play based, academic, Montessori, magnet school, charter school, general curriculum)

3. Stakeholder Involvement
   - Administrator
   - Parent
   - Community (fieldtrips, special guests)
   - Teacher (team teaching, ancillary staff, aides, etc.)
   - Other

4. Curriculum
   - What is your core belief about children and how they learn?
   - How is the curriculum structured (i.e. direct instruction, social instruction, constructivist)?
   - Is the curriculum play based, academic, both?
   - Which common subjects (language, math, science, social studies, motor activities, social development) does the school include?
   - How are you preparing students for transition?
   - How does the program foster diversity?

5. Inclusion
   - Why include children with and without special needs?
   - How are they going to be included? (go to inclusion models)
   - How will you involve special education teachers and specialized service providers (speech, occupational therapy, etc.)?
     • Do they work only with a child with disability or with all children?
     • Is the therapy embedded in the class time or is the child pulled out for services?
   - How will you adapt and modify the curriculum and materials to meet the individual needs of all the students?

6. Physical Setting
   - What is unique about your location?
   - What is the rational behind the set up of your classroom and playground environments? (see ECERS, ITERS, FDCRS, SACERS and DECA checklists http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ECERS/http://www.kaplanco.com/includes/content/resources/ECERSR_materials_checklist.pdf,

7. Write a statement concerning your belief about children and how they learn
8. Write a statement about the inclusion model you will use and why you will use it.
9. Write a statement about the physical setting of your school.
10. Write a statement about the strengths of your program and the stakeholders.
11. Make sure your statements are in Person First Terminology.
12. Combine statements into a cohesive statement to form your program philosophy.