

CLC

Children's Learning Centers

TODDLER PROGRAM HANDBOOK



Please refer to the CLC Family Handbook for more information.

WELCOME TO THE CLC TODDLER PROGRAM!

(Please refer to the Infant Guide for children less than 1 year)

The toddler years are truly amazing. They are filled with magical discoveries, developmental achievements, strides in independence and ... a multitude of challenges. The Toddler staff is dedicated to ensuring that your child's needs are met in a stimulating and developmentally appropriate environment, and also to helping parents embrace and savor the wonderful adventures that their infant/toddler will lead them on. Thank you for letting us travel on this journey with you.

COMPONENTS OF THE TODDLER PROGRAM

MULTIAGE CLASSROOMS

The Toddler program utilizes multiage classrooms to serve children ranging from ages 1 to 3 years old, with no more than an 18 month age difference between the youngest and the oldest child. Multiage education is the purposeful placing of children of different ages, (and abilities) in the same classroom. This practice assists the overall development of the child within a family-like community of learners. Using multi-age classrooms allows CLC to:

- Limit multiple caregivers and classroom transitions
- Create consistent personal relationships with the child and encourage healthy emotional attachments
- Increase opportunities for interactions between children and teachers
- Avoid separating children by age and developmental milestones
- Promote cognitive and social growth through heterogeneous grouping
- Increase the use of research-based developmentally appropriate instructional practices
- Support children's development of friendships and provide opportunities for children to play and learn from each other
- Improve overall children outcomes

Teachers plan lessons and activities according to developmental stages rather than chronological ages. A multiage classroom is a diverse environment where children are encouraged to do their best which can assist them in developing a positive self-concept that lays a foundation for life.

LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

A language immersion program is one in which the children spend all or a large portion of their day learning, in a natural way, a particular foreign language. The immersion approach to teaching a second language maximizes the time the children get to practice the language they are learning. Children in a language immersion program work toward fluency in the foreign language; the method of teaching revolves around conversations.

At CLC some of the children in the program are new to the foreign language, while others come from households where family members are bilingual or even multilingual; however, all young children are still in the process of acquiring language skills. Our program is designed to help the child easily transition into the language of the classroom by participating naturally in the language. They can use, practice and rehearse the foreign language in an emotionally supportive environment that stimulates all their senses.

As early childhood educators:

- *We support the building of a community of inclusion. We know that the young child's developmental needs are paramount; we want the language immersion process to be fun and to compliment the young child's development.*
- *We seek to utilize the unique window of opportunity for learning languages that young children possess by exposing the young child to the rhythm, sounds and culture of another language.*
- *We strive to foster an appreciation for a multilingual and multicultural nation by making natural connections through literature, actions, relationships, inquiries, opportunities, and repetition.*

Our methodology incorporates the CLC mission and the core values of early childhood education. We believe children develop at greater levels when activities include all learning domains; we know that children learn by doing, interacting and expressing.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

CLC makes every attempt to maintain continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children, and among groups of children. The program is organized and staffed to minimize the number of group, teaching staff and classroom transitions experienced by an individual child during the program year.

TEACHING STAFF – CHILD RATIOS

CLC Toddler classrooms are limited in group size up to 16 children; each classroom has two fulltime teaching staff and multiple part-time student staff that help maintain developmentally appropriate teaching staff:child ratios of 1:4. Whether a teacher works alone with a group of children or the teaching team works together with a group of children, the environment is designed to support children's positive learning and development across all areas.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Teachers design a learning environment that protects children's health and safety enabling children to practice mastered skills and encourage emerging ones. The space and materials are organized to stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery, and conceptual learning. Teaching staff reorganize the environment when necessary to help children explore new concepts and topics, sustain their activities, and extend their learning.

All of the Toddler classrooms are set up to meet the developmental needs of the children and to provide them the opportunity to make choices. They contain four learning zones:

Gross Motor: This area encourages children to use their large muscles through climbing, block play, music and movement.

Dramatic Play: This area encourages children to engage in role-playing activities with the use of props.

Quiet: This area allows children a space to retreat to for some quiet time and encourages children to develop language/literacy skills through the use of books and soft toys and develop fine motor coordination with the use of manipulatives.

Messy: This area encourages children to express themselves and be creative through art and to heighten their sensory awareness through a variety of sensory oriented activities.

CURRICULUM GOALS

The early years in a child's life set the tone for future learning. Our goal at CLC is to stay current on research in child development so that we are able to build a foundation for each child that lasts a lifetime. Our infant and toddler programs implement *Emergent Curriculum*, a philosophy of teaching and way of planning curriculum that focuses on being responsive to children's interests to create meaningful learning experiences. It is child-initiated, assessment based and prioritizes active participation, relationship building, flexible and adaptable methods, inquiry, and play-based learning. Our curriculum is designed with specific objectives for each age level based upon NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and AdvancED. Our classrooms are set up to create an environment that is rich with learning opportunities, safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate. The following goals are incorporated into every classroom:

- Developing safe and healthy habits in young children
- Fostering positive self-esteem
- Providing opportunities for creative expression
- Supporting the development of social skills
- Stimulating cognitive problem-solving skills
- Strengthening communication skills necessary for listening, reading, writing, and speaking
- Enhancing fine motor and gross motor skills
- Assessing the individual needs of each child

Specifically, infants and toddlers have multiple opportunities to:

- Move freely and achieve mastery of their bodies through self-initiated movement and to practice emerging skills in coordination, movement, and balance, and perceptual-motor integration

- Develop fine-motor skills by acting on their environments using their hands and fingers in a variety of age-appropriate ways
- Experience books, songs, rhymes, and routine games
- Use language, gestures, and materials to convey mathematical concepts such as more and less and big and small; to see and touch different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns; to build number awareness, using objects in the environment; and read books that include counting and shapes
- Use their senses to learn about objects in the environment and discover that they can make things happen and solve simple problems
- Explore and manipulate age-appropriate art materials
- Express themselves creatively through freely moving to music and to engage in pretend or imaginative play

DAILY SCHEDULE

The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to individual needs of the children. The schedule provides time and support for transitions, includes both indoor and outdoor experiences and is receptive to a child's need to rest or be active. Teachers organize time and space on a daily basis to allow children to work or play individually and in pairs, to come together in small groups, and to engage as a whole group.

PARENT CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATIONS

All parents are invited to participate in parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring semester. These conferences are held during school hours and at a time that is convenient for both the parent and the teacher. This is an opportunity for parents to share goals/expectations of their child with the teaching staff and to contribute to their child's assessment process. Occasionally a teacher may request a parent conference when there are special concerns in the classroom. We ask that parents respect this request with prompt attention.

Classroom staff provides written daily reports to parents as an overview of their child's day. Parents are encouraged to utilize the parent comment section of the daily reports as a tool for two-way communication. Teachers also make an effort to have daily face to face interactions with each parent at either drop-off or pick-up times. Parent Feedback forms are available in each room for parents to complete at any time.

PARENT RESOURCES

CLOTHING & SUPPLIES

- Label all items with your child's first name and the first letter of the last name. This includes clothes, diaper bags, diapers, pacifiers, blankets, etc.
- Closed toe shoes must be provided for toddlers to go outside and play.
- Valuable or sentimental items are highly discouraged.
- Several changes of clothes (including a cap) must be provided for when the children's clothes become soiled and/or the weather changes.
- In order to maintain a healthy environment for the staff and children, soiled clothes will not be cleaned at the Center.

TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

As infants enter the toddler years, they start to perceive themselves as separate from other people. They become more independent and able to do things for themselves. They are rapidly developing expressive language and becoming better able to relay their likes and dislikes to others. "*Me do it*" is a common response, even if the child is not fully able to do it. The gap between what the child wants to do and is capable of doing sometimes leads to the tantrums that are so common during these years.

At CLC children at this age are learning to:

- Drink from a lidless cup
- Sleep on a cot
- Build expressive vocabulary of 200+ words
- Self-feed with a spoon
- Develop fine motor skills
- Manipulate and gain an understanding of books
- Explore the environment in a positive way
- Engage in sensory activities
- Become independent in toileting
- Refine gross motor skills- balance/coordination
- Express independence/autonomy
- Enter beginning stages of cooperative play
- Practice socialization skills
- Gain an understanding of basic scientific/mathematic concepts- cause/effect, opposites, colors, shapes
- Label emotions and partake in conflict resolution

Children will get messy!

In order to maximize children's potential, in developing the above-mentioned skills, they need to engage in hands-on activities that utilize their senses.

All of the developmental changes that occur during the toddler years—increased language, budding independence, and beginning awareness of peers—must be considered when developing a program. Sometimes even the most carefully planned days need to be adjusted to meet an individual child's reactions and needs. Toddlers find consistent routines to be comforting and change in established routines to be unsettling. Morning good-bye routines are especially important for toddlers. Our

teachers want to work closely with every parent to minimize toddler frustrations and optimize learning.

A NOTE TO PARENTS ON CHILDREN BITING

In even the best child care program, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. This is an unavoidable consequence of young children in group care. When it happens, it can be frustrating and very stressful for children, parents and teachers. But however unfortunate, it is a natural phenomenon, not something to blame on children, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, “cause and effect” experimenting, or intense desire to have a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve the results: the desired toy, excitement, attention.

Here is what we do to try to stop the biting behavior:

1. When a child is bitten, we avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting, including negative attention. The biter is immediately removed from the situation, with no show of emotion and caring attention is focused on the victim. The biter is not allowed to return to play for a moment and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then redirected to another activity.
2. We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for patterns. We look to see if there was crowding, over stimulation, too few toys, too much waiting or any other reason for frustration. In addition, we ask ourselves if the biting child is getting enough attention, care and appropriate positive reinforcement for not biting or does the biting child need help becoming engaged in play.
3. We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
4. We try to adapt the environment so as to minimize crowding and reduce frustrations. We offer cold teething rings for an acceptable alternative to bite, plus the cold can reduce pain that accompanies teething.
5. We work with the parents to understand the situation and to reinforce the concept at home of “We do not bite our friends” and “Biting hurts”.
6. We make special efforts to protect potential victims. Many times we have 1 staff person shadow the biting child so situations can be redirected before harm is done.

Dealing with biting is a program & parent responsibility:

The program accepts responsibility for protecting the children. It is our job to provide a safe setting where no child needs to hurt another to achieve his or her needs. The name of a child that is biting is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult. While biting is a horrifying stage some children go through, it is, however, a “common phenomenon” that has virtually no lasting developmental significance.

A child who bites is not on a path toward being a discipline problem or a bad person. There are a number of possible explanations why some children bite. None of them is due to a “bad home”, “bad

parents”, or “bad teachers”. Most of the time it is hard to guess what is going on in the child’s head. Parents are responsible for working with staff on a strategy for change at the Center, reinforcing this strategy at home and for reducing any stress the child may be experiencing.

Punishment does not work to change the child:

Neither delayed punishment at home, which a young child will not understand, nor punishment at the Center, which may make the situation worse, helps. What can help are immediate, logical consequences: being deprived of what he or she sought, removal from the situation and denial of positive outcomes to the biting, such as adult attention.

Balancing program commitments to all the children:

Some children become “stuck” for a while in a biting syndrome and this can be frustrating for the parents of the victim and the biter. It is frustrating for the parents of the victims that we are unable to “fix” the child quickly. We make every effort to extinguish the behavior and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child and to that of other families. We strive to make the program work for all children. When biting occurs, we are all challenged to maintain a broader perspective and to pull together as we journey through the infant/ toddler years.

A WORD TO PARENTS ABOUT TOILET LEARNING

Do:

- Make the process a pleasant experience
- Talk to your child throughout the process
- Become comfortable using the vocabulary associated with toileting
- Communicate with teachers
- Exhibit patience with your child
- Make toileting a part of the home routine
- Maintain an appealing and safe bathroom environment
- Encourage your child to become independent
- Become aware of your child’s schedule and abilities
- Assess your child individually for readiness
- Respect your child’s feelings
- Take your child to the toilet regularly instead of asking if he/she wants to go
- Make a habit of taking your child to the toilet before transitions

Don’t:

- Force children to use the toilet
- Make a decision about toilet learning on what is easiest for the adult
- Ignore the signs that a child is ready to transition to underwear
- Stop the process because it is inconvenient
- Scold children for accidents or lack of interest
- Pull children away from activities to use the toilet
- Compare children
- Refer to children as “big” girls and boys if they use the toilet

SIGNS FOR UNDERWEAR READINESS

A child may be ready to wear underwear if he/she:

- Stays dry for long periods of time or wakes up dry from nap
- Can communicate needs
- Can use the toilet successfully
- Is aware of body eliminations
- Has regular bowel movements
- Requests a change of diaper
- Is emotionally ready

Children do not need to exhibit all of these signs; but, all of these need to be considered when making the decision to start the Toilet Learning process.

The toddler years are marked by so much growth and change that we want to stress the importance of daily communications between parents and teachers. At CLC we believe that a parent is the child's first teacher and because of this we want to be partners with you. Please feel free to discuss with us any concerns and we look forward to a fun filled experience together.

SAMPLE TODDLER SCHEDULE

7:00am-9:00am	Drop off in Opening, Small group, Self-directed choices
9:00am-9:30am	Transition to Classroom: Diaper check, Bathroom, Hand washing
9:30am-9:50am	Morning Snack
9:50am-10:25am	Transition to Large Group Activities: Circle/Story, Songs, Weather, Yoga
10:25am-11:00am	Self- Directed Choices/Transition to Art Activities
11:00am-11:30am	Sensory/Gross Motor/Outdoor Play
11:30am-12:00pm	Diaper Changes/Potty Time/Hand Washing
12:00pm-12:30pm	Lunch Time
12:30pm-3:00pm	Transition to Nap: Clean up Lunch/ Hand Washing/ Diaper Check/Potty Time/ Teeth Brushing
3:00pm-3:30pm	Wake- up time/Diaper Check/Hand Washing/ Quiet Activities: Read books at Table
3:30pm-4:00pm	Afternoon Snack
4:00pm-4:30pm	Transition to Large Group/Circle, Hand Washing/Read books/Sing songs
4:30-5:00pm	Diaper Check/Potty/Hand Washing, Small Group Activities/Self- Directed Choices
5:00pm-6:00pm	Outdoor Play/ Departure

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO BE A PART OF OUR CLC TODDLER FAMILY!