

Welcome to the Toddler Program!

The toddler years are truly amazing. They are filled with magical discoveries, developmental achievements, strides in independence, and a multitude of challenges. As a toddler caregiver I'm dedicated to ensuring that not only your child's needs are met in a stimulating and developmentally appropriate environment, but also to help you as parents embrace and savor the wonderful adventures that your toddler will lead you on. Thank you for letting me in on this journey with you.

Continuity of Care

Day Care Plus follows a Continuity of Care model. As research has shown, Providing infants and toddlers with a consistent caregiver allows children to maintain a sense of security that allows them to explore more freely the world around them. We use this in determining the manner in which the children progress through the Center. The Toddler Room is for children age 13 months to approximately 30 months. This room is led by one of the Master Teachers. After leaving this room, your child will enter the Preschool room, where he/she will remain until graduating from the Preschool Program.

Environment

The Toddler classroom is 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 manipulative.
- 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.

Daily Schedule

Although each classroom has its own specific schedule, each of those schedules has some common features. Breakfast is available from 8:00am – 8:30am, lunch is served at approximately 11:45am, all children are provided a rest period from 12:30pm – 3:00pm, snack is provided at approximately 3:30pm, and all of the schedules incorporate alternating quiet/active times as well as provide for outdoor time. A daily schedule is posted in our classroom. All schedules are subject to change depending on weather and the children's needs.

Curriculum

The curriculum and activities implemented by the teaching staff reflect the developmental needs and upcoming milestones of the particular children in each group. Most of the activities will be hands-on enabling children the opportunity to explore the world around them in a secure and safe environment.

Clothing & Supplies

- The parents must supply disposable diapers. Cloth diapers are not acceptable at the Center.
- Label all items with your child's first name and the first letter of the last name. This includes clothes, diaper bags, diapers, pacifiers, etc.
- Closed toe shoes must be provided for mobile infants/toddlers to go outside and play.
- Do not bring valuable or sentimental items to the classroom.
- Several changes of clothes (including a cap) must be provided for when the infant'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.
- **Parents must be timely with bringing supplies for their child when the Center's staff requests them.**

Expectations

What Day Care Plus expects from parents:

- Be child's first teacher
- Communicate any relevant issues with child's teacher
- Be involved
- Respect classroom schedule and needs of all the children in the class
- Develop consistency between school and home
- Adhere to Center policies
- Ask questions

Parents are an integral part of a child's education – the quality of a childcare facility is related in part to the degree of parental involvement.

What parents can expect from their child's teacher:

- Be knowledgeable about child development
- Be aware of the latest research in brain development
- Be open to parent feedback
- Treat my child as a uniquely important individual
- Follow through with special instructions for my child
- Take all measures to ensure the safety of my child
- Create and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Communicate weekly/biweekly the classroom curriculum
- Provide opportunity to conference about my child's development

- Create a positive environment for all children in the class

Toddler Development

As infants enter the toddler years, they begin to perceive themselves as separate from other people. They are beginning to 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 Day Care Plus children at this age are learning to:

- Drink from a cup
- Sleep on a cot
- Build expressive vocabulary of 200+ words
- Self-feed with spoon
- Develop fine motor skills necessary for writing
- Learn to manipulate and gain an understanding of books
- Explore his/her environment in a positive way
- Engage in sensory activities
- Become independent in toileting
- Refine gross motor skills- balance/coordination
- Learn to express himself/herself
- Enter beginning stages of cooperative play
- Practice socialization skills
- Gain an understanding of basic scientific concepts- cause/effect, opposites, colors, shapes
- Learn to 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 RESPONSIBILITY

The program accepts responsibility for biting and other hurtful acts and 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, a bad person, or a cannibal. 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 neither responsible for a child becoming a biter, nor are they a significant factor in the “cure”, other than working with staff on a strategy for change at the center and for reduction of any stress the child may be experiencing at home.

PUNISHMENT DOESN'T 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 or willing to terminate care for the biting child. 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.

**Thank you for choosing to be a part of our
Day Care Plus Toddler Family!**