

Welcome to the Infant Program!

The infant years are truly amazing. They are filled with: Magical discoveries, developmental achievements, strides in independence, and a multitude of challenges. As the infant caregiver, I'm dedicated to ensuring that not only are your child's needs are met in a stimulating and developmentally appropriate environment. Also to help you as parents embrace and savor the wonderful adventures that your infant 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 Infant Room is for children ages, from birth to approximately 13 months. This room is led by one of our Lead caregivers. After leaving this room, your child will enter the Toddler room, where he/she will remain until he/she is approximately 30 months old. After leaving this room, your child will enter the Preschool room where he/she will remain until graduating from the Preschool Program.

Environment

The Infant 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. Be creative through art and to heighten their sensory awareness through a variety of sensory oriented activities.

Daily Schedule

The infant room does not follow a daily schedule as infants are fed and allowed to sleep as needed. We incorporate many daily activities which offer quiet and active times, as well as provide for outdoor time. No daily schedule is posted in our room.

Curriculum

The curriculum and activities implemented by the teaching staff reflect the developmental needs and upcoming milestones of the particular child. 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 and last name. This includes clothes, diaper bags, diapers, pacifiers, etc.
- Closed toe shoes must be provided for mobile infants/toddlers, to go outside to 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

The teachers of the Infant/Toddler Program are dedicated to creating and maintaining the highest quality of care that encourages your child to grow to his/her fullest potential in all areas of development. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Preparing Your Infant for Group Care

In order to assist your infant in transitioning to group care there are a few things you can do in advance:

- Expose your baby to other family members, children, friendly adults or babysitters. This will help your child enjoy and look forward to interactions with other people.
- Let your baby learn to sleep around conversation, music or other daily activities. During group care some infants will enjoy a restful sleep while others are playing, eating, or engaged in a developmental activity.
- We encourage any mother who breastfeeds; we provide a nursing area where mothers can stop by to feed their baby during the day. However, if your schedule does not allow you to come routinely to the Center, your child must be acclimated to a bottle. Mothers may express their breast-milk to be used while the baby is at school but again the baby needs to have been introduced to the bottle. Introducing your baby to the bottle well in advance of child care minimizes the difficulties of transitioning to group care.

Additional Infant Program Expectations

- Infant's fingernails and toenails must be trimmed at all times.
- Inform classroom staff if your child is going to be picked up early or leave during the day for an appointment. This way the baby will be ready for departure upon your arrival.
- The parent must review and update the feeding instructions with the Lead Caregiver every 30 days.
- Young infants starting a new food for the first time must try the food at home for at least three days before we can introduce that food at the Center.
- All infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position, unless the child's parent presents written documentation from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position is allowed or will not harm the infant.

- The Center must provide a daily written report to the child's parent when the child is picked up from the classroom.
- Infants must never walk around with or sleep in their crib with a bottle.
- Infants must have daily opportunities for outdoor play as weather permits.
- Any parent using the diaper changing tables at Day Care Plus must follow the state licensing procedures for proper sanitization.
- Formula is to be supplied by the parents and labeled with the child's name and the date. Breast-milk should be labeled in the same manner with the date the milk was expressed and the number of ounces must appear on the container as well.

Infant Brain Development

Things Every Child Needs In Order to Help the Brain Grow

1. **Interactions:** Interactions with people and objects are as necessary to the baby as protein, fat and vitamins; all are vital nutrients for the growing and developing brain.
2. **Touch:** Touch is critical to development! Touch literally sends signals to the brain telling it to grow and make connections. Without the nurturance of touch at an early age, infants can NEVER develop. For both the brain and the body, touch is a critical nutrient, as critical as vitamins.
3. **Stable Relationships:** Infants need a loving, trusting adult to act as the interpreter of life experiences, otherwise they have no meaning. Infancy can be compared to being in a foreign land where no one can understand you or speak your language. Thus, a stable relationship is a necessity for an infant's survival.
4. **Safe & Healthy Environment:** Children learn wherever they are and a safe and secure environment is essential to their development. Because of the infant's vulnerability, adults must attend to each infant at all times to ensure continued safety. Taking care of a child's physical needs communicates positive feelings about his/her value and this influences the child's developing identity and feelings of selfworth.
5. **Self Esteem:** The root of all emotional feeling is in the brain stem. If you create a personal relationship with each infant, you will know the kind of cuddling, stroking, talking and playing that brings comfort and good feelings to each one. This supports their development and they will begin to build a sense of self-confidence.

6. **Quality Care:** Only people who want to interact with babies should care for them! Quality care is invaluable.
7. **Communication:** A child's ability to communicate begins at birth. The plasticity of the brain is what makes it possible to learn language in the first place. All the circuits are in place; they just need to be connected. The more words an infant hears, the more connections are made. Children need to interact with people to learn a language and it is critical to engage them in conversation.
8. **Play:** Play is essential to a child's development and play is linked to mental development. It is the experience, NOT the toy, which aids growth in the brain.
9. **Music:** Children have an affinity for music from birth. They need to be involved in music, not just listen to it. Music can encourage memory, imagination and language.
10. **Reading:** Reading to children has a tremendous impact on their lives. The more you do it, the more connections will be made in the brain.

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 Infant Family**