Curriculum and Program Goals

We are very excited to get to know you and your infant! The Infant Classroom is designed to meet the individual needs of each child. All infants receive holding and nurturing throughout the day by their primary caregiver and other staff as well. We believe that this close contact with infants helps them to form significant bonds and attachments. We also believe that holding and cuddling are an important part of each child's day. You often observe the staff rocking the children, holding them on their laps, and in general, "being with the children on their level" which is generally on the floor. When we sit at their level we open their opportunities to initiate interaction with us.

The curriculum in the Infant Classroom serves the basic needs of the infant. The environment is designed to be warm, safe, inviting, and challenging. The classroom is coordinated to challenge the various ages of infants in the room at any given time, and we continue to make the environment challenging as the infants develop. Throughout the child's experience, their caregivers keep track of developmental changes and set appropriate goals for each child. Goals serve as guidelines for caregivers as they plan activities for their group.

Our child-centered, relationship-based curriculum is further enhanced using the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) philosophy and essential practices. The PITC philosophy is a commitment to provide a style of care for infants and toddlers that best matches their inborn capacities and needs. This type of care is both relationship-based and responsive. PITC's 6 Essential Policies increase the likelihood that close and responsive relationships develop in our program. The 6 Essential Policies/Practices include the following:

- Culturally Responsive Care that supports the infants' identity formation and leads to strong family connections
- Inclusive Care that supports all infants, including those with special needs, in developing emotional security and competence
- Primary Caregivers who are primarily responsible for meeting an infant's physical and emotional needs
- Small Group Care that supports caring for children in small groups that encourages social relationships
- Continuity of Care by providing the same caregiver for each child and their peer group together for an extended period of time
- Individualized Care is provided that is responsive and respectful to each individual child

In the Infant Classroom, the teaching staff plan and implement various activities to foster the continual growth and needs of all the children. For young children, movement and sensory exploration lead the way to cognitive and social learning. We provide a large indoor and outdoor space with challenging equipment to feel, explore, climb, get into, etc. You will see things hung from the ceiling for the children to observe and watch. Various art and texture experiences are offered using many different kinds of materials. At this age you may not see as many final products, for it is the process that is more important than the product. Our activity time also includes lots of book reading, song singing, marching and dancing.

Infants learn through play. Caregivers help to facilitate play by giving infant opportunities to be in control of his or her own play and make discoveries on their own. Placing a peg back in its hole for the first time, making a pop toy pop, pulling a toy by a string, learning peek-a-boo, reading a book, and remembering finger plays to a song, are all ways in which babies learn through play and explorations on their own and with their caregivers.

As the infants become mobile and are able to crawl and pull up, they begin to use the pull-up bar and climbing structure, as well as tunnels to crawl through, mirrors to look in, and many kinds of toys that can be pushed, pulled, opened and shut. Walks and stroller rides are taken whenever possible and as the infants become older, more time is spent outside in the yard and sandbox.

Daily Routine

Infants are given, love, emotional support, and affection throughout the day. Both diapering and bottle times provide additional opportunities for caregivers to give individual attention to a baby. The changing table is an inviting place where hanging toys can be played with. Infant and caregivers can exchange smiles, gurgles, and giggles while a diaper is changed. At bottle time, infants are very relaxed while sucking on a bottle and sitting in the lap of a caregiver.

Infants have their own schedules for sleeping and eating, but usually as the infants begin to eat finger foods and drink from a cup, snack times tend to become a group experience. Snacks and lunch are occasions for social interaction, as well as eating.

The crib room is a cozy and quiet area where music plays or soothing sounds can be heard (flowing water, ocean sounds). Depending upon the infants, some cribs are placed on the non-mobile side of the room. Caregivers help infants go to sleep with rocking and rubbing backs depending on the child's preferences.

All activities are completely optional and we emphasize child direction in new activities. The daily schedule is largely dictated by the children's individual needs and preferences. The youngest infants have individual eating and napping schedules. We respect and honor these biological rhythms. In the Infant Classroom you will see your child change from lying to walking, just drinking bottles to eating finger foods, sleeping in a crib to sleeping on a cot/mat, and just being able to look at a toy/object to challenging themselves with the use of that toy/object.

We rotate our toys on a daily basis to keep the environment fresh and interesting. Individual toys are sought out daily for each child to enhance their stage of development. All our toys are safe, appropriate for various developmental needs, and available for children to use on their own. We bring out "special" toys and activities (art, pop-beads, crayons, etc), that need closer supervision at various times of the day.

Click here for the Introduction to the Infant Room and Developmental Milestones-1 **(this is a compressed zip file due to size of document - please "allow" in order to view)**, Developmental Milestones-2