

Dear Parents,

As child care professionals, we strive to offer the children a loving, safe and stimulating environment that fosters the child's natural development process. Teachers take special care to provide individualized attention with each child throughout the day. Infancy is an exciting period of growth and development. Much of the first year is spent learning how to control their bodies and muscles. Of course all this growing and learning requires lots of eating and sleeping too. Good communication between teacher and parent benefits all involved and encourages strong foundations between home and school. This is your child's first learning environment so we encourage you to begin good habits of parent involvement now. We spend a great deal of time caring for your child/ren and we hope to start a strong partnership.

In order to meet your child's needs, we would like to emphasize and address the following....

Please call if you will be later than 9:00. Breakfast is served in the infant rooms at 8:30. If you will arrive after 9:00 please be sure your child has eaten. Also, by popping in without warning after 9:00, the teachers and children's schedules and transitions are interrupted. Naps may be disrupted, walks may be cancelled, and activities may be delayed due to your late arrival. Lack of notification is disrespectful of teachers and insensitive to the other children in care. It takes a great amount of organization and planning to coordinate the schedules and care of 8 children. By popping in late or unannounced, teachers must reformat their plans to accommodate your child. Please be courteous and notify the classroom if you will arrive late so the teachers can plan for possible disruption.

Openly communicate with your teacher EVERY morning. When did your child wake up? Did they eat? We need to know this information so we can quickly meet their needs while also trying to juggle the needs of 7 other children. Notify the teachers of any concern, issue or happening that effects the child. Illness, antibiotic treatment, new living arrangements or conditions are all things the teacher should be aware of. Each of these directly involves your child's mood and should be discussed with your teacher.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP). The program requires the center to provide iron fortified infant formula, cereal and all fruits, veggies and meats. We will offer foods according to the guidelines and when the child is developmentally ready. Be sure to read the feeding information form for more information. Complete table food and milk from our menu will be offered after 12 months. Also, after 12 months, we will begin to wean children from bottles. To do this, we may offer less milk in the bottle or substitute milk with water until the child is completely weaned. Regardless of age, we will feed children until they are full. We will not ration food or bottles for children who are hungry.

If your child has any diet restrictions (vegan or lacto-ovo vegetarian), food allergies or reactions to foods, please let us know in writing and verbally communicate this to the teachers. A physician statement is also required for special dietary needs or restrictions.

As your child gets older we will begin to introduce other skills like washing hands at the sink, sitting in a chair to eat, using plates and utensils, sitting and reading or participating in songs. Each of these skills will be more easily learned if the expectations are consistent between home and school. Again we stress, talk to your teacher to find out what skills your child is learning and capable of.

While we strive to meet individual needs of each child, children of similar ages tend to have similar eating and napping schedules. Of daily schedule is as shown.

7:30-8:30 arrival and free play

8:30-9 Morning breakfast. Babies over 8 months will be offered finger foods at the table.

9-9:15 Diaper changes

9:15-11 Indoor play and tub activities for walkers and Tots. Morning Naps for Lil' Ones, Bottles at wake up, Join older children in indoor or outdoor activities

11-11:30 Lunch for under 12 mo, diaper changes for all, Books and songs for walkers and tots

11:30-12 Lunch for Walkers and Tots. Baby mat time

12-2 Naps for Walkers and Tots. Infant one on one time with teachers.

1-2:30 Bottles for babies under 12 mo, diaper changes and naps

2:-2:15 Diaper changes as older children wake up

2:15-2:30 Snack is served. Babies over 8 months will be offered finger foods at the table.

2:30-4 Indoor and Outdoor play. Tub activities, sensory and art play.

4:00 Final diaper changes

4-5 Free play

Please be sure your child has appropriate clothing for both indoor and outdoor activities. The clothes should be changed as your child grows and as the seasons change.

We will assess your child's development throughout the school year by completing a checklist of skills and abilities. We may request that you consult with the doctor regarding specific concerns. In cases of developmental delays, a copy of the assessment and a letter from the teacher will be sent to your child's physician.

Finally, we request that all of our families participate in the Parents as Teachers Program (FREE and sponsored by Columbia Public Schools). For more information or an application for the program, talk with Julie.

Thanks for your time. We look forward to talking with you about your child.