

Toddler Class Questions & Answers

This document is not a part of the contract and is intended to explain procedures.

What will the toddler experience?

The toddler-aged child is growing in many abilities and coming to school adds another dimension to his or her experiences. As the children work together they are learning to relate to each other, are developing new social skills and establishing foundations for future exploration and learning. They are creating habits for learning new things and confidence for exploring new experiences. The children develop independence in caring for themselves and managing their own activities. There is an increase in vocabulary and expanding verbal expression, especially for social and emotional language skills.

How does my child transition from home to school?

The phase-in process is a partnership with parents that supports the child's successful transition to school. The purpose of phase-in is to acclimate a particular group of children to the schedule, routine and expectations of our environment. The number of children and length of time they are in class build slowly. By beginning with half the number of students in the class, the children can have more personal attention and develop a connection to the teachers before the full group spends the full time together. Security with separation varies among the children with some having no difficulty and others having differing levels of anxiety. The phase-in period usually runs for two – three weeks until the full group is ready for the full morning period. Most of the children will be able to adjust very well with the phase-in schedule we have set up. Occasionally some children will need adjustments to the schedule during the first month of school, but if we go at the child's pace, they will have a sense of security in the group and a connection with the adults that allows them to proceed with learning from the environment.

What are the phase-in procedures?

- While your child is in the phase-in period, you can *park your car in the west parking lot* and walk your child to the class.
- Parents will join the child in the classroom on the first day so that the child gains a sense that you are connected to the school.
- After the first day, parents may bring the child into the Toddler coat room but not come into the classroom. Your child will be able to see you and will also be able to check in with you if he or she needs you. This will help your child achieve a comfortable and independent level in the class without your presence. We will work with you and your child to determine the best way for you to leave the toddler environment.
- At some time, most children will cry but we find that they can be comforted quickly and begin to become active learners and explorers of the environment. The teachers will contact you right away if your child does not settle into the routine within a reasonable time.

What is the phase-in schedule?

The phase-in schedule for each individual child will be mailed in the summer. The hours are usually 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. for one group and 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. for a second group for about three to four visits and then all children attend for two hours (8:30 – 10:30 a.m.) for about three to four visits.

The two-day group attends on Monday and Tuesday; the three-day group attends on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; and the five-day group attends Monday through Friday.

Do the children have a daily snack?

Yes. This special activity is very dear to the children while also giving a means for lessons in grace and courtesy – waiting for friends, eating and socializing together, using polite language and generally feeling very independent.

We ask all parents to help provide snack on a rotating basis. A schedule is provided at the beginning of the school year and when it is your turn, a letter will be sent home with suggested foods. The children actively help with food preparation which also gives the children time for conversation and sense exploration of different tastes and smells.

What clothing should my child wear to school?

It is important that the children be able to manage their own clothing. Garments that do not hinder freedom of movement and allow the child to learn to take it off and put it on again is requested. For example, back buttons or shoulder buttons are difficult for children to manage by themselves. When your child is ready to use the toilet, pants should be easy on and off. *Onesies* at school make it difficult for your child to learn to use the toilet at school. Shoes should be supportive to enable running when we go outside or downstairs to the movement room. Even in hot weather, sandals are not a practical option because the pea gravel becomes stuck in them or the sandals can get caught on play equipment. Short skirts allow children freedom to climb and run easily and shorts can be worn easily under the skirts. Long skirts are pretty but they get in the way when children are playing. Please keep in mind when choosing outfits that the clothes can get dirty through the use of paint or chalk or markers in the class or while playing outside.

What items are necessary for the child to have at school?

- A package of diapers (if your child is currently wearing them)
- A package of wet wipes
- 2 sets of clothes: pants, shirts, socks – a pair of emergency shoes is also desirable in case shoes get wet. Extra clothes should be marked with your child's name. They will go in a drawer which your child may be sharing with another child. Also send extra underwear if your child is toilet trained.
- We will notify you when these items need to be replenished.

When can we observe the class?

We encourage observations by parents. Since the children are still adjusting in September, we wait until October for Toddler observations. During September some parents may still need to be active in the child's adjustment and we use the Toddler Coat Room area for these extra transitions.

Beginning in October and through the end of May we encourage you to observe as often as convenient. A quick drop-in visit may only give you a glimpse of the class and your child may still be warming up for the day. The longer visits allow you to see your child in a typical activity cycle.