

Dear Infant parents,

Welcome to the Infant Department for the 2010-2011 school year. We are very excited to begin a new year. We look forward to getting to know each of your families and enjoying each day with your child. We are going to have a wonderful year together.

Your handbook contains classroom goals, classroom policies, and other resources for you to use at home. We are confident you will find this information helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with me. We are available Monday through Friday here at Stepping Stones. You may also contact us by email at any time or day. Again, we look forward to our year together!

Sincerely,

The Infant Department

## CLASSROOM GOALS

### CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is based on meeting each infant's individual needs. We will work together collaboratively to determine your child's schedule based on his needs and developmental stages. The Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) philosophy encourages the children to learn to play and to explore their environment independently. We are present for nurturing guidance and supervision. We will encourage the infant's involvement while meeting their basic needs (i.e. communicating with them throughout routines, such as diapering and feedings). We will strive to maintain their individual schedules while keeping you informed of any changes we may notice. We write a monthly observation of each child's developmental stages for each classroom

### ART

Art projects will be introduced to the infants depending on their developmental stage. We will introduce paint, chalk, glue, crayons, and other crafts that are age-appropriate. This activity generally begins when the child is developmentally ready. We are requesting any donations of shaving cream, whipped cream, artificial flowers, and other craft items you would like to contribute.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Here at Stepping Stones, we pride ourselves in community awareness. Each year, we choose several community service projects in which to participate. We will keep you posted regarding these special events throughout the year.

### DISCIPLINE

In the Infant Department, discipline is found in the form of redirection. Many of our infants will be testing their boundaries, their strengths, and their newfound freedoms. These discoveries may or may not impede on their friends. While some infants may not understand that their actions may hurt a friend, they are learning cause and effect. We may have to redirect the infants and explain to them that their actions may be hurting their friends. We will inform parents through daily interaction or daily sheets of any necessary information.

### BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

At Stepping Stones, we implement Baby Sign Language in the infants-toddlers classrooms. Baby Sign Language is a method in which you and your child use specific handshapes and motions to convey words and meaning (quickly and easily) with each other. Today, Baby Sign Language is widely accepted as a legitimate infant communication program. Many questions arise about language development. Will babies form a speech delay? Our answer is "no." We use baby signs in conjunction with the English language. It is a fact that children develop their fine muscles in their hands before they develop those required for speech. We will teach the infants simple signs, such as "more," "eat," "milk," and "thank you."

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

### DROP OFF/PICKUP

When your infant is dropped off, we ask that you please check his diaper before leaving and change it if necessary. This activity gives the child a predictable routine to start his day and should help him adjust quickly. When dropping off your infant, please fill the top portion of the daily sheet for your child. This information helps us know how he slept the night before and when he ate last. It also provides space for any notes you might want to leave us regarding the care of your child.

If you have older siblings, they may escort their brother or sister to the classroom, but please do not allow them in the play area. This policy ensures a clean floor and calm environment for the babies to explore. If the other babies are napping during drop off or pick up, we request that they wait in the hall with the door open, so they are being supervised. At pick-up, the daily sheet will inform you of your child's day. It will also inform you of any items that are needed for the next day. In addition, we will sign your child in and out daily.

### MEDICATION

Medication needs to be signed in by the child's parent or guardian on a daily basis. Please be sure to let the teacher know personally so that she may put the medication in its appropriate place. Medicine can be given to the children at any time during the day. Over-the-counter medication must specify the dosage for your child's age or weight. Also, prescription medication must be accompanied by its prescription. The teacher will label the child's medication with the child's name (if it's not already on the bottle) and store it out of reach.

### DIAPERS, CLOTHING, AND FOOD

As parents, we ask that you supply food and diapers for your infant. We recommend a mega/jumbo pack of diapers to begin. You will need to supply wipes and diaper ointment, which we will label with your child's name. We encourage you to have at least two changes of clothes for your infant. Soiled clothing will be rinsed and returned to you in a plastic bag.

Each classroom will be supplied with sheets for the cribs, bibs, burp cloths, and extra blankets. You are more than welcome to supply a blanket from home for your infant. Please take your child's blanket home at the end of the week for washing. For the safety of the infants, bumper pads and mobiles are not permitted in the cribs.

Each infant will have a shelf in the cabinet as well as in the refrigerator for his own food. If infants are drinking bottles, we ask that you bring them in pre-made each day. Each bottle should be labeled with the infant's first name and last initial. Each room is equipped with a crock pot for warming bottles. Each room

also has spoons, bowls, and cups available, but you may bring your own if you prefer. A feeding schedule must be provided by the parent every 30 days for a child who is not on table food.

### PACIFIERS

If your child uses a pacifier throughout the day, we will only be able to give it to them in their crib. Using a pacifier in a group setting allows for the spread of germs. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

## TIPS ON THE INFANT TO DIAMOND CLASSROOM TRANSITION

When your child promotes from our infant department, the following tips can make for a smooth transition as well as prepare you for what to expect.

- Parents need to begin taking small steps with their children between 9 and 10 months of age to prepare for the transition.
- Before infants move to the Pre-toddler wing, they need to be entirely off bottle feedings and should be drinking milk from a small cup. Sippy cups with water only may be brought into the Pre-toddler wing. We want your infant to have every opportunity to have liquid throughout the day. Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate bottles and jar food in the Pre-toddler department.
- Parents should begin offering similar items from our school menu to their infants at home. Offering these items will help your child become familiar with our lunch and help us to know if there are any possible food allergies. Please feel free to pick-up a menu in our lobby and begin sampling these simple foods at home between 9 and 10 months (Please speak to your Pediatrician before you offer table foods). Our Nutrition Coordinator makes the necessary adjustments so all food items are easier for the children to feed themselves. In addition, the teachers will break any large food into  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch pieces.
- In our Pre-toddler department, the children will be napping on nappers. You may purchase a napper (inquire about nappers from Administration) and the Infant Teacher will begin working on your child taking naps on their napper while in the infant room. The Diamonds classroom usually begins with two naps a day. Mid-year, we transition to one long nap a day. Depending on when your child transition to the pre-toddler department, it will help the teachers as well as your child if you begin working down to one to two naps a day at home.
- Your child needs to be mobile and able to pull themselves up on the play centers in order to negotiate around the classroom and play yard.
- Children must wear shoes everyday when they move-up. Please start at least one month before they transition so they have a chance to get used to wearing them throughout the day.

We know that moving your little one out of the infant department can be a nerve-racking and scary time. Our Administration and Teachers want to help make this transition smooth for you and your little one. Please don't hesitate to communicate with us if we can aide you in anyway. We know that you know your child best. Once again, this transition is a decision that we make together. We will move your child when the time is right for you and your family!!!