

Dear Toddler parents,

Welcome to the Toddler 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 Toddler Department

CLASSROOM GOALS

CURRICULUM

We use the Gryphon House curriculum. This curriculum targets the areas of language enrichment, cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development. These calendars are sent out by email prior to each month. The calendar includes morning and afternoon activities for each day as well as any parties or events planned for the month. In addition, we will plan a character building unit every month. We will focus on the following character traits: Manners, politeness, caring, respect, honesty, and good friends.

CIRCLE TIME

We will conduct a circle time twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Every morning, we will begin circle time by singing and participating in fingerplays. Then, we will read a book that is relevant to our weekly theme. Every day, we will review shapes, colors, counting to ten, and the alphabet. In addition to helping your child recognize shapes and colors during morning circle time, the afternoon circle time will be a review of the morning concepts.

ART PROJECTS

Art projects will pertain to our topic for the week. During this time, your child will be encouraged to use his or her imagination to create original projects. These projects will be offered twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We suggest that you dress your child in clothes that will allow for messy projects.

DISCIPLINE

The purpose of all discipline in the classroom will be to teach the children self-control skills. We will use redirection, positive guidance, and simple statements as discipline techniques. Redirection will always be our first response to issues that may arise. We believe that each day is a new day, with a chance to start fresh. If your child has a problem that redirection does not resolve, you will be notified through daily sheets or a phone call. If at any time you have concerns, we can set a time for a conference and explore our options.

MEALTIMES

We provide the children with a healthy lunch and a morning and afternoon snack every day. Please do not send extra food, other than breakfast, unless you have discussed it with the Teacher and Administration. If you will be providing breakfast for your child to eat at school, we ask that you come in before eight o'clock in the morning. Please label cups and other utensils with your child's first and last name. These items will be rinsed and placed in your child's cubby every day. All of the food served meets our safety requirements for choking hazards and the meals are served "family style." The children will be learning to use a

spoon, pull out their own chairs, wait for their friends, and drink from a cup. These goals will prepare them for the next classroom.

ALL ABOUT ME POSTERS

This year, we will focus on family. To do so effectively, we ask that each child bring in a poster filled with family and friends. Please label the pictures with the names of the people in the photographs so we can talk about them. The posters will be laminated and hung on the wall for everyone to see.

SELF-HELP SKILLS

Throughout the year, we will be working on self-help skills, such as picking up toys, washing hands, drinking from a cup, and eating with a spoon. These skills will prepare the children for the next classroom as well as give them the opportunity to be more self sufficient.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

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.

CLASS PET

Our class will have a pet, such as a hermit crab or a fish. The children will take turn caring for our classroom's pet. We hope this opportunity will be a thrilling experience for all of us!

GARDEN

The children will also have the opportunity to participate in gardening activities this year. The children will help with the planting and watering of plant and/or flowers. We will discuss how plants grow and the special care our garden will need. We plant inside in cups or plastic containers in the fall and outside in the spring.

BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

At Stepping Stones, we implement Baby Sign Language in infants-toddlers. 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."

SUPPLIES NEEDED

If you have any of the following items that you do not need or are going to throw away, we would greatly appreciate donations to the classroom: old changes of clothes, dress-up clothes, empty wipe containers, old newspapers, and old t-shirts. If you have any other items that you are going to throw away, please do not hesitate to ask if your classroom needs it. We can usually find a use for most anything, either now or in the future.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

DROP-OFF PICK-UP

When you drop-off your child, please be sure to put all items in your child's cubby, including pacifiers, blankets, sippy cups, etc. For safety reasons, please leave any medication your child may need with the teacher so that it may be put in the appropriated place. The teachers will sign your child in and out daily.

DRESS CODE

A change of clothes is necessary for your child due to accidents that can happen. Shoes should not be open-toed due to accidents on the playground. Please do not send your child in anything you treasure or would not want to see dirty.

DAILY SHEETS

Daily sheets will be sent home every day. This sheet will inform you of your child's mood, behavior, and activities for that day. The daily sheet will also include what your child ate for snacks and lunch, how long he or she napped, and any reminders or items needed for the next school day. Reminders may include diapers, monthly wipes, clothes, nappers, and parties. Please take a few minutes to check them out each day.

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 for our pre-toddlers. Toddlers receive medicine once a day at 11:30 am. Over-the-counter medication must specify the dosage for your child's age or weight. Also, other medication must be accompanied by its prescription.

COMMUNITY WIPES

The classroom will be using community wipes. Please bring in one package of wipes per month. All of the children will be sharing wipes on a daily basis. This system helps keep the room clean since only one box of wipes will be out at a time. We will have each name on a list that we will check off each month.

DIAPERS

We will be doing stand-up diapering throughout the school year to encourage future toilet training. We ask that you bring your child separate articles of clothing rather than a one-piece shirt or outfit. These clothes will give the children an opportunity to develop self-help skills by pulling off their own diaper and pulling up their own pants. This practice will also help the children transition into using the toilet.

PACIFIERS

If your child uses a pacifier throughout the day, we will slowly work towards weaning him or her off of it. Reasons behind weaning your child off the pacifier are twofold. One, using a pacifier in a group setting allows for the spread of germs. Two, we encourage your child to use his or her words when speaking. When your child no longer needs his or her pacifier, we will ask you to please leave it at home or out of sight. Please feel free to communicate your wishes with us regarding this issue.

CLASS PARTIES

We will be planning parties throughout the year. Our Room Parent will contact you regarding any items needed for the parties. We always appreciate any help you provide and welcome your company. Your child may bring a commercially-packaged snack to share with the class for his birthday.