

# CLC

Children's Learning Centers

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## **INFANT PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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Please refer to the CLC Family Handbook for more information.

## WELCOME TO THE CLC INFANT PROGRAM!

Every moment with an infant is precious. At CLC, our dedicated staff strives to make the Infant classroom a home away from home for your baby by offering care in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. Individual attention is given to each child including playing, talking, cuddling, rocking, singing and holding.

A baby's day at our Center follows a very flexible schedule; it is CLC policy that our infant care practices are responsive to the rhythms and schedules of each individual child. We talk with you about your child and your approach to feeding and napping so we are as consistent as possible between home and CLC. We are committed to making this first transition away from home easy and natural for you and your child.

During a "Meet the Teacher" session with parents, teachers learn more about the infant's routines and patterns of behaviors. On the "A little about our child" form, parents provide input on how their baby eats and sleeps, as well as techniques used for soothing.

We have a phone line directly into the infant classrooms so a parent can call any time during the day and ask how their infant is doing, and staff can also call the parent if we have any questions or concerns.

In order to assist your infant in transitioning to group care there are a few things you can do in advance:

- Expose your baby to other family members, children, friendly adults or babysitters. This will help your child enjoy and look forward to interactions with other people.
- Let your baby learn to sleep around conversation, music or other daily activities. During group care some infants will enjoy a restful sleep while others are playing, eating, or engaged in a developmental activity.
- We encourage any mother who breastfeeds; we provide a nursing room where a mother can feed her baby during the day. However, if your schedule does not allow you to come routinely to the Center, your child must be acclimated to a bottle. Mothers may express their breast-milk to be used while the baby is at school but again the baby needs to have been introduced to the bottle. **Introducing your baby to the bottle well in advance of child care minimizes the difficulties of transitioning to group care.**

### CLOTHING & SUPPLIES

Each child has his/her own personal space for belongings. Please label all items with your child's first name and the first letter of the last name. This includes clothes, diapers, pacifiers, etc. Several changes of clothes must be provided for when the children's clothes become soiled and/or the weather changes. In order to maintain sanitary conditions clothing that is soiled by bodily fluids is immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing) and sent home that day for laundering.

Closed toe shoes must be provided for mobile infants to go outside and play. Socks must be provided for the classroom and buggy rides.

Do not bring valuable or sentimental items to the classroom.

## **FEEDING INFANTS**

Parents must provide food for their child. The program staff works with families (who are informed by their child's health care provider) to ensure that the food provided is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage. Additional guidelines include the following:

- Parents must review and update their infant feeding instructions every 30 days until the child is twelve months.
- Infants starting a new food for the first time must try the food at home for at least three days before we can introduce that food at the Center.
- The staff keeps a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provides families with that information.

## **RESTRICTIONS ON FEEDING INFANTS**

- Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice.
- Teaching staff do not offer solid foods and/or fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless that practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by families. Sweetened beverages are avoided. If juice (only 100% fruit juice is recommended) is served, the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child daily.
- The program does not feed cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months, and it serves only whole milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.
- Staff discard after one hour any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated. If staff warm formula or human milk, the milk is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. - No milk, including human milk and no other infant foods are warmed in a microwave oven.

*Infants unable to sit unassisted are held for bottle-feedings. All others sit or are held to be fed. Infants and toddlers do not have bottles while in a crib or bed and do not eat from propped bottles at any time.*

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING**

The program accepts, stores, and serves expressed human milk for feedings. Human milk must be in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name, date, and number of ounces. It is stored in the *refrigerator* for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a *freezer* at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months.

*CLC also provides a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinates feedings with the infant's mother.*

## **STEPS THE CENTER TAKES TO HELP PREVENT SIDS**

All CLC staff must adhere to the Infant Safe Sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS). Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless you have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed

statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary. After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants may then be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items are not allowed in cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than twelve months. Infants may not be swaddled at any time or sleep in a corrective helmet unless there is a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a healthcare professional stating that swaddling the child for sleeping purposes is medically necessary.

Listed below are additional guidelines implemented at CLC for the infant classrooms:

- Diapers are changed when wet or soiled. Staff checks children to see if diapers are wet/soiled at least every two hours when infants are awake and when they awaken from a nap.
- Infants must never walk around with or sleep in their crib with a bottle.
- Infant's fingernails and toenails need to be trimmed at all times.
- Inform classroom staff if your child is going to be picked up early or leave during the day for an appointment. This way the baby will be ready for departure upon your arrival.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

CLC teaching staff is consistent and predictable in their care for the infants. They foster the baby's emotional well-being by demonstrating respect for the child and creating a positive emotional climate. The maximum group size for infants is ten and the teacher: child ratio is 1:4. In addition our teaching staff:

- Express warmth through behaviors such as physical affection, eye contact, tone of voice and smiles.
- Engage infants in frequent face-to-face social interactions each day.
- Provide one-to-one attention to infants when engaging in care giving routines.
- Are sensitive to infants various signals and learn to read their individual cries.
- Facilitate an infant's social interactions when he/she is interested in looking at, touching, or vocalizing to others.

## **CURRICULUM**

The early years in a child's life set the tone for future learning. Our goal at CLC is to stay current on research in child development so that we are able to build a foundation for each child that lasts a lifetime. Our infant and toddler programs implement *Emergent Curriculum*, a philosophy of teaching and way of planning curriculum that focuses on being responsive to children's interests to create meaningful learning experiences. It is child-initiated, assessment based and prioritizes active participation, relationship building, flexible and adaptable methods, inquiry, and play-based learning. The Infant Curriculum incorporates Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) as set forth by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and AdvancED, the latest research in infant brain development, and the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP) assessment. The curriculum and activities implemented by the teaching staff reflect the developmental needs and upcoming milestones of each child. Most of the activities are hands-on enabling children the opportunity to explore the world around them in a safe and secure environment.

Listed below are some of the general curriculum guidelines followed at CLC:

- The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the infants.
- Infants are provided an environment that allows them to move freely and achieve mastery of their bodies through self-initiated movement.
- Infants have multiple opportunities to develop fine-motor skills by using their hands and fingers in a variety of age-appropriate ways.
- Infants have varied opportunities to experience songs, rhymes, routine games and books.
- Infants are provided opportunities and materials to build number awareness using objects in the environment and to see and touch different shapes, sizes, colors and patterns.
- Infants are provided opportunities to use their senses to learn about objects in the environment and to discover that they can make things happen or solve simple problems.
- Infants are provided learning opportunities that foster positive identity and an emerging sense of self and others.

**SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule will vary based on each infant’s needs (feeding and naps). Diapers are changed at least every two hours or as needed.

7:00am - 9:30am	Arrival, parents/teachers exchange information. Infants have free play. Diapering.
9:30am -10:30am	Snack Time, clean up, and diapering
10:30am -10:45am	Circle time, songs, finger plays, stories and talking about the monthly theme.
10:45am -11:15am	Teacher directed activities. (Focus on activities from the monthly theme and the E-LAP).
11:15am -11:45am	Outside Time/ buggy ride or the playground
11:45am -12:00pm	Wash hands and get ready for lunch.
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch time, Wash hands and face and diapering.
1:00pm -3:15pm	Naptime
3:15pm -3:35pm	Diaper changes
3:35pm -4:05pm	Snack time
4:05pm -5:05pm	Free Play and a small circle time
5:05pm - 6:00pm	Buggy ride/ story time, Diaper changes and staff and teachers exchange daily information.

**HEALTH**

Personal cribs, separate areas for changing and feeding, and a “no-uncovered-shoes” policy, ensure clean playing, eating and sleeping spaces. Any parent using the diaper changing tables at CLC must follow the state licensing procedures for proper sanitization.

**COMMUNICATION**

At CLC our staff knows that you are your child’s most important teacher, so we will give you daily reports and offer tips on how to reinforce what your child learns in his/her time with us. Teachers communicate with family members on an ongoing basis to learn about children's individual needs and ensure a smooth transition between home and program. Teachers observe infants and exchange information about their abilities with families.

To make sure that the care we provide is just right for you and your baby, a personal care plan includes a schedule, nutritional guidelines, and any other requirements specific to your child. The

plan will reflect your child's unique characteristics and your own beliefs, values, and culture. Regular phone calls, conferences, and e-mails are all part of this important partnership. The Center provides a daily written report to the child's parent when the child is picked up from the classroom.

## **INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT**

### Things Every Child Needs In Order to Help the Brain Grow

**Interactions:** Interactions with people and objects are as necessary to the baby as protein, fat and vitamins; all are vital nutrients for the growing and developing brain.

**Touch:** Touch is critical to development! Touch literally sends signals to the brain telling it to grow and make connections. Without the nurturance of touch at an early age, infants can NEVER develop. For both the brain and the body, touch is a critical nutrient, as critical as vitamins.

**Stable Relationships:** Infants need a loving, trusting adult to act as the interpreter of life experiences, otherwise they have no meaning. Infancy can be compared to being in a foreign land where no one can understand you or speak your language. Thus, a stable relationship is a necessity for an infant's survival.

**Safe & Healthy Environment:** Children learn wherever they are and a safe and secure environment is essential to their development. Because of the infant's vulnerability, adults must attend to each infant at all times to ensure continued safety. Taking care of a child's physical needs communicates positive feelings about his/her value and this influences the child's developing identity and feelings of self-worth.

**Self Esteem:** The root of all emotional feeling is in the brain stem. If you create a personal relationship with each infant, you will know the kind of cuddling, stroking, talking and playing that brings comfort and good feelings to each one. This supports their development and they will begin to build a sense of self-confidence.

**Communication:** A child's ability to communicate begins at birth. The plasticity of the brain is what makes it possible to learn language in the first place. All the circuits are in place; they just need to be connected. The more words an infant hears, the more connections are made. Children need to interact with people to learn a language and it is critical to engage them in conversation.

**Play:** Play is essential to a child's development and play is linked to mental development. It is the experience, NOT the toy, which aids growth in the brain.

**Music:** Children have an affinity for music from birth. They need to be involved in music, not just listen to it. Music can encourage memory, imagination and language.

**Reading:** Reading to children has a tremendous impact on their lives. The more you do it, the more connections will be made in the brain.

*The teachers of the Infant Program are dedicated to creating and maintaining the highest quality of care that encourages your child to grow to his/her fullest potential in all areas of development. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal. **Thank you for choosing CLC!***