



### **Infants: 4 wks to 1 year**

Young infants possess and enjoy the ability to communicate with their families and significant caregivers in order to have their basic needs met, whether it is feeding them, changing them, cuddling with them, or playing with them. They are drawn to environments and people who communicate with them by providing an overall sense of emotional warmth and safety. That is what we try to provide at Growing Years for families who need a “home away from home” for their baby!

We also understand that infants learn best through trial and error, repetition, identification, and imitation. To encourage this type of learning we provide an environment that is safe, stimulating, and emotionally supportive so that infants can begin investigating and exploring their world.

#### *Primary Caregiving:*

Research and early childhood professionals tell us that it is vitally important for infants to form an attachment with a caregiver as soon as possible upon entering a new program. Forming a bond/attachment to a significant caregiver allows a child to feel secure in their environment and gives them the ability to thrive within it.

At Growing Years we attempt to form these bonds through a system of supervision called “primary caregiving”. Each child is assigned to a caregiver who will provide the majority of care, comfort, communication with the family, and record keeping throughout the day. As much as possible, we try to give children the ability to “pick” their primary caregiver by waiting to see who they might be naturally drawn to.

#### *Communication:*

Each month the lead teacher sends home a newsletter which outlines what they will be focusing on with the High Reach Curriculum, as well as sharing words to songs and fingerplays with parents. Other information pertinent to the program is shared also.

Primary caregivers may be reached any time during the day by calling the school at 989-792-8670 or by e-mailing us at [info@growingyearspreschool.com](mailto:info@growingyearspreschool.com).

#### *Daily Schedule:*

Because infants are allowed to eat and sleep on demand, the infant room schedule becomes very flexible! Diapering is done every two hours, unless otherwise specified by parents. Although a typical day for *each* child would be hard to describe, each day involves the following activities:  
6:30—7:00:

Children begin arriving and are greeted by staff. Belongings are placed in cubbies and refrigerator. Any special information for each child, such as feeding, sleeping, pick-up, etc., is shared with caregivers and notated.



7:00—8:30:

Growing Years breakfast is served each day for those children who are ready for table food.

Breakfast and lunch menus are sent home and posted each month for parents.

8:45—10:30

Infants are engaged in stretching, tummy time activities, cuddling and simple games. They are rocked, changed, and fed before their morning nap, as needed.

Older infants move to the large motor area where they have circle time, which might involve singing, storytelling, or fingerplays in conjunction with the High Reach curriculum for babies.

Oldest infants might also have water play, dramatic play, blocks, tunnel play and art exploration.

10:00—10:30

Snack is provided for those infants who are ready for table food. The snack menu is posted on a monthly basis.

10:30—11:00

Children are taken outdoors daily as long as weather permits. It is important for children, even infants, to get fresh air and explore the outside world each day. For the youngest infants, we have special seats that fit inside our 4 seater buggies. For the oldest infants, who are beginning to walk, we have a special playground full of fun equipment for them.

11:10—12:00

Growing Years lunch is served for those who are ready for table food. Diapering occurs as needed.

12:00—2:00

Babies are rocked, changed, and fed before their afternoon nap as needed. Soft music is played to comfort children during nap time.

2:00—3:30

Afternoon snack is served for those babies who are ready for table food.

Babies are engaged in small group or tummy time activities with their primary caregiver and other children, such as singing, reading books, or doing an art or sensory activity together.

Older infants return to the large motor area where teachers have structured center activities involving motor development through sitting, crawling, or walking, opportunities for creative expression through dramatic play, building with blocks, art, and socializing with other baby friends!

3:30—4:30

Babies are taken outdoors again by their primary caregivers, in the same way as in the morning, weather permitting.

4:30—6:00

Children engage in individual activities with primary caregivers depending on their age as they await pick-up by parents. Upon pick-up, primary caregivers provide a written summary of the day's activities for each baby and chat with parents.

### *Curriculum:*

Our infant program uses a series of Baby Kits from High Reach Learning. These kits help infants to develop the skills necessary to cope with their environment. The kits are divided into four major areas of development:



Moving and Exploring  
Interacting and Feeling  
Communicating and Talking  
Thinking and Learning

*Examples of development in each area might be:*

**1) Moving and Exploring:**

Tracks objects with eyes.  
Picks up objects.  
Crawls.  
Pull-up to standing position.

**2) Interacting and Feeling:**

Smile responses.  
Will touch mirror when seeing own image.  
Interested in other people  
Communicates needs by crying.

**3) Communicating and Talking:**

Responds to own name  
Hears, coos, and gurgles.  
Copies sound combinations.  
Recognizes and begins to point at common objects.

**4) Thinking and Learning:**

Looks at place from which a toy has disappeared.  
Transfers toy from hand to hand.  
Mouths and touches everything.  
Begins to show intentional behavior.

*Developmental Milestones/Assessment:*

Primary caregivers, with the help of the lead teacher, provide parents with a developmental milestone report approximately every 3 months to let parents know what we are experiencing with their child at Growing Years. These reports become the vehicle we use to share our understanding of early infant development as outlined by child development professionals. Individual babies may exhibit all or only a few of the behaviors for a given age group and still fall within the normal range of development. Obviously, infants progress at various rates through different aspects of development: for example, early walkers may not be early talkers...