



Toddlers: 1 ½ to 2 ½ years

Older Toddlers are a very energetic bunch! It is so important to stimulate meaningful play with this age group by singing and reading to them, and encouraging them to explore their environment. Toddlers love to learn through their senses and through motor experiences as well. In this way, they are able to construct new understandings about their world.

At Growing Years, it is the teacher's job to continually structure the environment based on children's needs and interests, allowing plenty of time and opportunity for them to explore each area. In this way, teachers are taking an active role in all aspects of their development. We believe toddlers want to continually learn and become more and more autonomous in their play, developing an "I can" attitude that will be critical as he/she moves from the toddler stage into the preschool years.

Primary Caregiving:

Research and early childhood professionals tell us that it is vitally important for toddlers to form an attachment with a caregiver as soon as possible upon entering a new program. Forming a bond/attachment to a significant caregiver/teacher helps a child 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.

Besides the Growing Years Parent Handbook, parents will also receive a Welcome Packet for the toddler room which outlines information specific to that program.

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.

Daily Schedule:

Although toddlers still need a lot of flexibility in their day, they also enjoy and need some structure and routine as well. Having a routine of events throughout the day gives toddlers a sense of security. They can begin to anticipate the order of events while becoming familiar with

how those routines are carried out, such as group time, eating time, center time, and going outdoors, etc.

A typical day in the toddler room might look like this: (diapering and/or toilet learning occurs throughout the day as needed.)

6:30—7:00:

Children begin arriving and are greeted by staff. Belongings are placed in cubbies. Any special information for each child is shared with teachers and notated.

7:00—8:30:

Growing Years breakfast is served each day. Breakfast and lunch menus are sent home and posted each month for parents.

8:45—9:00:

Morning large group time. Teachers introduce new concepts from the High Reach curriculum for toddlers, called Tender Time. They also engage in other activities such as songs, finger plays, and stories. Teachers explain what they will find at the center areas that day.

9:00-10:30:

Toddlers move freely about the room engaging in interest area activities, such as large motor play, sand and water play, dramatic play, blocks, writing, manipulatives, and art exploration. Open snack is also offered at this time as a center choice

10:30—11:00:

Children are taken outdoors daily as long as weather permits. It is important for children to get fresh air and explore the outside world each day. Growing Years has a separate playground for this age group that is full of fun, developmentally appropriate equipment.

11:00—11:15

Children are changed or encouraged to use the potty, wash up, and prepare for lunch.

11:15—12:00

Lunchtime! Primary caregivers sit and enjoy lunch with their group of four children and then clean-up together.

12:30—2:30

After lunch and potty/diaper changes, toddlers lay down on cots for nap time and teachers pat children's backs until they fall asleep. Soft music is also played to comfort children during nap time.

2:30—3:00:

Afternoon snack is served as a whole group, with primary caregivers sitting and enjoying snack with their group of four children.

3:00—3:30:

Afternoon playground time, weather permitting.

3:30—5:00:

Toddlers are engaged in small groups with their primary caregivers and other children for activities such as singing, reading books, or doing an art or sensory activity together. After small group time, children move freely throughout the room where teachers have structured interest activities involving small motor development (puzzles, etc.) or large motor development, as well as opportunities for creative expression through dramatic play, building with blocks, and socializing with other toddler friends!



5:00—6:00:

Children engage in individual activities with primary caregivers as they await pick-up by parents. Upon pick-up, primary caregivers share news of the day's activities for each toddler and chat with parents.

Curriculum:

Toddlers have never had more fun learning! Tender Time by High Reach Learning is specifically designed to meet the needs for this energetic age group. This curriculum is packed full of age-appropriate activities that stimulate language development, creative movement, free play and much more. The skills developed in this program will enhance your child's ability to cope with the social, behavioral, and academic demands necessary for preschool.

Tender Time Program Themes

September: From Head to Toe

October: Just Imagine

November: Deep in the Forest

December: Pack Your Suitcase

January: Dinosaurs are Dino-mite

February: Reach for the Stars

March: Barnyard Buddies

April: Egg-citing Events

May: Jungle Jamboree

Colors:

Red, orange, brown, green, blue, pink, yellow, purple, and white.

Shapes:

Circle, triangle, heart, square, rectangle.

Puppet Friends:

Gingerbread man, fairy, owl, elf, dinosaur, earth, rooster, bunny, tree frog.

Music for Munchkins:

We are so fortunate to have Mrs. Michele Spitz/Wietfeldt as our music teacher! The children love her and look forward to her weekly visits. We have a longstanding relationship with Michele as she is also the singer and music arranger for the *Peddlesfoots* series of songs. In addition to *Music for Munchkins* playing a key role at Growing Years, Michele is busy working with children throughout the Saginaw area as she teaches music and provides entertainment for children's parties.

She is also available to sing for weddings and adult engagements. If you're interested in learning more about Michele, you can visit her website at www.musicformunchkins.com.



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Weekly Bible lessons:

Each week the classroom teacher presents a new Bible lesson to our toddlers. Our Christian curriculum is non-denominational and geared towards building strong character, love and consideration for others, and making wise moral choices. Each lesson from either the Old or New Testament is shared in an attempt to make it relevant to the age group involved. To help with reinforcement of the concepts, each lesson is followed by a creative art idea.

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 toddlers 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, children progress at different rates throughout all aspects of their development.