WELCOME TO TODDLERS

Welcome to the Toddler Area of the University of Minnesota Child Development Center. This document describes for our families and staff the unique features of our Toddler Program. Please read it carefully and keep it so that you may refer to it with questions. Our hope is that this gives you an understanding of our toddler program and addresses questions that you might have. We you to feel comfortable with and to have a basic understanding of our toddler program. We welcome you and your child to our area! Please communicate with us your ideas, questions, input, or suggestions.

Toddlerhood spans from 16 months to 33 months of age as defined by MN DHS. This is an exciting period of tremendous growth and change for your child. Mobility and acquisition of language during this time allow the toddlers to start to develop a sense of independence; moving from the stage of total dependence as an infant to becoming a more independent individual. During this transitional period, toddlers experience naturally occurring conflict between the desire for autonomy and the need for adult care and support. Our staff works to provide consistent routines, reasonable boundaries, and adult guidance to support their developing competencies and identity formation.

INTAKE AND TRANSITION TO THE TODDLER PROGRAM

During your Intake meeting with the bungalow’s Area Coordinator, you will be asked to provide information about you and your family and to give input for us to understand your family more fully e.g. your culture, languages, your child’s strengths and/or any concern you have. We will provide you with additional information about the daily routine and schedule. This is a chance for you to ask questions about the Toddler Program. We want to get to know your family to establish and maintain a partnership of caring, familiarize you with day-to-day routines and procedures. We will end by taking a tour through the Toddler Bungalow your child will be entering. After the intake and once your child begins in the Toddler Program, you/we will discuss more details such as assessment, goals for your child, documentation, executive functions, and other UMCDC practices.

TODDLER BUNGALOW AND TEACHING TEAM APPROACH

Our Toddler Program is comprised of two bungalows that mirror each other in design, staffing, ages, ratios, group sizes, and the use of emergent curriculum. The bungalows each have two classrooms, one of 13 younger toddlers, approximately 16-24 months of age, having a 1:4 ratio, and a classroom of older toddlers, 25 to 33 months of age, having a 1:5 ratio; We serve a total of 56 full-time equivalent toddler placements. Your child will remain in the same bungalow through their toddler development. We maintain a developmentally appropriate staff to child ratio and groups size during all parts of the day, including indoor and outdoor times.

The majority of the day, each toddler spends time interacting with peers, teachers, and learning materials in their primary classroom or the toddler play yard. Routines such as eating, napping, and toileting occur in the child’s classroom. The teachers may bring small groups of children to other UMCDC learning spaces such as the Courtyard, Flex Room/Research Suite, or Multi-Purpose Room.

In each Toddler Bungalow, our teaching team approach includes:

- One full-time Area Coordinator who supervises and manages the bungalow
- Two full-time teachers- one for each classroom (younger and older)
- Two full-time Assistant Teachers- one for each classroom (younger and older)
- University student Child Care Workers (CCW’s)- part time undergraduate students who are carefully screened and oriented to our program

The Area Coordinator in each bungalow is responsible for the overall functioning, scheduling of staff, modeling and demonstrating of best practices and compliance with accreditation and MN DHS – Licensing, as well as
oversight of curriculum planning, and supervision of all staff in the bungalow. Throughout the week, the Area Coordinator spends time in the two classrooms observing, supervising, modeling and demonstrating teaching practices and support the staff and student workers. The Area Coordinator works closely with the full time teaching staff to discuss individual and group needs, set goals, develop emergent curriculum, follow-up on assessment, documentation, and bridging information and research from weekly meetings with the education coordinator and the director.

Each classroom has a full time **Teacher and Assistant Teacher** who work collaboratively, as a team, to plan, mediators, scaffolding, As well as having student workers, known as child care workers. The teaching team shares in the care of all of the children, establishes and maintains a sensory rich and organized intentional environment.

**Child Care Workers (CCW's)** are aides to the teachers in the classroom. Their responsibility is to assist the teachers in all parts of a toddler’s daily care of children and the environment. Each new student is interviewed by the Education Coordinator, and then spends two hours volunteering in a classroom. This ‘probation’ period gives teachers a chance to see how students interact with young children and staff. When a CCW, student worker, gets assigned hours in Toddlers, they receive training. The training includes the following: Shaken Baby Syndrome, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS), Mandatory Reporting and Risk Reduction, and receive a general orientation to classroom procedures of feeding, diapering/toilet learning, napping, and developmental best teaching practices e.g. around language development such the use of descriptive language, non-value laden language, “self and parallel” talk and narration.

All full-time teaching staff has training in Pediatric and Adult CPR and First Aid, OSHA, HIPPA, Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS). They are prepared to prevent or treat injuries as needed. When a child experiences an injury, such as a scratch, bump or bruise from a fall, an “injury report” is filled out in triplicate explaining the circumstance, the nature of the injury and the first aid administered. If the injury is a bump to the head, an additional head injury report is included. Incidents occur in this age group as they begin to learn their perceptual motor and gross motor skills in all environments.

**DAYS AND HOURS OF CENTER OPERATION**

UMCDC’s hours of operation are from 7:30am to 5:30pm each Monday through Friday throughout the calendar year. Please keep in mind that a day over 8 to 9 hours is very long day for young children and can be difficult for your child's emotional and physical well-being. Ten hours is excessive in group care for young children. This even more important during transitional periods from one age group to another, or during other life changes such as a move, birth or death in the family, or other events and transitions outside the center.

The Center is closed on all official University holidays and on Professional Staff Development Days. Please refer to the list of closed days for the calendar year on the back cover of the Parent Handbook or on the parent bulletin boards in each bungalow. We ask that you arrive in the bungalow by 5:15 or earlier if you want to enjoy the outdoors or classroom with your child. **The Center is closed at 5:30 and you must be out of the building.**

**CENTER PHILOSOPHY**

UMCDC is based on socio-cultural and social constructivist theories and inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia and Pistoia, Italy. The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC with which UMCDC practices are aligned. Some examples of the theoretical work on which the center draws are Vygotsky, Piaget, Erickson, Urie Bronfenbrenner, Alice Honig, Gonzalez-Mena, Lillian Katz, Allison. Gopnick. C., Rinaldi, Carolyn Edwards, Ron Lally, Peter Mangionne. and R.. Feurstein.
ANTI-BIAS AWARENESS

We strive to create a classroom that is free of bias as it relates to race, creed, gender, culture, age, family type, socio-economic class, abilities etc. Our goal is to help prevent stereotyping and to help the children recognize the uniqueness of each individual and the diversity of our society. Our approach to this accomplishment is through interactions, conversations, and materials: books, puzzles, pictures, furnishings, music, etc. We respect all children and adults. We need your help and support to model this. If you know of materials, resources or have any suggestions, or would like to share something of your culture, please talk with us about sharing.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

All children enrolled at the U of M Child Development Center are supervised at all times of the day. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards for age appropriate staff-to-child ratios are used daily instead of minimum state licensing requirements. Staff-to-child ratios are maintained at 1:4 in the younger toddler classrooms and 1:5 in the older toddler classrooms. In toddlers, we have a group size of 13 children in the younger classroom and 15 children in the older classroom. The teaching staff ensures the daily implementation of this written Child Care Program Plan through planned, age appropriate interactions with the children in their bungalows and classrooms. During these interactions, staff stay in smaller groups with the children, providing both teacher directed and child-initiated activities, so that they can be more responsive, reciprocal and respectful of the children’s developmental needs.

Since health and safety of each child enrolled at the Center is our primary concern and responsibility, careful supervision of the children is practiced consistently throughout the facility. Children must be in sight and sound at all times. You will find the Toddler Bungalows are very busy and active. Our busiest times are often during arrival, departure, and transition times. We are very receptive to informal conversations about your child, but we ask that you please, keep your conversations with us short when we are with the children in ratio to ensure the health and safety of the whole group. If you need to discuss in some length with the teacher, please speak with or email the Area Coordinator to arrange a time to talk with staff or the AC so we can devote our full attention to you and offer our assistance. This supports the children’s social-emotional well-being so that we are not talking about them or concerns about other children directly in front of the group. Children overhear and can understand when we are talking about them. We want to be respectful of the children, stress level, and their feelings. If concerns need to be discussed, please let’s be sure it is away from the group and/or your child.

The UMCDC building design was intentionally planned to provide optimum opportunities for keep children within sight and sound of the teaching staff at all times. Windows allow staff visual supervision of children in all areas of the classrooms from the Area Coordinator offices, hallways, children’s bathrooms, and the play yard. Dutch doors and half-door gates protect children from leaving their assigned space while at the same time permitting adults to see and hear the children at all times. Please support the teaching staff in closing and locking all gates and doors behind you as you move through the bungalows, along with keeping all opening and closing of doors and gates consistently being "a grown-up's job."

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Arrivals:
Washing Hands: Upon arrival to the bungalow, you and your child will wash hands in the child’s bathroom. This is a requirement for accreditation by NAEYC, as well as an important step to reduce the spread of illness. Be sure you introduce your child to the group after hand washing and ensure he/she are assimilated into the group before you leave and you have made contact with the classroom teaching staff.
Checking Your Child In: Daily sign your child in on the classroom clipboard, this is a MN DHS Licensing requirement, as well as fill out their Daily Note. This note informs the bungalow teaching staff of specific information you want to pass along about your child (i.e. health/medication, injuries, breakfast at home, sleep patterns form night before, family visiting, family on work trips or away from home, etc.).

Important Information for Teachers: If you are dropping off before 8:30am (before breakfast begins) check in with the full-time staff present on any specific information that you want passed along to your child’s teacher or to the Area Coordinator.

Saying Good-bye: Establish a routine where you can engage your child in finding materials to work with, read a book, and/or help your child do a “window wave” with a teacher. Try to keep this good-bye routine as simple and consistent as possible. If good-byes are drawn out, this tends to be harder on the child as they wonder if you are actually leaving and they may cling to you longer, making the good-bye more difficult with the child becoming upset. If your child is having a hard time departing from you, please seek out the full-time teaching staff to support your child in saying good-bye. We can always follow up mid-day if you are wondering how it turned out. Typically, once you are out of sight from the child, they tend to be distracted by other things they are interested in. Please know that we acknowledge your child’s feelings and offer support through co-regulation to help them through these moments.

Do not leave your child in the bungalow or in a classroom pertained within the bungalow without an adult (i.e. in the foyer when the teacher is in the classroom or vice versa). When you drop your child off or pick up at the end of day, ensure that a full-time teaching staff or Area Coordinator know that you are leaving.

End of the day:
Checking Your Child Out: Please be sure to sign your child out on the classroom clipboard (per DHS). Always either verbally talk with a full-time staff or make eye contact or gesture that you are departing (especially when outside when staff and children are scattered throughout the play yard).

Wash hands: Before departing, wash your and your child’s hands when leaving the center. This helps reduce the risk for your family to bring home any unwanted germs.

Daily Note Pick-Up: You will find your Daily Note in your family mailbox, located across from the front desk. Feel free to pick this up on your way down to the bungalow in case there are any messages on it from your child’s teacher that they may want to discuss with you, or if you have any questions reflecting from your child’s day.

PREDICTION AND ROUTINES

Parents and teachers work together to make the transition from home to the Center and from the Center to home as comfortable for the child as possible. Before the transition to the Toddler Bungalow, your child may separate from you easily, which is likely due to your child’s familiarity with the infant teachers. However, during the transition to toddlers, we will be new to your child and this may result in strong emotions. The toddler staff would like to work with you to develop a ritual of routine when you leave (ex: waving good-bye at the window). We understand it may be hard for you if your child cries when you leave, but we will reflect your child’s feelings by talking with them about when you are coming back and comfort your child until he or she is ready to begin play in the classroom.

Predictions and routines are important to your child. This started in infancy and is now becoming more complex. Executive function begins with routines. Routines are an important part of your child’s life both at home and at the Center. It is best to have a consistent routine for drop off so that your child is able to develop an understanding and sense of trust with you when you leave. For example, it’s important to say “good-bye” and let your child know you’re leaving, so that their sense of trust with you strengthens. When you prolong saying good-bye or leave and come back into the bungalow, it is confusing for your child and can create extra stress.
Providing a consistent routine of washing hands together as you enter the bungalow, getting your child assimilated into the group, such as, reading a book together, and then saying good-bye by having a staff member help your child to wave from the window, supports him/her to separate from you. Erratic or late arrivals are hard for toddlers, therefore, we encourage you to be here by 9:30 am. The classrooms’ small group exploration occurs around this time. Late arrivals can interfere with the flow of the morning transitions. If you are going to be late in the morning, please notify the front desk staff or call the bungalow office so we know when to expect your child’s arrival. If you are looking to shorten your child’s day, it’s better to do so at the end of the day so that your child is a part of the curriculum activities and set routines in the early morning. A reminder that being in group care for a long period of time each day is exhausting for the children’s social-emotional and physical well-being at this young age and stage of development.

**TRANSITIONS DURING DAILY ROUTINES**

Time is allotted to make successful transitions from activity to activity and from one location to another. Toddlers are given a cue through a verbal such as “soon” or “next”, or cues such as a song, a bell tone, a tap on the shoulder, etc. Time is not understood at this by toddlers, so saying: “1 minute” or “3 minutes” is not concretely comprehended. Teachers often sing songs to signal the transition, or use musical instruments, Toddlers are encouraged to participate in clean up times during transitions as well. Teachers explain to the children what will happen next to prepare them for routine transitions such as hand washing, dressing for outdoors, turns in the bathroom, clean up, nap time, or transitions to another location other than the classroom.

**MEAL TIMES**

We view our meal times as more than just an opportunity to eat. *Family Style dining* in the Toddler Program provides an atmosphere of learning, respect and sharing time together. A relaxed atmosphere of enjoyment is created rather than feeling rushed. Typically, there is a small group of children at each table sitting with a full-time teacher. You will see our mealtimes reflecting opportunities for meaningful one-on-one interaction as well as large group reflection. It is a valuable time for adults to model appropriate behaviors and social interactions. Meal times are a part of curriculum where the children learn and develop through the following areas:

- **Language** is developed as children engage in rich conversations with adults and peers (discussions of what activities were done in the morning, talking about and labeling foods they are eating- vegetables, fruits, grains, and colors; anticipating and discussing of what will come in the afternoon). We also incorporate comparative language big, bigger, biggest and prepositions that they are learning to use.

- **Eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills**, including developing and strengthening wrist rotation, are fostered by children pouring their own drinks. When someone spills, adults and children calmly clean up, and the children are not shamed for something they are learning to develop. The children are also offered the opportunity, when developmentally ready, to scoop their fruit and vegetables, and use tongs to pick up simple finger foods to serve themselves. Children feel empowered during meal times as they learn what they are capable of doing. They learn how to make meaningful choices, as well as fostering independence.

- **Mathematical skills** are developed as children learn about amounts, spatial relationships and one-to-one correspondence. **Mathematical language** is learned: more, less, another one, a little/small portion, a larger portion, half full, cutting something in half, thirds or quarters, and counting the pieces then cutting in half again (early fractions).

- Children develop and practice patience as well as **impulse control** through waiting their turn to be served and being excused from the table.

- They develop a **sense of mastery and competence** as they excuse themselves from the table one at a time and bus their own dishes. There are two separate buckets, one for food and one for dishes and the toddlers learn through *guidance and modeling* to scrape their food into the food bucket and then place their dishes in the other bucket. Toddlers then use a washcloth to wipe their face and hands or clean up in the bathroom with adult support as needed.
Our tables are used for curriculum activities, so **breakfast ends at 9:15 AM (starts at 8:30)**. This way, the teachers can clean, sanitize, and set up activities and we can send our breakfast items back to the kitchen in preparation for lunch. If you wish to have your child join us for breakfast, out of courtesy for the staff, kitchen, and other children, **please have your child here by 9:00 at the latest**, so he/she can enjoy a relaxing breakfast experience.

**TODDLER DEVELOPMENT**

*Identity Formation:* A big focus during the toddler stages of development is identity formation. With support from adult scaffolding and guidance, the children create a strong sense of **self-esteem and self-confidence**. This formation is a building block for psychosocial, cognitive, and resilience. Your child is on a quest for mastery of a myriad of things from language and communication, to motor development, self-regulation, and sense of mastery, toilet learning, eating, and dressing. Repetition is their quest for retention. They like to repeat and repeat until they have mastered a task. By allowing this repetition to occur, without interruption, they are learning perseverance and focus.

*Language Acquisition:* To support Language Acquisition, teachers communicate with the children through **self and parallel talk**. This means that we narrate what they are doing and/or what we are doing in descriptive words. Such as, “I’m putting the ball in the basket” or “you’re putting the ball in the basket.” We avoid **value-laden words**, such as “nice” or “good job.” Instead, we use descriptive words to a child, for example, when he/she blows his/her nose we say, “You blew your nose,” and state their actions rather than ambiguous language by saying, “good job.” This increases their development in vocabulary and use of rich language.

Toddlers are also learning **comparative language** so using words like fast, faster, fastest or slow, slower, slowest give the pattern of language. Toddlers are also learning prepositions and enjoy games such as, “Where?” “Can you put the (ball) under the blanket, on the blanket, behind the sofa?”

**Abstract language** needs to be tied to a concrete object. You will notice in toddlers we have timers because they don’t understand the concept of time, such as, “In one minute, we’re going to clean up.” Instead, we offer sand timers (1 minute, 3 minute, and 5 minute) and concepts in language such as, “Soon, next,” or “After I ring the bell…” to consistently offer an abstract and concrete understanding to transitions. As an opportunity for reflection from the children, we often ask them, “What’s next?” to support the early stages of sequencing and understanding simple steps. The same is true for concepts like **wet and dry**. Allowing the children to feel both a dry and wet cloth offers the opportunity for comparison and deeper comprehension. The understanding of these concepts aid in toilet learning for later on.

**Competence & Mastery:** This is the foundation for children to accomplish various tasks. At UMCDC, we support children through competence and mastery through mealtimes where the children control their wrist rotation in pouring their milk, feeding themselves, whether with hands at first and then learning to manipulate a utensil and scooping food, to bussing their own dishes. This also connects with learning how to dress themselves. This takes a lot of practice and repetition to achieve. The children make connections in learning about their bodies, such as standing on one foot to slip it into their boot, and using motor balance. Sequence is embedded in daily routines, such as bussing dishes, toileting, and getting dressed, where we offer trial and error opportunities for the children to understand that it doesn’t work so well to put your boots on before your snow pants or mittens before your jacket. Children are also great **imitators** so we model appropriate actions and behaviors. A key step in this process is that we **allow the children time to process** and we **calibrate our response** until we can see if they need scaffolding or assistance to move forward. If we step in with direction or support too soon, also referred to as **rescuing**, children do not get to **persevere, focus, repeat and master on their own**. However, we also want to avoid total frustration so that they do not become defeated and give up, so we calibrate when to **scaffold**, or assist them.
Sensory learners: Toddlers are developing an early “taxonomy of cognition.” They learn through play and exploration with their senses and with sensory materials, and learning through their senses is a key tool for developing the mind. To integrate the senses and engage the children, we provide cooking experiences and exploration of natural materials. Through this they learn processes such as to name/identify, to compare and contrast (find likeness and difference), and to anticipate. They are learning to look for attributes to classify and to sort.

Guidance and Regulation:

Guidance in the context of Conflict and Difficult Behaviors: Toddlers look to adults to encounter and learn about the world around them. Toddlers learn how to be socially competent but need adult support to do so. It is not uncommon for toddlers to bite or hit others, to resist requests from adults, or to erupt in tantrums. Playing with others brings delight and joy, but also brings frustration and disappointment. Conflicts are hard for children to work through, but it is an important part of teaching and learning. Conflict is a time for young children to negotiate strong feelings, differentiate in opinions and desires, and resolving conflict with others. To support the toddlers through conflict and difficult behavior, clear and simple conversation is used to help them make sense of the limits of acceptable behavior. We do this through respectful guidance. Toddlers experiment and test to see what happens when they act on something or someone in a certain way. If a child has done something unacceptable, the teacher/adult must provide clear limits and expectations, or boundaries. The adult acknowledges the child’s intent or desire, state clearly what the child may not do, state clearly what the child may do instead, and then give a brief reason why. Children rely on adults to give them clear directions about expected behavior stating what is allowed and what is not allowed. This clarifies the limits of acceptable behavior: “You may throw this ball, but you may not throw the block.” Expectations must also be said in statements rather than questions, for example, “Please do not throw the sand, ok?” versus the clear statement, “Please do not throw the sand.” By asking a question, we’re allowing a choice to be made from the child.

When responding to a child through respectful guidance, we must also acknowledge their feelings or intentions, especially when an overwhelming emotion results from a situation. Acknowledging those feelings is a way to help the child cope. “I see you are crying and may be feeling sad about giving the toy back, but this child was using the toy first. We don’t take toys out of other children’s hands if they are using it.” Follow with the clear expectation and learning experience of letting the child know what he/she can do, instead of taking a toy away from another child: “You could tell him/her you would like to be next to use the toy.” It’s important for these expectations, or “rules”, to be consistent from a majority of the adults, otherwise the child can become confused.

Self-Regulation: A significant indicator of readiness and of success throughout life is self-regulation. This includes perseverance and being effortful, the ability to wait, to meet one’s own and another’s needs, to share, and to self-calm. We assist in the development of self-regulation and readiness with routines so that children can anticipate, thus helping them to wait, to learn some ways to self-calm and by setting boundaries that make children feel safe and secure, mentally and physically. Through our interactions, routines, explorations, guided activities and small group projects we exercise their skills.

Toilet Learning: Rather than using the term “toilet training” at UMCDC, we use “toilet learning,” because it is a developmental journey in both understanding and physiological readiness of the child. There is no magic age when children are ready for toilet learning. We want to work with you as “partners in caring” to decide when to start. It is easiest for children and feels better to them when we work cooperatively. Developmentally young children are in a stage of identity formation. As caring adults, we do not want to make them feel shame, doubt, or incompetence around this or other issues. If children are shamed or pushed, it can lead to diminished self-esteem, self-confidence, or feelings of incompetence. We want them to have a healthy sense of self in their identity formation. The first and second years of life in Erik Erickson’s stages are about Trust vs. Mistrust (of others) that comes from relationships.
(attachment) and the second stage, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt. These are the foundations for “people making”. It is why these first years are so critical to your child’s development. Similar to developing learning skills, such as walking and talking, differentiate in individual children and can vary a great deal, as does toilet learning. The bladder is a part of the fine motor system and some children develop earlier than others do. When a child is not able to hold liquid in their body, for example, keeping their diaper dry over nap times, you can take this as an indicator they are not ready and the bladder is not physically ready to control this holding process.

Here are some other examples of what we look for when a child is showing “readiness skills” for toilet learning:

- Child seems curious about toileting, e.g. he/she wants to toilet try.
- Child imitates others around bathroom habits, e.g. wants to wear underwear, and wants to watch parents or other children go.
- Child remains dry for long periods of time.
- Child wants to and is capable of getting his/her diaper off (and some or all other clothing).
- Child makes physical demonstration when he/she is going, urine or bowel movement by verbalizing, grunting, or squatting.
- Child verbalizes he/she needs to use the toilet.
- The child can follow simple directions

When the child begins to use the toilet, referring to responses in the previous language section, we make the toilet learning a part of their daily routine and expectations when they are in the process of switching from diapers to underwear. We avoid language and responses of “Good job.” We simply state what the child is doing, “You put urine in the toilet,” or “You listened to your body when it had to go.” We do not bribe the children with toys, candy, or stickers during this learning process. With bribery, children learn to please the adult rather than feeling mastery and competence in their learning skills.

Please tell the teaching staff in your classroom or talk to the Area Coordinator if you see these signs and they will share with you as well. Again, when this is a cooperative effort, it works best for your child when we work together and the support is consonant between home and school.

TEACHERS’ ROLES, IMAGE OF THE CHILD, AND ENVIRONMENT AS THE 3RD TEACHER

Teachers see themselves with children as facilitators, co-researchers and co-constructors of psychosocial, motor and cognitive development. Teachers view children from the perspective of an asset model, that is, children are born with curiosity and a desire to learn. The role of caregivers (teachers & parents) is to observe and assist nature in development, as well as provide a safe and stimulating environment to help scaffold the children’s learning.

The physical Environment is intentional and incorporates natural elements. It is meant to be sensory rich and engaging to children. Simultaneously, the Bungalows are homey; walls, shelves and closet areas are organized and uncluttered, teachers and Area Coordinators select materials with intentionality. Like cities in Italy, the environment is seen as the third teacher. Therefore, attention is given to the bungalow foyer, play castles, classroom(s), and play yards, to lightscapes, and natural elements e.g. plants, furniture, equipment, materials and activities.

EMERGENT CURRICULUM AND LEARNING

We follow a developmentally appropriate approach to routines, play, and learning. Teachers work to be aware of the changes children are going through physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially and then facilitate appropriate activities and experiences in each area. Play offers toddlers opportunities to become involved in open-ended exploration and build relationships. Through play, toddlers make discoveries, work on problems,
use choices, and find out what kinds of things interest them, learn to repeat, focus, persist, and develop strategies.

Caregiving is an integral part of our curriculum. Caregiving tasks are seen as meaningful learning experiences for the child. Diapering is not looked upon as a chore, but rather a chance for one-to-one interaction with the child, encouraging attachment and relationships, and opportunities to give the child positive messages about his/her body functions. Interactions between staff and toddlers at mealtimes promote attachment, nutrition, sensory experiences, and the development of self-help skills.

The interactions, which children experience with their caregivers and with their environment, are another part of our curriculum. We work to create a nurturing learning environment. Toddlers have many needs and require adults who are there for them; to provide the care they need through talking, singing, reading, and playing. Sensitive observers and caregivers respond to the toddlers’ needs through social emotional, self-regulation, and impulse control, as a few mentioned executive functions. Our goal is to have an atmosphere that is positive and respectful to each child. We want the children to develop a sense of trust, well-being, competency, and high self-esteem that come by forming trusting, positive relationships with caregivers who understand the needs of toddlers and who sincerely enjoy working with them. When toddlers feel secure with the caregiver and the environment, they are able to freely explore and meet new challenges. As toddlers play, the teachers provide appropriate learning materials and guiding support as they discover how they can interact with and have an effect on their own environment. What this means for the teacher is to allow the child time to work out obstacles, motor or “cognitive knots” (i.e. fitting a puzzle piece in the board) or to experience interaction with another child (i.e. both toddlers wanting to use the same toy), and not to immediately rescue them. Teachers intervene if the child seems unable to find success or resolution with the situation. We combine a positive, caring attitude with knowledge of Early Child Development and respect for each individual in order to provide the best possible care for the toddlers. Teachers plan and follow daily routines so toddlers can both anticipate and participate in predictable activities.

Emergent Curriculum is a child-directed and teacher-facilitated approach to planning curriculum. Teachers develop and create “emergent” curriculum around children’s interest(s), observations, assessment and their knowledge of development. Thus, the curriculum is a balance of teacher and child initiated projects and activities. This is not a linear process and is constantly evolving in response to children’s changing developmental needs and interests. Parental and community interests also play a factor and are encouraged to be a part of the planning process. Planning “emergent” curriculum requires observations, documentation, creative brainstorming, flexibility, and patience on the part of the teaching staff. Children are always supervised through one-on-one interaction, and large and small group activities. By allowing toddlers to choose what areas of the room they want to be in and what activities they want to explore or play with, we encourage their independence and mastery.

Curriculum provides a framework for developmentally appropriate experiences or encounters to engage children both indoors and outside, to give them opportunities to explore, problem solve and investigate. In toddlerhood, time is given to curriculum based in play, psychosocial and cognitive domains while continuing to work on a variety of motor skills. As stated in the teacher section, curriculum is responsive to children’s interests and needs while balancing and developing appropriate curriculum to meet the stated goals of the program.

As part of developing curriculum, teaching staff use ongoing observation and the “Desired Results Developmental Profile” (or DRDP) assessment tool. This assessment tool is designed for teachers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of all toddlers in an education program. The assessment results are used by the teacher to plan curriculum and scaffold for individual children and groups of children and to guide continuous program improvement.
Daily Journals are another piece of evidence that is linked to the classrooms’ curriculum and assessment. Daily journals reflect the children’s learning and engagement through a representational experience, activity, or exploration.

The Daily Journal is NOT used as a photo gallery of all the children in the classroom. Instead, it is an overall reflection of the day’s events of the whole classroom, not the individual child’s. We hope parents understand the expectation given to the teachers, and do not expect their child to appear in the Daily Journal every day, but rather view their child in the classroom as part of a whole community and developmental experiences. Daily Journals are a supportive tool to look at with your child that gives them an opportunity to reflect on their day and enrich their vocabulary and “working memory.” This establishes a rich routine between parent and child to reconnect after being away from one another.

Daily Notes are individual for each child. Parents are to fill out the front side of this note daily, with specific information to communicate to teaching staff about your child’s time at home before coming to school (i.e. how they slept, if they woke up in the night, if they had breakfast or a snack before arrival to school, etc.). Teachers fill out the backside of the note daily to communicate with parents about their child’s day and any anecdotal observations made by the teachers. Teachers also record the amount of food that was consumed at meal times (breakfast, lunch, and snack). Please see a menu (found in foyer) for details on what was served for the day. At the end of each day, Daily Notes can be picked up in your Family Mailbox, across from the Front Desk.

ASSESSMENTS AND CONFERENCES

Assessment is an integral part of our program and is done naturally. It is based on observation, children’s work, and evaluation of the collected facts. Children are never put in a “testing” situation; we assess and observe the children’s learning and engagement through their work or play. Readiness is looked at developmentally. The indicators in the assessment tool, “Desired Results Developmental Portfolio (DRDP)”, are progressive and give a picture of each child’s progression. The Desired Results Developmental Profile developed by the California Department of Education (https://www.desiredresults.us/) is used to support our observation and anecdotal notes. Assessments are used in a variety of ways: To support learning, identify developmental skills and/or concerns, and connect with curriculum and documentation as a process. Assessments relate closely to the goals and objectives of our curriculum.

The Desired Results Developmental Profile is based on six goals. The staff develops curriculum and scaffold plans to help the children work towards these goals. The goals are:

1. Children are personally and socially competent
2. Children are effective learners
3. Children show physical and motor competence
4. Children are safe and healthy
5. Families support their children’s learning & development
6. Families achieve their goals.

Within these goals, five domains are placed that represent the areas of learning and development.

1. Approaches to Learning- Self Regulation;
2. Social and Emotional Development;
3. Language and Literacy Development;
4. Cognition, Including Math and Science; and

Under each domain, there are measures that guide the staff to show what and how the children are learning and developing. Feel free to visit the website to look further into what the measures are.

All assessments are stored in binders in the Bungalow Office. The collected evidence and data are confidential and will only be shared with parents and/or legal guardians. Assessment data is collected and results are shared with families at conferences and other times as needed. Parents are welcome to look at their child’s binder at
any time or after a conference meeting, but it must stay within the center and be returned to the bungalow office or the Front Desk Administration prior to leaving the center. You will be given a copy of the assessment and records when your child goes to preschool or disenrolls from or leaves UMCDC.

If the information is shared with a local professional or other organization when assessing developmental concerns about a child, written permission by the parents is required.

If staff and administration, through all the methods above, suspect a child may have barriers to learning or developmental delays, they will request a conference with parents to discuss their observations and the observations and concerns of the parents. We want to sustain regular communication regarding any concerns before and after a formal meeting. We suggest families lean on the Help Me Grow service to receive additional support regarding any developmental concerns, or other outside services. Information and additional discussion to be referred to Help Me Grow will occur within the formal meeting conference if necessary. (https://www.helpmegrowmn.org)

We provide families with two conferences per calendar year while your child is within the classroom. The Area Coordinator preschedules these conferences. You can also request a conference at any time, if you wish to discuss any further information, or want to discuss where your child is developmentally. When you wish to schedule a conference, the Area Coordinator will work with you to find a time that works with both the Teacher and your schedule. When you have a conference, you will be meeting with the teacher and on occasion, the Area Coordinator will join in. During a conference, the teacher will discuss with you the progress your child has made within the assessment tool. You will be asked to fill out a Parent Input Form before you meet with the teacher for your conference. The Input Form is very useful and is used as a collaborative tool to create new goals and discuss your child’s strengths and any possible concerns. You can always request the Area Coordinator to be a part of the conferences, but please do this when you are informed of a conference to be scheduled (for ratios).

NAP TIME

Children have their own cot with a clean sheet. The cots are 4 inches above the ground. The sheets are washed weekly or as needed when soiled. Parents provide a blanket from home, which is placed in their child’s cubby at the end of the week and must be taken home to be washed every weekend or provide a different blanket the following week.

Children are helped to relax and fall asleep with quiet music. There is always a staff person in the nap room supervising sleeping children. If your child is unable to sleep, we encourage him/her to rest quietly for 30 minutes. After that time, your child will be invited to play quietly in the foyer with a teacher, outside of the sleeping area/classroom. Children wake up naturally from nap, and as they wake up, their diapers are changed and they are offered quiet activities in the foyer such as reading books with staff, working with puzzles, or other manipulative learning materials.

We have found that most children are able to stay engaged throughout morning activities until naptime because the environment is positively stimulating and interesting to them. However, on occasion, if your child needs to sleep before naptime, we can find a cozy corner for your child to rest. This does not happen often and generally continues for only a short time, if it does occur.

DIAPERS/WIPES AND CLOTHING

Parents provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream, and multiple changes of clothing if your child were to soil his/her clothing during the day, whether it be during a developmental activity or during toileting time. You will receive a note to take your child’s soiled clothing immediately home that evening. Please be sure to replenish and check your child’s supply of clothing often to ensure they have the appropriate amount of clothing available for the season.

Only disposable diapers will be used in toddlers. UMCDC staff and parents work together to assist the child to be successful in toilet learning. Children develop at different rates. We wait to see that a child is “ready” and then work with parents so that the child has consistency from home to the Center, thus enhancing the possibility that this
milestone is crossed with the child’s sense of mastery and competence bolstered. Please refer to the UMCDC Toilet Learning section of this document to indicate when your child is “ready” for toilet learning. Group care offers the advantage of toddler imitating their peers who may be making “toilet tries” or who are now able to use the toilet. We need to work in a strong and consistent way from home to school, a consistency of caring, to have toilet learning be successful.

**PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS**

We believe that parent-teacher relationships are an important component of our program and for your child’s development. We recognize that parents and families are experts of their own children. We encourage parents and families to share their concerns and desires for care. In turn, the teaching staff use the Daily Notes to communicate with you on your child’s learning progress and daily individual needs, in alignment with assessments and other communication as needed. Our goal is to balance the best interests of the total group with the individual needs of each child within our daily program confined and as dictated by national (NAEYC), state (licensing), university, and center policies.

Parents and families are welcome to visit our Toddler Area any time. This can be a valuable time to observe the classrooms in action, and gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of group care throughout the day. This can also be an opportunity to strengthen the partnerships between families and staff, as well as to see how your child functions in a group setting. If you would like to be a part of our curriculum, or provide new experiences for the children in the classroom, please volunteer to come and spend time with the children. Any consideration of sharing your knowledge through the following are some examples:
- Being a guest reader
- Demonstrating an instrument you play
- Cooking a recipe from home with a small group (keeping in mind of present allergens of children)
- Sharing a tradition, such as a game, from your family’s culture
- Sharing your occupation, hobby or a sport
- Helping with special events (Center-wide Planting Day, Week of the Young Child, Literacy Week, etc.)
- Other ideas you may have or can offer to the classroom.

By providing your time and experience in any of these or other areas, you are offering a greater amount of knowledge to the children in addition to what the teachers do each day. All teachers welcome your presence and knowledge in other areas and are excited to work with you to teach the children new opportunities.

Please share with the Toddler Area Coordinator or your child’s teachers if you would like to volunteer at any time in the classroom.

**OUTDOOR PLAY**

Toddlers enjoy and need outdoor play. We incorporate daily opportunities for outdoor play into our schedule, unless the wind child is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit or the heat index/air quality are unsafe. It is important for children to have fresh air and a chance to exercise and develop their large muscles. Our outdoor play yard provides opportunities for toddlers to walk, run, jump, climb, ride, balance, explore, and dig. In addition, we also use the Multi-Purpose Room, which offers many of these same activities as our play yard.

NOTE: During the summer sunscreen is applied twice daily from April 1-October 1. We ask parents to provide a sun hat for their child for additional sun protection. In the winter, parents provide jackets, snow pants, boots, hats, and waterproof mittens. During transitional seasons of spring and fall, a variety of outdoor clothing is helpful, as well as knitted finger gloves or mittens. Both younger toddler classrooms keep all outdoor clothing in
the Mudroom to provide smooth transitions. Both older toddler classrooms keep snow pants, hats, and coats in the foyer. The older children’s boots and mittens are located in the hallway outside of the bungalow for their ease of transition out the hallway door.

**UMCDC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**UMCDC Parent Handbook and UMCDC Website: To review UMCDC’s policies and procedures, you can refer to the center’s website at http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ChildDevelopmentCenter/. Here, you will have access to the Parent Policy Handbook that provides all information regarding the center and your family.**

**“BELOW, PLEASE BRING IN BOLDED ITEMS WITH YOU ON YOUR CHILD’S FIRST DAY OR AT THE INTAKE WITH THE AREA COORDINATOR. ALL ITEMS IN YOUR CHILD’S INFANT ROOM WILL BE TRANSFERRED OVER BY TEACHING STAFF.”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENTAL PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bathroom Items:</strong></td>
<td>We change the children’s diapers on average 4-5 times daily, with 4 set diaper changes/checks every 2 hours (After breakfast before lunch, check after lunch before resting for nap, upon waking up from nap, and in late afternoon). If children are toilet learning or have BM’s outside of these scheduled times, assistance in and changes are taken care of as needed. We record each change on our Bathroom Chart, located in the bathroom. Feel free to check the Bathroom Chart to see your child’s bathroom/diaper routine that day. We will send home a notice attached to your child’s daily note when the diaper and wipe supply is getting low. You will receive 2 business days with a First Notice to bring in new diapers or wipes. After you receive a Second Notice of not providing the Center with more after the first two days, you will be charged a fee for the Center to use back-up diapers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide <strong>diapers, wipes, and diaper cream.</strong> We should have one large package of diapers in our bathroom for your child. If your child is in the process of toilet learning, please supply 3-4 pairs of underwear and additional spare clothes and shoes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Gear:</strong></td>
<td>All toddlers go outside daily and your child will enjoy this time more if they are fully protected from the elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide <strong>weather appropriate outdoor clothing.</strong> Summer: <strong>sunhat;</strong> Spring/Fall: <strong>jacket, light knitted mittens, and warmer hat;</strong> Winter: <strong>coat, snow pants, hats, and waterproof boots and mittens. ALL ITEMS LABELED WITH CHILD’S INITIALS OR NAME.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nap Time, Items from Home:</strong></td>
<td>Toddlers find an item from home to be comforting at naptime, such as their blanket or lovey, especially during their transition to the program. Please label both items. Please refrain from bringing in additional toys from home, unless teachers ask for a special classroom event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide a <strong>blanket</strong> and (if needed) a small lovey for naptime. Blankets work fine, unless a small lovey comforts your child as well. Please keep nap belongings to 1 or 2 items, which include the blanket.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra Clothing Supply:</strong></td>
<td>We will send home any clothing that is soiled while your child is at the Center. Soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag and labeled with your child’s name, and placed in the bathroom. You will also have a notice attached to your child’s Daily Note to pick up the bag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keep 2-3 changes of clothing</strong> at the Center (shirts, pants, socks, extra shoes). Please label all clothing materials from home as they are otherwise easily misplaced or lost. Please sporadically check to make</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Contact Information:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep your emergency card updated with current names and phones numbers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medication:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>If your child requires medicine, please fill out a medication form each time a new medication is needed. A full-time staff person will provide the medication as needed. All full-time staff are trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Mailbox:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check your child’s cubby and parent mailboxes. (Parent mailboxes are across from the Front Desk)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medication:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing requires the medication form accompanied by a doctor’s signature in order for us to dispense medications. This includes prescription and non-prescription medications (excluding diapering ointment, sunscreen, and insect repellent). Other topical non-medicated creams, such as lotion or skin care cream, a written note and signature must be provided from the parent.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phone Contact Information:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front Desk:</strong> 612.625.2273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bungalow B:</strong> 612.626.3180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bungalow C:</strong> 612.626.3181</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medication:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>We will call you if your child becomes ill at the Center. It is required by MN licensing that emergency cards be current at all times so that parents/guardians can be reached.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Absence from the Center, Pick-Ups, Late Arrivals:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please call if your child will not be in attendance for the day, will be arriving later than usual, or if someone else will pick up your child.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phone Contact Information:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front Desk:</strong> 612.625.2273</td>
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<td><strong>Bungalow C:</strong> 612.626.3181</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absence from the Center, Pick-Ups, Late Arrivals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can plan better for the day knowing this information. If your child is ill, we also know what symptoms to look for in other children. We cannot release your child to anyone except the people listed on your emergency card, unless the blue Alternative Pickup Form is completed in advance. If you know any of the above information before the day arrives, communicating verbally to a full-time staff or on your child’s Daily Note is appreciated.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Notes:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Daily Information Sheet located in the Foyer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Notes:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>In order to best meet your child’s needs, it is necessary that teachers know any information that may affect your child (ex. Restless night, moving to a new home, transitioning from crib to toddler bed, parent traveling, behavior changes etc.) Please let the teacher know verbally and/or write the message on the Daily Note.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sign your child IN and OUT - DAILY</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sign in and out sheets are used to verify children’s attendance in an emergency and are required by licensing. It is imperative that you sign in and out EVERY day. Reminders from teaching staff will be offered if not following this procedure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Mailbox:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check your child’s cubby and parent mailboxes. (Parent mailboxes are across from the Front Desk)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Diaper Notice:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaper notices, soiled clothing alerts, notes from teachers, and daily notes about your child’s day will be found in the mailbox. Children’s artwork can also be found in your mailbox or in your child’s cubby. Please take home the art work daily to keep clutter down from the cubby and room for outdoor gear.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you would like your child to join us for breakfast, please arrive before 9:00 am. Breakfast is from 8:30-9:15 am.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>We are unable to serve breakfast to children who arrive after 9:15 am. The tables are used for curriculum activities and they must be cleaned and made available for these activities that follow breakfast.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Late Pick-Ups:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Pick up your child and leave the bungalow by 5:25 pm. A late fee is charged at 5:30 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Late Pick-Ups:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The center closes at 5:30 and teachers use the remaining minutes of their shift to clean up and prepare for closing the building. If you wish to talk to a teacher about your child’s day, please arrive prior to closing. Please leave ample time, especially in winter months for road conditions and dressing your child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) You may not enter the building before 7:30 am if you do in cold weather, remain in the Front Foyer.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hand Washing Procedures:  
Wash your child’s hands and your own hands immediately upon entering the bungalow foyer and prior to leaving the bungalow (including any siblings that help drop off your Toddler).  
This is a requirement for NAEYC, as well as an important step in reducing the spread of illness.

Illnesses:  
Keep your child home when they are ill. Please call the bungalow office or front desk to communicate that your child will be out. If your child becomes ill while at school, we will call you to exclude your child and require that you pick your child up within the hour of being called.  
It is important to prevent the spread of illnesses to other children and staff. We are not able to provide one on one care to a child that is not feeling well. Your child must be able to participate in activities. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for more specific information on Illness Exclusion.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE INFORMATION REGARDING BITING

Biting is associated with the toddler stage and many toddlers bite. We feel it is important to give you some information regarding an “unfortunately but not unexpected” occurrence among toddlers. Biting is not just a physical act. It is a complicated issue that brings frustrations to the biter, the one who was bitten, parents, and child care providers. The toddler behavior that is “unfortunately not unexpected” conveys the understanding that while biting is not something providers or administrators want for the children in their programs, the staff are not surprised by biting among toddlers and are prepared to address it.

Assumptions about Biting: Most people see biting as a behavior problem that must be punished. According to this way of thinking, if there is no punishment, then the biter has “gotten away with it” and this cannot be allowed. This is not UMCDC’s policy for addressing biting incidences. Many parents, and a number of providers, may want the child who bit to have to ‘pay a price’ or be expelled for biting. Punishment makes them (the adults) feel that in at least some small way, justice has been served. UMCDC’s program focuses on the needs of the children. We do not use techniques simply to satisfy the adults involved when those techniques [punishment] are, in fact, inappropriate or ineffective with small children. Research shows that punishment is not an effective response to any kind of behavior problem. It’s necessary to understand why toddlers bite and then find strategies and techniques that match the child’s reason or reasons for biting. UMCDC operates from a multi-dimensional perspective to biting that includes:

- Observation and documentation
- We understand and accept that when toddlers are in groups, biting is unfortunately not unexpected
- We know and accept that toddlers bite for many reasons.
- We believe that biting is never the right thing to do.
- We want to help the children who are bitten feel better by giving them care, support, and advice.
- We want children who bite to learn different, more appropriate behaviors.
- We understand that our care giving environment and practices can influence biting, and we take responsibility for ensuring the environment and practices are appropriate for toddlers.
- We understand that biting is very difficult for parents, and we communicate with them thoughtfully and frankly.

The Toddler staff address this problem itself by looking at why toddlers bite, how to respond when they do, how to help both the child who is biting and the child who is being bitten, and how to develop a plan to deal with repeated biting. We want you to know that we have procedures in place to deal with this and other challenging behaviors.

Causes for Biting: It is very important to understand that many of the reasons for biting are related to development. It helps explain why we see so much biting in groups of toddlers but not in groups of preschoolers. It also puts biting into perspective: it points away from blaming toddlers for biting and towards understanding that while they are
developing important knowledge and skills, biting is “not unexpected”. While many toddlers bite, the causes vary, and they often fall into three broad categories:

1. **Developmental issues**, such as: teething pain or discomfort, developing oral-motor skills, sensory exploration of the surroundings, learning about cause and effect, learning through imitating others, developing a sense of space, developing autonomy, developing, but perhaps lacking expressive communication skills, needing more attention, learning to hold on and let go, and developing sensory integration.

2. **Expression of feelings**, which may include: frustration, anger, tension, anxiety, excitement, or a reaction to abuse or other physical aggression or few ways to calm, bring down their arousal state.

3. **An environment** that is not working for the child, for example: an environment that is too stimulating or not stimulating enough, a space that is too crowded and does not allow children privacy, inappropriate expectations (Such as expecting toddlers to share toys or equipment), or a rigid schedule that does not meet toddlers’ needs for food, sleep, and sensory experiences.

**Preventing Biting:** We work hard to prevent biting incidences from occurring, although we cannot guarantee there won’t be any biting. Toddlers bite for many reasons; it is not possible to predict or prevent every bite. However, what we do to help prevent the situation is to be professional, provide a supportive environment for the children, that is a consistent yet flexible schedule, provide a variety of sensory activities and materials, and interact with children gently and empathetically, while observing and following procedures we have in place.

**What we do when Toddlers do Bite:** The response that helps a child stop biting and keeps other children safe is different depending on each child’s need, temperament, and reason for biting. To determine the best response in a given situation, all staff closely observe children to find out why biting may be occurring. However, whatever the reason for the bite may be, the staff’s immediate response to the children is the same each time, acting quickly and directly. Whether it’s the first time or the seventh time someone bites another child. We appropriately help the children by putting our immediate empathy response to the child who was bitten and let them know they are safe and we will help them. We help the bitee express his/her emotions and responses by telling the biter to say, “Stop!” We then turn to the child who has bit and state strongly that it is never okay to bite people. We include descriptive words and comments such as, “You bit him with your teeth. He doesn’t like that [or “It hurts, see his tears”]. It’s not okay to bite people. “Or, if it was observed, what led to the incident, such as frustration because a toy was taken away, we may help that child with stating emotions such as, “You were so mad when the truck was taken out of your hands by [the other child] and you bit him. Biting hurts people. I’ll help you when your truck is taken away from you. But there is no biting.” We also help the biter by saying, “You tell [the other child], “No!” “Stop” or “Mine (My turn!), but there is no biting.” It is important that a child feels strong and able to express and assert self with language. We then help the biter to be redirected to another space or activity.

When approaching a biting incidence, we tie our verbal response to an action response. By this, we mean that while we want to send the message that biting is not the right thing to do, we also direct toddlers to what we do want them to do by helping them with appropriate behaviors and reactions similar to the ones states above.

**What we don’t do and why:**

- **Apologies:** the thought behind saying “I’m sorry” is to teach children to be accountable for their behavior by apologizing. While this may be a good motive, the practice is not a good fit for toddlers or for biting. When older toddlers are reminded or forced to say “I’m sorry” in situations in which their behavior was inappropriate, they can readily learn to utter the words. They can even learn the correct contrite tone of voice. During the development stages of toddlers, they are still learning what it looks and feels like to be empathetic towards other people. Saying “I’m sorry” is not understandable at this developmental level.
Being forced to say this over and over again, over time, children learn that it’s all right to hurt other people, as long as they say, “I’m sorry” afterward. It’s also the very opposite of genuinely taking responsibility for their own behavior.

- Time-Out: not being allowed to participate in an activity may make sense to adults as a punishment, and it might even serve to eliminate an older child’s misbehavior. A time out makes sense to adults because the adult can connect the punishment to the behavior. Toddlers, however, do not experience a time-out in the same way because they don’t make that connection. The developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget, reminds us, the way young children think and reason is different from the way older children and adults think and reason.

- Saying, “How would you like it…?”: Variations of this technique to toddlers include, “Would you want someone to bite you?” and “Do you like it when people bite (hurt) you?” Even if toddlers were to agree and say “No,” because they certainly wouldn’t want it done to them, adults may take the next logical step of saying, “Well, then, if you don’t want to be bitten, that child doesn’t want to be bit either.” This makes sense to adults because it is a logical step, but that is exactly why it doesn’t work with toddlers. They don’t think logically, therefore, they cannot make that logical step. Logic is one of the characteristics of the thinking of older children and adults, not young children.

- Lecturing or Going on a Tirade: Responding to biting by telling the child at length what she did wrong and why (a lecture) or by telling her over and over again, with a lot of emotion, not to do something (a tirade), are both ineffective approaches to stopping biting behavior. Lectures are ineffective because they are usually too long and not given in toddler-friendly language. The child needs to hear briefly and clearly what happened, what was wrong, and what to do next. Tirades are ineffective because the adult’s voice and body language frighten or surprise the children, and the message usually gets lost.

Policy Components: Because we want the biting to stop as quickly as possible, we don’t use techniques that alarm, hurt, or frighten children. When we have episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to address it. This plan is shared with parents who are involved (to the child who bit). When a child has bitten another child, we address both sets of parents, explaining the situation. However, please note, that our information shared concerning biting is kept confidential. This applies to the name of the child who bit and the child who was bitten. This is the law that we abide by.

**POLICY REGARDING HURTFUL BEHAVIORS BETWEEN CHILDREN**

It is UMCDC’s goal to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We are aware, however, that young children commonly engage in hurtful behaviors as part of their developmental experience. As parents and teachers, we will better understand our children if we consider the many reasons why one child may hurt another:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of language skills</th>
<th>Tiredness/Fatigue</th>
<th>Defending property or space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety/stress</td>
<td>Not feeling well</td>
<td>Lowered coping ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>Ear Infection</td>
<td>Sensory needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Lack of impulse control</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teething</td>
<td>Lack of motor control</td>
<td>Peer Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social interaction skills</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
UMCDC considers the following physical behaviors to be NOT ACCEPTABLE: hitting with hands, hitting with objects, scratching, pushing, pinching, hair pulling, throwing sand, kicking, biting, etc. We are concerned about these behaviors and take them seriously.

Hurtful behaviors, and the Center’s response, differ by age group and situation. In the event of a hurtful interaction between children, UMCDC staff intervene immediately with the children involved. Teaching staff use their best judgment in determining when and how to contact parents of the hurt child and the child who has caused the hurtful behavior. The situation is first evaluated by teaching staff and the Area Coordinator, and may also involve the Education Coordinator and/or the UMCDC Director, to identify the source of the behavior and take steps to eliminate it. In some cases, referral to an outside agency may be indicated. It is expected that parents cooperate with teaching and administrative staff when such a referral is indicated. Lack of such cooperation may result in termination of enrollment and child care services. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for more details about this process.

Please note: data privacy prevents UMCDC from revealing any information specific to the children and families involved in a hurtful behavior situation.

**WHEN TODDLERS EXPERIENCE HURTFUL BEHAVIORS**

It is UMCDC’s goal to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We are aware, however, that young children commonly engage in hurtful behaviors as part of their developmental experience.

**SPECIFIC TO THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION OF A HURTFUL BEHAVIOR ALL FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STAFF ARE INSTRUCTED TO:**

1. Use a very firm voice to say:
   - “STOP!” It’s not okay to (hit, bite, etc.) ________.
   - “STOP!”
   - “(child’s name)”

2. If one child is still hurting another child, physically separate them to stop the hurtful behavior:
   - Stop the child who is hurting the other and say, “You can count on me to stop you when you hurt other children.”
   - Help the children separate
   - Keep the child who is doing the hurting behavior next to you (without reinforcing that child with eye contact or words) until the hurt child is ready to play.

   **NOTE:** By not giving eye contact or words to the child who caused the hurtful behavior, ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON THE HURT CHILD, NOT THE CHILD WHO CAUSED THE HURTFUL BEHAVIOR.

3. Give any first aid that is needed, such as washing the hurt area with soap and water, apply ice, etc.

4. Stay with both children until the hurt child feels comfortable enough to return to the current routine of the classroom. During this time, the child who caused the hurtful behavior may participate, if appropriate, in the care and comfort of the hurt child. Such participation provides a “cause and effect” experience for that child, and is a step towards helping young children to develop empathy toward their peers. The supervising adult has a short discussion with both toddlers at this time, focusing on the hurtful behavior that has occurred, and talking about ways that child can handle feelings. The child who caused the hurtful behavior needs to be directed to another activity.

5. Complete an accident report describing the situation surrounding the hurtful behavior, without naming the child who caused the hurt. This report is given to the parents of the hurt child at the end of the day. The name of the child causing the injury is placed on the yellow copy that is forwarded to the Education Coordinator. The name of the child who caused the hurtful behavior is refrained from sharing with the family of the child who has been hurt, due to confidentiality purposes.

6. Teaching staff use their best judgment in determining when and how to contact parents of the hurt child. Parents may be encouraged to contact their health care provider, depending on the injury. If this occurs, communication with the Area Coordinator or child’s Teacher is needed.
7. Teaching staff use their best judgment in determining whether, when, and how to inform the parents of the child who caused the hurtful behavior. Parents may request early notification if there is a behavior causing them concern.

8. If a pattern of hurtful behaviors develops, documentation will be placed in the file of the child who caused the hurtful behavior. Parents of the child doing the hurtful behavior(s) will be contacted to work with the teaching staff to create and implement an intervention.

*Please note: Data privacy prevents UMCDC from revealing any information specific to the children and families involved in a hurting behavior.