

## Welcome to Group Care!



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON  
Health

**H**ead Start and other programs that serve infants and toddlers provide your child a safe environment to learn. We believe you are your child's first teacher. Parents, grandparents, and other caregivers are viewed as partners. We promise to...

- Value individual culture, beliefs, and traditions in raising children
- Listen to your concerns and share ideas on healthy child development
- Support and encourage you through your child's enrollment
- Provide you with daily reports on how your child is doing
- Assist in helping you locate community resources, such as food and medical care

### Social and Emotional Development

Your child is learning how to get along with others—how to share and be kind. We use simple games that encourage cooperative play. For example, playing make-believe enables your child to play with others and try out different roles.

- She is developing a sense of humor. She likes to laugh and repeat silly words
- She will seek attention and approval of adults
- She may be influenced by what she watches on TV
- You can spend a few minutes every day doing something together that both of you like. It could be reading, walking, talking, or playing a game together
- You can show her how to handle anger and frustration. Help her take time alone and show respectful actions



### Toilet Training

Most children will be toilet trained by this age. However, keep in mind that each child is unique and develops at her own rate. Let us know if you have concerns about toilet training. To be successful with toilet training, your child needs to:

- Sense the urge to go
- Understand what that feeling means
- Communicate the need to go to the toilet

*School readiness begins with health!*

## Oral Health

Tooth decay can develop when your child snacks frequently, does not have her teeth brushed twice each day, and/or is not exposed to fluoride in her drinking water or toothpaste.

- We assist her in brushing her teeth every day, using a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste
- We provide healthy meals and regularly scheduled snacks that are low in sugar
- We encourage her to drink fluoridated water when she is thirsty
- We help you find a dental home for your child, if needed
- You can help her care for her teeth at home too

## Physical Development

As children interact with their environment, they practice decision-making, use their imagination, become more independent, and grow more confident in their physical abilities. Allow your child to do as much as she can for herself. She can:

### Gross motor development

- Throw and bounce a large ball
- Run, jump, dance, climb, swing, and ride a toy with wheels

### Fine motor development

- Start to hold a pencil or crayon better
- Pretend to write
- Learn to button, snap, zip, and put on her shoes
- Practice cutting with age-appropriate scissors

## Language and Literacy

Three year-olds seem to talk all the time. They enjoy repeating words and sounds, over and over. Your child may also pretend to read, write,

and enjoy books, particularly those of different sizes, shapes, and textures. At this age:

- She may frequently ask why
- We encourage reading and writing by sharing words in books, on signs, and on packages
- We spend at least five minutes of story time together
- We read books with simple stories about everyday life
- You can let her know why and how things happen
- You can read to your child in a comfortable place. Have your child retell the story

## Learning through Play

Your child uses play to learn about math and science concepts.

- She will start to count items that she is playing with, such as blocks, dolls, and cups
- She will find it easier to name similarities and differences in objects
- We provide simple science activities such as magnets, planting seeds, and flying kites
- We reinforce colors, counting, and shapes when we talk
- We will give your child simple tasks, such as carrying her garbage to the garbage can
- You can practice math ideas such as counting and shapes with her at home

### Questions to Ask Your Baby's Pediatrician

“How can I make sure my child is getting enough physical activity?”

“How often should I read to my child?”

“What type of car seat should my child be using?”

“When is my child ready for organized sports?”