

# *Infant Transition to a Toddler Classroom*



**A Resource Guide for CLC Parents**

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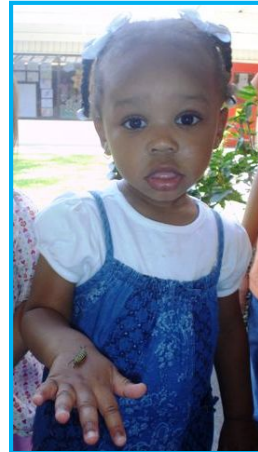
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## **Moving On!** *Supportive Transitions*

Now is the time to start thinking about the toddler years and all that it entails for your child. We believe that throughout the whole learning process parents are their child's first teacher; thus, we work to support parents in their efforts to guide their child's development. It is important to prepare ahead to help alleviate any unnecessary anxieties in making a transition from the infant classroom to a toddler classroom.

In order to appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle, we base our work with children on current knowledge of child development. Acquainting yourself with developmental milestones and the routines in the toddler classroom your child will be moving to is a great way to get a jump start on the whole process.

The CLC Infant Teacher will discuss toddler program expectations with families and review how the toddler classroom may be different and/or similar to the infant classroom. She will also share developmental information about your child and review emerging skills that will indicate readiness for the next step. Oftentimes, parents feel as though they are embarking on a whole new adventure, leaving everything known behind. Planning ahead for transitions supports everyone involved – children, parents and teachers.

Transitions are a part of everyone's life. Helping parents and children through them is an important part of our program. CLC strives to support each child in attaining challenging yet achievable goals that contribute to his/her development and learning. We hope that you find the information that follows to be helpful; we are here to assist you and your child at this special crossroad.

Thank you,

***CLC Administrators and Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff***



## A Snapshot View of the Toddler Classroom

Young children are growing and developing in many ways every day. The infant curriculum is designed for children ages three months to one year, while the toddler curriculum is planned to meet the needs of children ages one to three. The toddler classroom is designed to enhance the young child's learning by providing many experiences for the child to practice and build upon skills he/she already has while also incorporating new knowledge. Our Toddler Teachers are purposeful and thoughtful about classroom planning; they base their daily actions on desired outcomes for the young child.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



CLC Toddler classrooms can have a group size up to 16 children; each classroom has two fulltime teaching staff and multiple part-time student staff that help maintain developmentally appropriate teaching staff: child ratios of 1:4. Whether a teacher works alone with a group of children or the teaching team works together with a group of children, the environment is designed to support children's positive learning and development across all areas.

Teachers design a learning environment that protects children's health and safety, mastered skills and space and materials are organized to stimulate exploration, conceptual learning, and discovery. Teaching staff reorganize the environment when necessary to help children explore new concepts and topics, sustain their activities, and extend their learning.



environment that protects children to practice emerging ones. The organized to stimulate experimentation, discovery, and Teaching staff reorganize the necessary to help children explore sustain their activities, and extend

The Toddler classrooms are set up to meet the developmental needs of the children and to provide them the opportunity to make choices. They contain four learning zones:

**Gross Motor:** This area encourages children to use their large muscles through climbing, block play, music and movement. *\*Please remember that closed toe shoes are required for the child's safety!*

**Dramatic Play:** This area encourages children to engage in role-playing activities with the use of props.

**Quiet:** This area allows children a space to retreat to for some quiet time and encourages children to develop language/literacy skills through the use

of books and soft toys and develop fine motor coordination with the use of manipulatives.

**Messy:**

This area encourages children to express themselves and be creative through art and to heighten their sensory awareness through a variety of sensory oriented activities. **Children will get messy!** In order to maximize children's potential in developing all the above-mentioned skills, they need to engage in hands-on activities that utilize their senses.



**RELATIONSHIPS**



All of the developmental changes that occur during the toddler years—increased language, budding independence, and beginning awareness of peers—must be considered when developing a program. Sometimes even the most carefully planned days need to be adjusted to meet an individual child's reactions and needs. Toddlers find consistent routines to be comforting and change in established routines to be unsettling. Morning good-bye routines are especially important for toddlers. Our teachers want to work closely with every parent to minimize toddler frustrations and optimize learning.

Research tells us that infant and toddlers learn best when they feel secure and building attachments are vital to this process. This is why it is a positive sign when a toddler cries when his/her parent leaves; it is a sign of attachment to the parent. We realize separation anxiety may be hard on parents – and teachers too – but it is still a good sign. Our goal is to not lessen the attachment to family members; it is to maintain it while simultaneously building attachments with our teachers. Firm attachments, plus feelings of security and trust, provide the foundation of learning for infants and toddlers.

**DAILY SCHEDULE**

The toddler teachers strive to create a predictable routine for the children. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is flexible and responsive to individual needs of the children. The schedule provides time and support for transitions, includes both indoor and outdoor experiences and is receptive to a child's need to rest or be active. Teachers organize time and space on a daily basis to allow children to work or play individually and in pairs, to come together in small groups, and to engage as a whole group.



A typical daily schedule consists of arrival, playtime, snack, playtime, lunch, naptime, snack, playtime and departure. Diapering takes place when needed and diaper checks occur throughout the day. The children arrive and depart at different times, but the schedule of events remains consistent, providing a basic predictable framework for the day.

**Meal Times – here are some thoughts on toddler meal times:**  
(see Lunch Tips handout page 11)

- Keep portions realistic; remember that *toddlers don't need a full serving*, nor do they even need a half-sized serving in most cases. They have little tummies that fill up quickly! Start small and provide some extra so that we can serve more if they are still hungry.
- Accept the mess; mealtimes are meant to be sensory. Toddlers appreciate the smell and taste and texture nuances that eating offers but this oftentimes involves a mess! Prepare yourself for this mentally as well as practically by providing extra clothes.
- We strive to make each bite count, so think about ways to combine foods to increase the chance of your toddler getting an (almost) equal amount of protein, starch, and fruits/vegetables in each bite. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks can make up for foods not eaten at mealtimes.



**Nap Times – here are some thoughts on toddler nap times:**

- A familiar pattern helps a toddler to know what to expect; each day in the toddler classroom naptime follows lunchtime.

- Toddlers are busy tackling new gross motor skills, building on confidence gained by mastering walking. After a morning in the classroom, they are ready for an afternoon nap.
- This ritual supports emotional self-regulation by offering the toddler a way to manage their fatigue from a busy day.
- Toddlers have supervised naptimes on individual age appropriate cots; parents provide a blanket for their child.



## CURRICULUM

The **Toddler Curriculum** is designed with specific objectives for each age level based upon NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) guidelines. Our classrooms are set up to create an environment that is rich with learning opportunities, safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate. **We understand that children's learning experiences will drive their development.** The following goals are incorporated into every classroom:

- Developing safe and healthy habits in young children
- Fostering positive self-esteem
- Providing opportunities for creative expression
- Supporting the development of social skills
- Stimulating cognitive problem-solving skills
- Strengthening communication skills necessary for listening, reading, writing, and speaking
- Enhancing fine motor and gross motor skills
- Assessing the individual needs of each child

Specifically, toddlers have multiple opportunities to:

- Move freely and achieve mastery of their bodies through self-initiated movement and to practice emerging skills in coordination, movement, and balance, and perceptual-motor integration



- Develop fine-motor skills by using their hands and fingers in a variety of age-appropriate ways
- Experience books, songs, rhymes, and routine games
- Use language, gestures, and materials to convey mathematical concepts such as more and less and big and small; to see and touch different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns; to build number awareness, using objects in the environment; and read books that include counting and shapes
- Use their senses to learn about objects in the environment and discover that they can make things happen and solve simple problems
- Explore and manipulate age-appropriate art materials
- Express themselves creatively through freely moving to music and to engage in pretend or imaginative play



### TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

As infants enter the toddler years, they start to perceive themselves as separate from other people. They become more independent and able to do things for themselves. They are rapidly developing expressive language and becoming better able to relay their likes and dislikes to others. “*Me do it*” is a common response, even if the child is not fully able to do it. The gap between what the child wants to do and is capable of doing sometimes leads to the tantrums that are common during these years.

#### *At CLC, toddler children are learning to:*

- Drink from a lidless cup
- Sleep on a cot
- Build expressive vocabulary of 200+ words
- Self-feed with a spoon
- Develop fine motor skills
- Manipulate and gain an understanding of books
- Explore the environment in a positive way
- Engage in sensory activities
- Become independent in toileting
- Refine gross motor skills- balance/coordination
- Express independence/autonomy
- Enter beginning stages of cooperative play
- Practice socialization skills
- Gain an understanding of basic scientific/mathematic concepts- cause/effect, opposites, colors, shapes





- Label emotions and partake in conflict resolution

### A NOTE ON CHILDREN BITING

In even the best child care program, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. This is an unavoidable consequence of young children in group care. When it happens, it can be frustrating and very stressful for children, parents and teachers. However, it is a natural phenomenon, not something to blame on children, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it.

*Please refer to the Toddler Program Guide for more information on biting.*

## Infant to Toddler Classroom: Useful Transition Tips for Parents

### What to do as your child nears age one:

- Offer your child a cup to drink out of on a regular basis.
- Make an effort to extend your child's naptime to see if he/she is able to make it until 12:00.
- Consider your child's transition from formula to whole milk.
- Try cutting back on the number of bottles as your child eats more table food.
- Increase solid foods as your child cuts back on baby foods.
- Practice packing a lunch for your child and experiment with different table foods and/or methods that may work best for you and your child.
- Begin to limit the use of a pacifier to nap times only.
- Let your child practice wearing closed toe shoes daily.
- Allow your child to explore and play independently with planned activities and hands-on learning.
- Remember to practice, practice, and practice each of these suggestions with your child **at home** to ensure a smoother transition at school.



### What to do before your child starts in a toddler classroom:

- Conference with the Infant Teacher about your child's readiness, review current assessment data, and discuss what developmental tasks need to be encouraged at home and school to prepare for a classroom transition.
- Review and sign the CLC Transition *Family Worksheet*
- Review the *Infant Transition to a Toddler Classroom Resource Guide for Parents*.
- Meet the Toddler Teacher, tour the new classroom and get a copy of the toddler daily schedule.
- Ask for child development information if you are unsure about any part of the process.
- Visit the new classroom at different times of the day to observe routines and toddler children.
- Establish two-way communication with the Toddler Teacher via email to review the toddler classroom expectations.
- Communicate any concerns about the transition process or your child's readiness immediately to the Infant Teacher, Toddler Teacher or CLC Leaders.
- Continue to practice, practice, and practice the **at home** suggestions with your child to ensure a smoother transition at school.



### What to do after your child starts in a toddler classroom:

- Communicate to your child that you are comfortable with the new classroom and teachers.
- Remember to send your child to school wearing closed toe shoes each day.
- Allow time for your child and the teachers to get to know each other and the environment.
- Maintain a consistent routine at home and work towards consistency in schedules between home and school to keep your child's day as predictable as possible.

- Continue two-way communication with the Toddler Teacher.
- Ask for child development information if you are unsure about any part of the curriculum.
- Review the Toddler Program Guide.
- Request to schedule a conference to discuss any concerns or to get updates on your child's development if needed.

*Reciprocal relationships require mutual respect, cooperation, shared responsibility, and negotiation of differences toward shared goals.*

NAEYC

## Toddler Resources for Families

### Toddler Books

Help your toddler discover the joy of reading; books with colorful pictures and short text nurture a toddler's love of books. Below are some links to toddler reading lists:

[www.parents.com/fun/entertainment/books/kids-reading-list/](http://www.parents.com/fun/entertainment/books/kids-reading-list/)

[www.nea.org/grants/61763.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/61763.htm)

### Toddler Nutrition

[www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/pages/Feeding-and-Nutrition-Your-One-Year-Old.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/pages/Feeding-and-Nutrition-Your-One-Year-Old.aspx)

### **Ideas for packing a young toddler's lunch:**

<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=8055>

### **From baby bottle to cups:**

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/baby/bottle-feeding-9/bottle-to-cup>

### Benefits of messy play

<http://childhood101.com/2012/02/active-learning-through-messy-play/>

<http://center.serve.org/ss/toddlersmessy.php>



[http://www.keap.org.uk/documents/eyfs\\_messyplay\\_bduffy.pdf](http://www.keap.org.uk/documents/eyfs_messyplay_bduffy.pdf)

### **Helpful Infant/Toddler Websites**

*ZERO TO THREE* is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. [www.zerotothree.org/](http://www.zerotothree.org/)

NAEYC for Families provides a wealth of information for families of young children. <http://families.naeyc.org>

## **Infant Transitions**

### ***Packing a Lunch: Tips for Parents***

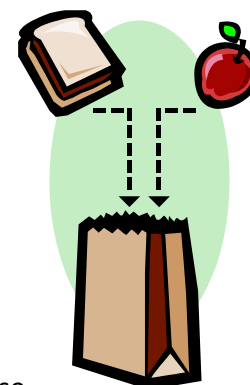


Packing lunch for a 1 year old may seem difficult at first since many children in this age range are only eating finger foods, cannot master utensils yet, and/or have very few teeth to eat with. Consider packing a variety of food for lunch such as a vegetable, a protein, some sort of dairy, a grain, and a fruit. This will ensure a balanced diet and will provide a variety of choices since many children this age are quite finicky. However, there is no single food that is absolutely necessary. Nutrients in one food will also be in some others. Just offer a wide variety of foods and remember that sometimes new foods need to be introduced a number of times before the young child decides he or she likes it. At the same time though, the older a child gets the less willing he or she will be to try new foods. Oftentimes toddlers will eat a lot of one thing for awhile and then will refuse it at some point. ***Please remember though, that if you are still using baby food at home it may delay the transition process at school.***



Below are some ideas for packing a nutritious lunch for your child:

- **Main Dish** - For your child's main dish serving make sure you pack some protein. Some examples may included: black beans mixed with a little cheese, a scrambled egg prepared with cheese and broccoli, a grilled turkey and cheese sandwich cut into small bites, a nut butter (other than peanut if you are worried about allergies) spread on whole grain bread and cut into bite sized pieces, or whole grain pasta prepared with peas, cheese, and a some turkey sausage.
- **Vegetable** - Vegetables that are already in bite-sized pieces are the easiest to pack. A little preparation will allow you to send cut-up green beans, broccoli florets, cauliflower, and zucchini. Try purchasing bags of mixed frozen vegetables and cook them until very tender or using the veggie cups. Then you can just add these into a lunch container.
- **Dairy** – You may want to pack your child whole milk to drink with lunch, and/or you can serve a dairy with the meal such as cheese. Cottage cheese and yogurt should probably be saved for a time when the child is able to utilize a spoon.
- **Grains** - A great side dish for your child's lunch is a piece of whole grain bread, toasted, and pulled into small pieces. You can also choose whole grain pasta for the main dish, or send a sandwich made on whole grain bread and cut into tiny pieces. Whole grain tortillas are a good choice as well. Even a side dish of cereal such as Cheerios works.
- **Fruit** - Fresh fruits should be served when possible. Soft options such as bananas, very ripe peaches, blueberries cut in half, and strawberries are great choices. If you do send canned fruit it should be packed in juice and not syrup.
- **Storage** – utilize storage containers with separated sections to make packing the food easier; choose a container with small sections and a tight fitting lid.
- **Offer child-sized portions** - A child may feel overwhelmed with too much food on his/her plate and then may refuse to eat at all. A child's serving is 1/4 or 1/3 of an adult portion size.



Any food brought from home must also be cut into bite size pieces and ready to serve.

Any food or beverage brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and date.  
Label resources: [www.inchbug.com](http://www.inchbug.com) and [www.namebubbles.com/labelpack/daycare-labels.html](http://www.namebubbles.com/labelpack/daycare-labels.html)

## **CLC Parent Handbook Policies**

If a child requires a special diet, parents must **provide the food from home and the child's file must include a signed statement** that CLC is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food brought from home or for meeting the child's daily food needs. In addition, if a child requires diet modifications for health reasons, we **must have** written approval from a physician or registered-licensed dietician. Any child's special dietary needs are posted in the classroom as a visual reminder to staff.

- *CLC does not offer children hot dogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole (even if a parent packs this in their child's lunch).*

**Children's Learning Centers**

***Infant to Toddler Transition***

***Family Worksheet***

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

New Classroom Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Family's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Date of Move: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transition Part 1** - Review current assessment data for the child; discuss developmental tasks to be **encouraged** prior to the child's transition/move to a Toddler classroom.

- Gross Motor** – Standing alone; walks along 5 steps without falling; gets into standing position without using hands
- Fine Motor** – Uses pincer-like grasp to obtain objects; marks with a crayon/pencil; scribbles in imitation
- Cognitive/Language/Social & Emotional** – Responds to verbal requests; follows simple instructions; jabbars expressively; points and vocalizes to indicate wants; gives toy to an adult upon request
- Self-Help** – Finger feeds self; chews most food well; cooperates in dressing; overcomes simple obstacles
- At Home Tasks** – Practice drinking from a cup, extended naptimes, whole milk transition, increased solid foods, decreased baby food and bottles, and limited use of pacifier.
- Smooth transitions** - occur only when skills introduced at school are reinforced at home.

**Part 1** conference completed:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transition Part 2**

- Review and sign the Family Worksheet Part 1.
- Review the Infant to Toddler Transition Guide.
- Meet the Toddler Teacher and review classroom expectations.
- Tour the new classroom and get a copy of the toddler daily schedule for the new classroom assignment.
- Respond to the Toddler Teacher's email communication.
- Continue to practice at home with your child all of the suggested skills to ensure a smooth transition.

Transition **Part 2** completed:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Children's Learning Centers

## Infant to Toddler Classroom Transition Teacher Worksheet

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

New Classroom Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Family's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Date of Move: \_\_\_\_\_

Family notified about transition:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Family conference about transition:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Family follow-up contact:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Transition Phases	Transition Activities	Comments
<p><b>Phase One: Initiate</b>                      Infant Teacher prepares family for child's transition to a Toddler classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review differences/similarities in the infant &amp; toddler classrooms (utilize Program and Transition Guides)</li> <li>• Review current assessment data and what developmental task will be encouraged prior to the move</li> <li>• Determine what support the family needs – report to Site Manager and/or Director</li> <li>• Prepare a transition timeline and family worksheet</li> <li>• Schedule a transition planning meeting with the family</li> <li>• Complete a family transition timeline worksheet (Have parents, teacher &amp; director sign the worksheet)</li> <li>• Follow-up and communicate with the child's family about the child's developmental progress and readiness</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase Two: Communicate</b>                      Infant &amp; Toddler Teachers make contact with the family (approx. 1 month prior to move)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toddler teacher sends out a welcoming email to the family</li> <li>• Toddler teacher calls and offers to schedule a conference with the family</li> <li>• Family tours and visits the toddler classroom often &amp; at different times of the day</li> <li>• Infant visits the new classroom (1 to 3 times minimum) with an infant staff member present</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase Three: Collaborate</b>                      Infant &amp; Toddler Teachers discuss child's readiness for a transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant teachers will assess the child's developmental progress/readiness</li> <li>• Infant teacher communicates readiness level to the Toddler teacher</li> <li>• Toddler teacher checks in with the family in person, or by phone/email</li> <li>• Infant and Toddler Teachers report to the director any feedback for a change or delay in the plan</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase Four: Integrate</b>                      Infant &amp; Toddler Teachers follow through with child's transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant Teacher reviews with the family the move date and upcoming changes in classroom procedures</li> <li>• Toddler teacher sends another email with ideas for the family on how to prepare for the move</li> <li>• Child moves into the toddler classroom (toddler staff communicates with parents at pick-up, verbally and daily note on how first day went)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Phase Five: Complete</b>                      Infant &amp; Toddler Teachers review transition experience and follow-up as needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toddler teacher emails pictures of the child participating in activities</li> <li>• Infant teacher makes contact (by phone, email, or face-to-face) to check on the parents transition experience and offers assistance as needed</li> <li>• Toddler teacher checks in with parents for a follow-up conference about the toddler program, their child and the adjustment</li> </ul>	

Transition completed:  Yes/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Infant Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Toddler Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_