



# The Children's Learning Center

"Learning through fun and fascination"



Our Programs Include:

Infant  Toddler  Pre-School  Pre-Kindergarten

Founded 1987



Our centers are NAEYC accredited or are awaiting accreditation

## What do our Families think of us?

"Your Center provides exceptional care to my children. I could not be happier with our experience. The staff is top-notch...caring, respectful, communicative with parents, fun and professional. It's obvious they truly care about the school and each child under their care."

*Carol Stephenson*



"Your Learning Center has been a wonderful experience for our family. My oldest son is 16 years old and still remembers LTG and the staff that worked so well with him. My son Shane who is now 10 years old loved LTG and he actually got to see his teachers after all these years when his three year old sister started at LTG. LTG is a great place for children and families."

*The McCloskey Family*



"I drive twenty minutes one way to bring my son to your Learning Center. I have been with the center for three years and I love it. The reason: I was and am impressed with the teachers, how well they take care of the children; they love them as their own kids or grandkids. The teachers have lots of ideas for various learning and fun activities and the director brings additional programs such as karate, music, dance which are very well received by the kids. My son loves to come to school and I recommend the Center to anyone without hesitation."

*Adelina Paunescu*

"Our son Gabriel, now almost eleven years old, attended your Learning Center for three years in the late 1990's. At that time, we were impressed with creativity of the children's activities and the care and attention given the children by the teachers. In fact, we continued to remember several of Gabe's teachers fondly for a number of years after. When it was time for our three-year-old daughter Naomi to go to a child center, we immediately thought of your Center. She has now been at LTG for half a year, and we have been pleased to see the Center has improved since Gabe's time there. The same care and attention still exists, and the NAEYC certification process appears to have raised the level of creativity to greater heights. Naomi loves to go to her "Big Girl School" (she runs from the car to the building every morning!), and we love to leave her in the care of the LTG staff. We think she is very well-situated for the next two years prior to kindergarten."

*Jeff Ravel and Cristelle Baskins*



"WCLC has provided my child with something I never thought any 'center' could possibly provide - a second family. Each day is a new adventure for these kids - from daily craft activities to various classes offered. WCLC allows kids to learn and be creative no matter what their age."

*Lance and Lisa Pratt*

"Great Teachers! I Can rest assured that my children are in good hands at (SCLC) while I am at work."

*Mary Lou Bakalos*

*mom of 4 children*



"As a mother of three children, all in Center, I couldn't be more impressed with WCLC. From the first phone call that I made, I knew this was the best daycare center. The warm and friendly greeting we get from everyone everyday to how much they care for my children is unbelievable. My son has learned so much being with his Pre-K teachers he doesn't ever want to stop reading and writing. While learning so much, they have also had a great deal of fun in the process. When it's time to leave, sometimes they'd rather stay. The staff at WCLC have made a huge impression on my children's lives, and I couldn't appreciate them enough."

*James Kane & Kerry Lane*

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## WELCOME

*"It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question."  
Eugene Ionesco*

Dear Family,

We recognize that searching for a children's learning center that provides an enlightened teaching environment and warm and caring teachers can be both challenging and exciting. As a parent, you have great hopes for your child: you want to present your child with an opportunity to establish a solid foundation for learning, yet you don't want your child to be overwhelmed by the process. Above all, you want your child to feel secure in his new environment.

The Children's Learning Center's professional staff is sensitive to the needs of each individual child, and recognizes that children develop at different paces. Yet, one thing that all children understand is play. Our Center incorporates play into almost all aspects of learning instruction, but it is play that is carefully designed to encourage and instill learning readiness.

Each program in our exclusively developed curriculum, *Learning through Fun and Fascination*, places a strong emphasis on developing your child's emotional, social, physical and self-help skills. As your child masters these skills, we introduce expanded learning skills that focus on language, math, science and technology.

In addition to our full-time teaching staff, we provide specialized enrichment programs for our children. Specialists in the field of music, art, exercise, science and early computer exploration programs visit our children. Our enrichment programs compliment the core-learning curriculum and encompass all areas of development. With our Totercize and Karate programs exercise and gross motor skills are promoted, while our art program focuses on refinement of fine motor. Cognitive learning skills are bolstered with our music, science and computer exploration programs.

Unlike the corporate chains, most of our teachers have been with us for many, many years, bringing rich experience and fascinating creativity to our children. They are required to participate in ongoing education classes, as well as certifications, and each of our Centers has earned or is in the process of earning the NAEYC accreditation. By keeping current with education trends and practices, our Center is afforded a unique opportunity to readily adapt our programs to meet the growing range of goals, cultures, and surroundings.

Our years of experience have demonstrated that children learn best when there is family involvement. Today's technology easily allows us to keep our parents in touch. With the convenience of email, it is our pleasure to communicate with parents during the workweek on our children's activities. By teaming with community leaders and experts, we are able to offer parent workshops and presentations that focus on early childhood development issues. And, because we understand the demands of today's parents, we make every effort to work with parents' schedules by offering flexible full and part-time programs, convenient family hours, and affordable rates.

We treasure the trust you place in us by allowing us to be with your most valuable treasure.

Please take advantage of the resources we have assembled for you at our web site: [www.funandfascination.com](http://www.funandfascination.com)

**Marianne Racioppi**  
*Founder*

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## WELCOME TO OUR INFANT PROGRAM

*"...a child is discovering new things for the first time in virtually every waking moment."  
Dr. Ann Barnet and Richard Barnet*

This is where it all begins! Years of research and observation have demonstrated that babies have well-defined sensory abilities. Seeing, touching, hearing, sucking, and feeling are all senses that an infant uses to learn not only about herself, but also about the world around her. From that first sound, that first cry, your baby has begun absorbing information, exploring her surroundings, and building trust.

Establishing trust is an essential element to a child's sense of well-being. Every diaper you change, every comfort-cuddle you give, and every feeding you provide are all elements that foster trust in your infant. She learns through these daily, routine experiences that her needs will be met, that someone will comfort her, feed her and keep her safe and warm. Just as importantly, she learns to feel good about herself and the world around her.

We continue to build on the trust that you and your baby have established by providing a warm, loving, infant-only environment. It is here that our teachers/nurturers respond to your baby with genuine love, affection, and constant attention to developmental needs.

In addition to building trust, our Infant Program incorporates developmentally appropriate activities that are designed to help your child reach key milestones. While in our care, your child will be exposed to different stimuli and learning activities that encourage intellectual and physical development.

The guidelines presented are a representation of some commonly observed behavior patterns of infants from birth to fifteen months. It is important to remember, though, that these are just guidelines. All aspects of development—growth, physical maturity, language, intelligence—are a series of complex interactions between the child and the environment. Research has shown that in these first crucial years, a child's daily learning curve is so steep that we, as adults, cannot absorb its acceleration. As a result, each child develops skills at vastly different paces. Your child is unique and should be allowed the luxury of developing at her own pace.

### Birth to Three Months

#### ***Physical / Motor Development***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Lifts and turns head when placed on stomach	Place your infant on their belly and offer them manipulatives to look at and reach for
Holds head steady when seated	Hold your infant in an upright position on their lap
Uses eyes to follow objects, reaches for and holds objects	Provide a colorful selection of manipulatives to reach for and explore
Straightens legs and kicks in sequence when lying on stomach or back	Allow for plenty of "floor time"
May begin to grasp and shake hand toys	Provide rattles and other attractive manipulatives
May take swipes at dangling objects with hands	Provide mobiles and other interesting hanging objects



### ***Visual Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Looks longer at the human face than objects	Provide one on one laptime
Follows moving objects with eyes to midline	Encourage infants to track objects using their hands and colorful objects
May begin using hands and eyes in coordination	Provide easy to grasp manipulatives
Prefers moving to stationary objects	Provide musical mobiles and animated toys

### ***Receptive/Expressive Language Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Listens to sounds and voices	Play lullabies and classical background music
Babble, gurgles and coos when talked to	Communicate through imitating sounds, talking, singing and reading
Turns head toward direction of sound	Call child's name and sing to them
May begin to imitate some sounds	Talk to infants, sing songs with many sounds (i.e. "Old MacDonald had a Farm")

### ***Social / Emotional Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
May imitate some movements and facial expressions	Interact with your infant through talking, reading and singing
May begin to develop a social smile	Interact with your infant through talking and engaging smiles

### ***Thinking / Cognitive Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Shows interest in movement of own hand	Play hand games
Responds to sounds with facial expressions	Play music, talk to infants

## **Three to Six Months**

### ***Physical / Motor Development***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
May sit with, and then without support	Offer soft, comfortable props to strengthen back muscles

Reaches and grasps with one hand, with good aim	Hold interesting items within infant's reach
Transfers object from hand to hand	Offer various textures to feel
Begins to roll over, front to back and reverse	Provide floor time

***Visual Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Begins to develop full color vision	Provide colorful materials to look at
Distance vision begins to mature	Display interesting pictures and items on walls and ceiling
Ability to track moving objects begins to mature	Play tracking games with fingers

***Receptive / Expressive Language Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Tries to attract attention by vocalizing	Listen/learn/understand your child's cries and language
Repeats sounds	Interact with your infant through talking, reading, and singing
Experiments with making noises and voice	Stimulate your infant with verbal interactions

***Social / Emotional Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
May respond to other people's expressions of emotion	Play with infants using exaggerated expressions
Enjoys music	Expose your infant to variety of music
Enjoys social and affectionate play	Interact closely with babies

***Thinking / Cognitive Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Explores objects with hands and mouth	Provide safe, non-toxic manipulatives
Tries to get objects which are out of reach	Hold interesting items just out of reach, while encouraging children to reach
May find a partially hidden object	Play hiding games with blankets, etc.



## Six to Nine Months

### ***Physical / Motor Development***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Crawls	Encourage movement by placing toys just out of reach
Begins using thumb and index finger to pick up small objects (pincer grasp)	Begin offering finger foods
Enjoys banging objects together	Offer musical instruments

### ***Receptive / Expressive Language Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Babbles speech sounds, including vowels	Encourage your child to imitate words and sounds through repetition
Understands basic words (“bye-bye”)	Talk with infants, read stories
Responds to their own name	Sing songs and tell stories using your baby’s name
Combines syllables (“da-da,” “ma-ma”)	Model simple words

### ***Social / Emotional Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Nervous with strangers	Continue to provide comfort and reassurance while fostering positive, nurturing relationships
Sense of self begins to emerge	Provide encouragement and praise
Enjoys games with others	Play peek-a-boo, so big, etc.
Separation anxiety appears	Reassure children, provide consistency of care

### ***Thinking / Cognitive Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Loves to explore small items	Provide safe, interesting items
Shows memory for partially hidden objects	Play hiding games
Increased memory span	Play repetitive games
Notices consequences of their behavior	Provide cause and effect toys

Nine to Twelve Months

***Physical / Motor Development***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Pulls self up to stand and walks while holding furniture	Encourage use of ballet bar and soft climbing structures
Uses pincer grasp (with thumb and forefinger)	Encourage your child to pick up small items
Tries to imitate scribbling and holds crayons	Offer crayons, markers and paintbrushes
Rolls a ball on the floor	Play ball games

***Receptive / Expressive Language Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Pays increasing attention to speech	Interact verbally with your child
Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for 'no'	Encourage imitation through language and movement
Responds to verbal requests	Ask your child to locate or retrieve play objects
Begins to form simple words	Interact with your child and encourage imitation

***Social / Emotional Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Likes to perform or repeat sounds or gestures for attention	Sing with infants, provide positive reinforcement for attempts to communicate
Likes to play games such as "hide and seek," "bye-bye," and "pat-a-cake"	Encourage social interaction and motor skills
Imitate facial gestures	Offer mirror for your child
Tests responses to behavior	Express positive reinforcement



## **Twelve to Fifteen Months**

### ***Physical / Motor Development***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Attempts walking	Encourage hand held walks
Climbs/crawls up slide/stairs	Offer soft climbing structures
Uses utensils at meals	Encourage use of spoon and fork

### ***Receptive / Expressive Language Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Begins to verbalize familiar words	Encourage verbal expression
Able to identify basic body parts	Play naming games
Able to imitate during simple songs and finger plays	Expose your child to songs of repetition

### ***Social / Emotional Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Enjoy participation in small group activities	Conduct short group songs/stories
Communicates wants and needs through a combination of verbal and nonverbal cues	Foster positive expression of needs
Begins to challenge limits	Redirect behavior and encourage desired behavior

### ***Thinking / Cognitive Skills***

<b>Developmental Milestone</b>	<b>Teachers will:</b>
Able to problem solve basic cause and effect actions	Enable your child to explore for consequences
Predict classroom routine	Follow a set daily routine to establish consistency and stability

## WELCOME TO OUR TODDLER PROGRAM

*"Every child begins the world again...."*  
*Henry David Thoreau*

The amazing discovery process that began in your child's infancy flourishes in the toddler years, for now he is learning the joy of movement, the joy of speech and the joy of independence. And, one declaration of independence your toddler is apt to demonstrate during these years may combine an element of each of his newly acquired skills. With that first foot stomp and a loudly stated, "No!" your toddler is experimenting with his newly discovered sense of self. He is realizing that he is a separate person—an individual—with his own wants and needs; he is making his push for autonomy.

Autonomy is an important developmental component in a child's life, for when properly guided and nurtured, it will lead to a sense of self-esteem, confidence, and pride in his newfound accomplishments. His physical and muscular development will also contribute to his sense of autonomy and independence as he uses his muscles to climb, tumble, jump, hop and run to explore his world.

As your toddler's sense of autonomy begins to develop, he will show a greater interest in mastering self-help skills, such as feeding himself, dressing, pouring his own drink, washing his hands, and brushing his teeth. He will also become more adept at stringing beads, manipulating paint brushes/scissors/crayons, throwing and kicking a ball, hopping on one foot, and climbing. These activities are the serious work of toddlers, for it is from mastering these skills that your toddler develops his sense of accomplishment, self-esteem and pride in his newfound control.

Our Center's Toddler Program is designed to promote your child's development in all areas during this exciting, busy time. Our program provides daily activities that focus on developing cognitive and linguistic skills, as well as physical, social, and self-help skills. And, our staff of trained professionals provides the encouragement and nurturing environment to guide your toddler through this important stage.



## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Even though your early toddler may not be saying too much, she is absorbing huge amounts of information through sound and sight. While a typical 18-month-old toddler may speak only up to about five words, she may actually comprehend fifty. The rate of comprehension and expression accelerates rapidly over the next several months. Between the ages of 19 to 24 months, your toddler's comprehension will encompass the ability to understand simple questions such as, "Do you want more juice?" And, while she may only employ 50 to 75 words, she will actually understand as many as 200.

By the time your toddler is three, child development experts believe she will have been adding as many as 10 new words a day to her vocabulary and her vocabulary will have expanded to understand 900 words, 300 of which may be used regularly. And, between two and three years of age, you will notice that your toddler is beginning to comprehend grammatical components of the language. She will be able to differentiate between common pronouns, such as "I", "me" and "you." She will grasp the meaning of common verbs (run, walk, play), as well as prepositions—over, under, behind. Soon, she will string nouns and verbs together, forming complete simple sentences.

Language is not only one of the most exciting skills a toddler develops during these early years, but it is also the foundation for the rest of cognitive development. Research demonstrates that children who have been exposed to early verbal stimulation have richer vocabularies than those of children who did not receive extensive verbal interaction.

Our Center actively promotes language development by encouraging toddlers to use their words to express their feelings and needs to both teachers and peers. However, not all children develop their verbal skills as rapidly as others. Some toddlers are still building their vocabularies, while others are attempting to connect their words to their feelings and behavioral experiences. Yet, by paying close attention to the non-verbal cues and communication these toddlers give, our teachers are able to help them make those important connections between their words and their feelings and actions. You will find that conversation with your child is a mainstay of our language program, along with reading, singing, and problem solving.

Our teachers promote language through activities such as:

<b>15–24 Months</b>	<b>25–33 Months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Looking at and talking about picture books together with your child</li><li>■ Giving choices and encouraging your child to reply which stimulates decision making</li><li>■ Participating in songs, finger plays, and puppet activities with your child</li><li>■ Encouraging your child to point to an object or picture when it is named</li><li>■ Continuously identifying persons, objects and activities</li><li>■ Encouraging your child to use words to express wants and needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encouraging your child to attempt new words</li><li>■ Carrying on conversations throughout the day with your child</li><li>■ Playing games — for example, "follow the leader"</li><li>■ Expanding circle time to include question and answer conversations relative to the weekly curriculum theme</li><li>■ Encouraging more complex conversations between peers</li><li>■ Engaging your child in language while playing with puppets, dolls and other props</li></ul>

## COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Cognitive development defies a simple definition, for it involves almost all aspects of your toddler's development—emotional, social, intellectual, physical. As your toddler becomes more confident in his newfound accomplishments, his curiosity increases, which leads to a desire to explore his surroundings and make connections. He will demonstrate more imaginative and complex play. Our teachers capitalize on this exciting time to fully engage your child in his world. Each game or task is an opportunity for problem solving and heightening awareness of associations. Each "Why?" your child asks is an opportunity to encourage him to explore and learn.

To motivate, stimulate and encourage your toddler's developing cognitive skills, our teachers incorporate a wide range of tools and activities: sorting toys, shapes and objects; classifying animals; reading; singing; talking; creative, cooperative playing. Our teachers follow your child's lead, responding to his interest in stories, songs, play, and of course, the question, "Why?"

Teachers will promote activities for cognitive development by:

<b>15–24 Months</b>	<b>25–33 Months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encouraging your child to follow simple directions</li> <li>■ Encouraging conversations</li> <li>■ Beginning to ask simple questions and challenging memory recall</li> <li>■ Offering simple choices</li> <li>■ Encouraging participation in story time, songs, finger plays, etc.</li> <li>■ Offering sensory motor experiences</li> <li>■ Offering a variety of cause-and-effect toys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Setting a consistent classroom routine</li> <li>■ Asking open ended questions</li> <li>■ Encouraging more in-depth conversations</li> <li>■ Including conversations regarding weather, the curriculum topic, special events, etc. during circle time</li> <li>■ Offering toys that challenge the imagination further: blocks, stringing beads, etc.</li> <li>■ Playing hide-and-seek games with objects</li> </ul>



## FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

We encourage our toddlers to develop and exercise their fine motor skills by allowing them to use utensils to eat, put on their shoes and coat, allow them to button and zip, and wash their own hands. Just as importantly, we recognize that while many need assistance getting started, most toddlers will learn to master these skills confidently and with pride when given time and encouragement to do so.

We further assist in the development of fine motor skills by increasing opportunities to utilize them. Art activities such as finger painting, painting with brushes, playing with play-dough, drawing with crayons, markers, and pencils, stringing beads all encourage use and refinement of fine motor skills. Manipulating puzzle pieces, building with blocks, pressing buttons on telephones, and playing musical instruments provide further opportunities to improve development of these skills.

Your child will develop fine motor skills through activities such as:

15–24 Months	25–33 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Building towers of four or more blocks, then knocking them down</li> <li>■ Participating in sensory experiences: play-dough, water table</li> <li>■ Turning pages of a book</li> <li>■ Coloring with crayons, painting and creating collages</li> <li>■ Manipulating puzzles</li> <li>■ Covering and uncovering boxes or other containers</li> <li>■ Picking up balls or other objects in motion</li> <li>■ Learning finger plays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Building towers of six or more blocks</li> <li>■ Making shapes from play-dough</li> <li>■ Turning pages of a book one at a time</li> <li>■ Making vertical, horizontal and circular strokes with pencil or crayons</li> <li>■ Manipulating peg boards</li> <li>■ Stringing beads</li> <li>■ Dressing and undressing self (putting on boots, socks, hats, coats, etc.)</li> <li>■ Playing with puppets</li> <li>■ Folding and tearing paper</li> </ul>

## GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Many children have begun walking by fifteen months, so their activity level increases. Because we recognize that toddlers learn how their bodies work from their physical activities, we provide space and time (indoors and out) for our toddlers to run, jump, hop, climb, dance, and carry objects.

Teachers will encourage gross motor development through activities such as:

15–24 Months	25–33 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dancing and movement games</li> <li>■ Crawling through the tunnel</li> <li>■ Playing games with the parachute</li> <li>■ Riding toys with four wheels</li> <li>■ Running on the playground</li> <li>■ Tossing balls</li> <li>■ Climbing up and down play equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Climbing slides</li> <li>■ Riding bikes</li> <li>■ Games — for example, “Duck, Duck, Goose”</li> <li>■ Kicking balls</li> <li>■ Walking up and down stairs while holding on to a support</li> <li>■ Pulling toys behind while walking</li> <li>■ Standing on tiptoes</li> </ul>

## SOCIAL SKILLS

In the initial stages of toddler-hood, your child may demonstrate a range of personalities. At times she may be the friendly, loud, talkative extrovert, and at others she may be the shy, reserved, introvert. Much can depend on the social setting she finds herself in. However, at this stage your toddler's personality is not defined nor is it capable of being placed in any one stereotype. Because their cognitive skills are still developing, early toddlers do not understand social etiquette and their play tends to be parallel rather than cooperative.

Yet, as your toddler continues to develop her cognitive and linguistic skills, she will begin forming meaningful friendships, engage in cooperative play, and express herself with words. Our teachers promote these skills by providing opportunities that encourage positive peer skills, such as role playing—a social structure that encourages your toddler to exercise her ever-active imagination and allows our teachers to guide her toward socially acceptable behavior, such as sharing and taking turns.

Teachers will foster social development by:

<b>15–24 Months</b>	<b>25–33 Months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encouraging the use of words to express needs, wants and feelings</li><li>■ Modeling gentle actions and play</li><li>■ Supporting children in using basic words (no, stop, mine) rather than physical responses to other children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Modeling and encouraging manners such as saying “please” and “thank you.”</li><li>■ Encouraging interactive play between children</li><li>■ Guiding children to take turns</li><li>■ Modeling gentle actions and play</li></ul>

## SELF-HELP SKILLS

As the toddlers become more and more independent, they begin to build positive self-esteem as they master the self-help skills. Toddlers enjoy opportunities to be in control of certain activities, such as putting on their own hats, coats, shoes and practicing zipping as well. We continuously encourage the self-help skills in order to prepare them for the next developmental transition and challenges.

Your child will develop their self-help skills by being encouraged to:

<b>15–24 Months</b>	<b>25–33 Months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Feed themselves</li><li>■ Drink from a cup</li><li>■ Put themselves to sleep</li><li>■ Wash their own hands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Use utensils</li><li>■ Use language to express wants and needs</li><li>■ Help clean up after activities and meal times</li><li>■ Make simple choices</li></ul>



## WELCOME TO OUR PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

*"All kids are gifted. Some just open their packages earlier than others."*

*Michael Carr*

All the skills your toddler has been so busy learning and mastering begin to come together during the pre-school years. With his increased ability to articulate his wants and needs, his better understanding of socially acceptable behavior, and his continuing discovery of how to make his body work for him, your preschooler's confidence only continues to grow. He is now capable of gauging responses to his actions, experiencing pride in himself and his family, demonstrating more self-control, and engaging in cooperative, group play. But, his work is not done! At this age, your preschooler's brain is still in an active stage, but a fine-tuning process begins.

By about the age of three, there are many more brain cell connections that have been made than will be needed. Your child's experiences will determine which connections will become stronger, for the connections that are used the most are the connections that are strengthened. You may notice that your preschooler has become a non-stop talking machine. And, his physical activity may seem to dramatically increase—climbing, running, jumping, hopping. Yet, all this movement and all this talk is reinforcing your child's brain cell growth and promoting development of neuron connections.

Our preschool curriculum promotes all areas of growth by providing each child an opportunity to learn by doing. We present a well-balanced program that allows for working and learning individually, in a small group, and as a part of the whole group. Each of our activities incorporates letters, shapes, colors, and numbers and the children experience a wide range of activities that include any combination of the following:

**Cognitive** - children are exposed to the types of information they will experience in kindergarten and grade school. Review of colors, shapes, numbers, days of the week, months of the year, letter recognition, topical discussions and story times all contribute to building a comfort level with formal learning, increasing attention spans, and taking turns.

**Motor Development** - Fine Motor Skills are reinforced and refined in a variety of ways: shaping play dough, coloring, writing, drawing, building with blocks, painting, sand play, arts and crafts activities, cutting with scissors, experimenting with textures. Gross Motor Skills are further developed by physical activities such as climbing, running, hopping, bike riding, dancing, playing catch, balancing, tossing and catching objects, practicing stairs.

**Language and Intellectual Development** - Daily exposure to literature is offered through stories, poems, song singing and conversation. Opportunities are available throughout the day for individual and group reading, writing, and free art. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and their needs, and to respect the feelings of others.

**Social (character) Development** - an important part of social development is the smooth transition from individual to group activity. By gently guiding our preschoolers through this transition, our preschoolers learn the art of sharing and interacting. Self-help and the ability to solve problems with words and redirection are necessary skills in today's world. Children learn appropriate expression of feelings, needs, and desires. Organized and spontaneous activities teach responsibility for one's self and one's actions. And, just as importantly, children learn respect for themselves, others and their environment.

## Blocks, Colors and Shapes

Blocks are one of the most valuable learning materials in our classrooms. When children build with blocks, they learn about sizes and shapes, spatial relationships, math concepts, and problem solving. When children lift, shove, stack and move blocks, they learn about weight and size. When playing with blocks, children acquire many logical thinking skills, including the ability to make use of classification and equivalence. Each time they use blocks, they are expanding critical thinking by making decisions about how to build a structure or solve a construction problem.

## Once Upon a Story (Book Corner)

Reading is a very special activity for your child. The more children are exposed to quality books and the fun of reading, the more they will learn to value the experience. It's important to keep reading to a preschooler, because their knowledge base will be way ahead of their reading ability. Our philosophy is to keep fueling their imagination, develop a love of books and reading, and build their vocabulary. Although readiness for a book depends on individual rates of development, individual preferences, and the amount of experience a child has had with books, there are some qualities that appeal to each age. The key is to have fun. Our vast library includes:

- Stories that tell about family, friends, school and relationships
- Books about their concerns, feelings and real life experiences
- Counting books, ABC books
- Concept books — colors, opposites, sizes
- Books that give them a window into a bigger world
- Books with funny characters in silly situations
- Rhyming books which helps children with memory skills and word/sound associations.

## Math Area

Early development of number concepts is critical in developing positive attitudes about mathematics at an early age. Special methods and activities will assist children to develop early mathematical skills. These methods include the use of motivating and engaging concrete materials that children can manipulate. Young children need to experience a lot of 'doing' and 'saying' before written numerals will make sense to them.

Each day includes a combination of formal and informal math concepts including number sequencing and recognition, sorting and graphing, measuring and recording. Computers are available throughout the day for formal instruction and individual exploration.



### **Science Lab**

Exploring, questioning and experimenting all mean discovering the joys of science. Teachers seek to introduce children to the world around us through observation of plants and animals, the environment, our bodies and outer space. The program is changed biweekly, allowing the children to be introduced to a variety of science experiences throughout the year.

### **Sensory Area**

Experiences in the sensory area allow children to explore a variety of media using their senses. Table toys include puzzles, various table blocks and other builders, beads and stringing activities and collections of objects (including shells, buttons, etc.). Children enjoy the variety and versatility of table toys. Rich in texture, color, and shape table toys offer children challenging opportunities to learn new skills and concepts.

### **Little Artist Corner (Color My World)**

Most young children naturally delight in art. They love the process of applying paint to paper, gluing things together, and pounding a lump of clay. Working with art materials offers children opportunities to experiment with color, shape, texture and design. Through art, children express how they feel, think, and view the world. Art is an outlet that allows children to convey what they may not be able to say with words. Involvement with a rich variety of art materials instills confidence and pride.

As they engage in art activities, children develop awareness and an appreciation of pleasant sensory experiences. As they view their own creations and those of other children, they learn to value and appreciate differences. For young children, the process of creating is what is most important, not what they actually create.

### **Dramatic Play Area**

Dramatic play, pretend play or make-believe is a very important part of our curriculum. In the Dramatic Play Area, children take on a role and recreate real-life experiences. They use props and make-believe about a wide variety of topics.

The ability to pretend is very important to children's later academic success. When children pretend, they have to recall experiences they have had and recreate them. To do this, they have to be able to picture their experiences in their minds. As children act out roles, they develop many new skills. They learn about themselves, their families, and society. Engaging in dramatic play, they learn to judge and select relevant information. This is an essential skill for intellectual development. Children also learn from one another as they interact in socio-dramatic play. They learn to ask and answer questions and to work together to solve problems.

## WELCOME TO OUR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

*"When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments; tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become." - Louis Pasteur*

Even though pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are considered the start of formal education in America, we can see how foundations for learning are built before a child enters school. While learning is a life-long endeavor, there are prime times when learning is easier. Pre-kindergarten is one of those times. Young children, with their curiosity and enthusiasm, are passionate learners, eager for information, eager to acquire new skills and eager to discover their world. Our teachers capitalize on this prime learning time by creating a more structured learning environment in which to disseminate information and lay the foundation for mastering the skills your child will need to excel in her upcoming school years.

Our Pre-Kindergarten program is a continuation and expansion of the concepts introduced in the Preschool program. Monthly themes, weekly topics and daily activities keep the curriculum focused and fun. Our strong literacy-based approach encourages reading readiness through our Letter of the Week, journal writing, music, rhymes and stories. Concepts such as phonics and math become progressively more advanced. Yet, by exposing our pre-kindergartners to the topics they will encounter in kindergarten, our teachers seek to create a comfort level with the learning process, thus making the transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten smoother.

New ideas are introduced in small and large group settings with games, music, and teamwork. In addition to group activities, our program encourages your child's curiosity and engages your child's attention by promoting opportunities to explore the creative areas within the room. Our creative activity area includes computers, math centers, science centers, the writing table, paint and easel, housekeeping, dramatic play center, sensory tub, wooden or large blocks, fine motor manipulatives, puzzles, table games and art projects.

Children are encouraged to explore each of the following on a daily basis:

### Language and Writing

Teachers and children read and write stories, poems, songs and journals. Children learn to write their own names, addresses, short words and numbers. These activities are offered daily in a formal setting and as free choice.





## Once Upon a Story (Book Corner)

Reading is a very special time for your child. The more children are exposed to quality books and the fun of reading, the more they will learn to value the experience. It's important to keep reading to a preschooler, because their knowledge base will be way ahead of their reading ability. Our philosophy is to keep fueling their imagination, develop a love of books and reading and build their vocabulary. Although readiness for a book depends on individual rates of development, individual preferences, and the amount of experience a child has had with books, there are some qualities that appeal to each age. The key is to have fun. Our vast library includes:

- Stories that tell about family, friends, school and relationships
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- Books that give them a window into a bigger world
- Books with funny characters in silly situations
- Rhyming books which help children with memory skills and word/sound associations.

## Drama Center

The ability to pretend is an essential skill for intellectual development and promotes future academic success. Engaging in dramatic play, children learn to judge and select relevant information. When they pretend, they learn about themselves, their families and society.

Engaging in interactive socio-dramatic play allows children to not only learn about one another, but it also allows children to learn from one another. They learn to ask questions and explore ways to work together to solve problems.

## Social Concepts

Growth and development of personal and social skills not only allow children to benefit fully from experiences at school, but they are crucial to achieving success in the world. Promoting personal, social and self-help skills affords children the opportunity to gain a better understanding of themselves and to demonstrate self-control. Teachers promote self-help skills such as encouraging the children to find their own belongings, to dress themselves, and to clean up after themselves. Personal and social development is promoted by encouraging the children to be sympathetic to the feelings of peers and expressing their own feelings and opinions.

## Math

Each day includes at least one formal math activity with additional math concepts offered within the context of other daily situations. Children learn to recognize numbers and verbalize sequences. They learn to recognize shapes, graph comparisons, measure and weigh, and explore money concepts.

## Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Physical development and health are essential to children's overall well-being. For young children to be prepared for basic independent functioning both at school and home, they need to continue developing gross and fine motor skills as well as acquiring healthy habits and safety practices. Teachers utilize blocks, puzzles, games, manipulatives, and scissors to assure that fine motor development is supportive of academic development.

## Super Science

We believe in laying a foundation for scientific understanding. Children are asked daily to explore the world around them and to ask questions about it. We take advantage of the opportunity to instill a love of science within your child. Through **Fun and Fascination** we make it easy and interesting with simple science activities like weather watch, magnet play, playing with measurements, planting a window garden or playing with growth charts. These are only a few of the everyday science activities that we do with our preschoolers – our activities are only limited by our imagination!

## Block Area

Children playing with blocks develop a concrete understanding of concepts essential to logical thinking. Blocks are open-ended play materials that allow children to create whatever they desire. There is no right or wrong way to build with blocks. Children can create whatever they want. Sometimes children start with an idea of what they want to make; at other times three-dimensional designs grow as children place blocks together randomly or in patterns. Like other art, the creations children produce with blocks are unique. Block play is an essential creative outlet for some children.

## Sensory Table

Experiences in the sensory area allow children to explore a variety of media using their senses. Table toys include puzzles, various table blocks and other builders, beads and stringing activities, and collections of objects (including shells, buttons, etc.). Children enjoy the variety and versatility of table toys. Rich in texture, color and shape table toys offer children challenging opportunities to learn new skills and concepts.

## Little Artist Corner (Color My World)

Artwork benefits all aspects of your child's development. Making lines and shapes with crayons and markers will help your child develop the fine motor control they need for writing. Teachers provide children with various art media to explore personal thoughts and creativity. A formal project based upon the weekly theme is offered daily as well as opportunities to choose art expression for activities. Art is enjoyable and satisfying for young children. It enables them to learn many skills, express themselves, appreciate beauty and have fun – all at the same time.



## ONLINE RESOURCE GUIDE

Technology can be a wonderful thing! It provides almost instant access to information that used to be found only through magazine subscriptions or trips to the library (still a good practice). However, should you participate in any online research, you may notice that there are conflicting theories.

The area of Early Childhood Development is still a new, yet growing field. With technological improvements in diagnostic techniques, researchers are now afforded an opportunity to delve into areas of development that were only speculated upon not too long ago. While the actual scientific measurements and data may be more accurate, how that information is interpreted and incorporated by theorists can be vastly different. And, that can be attributed to the fact that no two children are alike.

Certainly there are common developmental milestones, but how and when each child reaches those milestones is an individual process that involves several factors unique to each child—genetics, environment, to name just two. When using online resources, or any resource material, it is important to keep in mind that the information presented is a guideline only. Should there be any concerns about your child's developmental progress, it is always advisable to consult with your child's pediatrician and care provider.

The first hyperlink we listed below is our website. There you can find many more links to children's development and parent interest websites. We've added brief descriptions of what these websites are about to assist you in your research. We strongly encourage you to visit our website and take advantage of these resources.

### Parent Centers

[www.funandfascination.com](http://www.funandfascination.com)

[www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com)

[www.brainconnection.com/topics/?main=fa/child-brain3](http://www.brainconnection.com/topics/?main=fa/child-brain3)

[www.earlychildhood.com](http://www.earlychildhood.com)

[www.sciencenews.org/pages/sn\\_arc99/1\\_30\\_99/fob1.htm](http://www.sciencenews.org/pages/sn_arc99/1_30_99/fob1.htm)

[www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/](http://www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/)

[www.zerotothree.org/magic/](http://www.zerotothree.org/magic/)

### Educational/Theoretical Centers

[www.psy.pdx.edu/PsiCafe/KeyTheorists/Erikson.htm](http://www.psy.pdx.edu/PsiCafe/KeyTheorists/Erikson.htm)

[www.sk.com.br/sk-vygotsky.html](http://www.sk.com.br/sk-vygotsky.html)

[www.marxists.org/archive/luria/works/1930/child/ch03.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/works/1930/child/ch03.htm)

[www.chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/cogsys/piaget.html](http://www.chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/cogsys/piaget.html)

[www.funderstanding.com/piaget.cfm](http://www.funderstanding.com/piaget.cfm)

[www.kolar.org/vygotsky/](http://www.kolar.org/vygotsky/)

Since 1987, our Learning Centers have been providing nourishing care and quality teaching to young children. Our Centers are independent and family-oriented. What this means to you, as a parent, is that our teachers are not bound by the "one size fits all" corporate-designed instruction manuals so often found in today's corporate chain facilities.

Our dedication to a shared family philosophy allows our teachers the flexibility to adapt our programs to individual child needs, as well as family needs. This flexibility lends itself to teacher creativity, sensitivity, and longevity. Because many of our teachers have been with us for years, we have established continuity in our curriculum. Yet, we are constantly refreshing and adapting our resource-rich library of teaching methods and curriculum to not only meet, but to exceed, today's education standards.

We are proud to have such experienced teachers guide your child through these exciting years of learning through Fun and Fascination.

We know there is no reward greater than the joyful smile of a child and we are happy to share some of the many smiling faces that have been with us over the many years.

## ***The Faces of Success***





"Learning through fun and fascination"

# The Children's Learning Center

"Learn to Grow"