

Welcome

We would like to welcome you and your family to the infant toddler room.

We are looking forward to a wonderful journey together. The infant and toddler program is designed to meet the needs of very young children and their families. This handbook will give you some of the specifics that are not covered in detail in the general parent handbook. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with both hand books. We suggest that you save them as they will serve as an invaluable resource throughout your time at Parkside.

Philosophy

Our infant and toddler program has two philosophical influences: RIE (resources for infant educators) and the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

RIE

The RIE philosophy was founded by Magna Gerber and Dr. Tom Forest. The foundation of the RIE philosophy is respect for the child and their family. The belief that each child is a unique individual who develops at their own pace, in their own way, and deserves our respect is the cornerstone of our programs philosophy.

We encourage infants to be active participants in their caregiving routines by talking to them, and letting them know what is happening. In this way, we show our respect, and lay the foundation for later cooperation, and independence. As children get older they are able to participate more fully because they are able to anticipate what is expected of them. Caregiving routines are an important part of their curriculum as they ensure automatic opportunities for caregivers to be one on one with a child, providing opportunities for all kinds of social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive development.

R.I.E. philosophy encourages active exploration and natural motor development. Our environment is set up to provide babies time on the floor to freely move their bodies. We do not use swings, bouncy chairs, high chairs, or exercise equipment. In most cases, physical development comes naturally, and we do not want to interfere with this natural process. Research has shown that children who are allowed to move in there on time, and in their own way often have fewer childhood accident because they have greater awareness of their capabilities and their limitations. Another aspect of the RIE philosophy is an emphasis on observation of the children. The caregivers observe the children closely to discover the uniqueness in each child. Observation Foster is a deep connection to end in the understanding of the children. It allows us to plan curriculum based on the individual needs and interests of the children.

The School of Reggio, Emilia, Italy.

Arc program is inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. We recently began our study of these schools, and their enormous impact on the field of early childhood education and care worldwide. We have explored and embrace many parts of the central tenants: an image of a strong and capable child, parents, as partners in the

educational project, and attention to the environment as the third teacher, the practice and the communication through documenting our research and children's work and the teacher as a co-researcher with children. We are currently engaged in exploring, and deepening our understanding about how the central ideas are incorporated within our program.

Relationships

Group size and primary care

In the infant toddler program, our group size is 12 children and we have a ratio of three children to one caregiver. Trust is an important feeling for infants and toddlers, each child needs to be able to trust their needs will be met. We use primary caregiving to ensure that each child has one caregiver in the room that will form a close and intimate connection with them. Whenever possible the primary caregiver is the person responsible for carrying out the daily routines of eating, sleeping and diapering with your child. It is primarily through the routines of caring that the caregiver for just a relationship with each individual child. This does not mean that it is exclusive care however, all of the caregivers work together to meet the needs of the room, and to get to know all of the children. In the event that are duties on staff or at home, call us to be out of the room, and natural shift in the caregiving routine will occur. When we utilize substitute teachers, another member of the team will typically do the caregiving well the substitute is used as a support person.

Parents as partners

Our goal is to create a partnership with parents that will ensure that each child gets the best care well at the center. Your child's primary caregiver is your main contact person on the team and is the person who will build a strong partnership with you on the behalf of your child. A partnership begins with open communication and mutual respect between families and staff. Your knowledge and caregiving preferences are important to us, and will form the basis of our caregiving plan for your child.

Parents are welcome at Parkside at all times.

Communication

Communication is a key component of our ability to build partnerships with families. At Parkside, we communicate regularly with you:

- at drop off times
- Through your child's daily report
- by email
- through classroom board postings
- at parent conferences

Each day we hope that you share with us in the morning a little bit about your child's evening ,night and morning at hom. throughout the day the caregivers will record information about your child's caregiving routines and activities so that you will have the information you need to take care of your child in the evening. In this way, we create a smooth transfer of care between Home and Parkside.

Curriculum:

Please see Parkside's parent handbook for additional information about our curriculum

Routines:

For infants and toddlers, caregiving routines are essential components of the curriculum. We approach these caregiving routines in a leisurely way, offering each child our time and full attention with the understanding that caregiving routines are not simply items to get accomplished, so we can move onto more important work.

Caregiving routines are central to a young child's experience of themselves and to their developing understanding that their world is a safe and supportive place where their needs will be met and where they will be valued by adults who care.

Arrivals/departures:

Our highest priority is to keep your child safe. To help us do this you have an important part in our morning and evening routine. In order for the school to become responsible for your child you must sign them in/out. Daily and be certain a teacher has acknowledged your child's arrival. The sign-in board is located directly outside the front door of each room. If someone other than you is picking up your child from the centre, prior arrangements will need to be made, and communicated in writing to the teachers. Please see handbook.

Saying bye, can be a very hard thing to do for both children and parents. Children may cry and cling when you attempt to leave. This behaviour is normal and is a sign that your child has a healthy attachment to you. It is important to allow young children to express these feelings, and to acknowledge that it is not easy for a parent and child to be apart for long periods of time. Separation is not a task that is accomplished once and then completed. There are ages, where, in separation anxiety is intense and difficult, regardless of how the child has separated from the parents in the past. Establishing a regular goodbye routine can help to make the process a little easier for parents and children. Routines add a comforting, predictability to your child's day because they will know what happens next. In the long run, a predictable routine can lessen the anxiety of daily separations. We ask that you give some thought to what makes your child most comfortable in new situations and use this information to establish a written arrival plan. Some parents choose to read a book or engage in a single activity with their child each morning and then have a consistent spot for saying goodbye. A younger baby will probably be content to help put away their things and then be handed to their caregiver. Once you have completed a morning routine and you are ready to leave, let one of the teachers know so they can assist you and your child with saying goodbye. Your plan may change as your child grows and feels more comfortable. Parents and caregivers will work together to be supportive of one another in the ongoing process of saying goodbye.

We ask that you always say goodbye to your child before leaving. This enables your

child to play freely without worrying, if/when you might disappear, and forms the very basis of their ability to trust you and their new caregiver.

Evening, Hello routine:

A transition that's frequently overlooked is pick up time. Your child must now make the transition from Parkside back to your care. Children often greet their parents with a confused emotion; "I'm so happy to see you" is expressed along with "I'm angry that you left me" or "why did you come so soon". These emotions can manifest as tantrums, refusal to cooperate, indifference to parents, etc. Parents often feel confused by their child's behaviour, especially if they were expecting the child to rush into their arms flushed with the days fun and happiness to see them. This can be a difficult time of the day. Again, some planning on a consistent routine can help. Please plan to arrive early enough to spend some time your child's room before you need to leave. Parents and caregivers will work together to support the end of the transition. Children do not have the same emotional agenda with their caregivers as they do with her parents. They tend to make the biggest faces, and reserve the most love, for their parents. Some children respond better at the end of the day if a caregiver helps them to get ready to leave by helping with a coat, etc.

If you would like help with the end of the day routine, please communicate that to the closing caregivers.

The centre closes at 5 PM. Children generally need 10 to 20 minutes to visit with you before gathering things for their departure. Please plan on arriving no later than 450pm to pick up your child until you have the routine down.

At some point in the year, the Parkside classrooms may work together with another room to get the day started. In the evening we may again combine for closing procedures. We see this as a time to build on the child's idea of a school community. The blending of ages allow children to try out new rules and explore choices together. It also facilitates dynamic teaching and staffing to span our hours of operation. The teaching team in your child's room will give advance notice whenever possible, about this, so you know what to expect it.

Feeding/Eating:

Feeding/eating times are an important part of the ongoing curriculum in the infant and toddler rooms. Feeding/eating times are important opportunities for growth in all domains of development. Infant and toddlers, build relationships, acquire, self-help skills, learn language, and develop understandings of cognitive concepts, like cold, hot, soft, crunchy, etc. during feeding/eating times. For all of us, feeding/eating times are opportunities to slow down and enjoy one another's company. For toddlers, it's an opportunity for caregivers to model table conversation, and reflect on the days activities with them at Parkside. Children are never forced to eat. And food is never associated with discipline, as either a consequence or a reward. Infants follow their own unique rhythms in developing a feeding routine. Parents are always welcome to come over and feed their baby. We have a quiet corner and a rocking chairs for both breast-feeding,

mothers and parents who would like to give their child a bottle. At Parkside caregivers always hold babies who are being bottle-fed and will continue to hold them on their lap throughout the early experience with eating solid foods. Once children can sit up on their own, they can sit at a small table for meal times. At Parkside, we support women who choose to continue breast-feeding when they return to work. Your child's caregiver will work with you to establish a routine for breast-feeding that coordinate with your work schedule. Freezer space is provided for you to store extra milk for your child. You are responsible for providing all foods for your child's time spent at the center. All formula/breastmilk for your child's day. Should be ready to serve in bottles that are labelled with the child's name and have a cap covering the nipple. Space in the refrigerator, freezer, and in the cabinets will be available to store your child's food. All solids must be labelled with your child's name. Any food that is open or bottles of formula/breastmilk that have been prepared for the day must be sent home at the end of each day. It is important to notify your child's caregiver if any changes and feeding schedule and routines. Just like all decisions and changes you make for your child, you should be communicating closely with your child's caregiver to make eating a successful and enjoyable caregiving routine for your child. The toddlers follow a group meal schedule. We offer morning snack at 9:30, lunch at 11:30, and an afternoon snack around 3:30.

Sleeping:

Sleeping is a routine of care that is different for each child. Predictable routines based on the needs and styles of each child are the best way to support infants and toddlers as they learn how to self soothe and put themselves to sleep comfortably. Day to day variations in sleep times are to be expected. In the infant, your children follow their own individual schedules for sleeping. It is required health and safety guideline that all children be put on their back to sleep and one that we cannot make any exception for as a licensed child development center. Research strongly indicates that this is the safest position for very young infants.

Safe sleep policy

1. Healthy infants are always placed on their back to sleep. Side sleeping is not a safe or back sleeping and is not advised.
2. Older infants, who are capable of rolling from back to front, or place on their back to sleep, and allowed to adapt to whatever position they prefer as they sleep
3. Cribs are kept free of toys, stuffed animals, and extra bedding.
4. If a blanket is used, place the infants feet to the foot of the crib and tuck in a light blanket along the sides of the foot of the mattress. The blanket should not come up higher than the infants chest. another option is to use sleep sacs, and nothing else in the infants crib
5. The room is maintained at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult
6. Sleeping babies are kept within sight and sound requirements and visually checked on every five minutes. Monitors are used.
7. Sleeping children are not woken up. They are allowed to sleep as long as their body requires it.

During the toddler year, the children follow a group schedule and nap together on cots after lunch. By this age, children have developed their own unique patterns and habits of sleep. Some children self-soothe themselves to sleep; others need support at rest time. Caregivers prepare environment conducive to sleep, example playing soft music, Dimming, the lights and assist children as needed by singing or rubbing backs

Diapering/ Toileting:

In order to ensure that we can properly care for your child in the bathroom, we ask that you provide the following items clearly marked with your child's first and last names. Each child is provided a spot in the diaper changing area. And the spot provides easy access to your child's change of clothes and diapering supplies. Also, please refer to the checklist for a more detailed list of items needed on the first day.

- A supply of diapers
- Diaper wipes
- Diaper ointment

Since it is critical to have enough diapering supplies for a complete day at school, plan to check your child supplies periodically at drop off or pick up times. If we notice diapering supplies running low, we will make a note of it and inform you at the end of the day. When appropriate time comes for your child to begin the transition to underwear we will talk about the plan that mirrors what you were doing at home. The transition to underwear is different for each child and family so it is important to communicate to the teaching team what seems to be successful in working with your child in the bathroom. We encourage children who are moving out of the diapers to wear cloth underwear at school. If the added protection of disposable pull ups is needed We will let you know if there is specific information we should know about your child needs in the bathroom please make a point of sharing it with the staff.

Environment:

The environment at Parkside is designed to be flexible and respond to the specific and evolving needs of each particular group of children. During the infant year, the environment is designed to allow for babies to be free on the floor and able to move in their own bodies in their own time, and in their own way. As the children grow and develop, the layout is modified and developmentally, appropriate equipment is added to challenge their growing capabilities. We empathize, encouraging children to improve explore when they are ready and do what they are capable of doing independently, caregivers do not put children in positions or places that they cannot get in themselves for example, propping a sitting baby up, we'd follow this guideline both for safety reasons, and to honour our belief that children actually do what they are capable of doing when they are capable of doing it. Most often the acquisition of motor skills is matter of maturation and is not enhanced by modeling, teaching, or encouraging. During the toddler year, the environment is designed to support the children's burgeoning independence and capabilities. Children are encouraged to do what they are capable of

doing on their own, and the environment supports us by providing the children, greater accessibility.

The outdoors is a critical component of our environment. The children spend time outside year round. In addition to our large and very well equipped playground, we take advantage of extended areas by taking forest walks and exploring the neighborhood. At Parkside, we prize our ability to offer these experience to children of all ages. We place a strong value on the rule that the natural world plays in a child's development, and growing sense of place within the larger world. Very young children are taking in information and learning through experiences involving all their senses. Because of this, we pay very close attention to the aesthetics of the room in terms of light, texture, colour, smells and sound. Our environments are designed to be welcoming places that support the development of a sense of trust. We emphasize home like features, natural light and high-quality materials. We believe that each classroom should tell you something about the unique individuals who inhabit that space. It should reflect the life and work of the children through the documentation, the arrangement of space, and the materials offered.

Materials:

We select, organize and present materials in ways that are designed to invite the children into explorations that are meaningful to them. In our selection and materials we emphasize high-quality, open, ended, natural, and reused items. Exploration of open ended sensory materials, like water, sand, paint, and clay, are central to the infant toddler curriculum. These materials afford children an opportunity to develop a sense of their own agency, by seeing the impact that their actions have. Discovering and developing understandings of the qualities and uses a various materials at a young age expands a child's creative capacity, and hones skills for later representational work.

Intake conferences:

Before your child's first day at Parkside, we will plan an individual meeting between your family and your child's caregiver to discuss your child's eating and sleeping, rhythms and routines, and talk about the play and exploration your child is engaged in at the current time. At this intake conference, the caregivers will ask a lot of questions to gather information about your child. This is necessary to provide as much familiarity and consistency for your child as possible. It is also an opportunity for you to communicate your preferences and needs and have your own's questions answered.

Beginnings/gradual entry :

We would like to share a philosophy about beginnings and separations with you, because quality beginnings and separations are central to our philosophy and are crucial for all of our well-being.

Both parents and children have strong emotions about beginnings and separations. You all have memories of beginning, a new job, or moving to a new place. You probably had a mixture of strong feelings; excitement, nervousness, uncertainty, confusion, fear, etc.

Young children have many of those same feelings, and have less experience coping with them than adults do. We want to give you both, children and adults, time to support and process for adjusting. For very young infants, new sights, smells, and ways of being handled can be overwhelming. Typical responses, including eating, crying, or sleeping more or less than usual or stress related hiccups. Some older infants and toddlers may be excited by the newness, but then have trouble settling in, in the day to day life at Parkside. Others will stick close to a parent for a long period before beginning to explore the room or meet new people. Still others will cheerfully say goodbye, and perhaps even before you are ready, and grow steadily more comfortably as time goes on. You probably already have a feeling for your child style of approaching and coping with new situations. Children and parents individual needs, and styles of separating will be recognized and will serve as our guide for the first few weeks of the year. We ask all parents to be available to assist us and your child during the phase in process.

Gradual entry.

During the phase in period, both children and adults have the opportunity to begin to build strong and supportive relationships. By investing in this extra time at the beginning, we lay down the groundwork for trust and partnerships that supports us all throughout the year. We encourage you to build some flexibility into your work schedule during your child's first five attendance days. Your reassuring presence allows your child to spend their energy, exploring the room, the materials and to begin to form new relationships with teachers and children, rather than to simply cope with their separation from you. During this time, the teachers have the opportunity to learn about your child, and their caregiving preferences as we watch you take care of, and play with your child. The amount of time your child will require your presence for will vary from child to child. We gradually increase the amount of time your child spends at Parkside and the amount of time that they spend without you.

We encourage you to use whatever flexibility you have in your work schedule to spend time in the room visiting and/ or to shorten your child's day by arriving late or picking up early during the first couple of weeks that your child attends. Please be aware that if your child is not ready to be here alone for a long day, we will request an extension of a phase in time and work together to develop a plan that supports you and your child. We are aware of the stress and difficulties phase in may cause working families, but we believe that a thoughtful, respectful phase in process, allows children, parents and teachers, the opportunity to have a solid beginning to our partnership.

Nuts and bolts; what to wear, want to bring?

What to wear

Our activities environment are geared towards the interest of children. At Parkside, children, engage in physical, tactile and sensory based activities as well as move from indoor to outdoor environments. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that will not be hurt by a little fun or outdoor activity. Be sure to send your child dressed appropriately for the weather: sweater, socks, rain gear, hat, mittens, etc. We strongly recommend keeping a raincoat with a hood and a pair of boots in the classroom for your child. All clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name.

What to bring?

We ask that you provide the following items:

A supply of diapers

Diaper wipes

Diaper ointment

At least three changes of clothing, including socks, pants, shirts, etc.

(We recommend that children have clothes that are easy to get on and off such as sweat pants or anything with an elastic waist band)

Children should have a pair of inside shoes

Outdoor clothing; a jacket and a warm hat for colder weather, and a sun hat for warmer weather

Muddy buddy, or wet suit and rubber boots

Mittens and toque in cold weather

Blankets, sleep sac

Security objects, your child will need for nap

Sunscreen

We value the importance of things from home. We also recognize that things from home are hard to share and keep track of in a group setting. Each child will have a personal cubby space. It is helpful in general housekeeping if the items you bring from home can be comfortably stored in the space. The toddlers have cubbies that they are able to access so it is important that no unsafe items are stored there.