

## PROGRAM GOALS - Toddlers

Although all children learn differently, most have a general need in each stage of their childhood that can be met by their caregiver. At Mill Pond we strive to create an environment that supports children at each stage of their development.

**Toddlers:** The toddler stage can be seen as one of the most challenging (and rewarding) times. Toddlers are very mobile and active using all five senses to discover the world. Adults are challenged to provide a safe, but stimulating environment in which the child can grow. The toddler responds well to regular daily routine with set meal times, rest times and play times. Toilet training is best accomplished by taking the child to the toilet at the same times each day.

Important independence skills are being acquired during these years, including personal care such as toileting, feeding and dressing. Patience is essential as a toddler struggles to master skills (developing independence at this stage occurs after much repetition and encouragement). Realistic toys will enable children to engage in increasingly complex types of play and practice.

Toddlers are learning to produce language rapidly. They need simple books, pictures, puzzles and music, plus time and space for active play such as jumping, running and dancing. Toddlers are acquiring social skills, but in groups there should be several of the same toy because egocentric toddlers are not yet able to understand the concept of sharing.

Program goals for children approximately 18 months to 36 months are:

1. To provide a nurturing, flexible and calm environment where physical affection is freely given, self-concept is enhanced, independence is encouraged and expectations are made clear]
2. To meet each child's physical needs while setting the stage for future independence in selfcare. i.e. toilet teaching, putting on coats, putting on shoes, etc.
3. To establish respect for the environment, the equipment and materials
4. To promote emotional growth
  - a. To build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, by allowing choices within limits and to build on successful experiences
  - b. To provide a warm, accepting environment in which children can work and play
  - c. To encourage curiosity and a sense of wonder with an environment that is designed to limit the use of "no"
5. To promote social growth
  - a. To promote and instill a sense of caring for, and sensitivity towards others; foundations for respect are established
  - b. To model acceptable behavior which is critical to the toddlers who are practicing and learning cooperative and group play
6. To promote intellectual growth
  - a. To instill a sense of curiosity
  - b. To provide an atmosphere where children discover and explore
  - c. To provide experiences with open-ended questions and where process, not product is emphasized

- d. To provide a wide variety of activities within an outline where cooperative play is encouraged. Curriculum areas of art, math, science, cooking, music and movement, large muscle, practical life, dramatic play, language arts and fine motor activities are provided. Through these activities, children are learning to be able to trust their own desires/choices about what they learn, hear, see and do. They also begin to share these experiences with others
7. To promote physical/motor development
  - a. To provide a variety of active ways children can use their bodies to participate in fine and gross motor activities both indoors and outdoors
  - b. To encourage participation in simple games and songs
8. To provide the language development that is so important at this stage of development
9. To make available a good variety and quantity of materials on the shelves at the child's level i.e. manipulative, dramatic play, pull toys, puzzles, books, etc.
10. To develop self-help skills in order to create a feeling of independence and confidence in the child (this can be accomplished by toilet training, encouraging them to try to help dress themselves and letting them help serve food at meals, etc.)
11. To provide care in small groups in order to give each child more personal attention, prevent under/over-stimulation, allow more freedom of choice and maintain a more relaxed atmosphere

The toddler group is a diverse one. Providing a variety of activities with many choices is essential to enhancing each child's developmental progress. Activities will be designed with the developmental level of each child in mind. The following are such activities:

\* Introducing sensory experiences with materials such as:

Pudding	Tasting and smelling boxes
Jell-O	Cornstarch
Water table	Music/rhythm instruments
Sand table	Bubbles
Rice/Macaroni	Play Dough
Flour	Textured Books
Corn meal	Flashlights
Karo Syrup finger painting	Shaving cream
Noise makers/Bean shakers	Silly putty

\* Encouraging cognitive development and language acquisition by:

- Reading and re-telling favorite stories
- Working on recognizing and naming the teachers and children in the classroom using photographs of the children
- Reinforcing aspects of the routines, such as: snack time, lunch time, nap time, etc.
- Working with the older toddlers on learning the words and actions to the songs we sing: i.e. by singing to the children and encouraging them to sing along.
- Encouraging the toddlers to talk more by:

using puppets      asking lots of questions  
(open-ended)      reading stories and asking  
lots of questions

\* Verbalizing with the children while they are playing so as to provide a springboard for the children's own verbalizations. Language should be incorporated into every activity throughout the day, using:

Simple songs and finger plays	Puppet plays
Tape recorder	Object labeling
Simple directions (up, on, over)	Story time
Nursery rhymes	Memory games
Counting games	Color matching
Alphabet games	Dolls
Sorting activities	

\* Increasing the child's ability to recognize common objects, using:

Picture books  
Picture cards of simple, common objects  
Object boxes  
Shape sorter  
Lotto games or matching games  
Three basic shapes - circle, square, triangle  
Art activities with these shapes (pasting)  
Simple cooking activities - mixing, pouring and sorting

\* Providing the child with opportunities to participate in self help activities designed to promote the growing independence desired by toddlers, such as:

Washing hands and face  
Eating with spoon and fork  
Throwing away cup and napkin  
Taking off/putting on socks and shoes, coat, etc.  
Putting away toys  
Washing and drying dishes  
Bathing and drying dolls  
Becoming aware of the rules of safety Potty training (where appropriate)

\* Enhancing social and emotional development, by:

- Setting limits in such a way that the child learns self-regulation
- Enforcing the rules: you may not hurt yourself; you may not hurt others; and you may not hurt the materials, equipment, or other things in the environment.
- Using the methods of distraction, substitution, alternative activity or corrective guidance when necessary
- Encouraging the children to use words rather than pushing or hitting other children
- Helping children play well independently among a larger group of children

\* Providing materials and activities important in advancing a child's coordination, focusing on:

Fine Motor Development

Pouring and sifting	Cutting play-dough with scissors
Filling and dumping	Puzzle work
Peg boards	Shape sorting
Nesting	Sewing cards
Stacking	Lego blocks
Putting shapes through holes	Button and snap boards
Snap beads	Twisting jar lids, nuts and bolts
Stringing beads	Art activities
Macaroni necklaces	

Gross Motor Development

Dancing and marching	Swinging
Walking outside when weather permits	Pulling toys and wagons
Sliding	Circle games and songs
Climbing stairs	Crawling under and through
Climbing	Jumping
Hanging off bars/ropes	Stretching exercises
Playing ball	

\* Scheduling daily activities that encourage children to express themselves creatively by participating in basic art activities such as:

Painting with brushes	Creating:
Easel painting	Collages and montages
Finger painting	Murals with chalk, crayon, paint
String painting	Potato prints
Sponge painting	Food coloring pictures
Marble painting	Mobiles
Q-tip painting	Tearing paper
Salt painting	Crayon activities
Water painting	Coloring with crayon and chalk