



## Curriculum Overview – Infant Ages 3 months – 18 months

This overview reflects the rich Montessori beginning-of-life concepts and the earliest learning cycle based upon the sensitive periods which occur during a child's first stage of development.

Teachers create strong bonds of trust with the infants as they lovingly respond to their individual needs. Teachers communicate regarding schedule, needs, and progress of the child on a daily basis, creating a partnership with parents. Trust and parent-teacher partnerships allow infants the security to develop to their greatest potential while at school. Each child receives one-on-one time through reading, singing, feeding, and rocking and also, opportunities for independent work in movement and concentration.

The sensitive periods during the infant stage of development involve the infant hearing sounds in his native language, development of a sense of order, sensorial exploration, and movement. Teachers provide rich and varied experiences in each of these areas, laying the groundwork for future development.

### The Environment

The Infant Environment is a safe space with specially designed activities and materials to meet the infant's interest and development in:

- Language
- Movement
- Independence
- Order

The design of the environment enables the child to safely explore the classroom. Infant-sized furniture and a soft gross motor play area allows children to explore, make choices, and have independence without the impediments of cribs, playpens, or highchairs. The environment is fully equipped with beautiful and purposeful infant materials.

### Infants Learn Best Through:

- Sensorial exploration
- Self-chosen activity
- Activity that fulfills the need of a sensitive period
- Repetition
- Concentration
- Experiencing order

### Language Development

- The adult talks to and listens to the child
- The adult narrates daily activities, connecting the child to his world
- The adult reads books to the child
- The adult sings to the child

## Movement

The infant learns through his senses, and movement allows him to sensorially explore his world. By encouraging the infant's movement, the caregiver is assisting in building his intelligence and understanding of the world around him. This exploration begins from birth, long before a child can crawl or walk. Aids to movement in the infant environment include:

- **Floor Bed** – A floor bed creates a safe place for the infant to view his environment with no obstructions like playpen walls or crib bars.
- **Montessori Mobiles** – This carefully designed sequence of mobiles is the first element introduced to the infant. The mobiles allow the infant to practice focus, tracking and concentration, and range from high contrast black and white mobiles to subtly graded colors.
- **Grasping Materials** – Hanging a simple wooden ring above the infant, yet within his reach, allows the infant to connect what he sees with the motions of his body. As he grasps the object above him, he delights in exerting control over his body and his surroundings.
- **Movement Mat** – This thin, neutral colored mat allows the infant to focus on the objects placed before him.
- **Low Mirror** – Attached to the wall in front of the movement mat, this mirror allows the infant to observe his own body in motion.
- **Toys for Movement** – Offering a simple yet interesting object slightly out of the infant's reach will encourage him to scoot or crawl forward to grasp it.
- **Standing** – A bar set in front of a mirror allows the infant to pull up to a standing position while observing the movements of his body. Low shelves with interesting materials placed on the top level will also encourage a child to stand up in order to explore the materials.
- **Walking** – A push wagon gives the infant the stability to walk within his environment.

## Independence

Children are encouraged to develop independence in several key areas in the classroom:

- **Sleep** – Each child will have a specifically located floor bed which is always available to him for rest or naps. Teachers will work with each child to create gentle transitions into daytime sleep routines.
- **Eating** – Once the child is ready for solid foods, he will learn to feed himself at a specially designed weaning table. Teachers will work one-on-one with each child, guiding in the use of utensils and sitting independently during meals.
- **Work Cycle** – Teachers encourage children to independently choose materials from the shelves when a child begins to crawl. Rotation of the beautiful materials entices children to explore their surroundings.
- **Toileting** – Once a child is standing, teachers will begin to change his diapers in a standing position. He will begin to be involved in the care of his body, laying the groundwork for toilet learning.

## Readiness for Toddler

### Required for Toddler Program Admission:

1. No bottles
2. Feeds self – with fingers transitioning to spoons and forks
3. Able to rest quietly on the mat with little assistance
4. Walking without assistance
5. Separates from parents with minimal and decreasing fuss

### Developmental Expectations at Time of Transition to Toddler:

- Begins to assist in dressing and undressing themselves
- Sits in a toddler sized chair at a table
- Does not drool excessively
- Displays emotions through facial expressions, body movements or words
- Shows likes and dislikes
- Points to known objects  
(ex. car/ball/dog/body parts)
- Names 1 or 2 familiar objects  
(mom, dad, etc.)
- Responds to name
- Responds to simple commands
- Begins to attach to someone in the room
- Makes eye contact with more than one person
- Will climb steps holding onto a railing
- Picks up and holds materials
- Uses a pincher grip
- Shows a level of curiosity by going over to materials or by observing activities in the room
- Will engage in one work and responds to it
- Uses sounds or motions to get needs filled
- Responds to re-direction