



Toddler Program Handbook

Hilltop School
218 Ohio Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
(207) 945-3705

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Dear Families,

Thank you for considering Hilltop School's Toddler Program for your child's early care and education. Children ages 2 to 3 are characterized by a tension between the desire for independence and the need for continued dependence on a trusted caregiver. It is an exciting time with a lot of developmental changes. We offer a developmentally appropriate program that is designed to enhance the overall growth of your child. Our teachers plan opportunities for experiences that as individuals, your child can make the most out of. Teachers organize materials for the classroom by taking into account their knowledge of child development and children's individual differences. Planning is based on observations of the children using their interests, their new skills, and their reactions to materials. As the children grow and change, the teachers change the classroom environment. We take every opportunity to plan experiences that will fuel each child's imagination and curiosity.

Curriculum:

In our Toddler Program children will be working on the following skills through daily exploration and interactions:

Language and Literacy Development:

- Use one or two words to label objects and express needs and wants.
- Build an understanding of words through interactions including reading books
- Imitate reading behaviors like turning pages and babbling while looking at pictures
- Explore writing with scribbles on paper

Social and Emotional Development:

- Self Awareness
 - recognizes self in mirror or photos.
 - uses "me" or name: "me Sophie"
 - identifies self by gender
- Self concept
 - wants to experience the world on their own terms: "I do it"
- Self Regulation
 - show impulse control. Ex: walking around spilled items
 - anticipates and follows routines when prompted.
- Peer Interactions:

- engages in joint exploration and associative play.
- Peer Interactions continued:
 - shows concerns for a peer who is in distress.
 - includes other children in pretend play.
 - shows reciprocal exchanges with peers.
 - seeks out a particular peer to be around.
- Adult Interactions:
 - through words and actions, use adults as a resource.
 - shares accomplishments with adults.
 - periodically checks back with caregiver when playing or exploring.
 - identifies and imitates others roles.
- Social Intelligence:
 - notices likenesses and differences
 - comments on gender

Physical Development and Wellness:

- Gross Motor Skills
 - engages in creative movement and dance spontaneously and when prompted.
 - exhibits more control and coordination of large muscle and body movement.
- Fine Motor Skills
 - use crayons to imitate marks/scribbles
 - hold an object with one hand and manipulate it with the other.
 - puts on some easy clothing
 - can turn pages of a book
 - hold spoon, fork, cup, but may still spill
 - pour liquid from a small pitcher or cup.

Self Help Skills:

- Self Feeding:
 - holds spoon, fork, and cup
 - pours own milk and juice from small plastic containers
- Dressing Self:
 - undresses self
 - puts on clothing except for buttoning
 - puts on own jacket and hat
- Shows interest in toileting skills:
 - willing to use the toilet
 - will wash hands after going to the bathroom

Creative Expression

- Begins to solve problems in his/her head
- Acts out dramatic play role-play themes with others
- Engages in make believe play.
- Uses objects for other than the intended purpose.

Emotional Expression/Understanding

- Self-conscious emotions appear.
- Uses artistic tools for creative expression
- Begins to talk about and play-act emotions
- Begins to show sympathy responding to others.

Children do not need to have these skills upon entering our Scout Program. All skills are from Maine's Infant/Toddler Standards for Learning and Development.

Daily Communication:

Each child has a folder labeled with their name on it in the classroom. This is where you will find newsletters, notes from your child's teacher and other pertinent information. Please make sure to check this folder daily.

Teachers will fill out "About my Day" forms each day which will tell you important information about your child's day such as activities they participated in, how they ate, and whether or not they took a nap.

We encourage families to talk with their child's teacher at drop off and/or pick up. It is important for the teacher and family to have on-going communication to best meet the needs of the child.

Potty Training:

Children do not need to be potty trained to enroll in our Toddler Program. As a parent you make the decision when your child is ready to begin potty training. Once you have made the decision, we would be happy to help your child succeed. Please see the family handbook for a detailed description of our potty training policy.

Outside Play:

Children will be going outside as much as possible. We go outside each day, weather permitting. Please make sure your child has clothing that will keep them warm and dry during this time. In the winter they will need a jacket, snow pants, boots, a hat, and a scarf.

Drop Off Transition:

Separation anxiety is normal for children this age. Each child is unique and will respond to separations differently. Please be aware the children will take cues from you. If a parent feels good and responds positively at drop off, the child will sense this. These helpful hints can help ease the transition:

- Talk with your child ahead of time as to what is going to happen, such as “today is a school day.”
- Talk with your child’s teacher daily. The more comfortable you are the better your child will respond.
- Help your child settle in by offering them a book or toy.
- Say your goodbye’s to the child and make your departure definite. It is never best to sneak away from a child.
- If your child begins to cry while you are leaving it is best not to turn around and come back. It is a natural reaction to want to go back and comfort your child when they are distressed, however, coming back to ease a crying child will not make the separation any easier when you have to leave again and at times can be harder for the child the second time around. Typically children regain their composure and get into the daily routine soon after parents leave.
- We have an open-door policy at Hilltop so you are welcome to stop in anytime and you are always welcome to call the school after you leave to see how your child is doing.

What to bring:

Children enrolled in the Toddler Program should have the following each day:

- An extra set of clothes to leave in their cubby.
 - Socks, shirt, underwear, pants/shorts, shoes (if possible)
- A blanket and a small pillow.
- Pull-ups and wipes
- Light sweater or sweatshirt to wear in the classroom if needed.

*Active and messy play will be a big part of your child’s day. Please make sure your child is dressed in comfortable play clothes that are easy to move around in. We encourage children to freely explore all materials. At times we use smocks to protect clothing but please keep in mind that accidents do happen.

*We spend a lot of the day running and jumping so we recommend wearing sneakers so their feet can stay protected and prevent any potential slips and falls.

*We ask that you do not send sippy cups to school with your child. The American Dental Association recommends transitioning from a sippy cup to a regular cup by the child's first birthday. If your child is not comfortable drinking from a cup, we would be happy to help them learn this skill. If you have concerns about this please let us know.

The first years of your child's life are the most important for his/her development and we are honored that you have chosen our school to be part of these memorable years.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call the school at, (207) 945-3705 or e-mail hilltopschooled@gmail.com.

