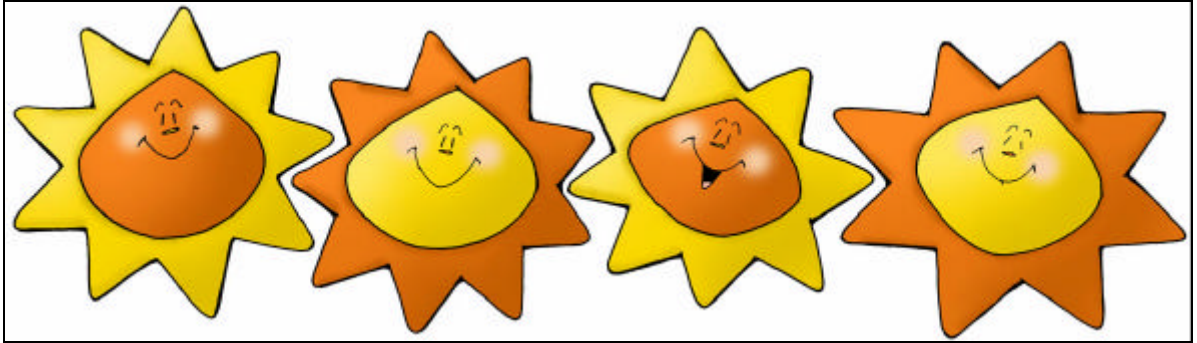
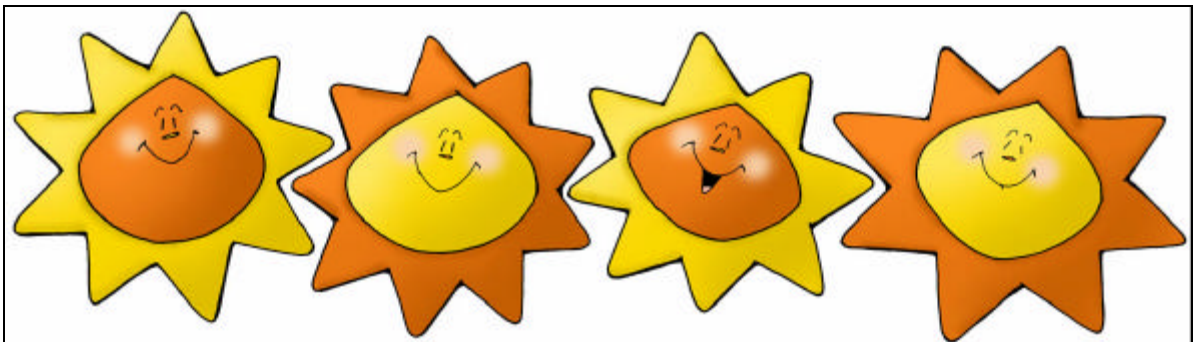


ProKids Child Development Center



# Toddler Program Family Handbook



Bright Horizons Family Solutions

# What You Will Find In The Toddler Program Family Handbook

Welcome letter from homebase teachers

*The World at Their Fingertips* welcome poem

Our Little Corner of the World, homebase information

What to bring on the first day

Toddler Program daily schedule

*The World at Their Fingertips*

Education for Bright Horizons

About tracking child development

Areas for tracking child development

Toddler Program developmental milestones

# Welcome

Dear Family,

First, we'd like to warmly welcome you! Your child has been enrolled in our *Toddler Program*. Our Toddler Program provides an active, yet safe, nurturing environment where children can grow and learn. Many great things will happen in our unit, and we're excited that you'll be a part of the experience!

Please become familiar with the information provided in this handbook, it has important information that will help you find your way around the homebase. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please know that we are here for you. Our doors are always open and you are always welcome.

Thank you so much for this great opportunity and we look forward to becoming a strong team with you, for your child!

Your Teachers,

The  
World  
at Their  
Fingertips

Welcome to a place of  
microscopes and mess,  
kaleidoscopes and computers,  
blocks and books;

a warm, soft place of beauty  
that has the tone and  
texture of childhood;

A place filled with laps,  
smiles and hugs,  
and an abundance of good  
conversation.



# The Toddler Program

## Our Little Corner of the World

This is such an exciting time for children! They have many opportunities to learn new things and participate in unique and fascinating experiences. Our roll, as teachers, together with you as parents, is to provide children with a strong foundation on which we'll continue to build so they become active and excited learners!

We look so forward to the time we spend in our homebase and would like you to feel the same. The information provided in this handbook will help you become familiar with Our Little Corner of the World.

### ***Question***

*What measures have you taken to ensure a smooth transition when entering and departing the center?*

### ***Answer***

*Transitioning to and from the center is not always easy. Establishing and sticking to a routine helps your children feel secure, they begin to learn what to expect next. We suggest the following...*

Checking In: Please be sure to, first, check your child in each morning.

Where to Go: If you arrive at the center before 8:15am, please bring your child to Toddler 1.

Personal Items: Each child will have a cubby labeled with their name. We also have cabinets available for additional storage of personal care items.

Important Information: If your child's primary care teacher is not currently in the room, please feel free to inform the unit's support teacher of any information you would like passed on.

Saying Goodbye: Saying goodbye isn't easy, but there are a few things you can do to help ease the transition. It is so important to develop a routine that works for you and your child. Always say good-bye and communicate with them when you'll be back. This helps reinforce that you support and feel comfortable with them being here.

Upon Departure: Our unit combines on Tuesday and Thursday at 4:00 due to staff scheduling. Please be sure to check your child out when you depart for the evening.

## Question

*How will I get and give important information about my child's day?*

## Answer

*We strive every day to create a strong Parent Partnership with you and welcome and invite verbal communication at any time. We also feel, however, that written communication is a very important and essential part of our communication exchange. We use the following methods...*

Daily Care Sheets: Information sheets about your child's day will go home daily. Daily sheets contain important information about your child's experiences at the center that day.

Mailboxes: Each child will have their own mailbox. Please check with your child's teacher to find out where they are located in the classroom. Your child's mailbox is used to send important information to you that will need to go home such as newsletters, announcements, current events, etc.

Parent Conferences: As a center, we conduct regular parent conferences. We would like you to know that we are open to scheduling a conference with you at any time.

## Question

*Who will care for my child?*

## Answer

*The teachers in Toddler Program are a team of caring professionals. Together they care for, plan, teach, play with, interact with, observe, assess, and meet the needs of every child in a loving and nurturing atmosphere. Based on availability and schedules, your child will have a **primary caregiver**.*

A **primary caregiver** is responsible for...

- Daily communication with you; either written or verbal
- Documentation of your child's growth and development
- Important paperwork such as accident reports, medicine forms, etc.
- Creating and updating your child's portfolio
- Developing individual child goals and objectives with you
- Child assessments
- Parent conferences

**Please feel free to communicate concerns with any teacher in the room, and please know they will be addressed appropriately.**

## Question

*How do I know what learning experiences are being provided for my child?*

## Answer

*As a Bright Horizons center, we develop education plans that are individualized to meet the current needs of the children in the homebase through **The World at Their Fingertips, Education for Bright Horizons**. The learning that is happening in our room is made visible through the following...*

Parent Board: Our parent board has a lot of great information and should be visited regularly. The parent board is located near the cubbies and will contain the following forms...

*What in the World is Planned for Today*- This is a form we post informing you of what is planned for the day and what actually happened at the end of the day.

*Activities and Projects*- This is a form we post that highlights the activities and projects planned for the week. It is intended to be a brief overview at a glance, for more details, refer to the posted "What in the World is Planned for Today" form.

*Weekly Menu*

*Classroom Happenings*- Here we will post any current events that are happening in the classroom such as luncheons, parent meetings, staff changes, etc.

Child Development Portfolios: Each child will have their own portfolio. Their portfolio will contain writing samples, art work, newsletters, milestones, projects, and pictures of your child in action. Your child's primary care teacher will be responsible for helping your child build their portfolio. Please do not remove their portfolios from the center.

Documentation Board: Please visit our documentation board regularly. It highlights the learning that is taking place in our room in a very visual way. It contains pictures, children's work, summaries written by the teachers, and at times, even recipes and items you can take with you.

Our Homebase: We are constantly hanging up children's artwork. The artwork hung will always be rotated and current to the activities that are taking place in the homebase. Please visit the homebase regularly to see all the creative work that is taking place in our room. Artwork is always displayed at the child's eye level.

## **Question**

*How do you celebrate birthdays and other special events and occasions?*

## **Answer**

*We value and welcome your customs and culture. Please let us know what we can do to help your child share their special days and culture with their friends. Please feel welcome to communicate with us if you would choose not to have your child participate in birthday or other celebrations and we will be happy to make accommodations.*

## **Question**

*Will my child be leaving the center for any reason?*

## **Answer**

*Outside time is an important part of our day. Children can develop through their senses when exposed to what outside time has to offer. We practice the following...*

Field Trips: For your child's safety and well being, field trips are not part of the Toddler Program at a Bright Horizons center.

Playground: To promote physical development, two opportunities are available daily for your child to visit the playground. Each group will spend 45 minutes on the playground both in the morning and the afternoon.

## **Question**

*Is it OK for my child to bring toys to school?*

## **Answer**

*A soft sleep toy may be brought from home to be taken out at nap time. Please help your child deliver their soft toy to their cubby in the morning. Please do not bring other toys from home, they may cause fighting or may break or get lost.*



## **Question**

*When does my child have an opportunity to rest?*

## **Answer**

*Our scheduled rest time is from 11:30 to 2:00. We are aware, however, that some toddlers may require more or less time than this scheduled time allows. We make accommodations for children needing additional rest time by providing appropriate quiet places for children to rest during the day. Children who wake up before 2:00 are openly encouraged to participate in a quiet activity on their cot that allows the other children the rest time they require.*

## **Question**

*Will my child get messy?*

## **Answer**

*Many activities that yield a messy outcome are very exciting, educational, and fundamental to your child's development. We do our best to keep their clothing from becoming soiled, but cannot prevent it 100% of the time. If you have somewhere to go and need them looking their best, please let us know in the morning, and we'll be happy to help them into a clean change of clothes for your expected pick-up time.*

## **Question**

*When do you begin to potty train?*

## **Answer**

*Each child in our unit is exposed to potty training procedures as part of our daily routine. Many factors determine when potty training will begin.*

*We take into consideration the following...*

- *Your child's interest*
- *When you feel it's time*
- *When we feel it's time*

# Checklist For What To Bring On The First Day In The Toddler Program

Please label all items with your child's name.

Small Blanket for Rest Time	
Small Travel Size Pillow for Rest Time (optional)	
Diapers	
Wipes	
One Roll of 35mm Film	
Bath Towel	
Extra Shirt/Sweatshirt	
Extra Pants/Shorts	
Extra Socks	
Extra Underpants (if potty trained)	
Soft Sleep Toy (if needed)	
Family Photos to be used for a Family Poster	
2 inch Clear View Binder (only if you are new to ProKids)	

# Toddler Unit Daily Schedule

7:00am	Enter Opening Room	Greetings and Snuggle Time All learning centers are open for child choice
8:00am	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks Story time in the Library
8:30am	Breakfast is Served	Family style dining with self serve encouraged
9:00am	Small Group Time	Group 1 planned activities with primary care group Group 2 outside time with primary care group
10:00am	Small Group Time	Group 2 planned activities with primary care group Group 1 outside time with primary care group
11:00am	Lunch is Served	Family style dining with self serve encouraged
11:30am	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks for some
12:00pm	Rest Time	Quiet music and cots available for all children
2:00pm	Snack is Served	Family style dining with self serve encouraged
2:30pm	Care Time	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks for some All centers are open for child choice
3:00pm	Small Group Time	Group 2 planned activities with primary care group Group 1 outside time with primary care group
4:00pm	Small Group Time	Group 1 planned activities with primary care group Group 2 Outside time with primary care group
5:00pm	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks*
	Group Time	All learning centers are open for child choice
6:00pm	Center Closes	

\* Restroom breaks and diaper changes are done as needed between care times and potty training is always ongoing.



*The World at Their Fingertips:*  
Education for Bright Horizons

---



# The World at Their Fingertips

Education for Bright Horizons

---

## **Programs for Learning**

Infants and Toddlers

Twos

Preschool

Kindergarten

School-Age

Multi-Age Approach to Back-up Care

## **Key Elements**

### **Language Works**

A Comprehensive Approach for Reading Success

### **Math Counts**

Enriched Experiences in Mathematics

### **Science Rocks**

Enriched Experiences in Science & Technology

### **PROJECTIONS**

Creative Project Learning

### **Our World**

Appreciating Diversity and the World in Which We Live

### **ArtSmart**

Exploring the Arts

# The World at Their Fingertips

## Education for Bright Horizons

---

*The World at Their Fingertips* program for learning empowers children to become confident, successful, lifelong learners and secure, caring people. We help children to see the world as an invitation to learn, to grow, and to live fully – to see a world full of possibilities that are within their reach. We help children to approach school and academics with skills, confidence, and the drive to succeed.

### **Active Learners**

Children are active learners who learn best from activities they plan and carry out themselves. They are little scientists and builders, acrobats and artisans who need active experience with the world of people and things; who need opportunities to set goals, plan, reflect, and take responsibility. From birth, they are communicators who need a world filled with books, language experiences, and great conversation. Our *The World at Their Fingertips* program for learning offers each child a world rich with discovery opportunities guided by skilled and sensitive teachers who recognize each child's individual strengths, optimum opportunities to learn, and what he or she needs to succeed in school and life.

### **Teachers are Mentors**

Teachers at a Bright Horizons Family Center are members of the BFamily Team who provide the environment and experiences from which children learn. They are there to create experiences appropriate for each child, ask stimulating questions, provide challenge, and help children find new answers and new opportunities. Teaching also involves helping children achieve the confidence and self-discipline to develop increasingly more sophisticated social and intellectual skills and knowledge that prepare them for success in school. *The World at Their Fingertips* program for learning develops and builds off the talents of creative teachers and the wider resources of a talented company committed to early childhood education.

---

## **A Program Based in Theory and Research**

*The World at Their Fingertips* program for learning is a comprehensive, integrated program based on solid research and the understandings developed through the work of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, Erik Erickson, and other leading developmental theorists and educators, who emphasize the importance of active learning, language, and teachers as mentors and facilitators. The Bright Horizons Family Center program recognizes that there is no clear separation between learning and caring, play and work. Each child's entire experience in the program is important to success in school and life and each child's experience is uniquely his or her own.

## **Not “How Smart is This Child?” But “How is This Child Smart?”**

The concept of a single unified intelligence has been replaced by the understanding that there are multiple intelligences: ways of knowing and achieving in the world. Success in school and success in life draw upon multiple intelligences, that are interrelated and interactive. Optimum development requires identifying a child's strengths and using those strengths to help the child succeed in school and life. The program is individualized to meet each child's needs.

## **Appropriate Learning Environments**

*The World at Their Fingertips* creates developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate learning environments in which each child learns what the world is like, how it works, what he/she is capable of, and his/her place in it. The daily schedules, learning centers, and the way learning is incorporated into homebase furnishings and the playground are all carefully planned to allow children to independently explore, discover, and learn through developmentally appropriate experience. The routines and environment are organized to teach: labeled shelves use color, symbols, and language; science experiences are built into the playground; and language and numbers are built into meals and clean-up. Children are confronted with new challenges and have opportunities to practice and master skills through play and exploration. Teachers prepare and rotate the learning centers and provide large and small group experiences, extended projects, and field trips to enrich children's learning. Themes and directions emerge from the interests and experiences of the children, families, and teachers. Field trips and enrichment programs extend children's experience into the world beyond the center.

---

## **A Comprehensive Approach and an Educational Sensibility**

*The World at Their Fingertips* is both an approach and a sensibility that infuses interactions and the planned environment. Individual elements like *Language Works*, *Math Counts*, *Science Rocks*, *Our World*, *ArtSmart*, and *Projections* are integrated into each of the developmental programs and into the sensibility of the center. They are not isolated into artificial, discrete components.

## **Documentation and Assessment**

Documentation of learning experiences and child assessment are critical program requirements of *The World at Their Fingertips*. Teachers and children document homebase experiences, projects, and field trips using journals, documentation panels, and other means of public display.

As children develop and progress through the program, individualized child observation and assessment are important features guiding parent/teacher/child goal setting. Assessment characterizes a child's strengths and achievements as well as noting areas for growth. Each child develops a portfolio of accomplishments that begins at enrollment and continues throughout their experience at Bright Horizons. Kindergarten assessments are tailored to reflect the expectations of the local schools.

## **Parents are Full Partners**

Parents are full partners in every aspect of curriculum: participating in creating child development profiles, helping to set goals and priorities, planning and evaluation, and sustaining the learning through coordinated experiences at home.



## **The Infant and Toddler Program**

Bright Horizons Family Solutions recognizes that the first two years of life are an extraordinary time that sets the stage for all the years that follow.

During these years, children need to acquire what psychologist Erik Erickson called "basic trust," a pervasive sense of the essential trustworthiness of oneself and others. It is the sense of safety and security that comes from responsive, predictable care from familiar people to whom one is attached. Without this sense, the world is far too scary a place to cope with and learn about.

Each child also needs to develop a sense of autonomy, the sense of being a separate, independent self that comes from being treated as an important individual and being allowed increasing opportunities for independence. The "no" of toddlers is an assertion of autonomy that leads to freely saying "yes" and developing the power to begin to control their bodies and feelings. Only when children personally feel a sense of personal power ("I can affect things"), are they ready to move to the next critical level – a sense of competence ("I can achieve things") as they step out into the wider world as active learners and problem-solvers.

The child's first two years are critical for the development of the brain and language development. During this period, the child's life experience plays a fundamental role in the "hard-wiring" of the brain, laying the foundation for all intellectual and emotional development to follow. From birth, babies are marvelous learners, immediately investigating the sights, sounds, and feel of the world. Long before walking and talking, they are exploring their own bodily powers and what the world has to offer. They need a safe world rich with opportunities to actively explore and enjoy: to see, hear, feel, touch and move. They need a world filled with responsive interactions and language: many "conversations" with others, books (for even the youngest babies), songs, and a great deal of listening and responding to their vocalizations and words. The infant, toddler and two-year-old program for learning is based on the book *Prime Times: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs* (Jim Greenman and Anne Stonehouse). The program includes:

### **Heart to Heart: The First Year of Life**

The first year of life is a critical time for development. It is responsive, language-rich attention that follows the child's lead that is essential to optimize development. Recent studies demonstrate that both psychological and neurological development depend on responsive stimulation. At a Bright Horizons Family Center, teachers and parents work together to ensure responsive caregiving for each child. Heart to Heart provides:

**Personal Care Plans:**

Parents and the primary caregiver establish a personal care plan that is continually updated to ensure that care routines are personalized “prime times” that fit the child and family.

**Snuggle Care:**

Very young babies spend time each day “heart to heart” with their primary caregiver. Every sound and movement of the baby is met with a warm response: a word, a smile, a touch that signals, “You are special.”

**Parents Prime Time:**

Teachers understand that the parent-child relationship is primary and parents are encouraged to call anytime with ideas, questions, or concerns.

**Team Quality:**

Teachers in the homebase systematically observe and share observations to ensure that each baby’s cues, needs, and strengths are recognized and understood and that care is responsive.

**Let’s Read**

Long before they understand the words and pictures, infants benefit from the joy of sharing a book in the arms of a caring adult. Reading begins with young babies and gains momentum as the child matures. On laps, on the floor, and as they drift off to sleep, infants and toddlers experience the magic and wonder of books.

**My Place to Grow**

Infants and toddlers are sensory motor beings. They explore the world with their senses and developing motor skills. Long before they understand concepts like “under” or “far” with their minds, their bodies are learning to navigate the up and down, over and under of the physical world. Their perceptions are sorting out sizes, colors, and shapes. The curriculum provides infants and toddlers with a rich learning environment with appropriate learning centers planned and organized to maximize:

**Large and Small Motor Experiences:**

For younger babies: reaching, grasping, kicking, holding, pulling and standing, creeping and crawling in, out, over, under. For toddlers: gripping, throwing, manipulating, walking, climbing, pushing, pulling, etc.

**Sensory Experiences:**

Explorations of texture, color, patterns, size and shape, smell, taste, weight.

**Cognitive Experiences:**

Object permanence, spatial relationships, classifying, collecting and dumping, cause and effect experiences, problem-solving.

**Language and Music:**

Adult-child conversations, reading and language play, explorations in music, rhyming, and sound explorations.

**Personal Expression:**

Art, movement, imitation and beginning dramatic play, doll and stuffed animal play.

---

## Selected Elements

# Language Works

### A Comprehensive Language Approach

*Language Works* is a comprehensive language approach that infuses *The World at Their Fingertips*. Young children need a world rich in spoken and written language. A whole language approach involves children in continual learning about language as it becomes meaningful to them. Long before learning to read, children are immersed in language activities that lead to a lifelong appreciation and respect for the power and beauty of language. Language is a vital part of every interaction, every aspect of curriculum, every day. Words spoken aloud and in print are respected and enjoyed, for their power, beauty, and utility – as a means to order and understand the world.

*Language Works* engages children in a continuum of language experiences that challenge their emerging skills and knowledge. Rhyming with toddlers, puppet shows, creating a homebase newspaper in a pre-kindergarten class, composing Haiku with kindergartners, acting out plays, and corresponding with national (and international) pen pals are all a part of the magic of *Language Works*.

In the *Language Works* approach, teachers are trained to be alert for opportunities to extend the children's ideas and interests into opportunities to read, write, speak or listen. Language is in the air, and the sounds, meanings, and pure joy of words vibrate throughout the center. Look around and you will see books, signs, posters, labels, directions, and the stories of children. You will see and hear conversations of adults listening to children, enjoying poetry and fingerplays, children making and listening to tapes, and older children reading to younger children. Children will be writing, typing, and using the computer. Even toddlers and twos will compose stories for teacher scribes and "write" their own versions.

Recognizing that children and families are not all the same, *Language Works* assumes that that no one approach to reading works for all children. Teachers work closely with families to make sure each child is successful in developing strong literacy skills.

*Language Works* extends into the child's home in the acknowledgement of the critical importance that parents play as the child's first and most important teacher. We encourage and support parent's efforts though information, materials, and shared expectations for extensive, quality, language interactions.

---

## Math Counts

### Enriched Experiences in Mathematics

*The World at Their Fingertips* includes an emphasis on developing a solid foundation in mathematical skills and reasoning. *Math Counts* is an approach that encourages all of the adults in the child's life to look for and create opportunities to help children understand the math inherent in their everyday lives. From a toddler's conception of more cookies to the one-to-one correspondence in setting a table, children are helped to become increasingly competent in numerical skills and reasoning.

*Math Counts* establishes learning centers, projects, activities, and guidelines for teacher interactions that all promote the developmental growth necessary for success in school. Children learn number recognition, one-to-one correspondence, seriation, ordination, and other fundamental math skills.

As with *Language Works*, *Math Counts* recognizes that parents are the primary intellectual influence on children. We encourage and support parent's efforts to promote the child's greater understanding of mathematical principles and the use of numbers to navigate an increasingly complicated world.

## Science Rocks

### Enriched Experiences in Science and Technology

*The World at Their Fingertips* includes an ever-growing collection of science and discovery opportunities. *Science Rocks* makes science come alive by taking advantage of the child's experience with science in daily life: the physics of falling blocks, the chemistry of mixing paint or frost on the windows, or the biology of growing plants and animals. *Science Rocks* includes special learning centers and learning stations, projects, activities, and guidelines for teacher interactions that stimulate a child's sense of wonder and challenge a child's problem-solving skills. *Science Rocks* encourages children to observe, question, experiment, and reflect.

*Science Rocks* activities include experiments from raising butterflies and frogs, to tending rabbits, snakes, and mourning doves. Preschool children may be measuring rainfall or shadows, growing and weighing a "crop" of beans or sunflowers, or timing the evaporation of a wet footprint. Toddlers and twos may watch chickens hatch, play games with shadows, or make music with wind chimes. Kindergarten children explore seasons on the Internet with children in Australia back from their summer Christmas vacation or discuss 24-hour sunlight with Inuit children in Kotzebue, Alaska. On field trips and at the center, computers, microscopes, tape measures, and even video cameras help children explore and communicate the mysteries of the forces, properties, and principles of the world around them.

---

# PROJECTIONS

## **Creative Project Learning**

Projects take the child beyond the usual child care time and space, outside of the tidy framework of a work time or day, and beyond the limits of learning centers. A project is an adventure in learning fueled by the children's interests and enthusiasm for making sense of their experience; an in-depth study of an idea, topic, or phenomenon that a group or an individual child finds interesting.

Project work is important to enhance and complement what children learn from spontaneous play and instruction. Projects broaden and deepen the children's understanding, sending them off to explore how the world works and apply emerging skills and understandings. Projects are filled with problems to solve; hypotheses to be tested, charted, graphed, or pictured; and discoveries to be communicated.

Projects are possible with almost all ages. Two-years-olds may investigate the mysteries of weather over a few days. A group of preschoolers may spend a week creating a dinosaur habitat or a quilt. Kindergarten children may construct an inflatable dome, in the process learning about volume, air pressure, and adhesives. School-age children's projects may extend over weeks or even months on an infinite number of topics, such as putting on a play or creating a restaurant. Projects may involve desktop publishing, sales and banking, as well as a huge amount of delicate social negotiation. In all projects, planning and communication of activities and results extend the learning far beyond the specific topic. Documentation by teachers and children is an essential element in the project process that ensures reflective, critical thinking.

## *Our World*

### **Appreciating Diversity and the World in Which We Live**

*Our World* characterizes the Bright Horizons Family Center's commitment to instill in each child a respect for all living things and the environment we inhabit. *Our World* recognizes and values the rich cultural heritage that people bring to the center. We understand that individuals belong to communities and develop within a culture.

*Our World* is a vital part of *The World at Their Fingertips* and includes materials depicting people from many different places doing many different things, and people with all sorts of abilities and challenges living their lives. Books, music, games, learning centers, enrichment programs, and a wide range of activities help children learn respect for our

---

world, its diverse people, and the environment in which we live. Children experience the sights, sounds, and textures of other cultures and are encouraged to explore experiences that might not be part of their everyday lives.

Multicultural education and respect for diversity is more than teaching information directly. The *Our World* approach is designed to encourage teachers to move beyond teaching awareness of other cultures to providing experiences that help children understand the ideas and issues presented by diversity at their individual developmental level. *Our World* creates and maintains an environment that says, “everybody is welcome here, everyone can feel at home here” (parents as well as children). As they participate in group living and special activities, children learn about respect and fairness, tolerance and acceptance, and to value their own culture and their own individual qualities. The *Our World* sensibility encourages children to notice and think about injustice, and challenges them to do something about unfairness toward people in the world.

Respect for the natural world is also an important element of the *Our World* approach. Children are taught to respect all living things and the environment we inhabit. They learn about conservation of resources through the practices of the center and through special activities and projects.

## ArtSmart

### **Appreciating the Arts**

*ArtSmart* is a recognition that young children can develop an appreciation of art, music, theater, and dance. Comprehensive education includes learning to distinguish and enjoy the artistic expression of quality artists: the distinctly different visions of a Monet and a Jackson Pollock, the dance of Alvin Ailey and Swan Lake, the music of Mozart and Gershwin, and the drama inherent in the best of children’s literature.

*ArtSmart* takes advantage of local and national resources to introduce children to artists of all kinds and seeks to uncover the children’s unique talents to both appreciate and express artistic vision.

# Tracking Child Development

How do we come to know a child? Obviously we learn about each child through what we observe day-to-day in the homebase. But our program is only one of the child's settings and a rather atypical one at that: a group setting mostly organized by age. We also need to recognize that we come to know and understand the child through our partnership with parents. Parents see the child in a range of settings over time and bring to light a much broader context of development; their views are essential. Our knowledge comes from seeking to understand and appreciate the child together, sharing observations of the child's experience and behavior at home and at the center. We begin tracking development at the initial enrollment conference and establish the development of personal care plans. This effort continues through daily communication with parents, primary caregiver observations, documentation of experience in the homebase, and discussions during the planning cycle.

## **Development is a Journey, Not a Race**

When we are in settings with lots of children of the same age, in a society that sees time as a precious commodity and *getting ahead* and *being first* as prime goals, it is hard not to see development as a race to achieve milestones. But development is not a race and *earlier is not better*, nor is earlier generally an indicator of future development. Children benefit from the individual, measured pacing of the journey, not from achieving developmental milestones at the earliest opportunity.

## **What are the Key Components you use to track development?**

- Sense of Self
- Social Relations
- Creative Representation
- Movement
- Communication and Language
- Exploration and Early Logic



---

## **Sense of Self (Infant/Toddler) – Initiative (Preschool/Kindergarten)**

Through their actions with objects and interactions with trusted caregivers, infants and toddlers gradually begin to understand that they themselves exist as separate and individual beings. As children develop, they construct an image of themselves as distinct and capable people who can both influence and respond to their immediate world. Initiative is the child's ability to begin and follow through on tasks. It is the power to make and carry out choices and decisions. As children develop, they initiate and carry out activities of increasing complexity, solving problems and coordinating their activities and ideas with others.

## **Social Relations**

Children's social interactions begin as soon as they discover the presence of others in their world. Infants and toddlers learn about how human beings act and treat one another through their day-to-day interactions with parents, family members, caregivers, peers, and other adults. These early social relationships influence their lifelong approach to people, the manner in which they develop attachments, become empathetic, make friends, work cooperatively, lead and follow, work through conflict, and express feelings naturally and appropriately.

## **Creative Representation**

Representation is the process by which children depict objects and experiences through imitation, pretending, building, artwork, and written language. Infants and toddlers build a critical body of direct experience from their ongoing sensory-motor explorations – acting on objects with their whole bodies and all their senses and repeating these actions at will. They learn to imitate the actions of others, interpret pictures and photographs of actions and objects they have experienced, and begin to use actions and materials to show or represent something they know about their world. Gradually, with repeated experiences, they begin to form mental images of the object or person. This process is the beginning of representation – the ability to internalize or mentally picture an absent person, object, or action. Representing is important developmentally because it indicates that young children, who tend to see things in very concrete terms, are moving towards a more abstract understanding of their world – from the world that they only understand through their senses to the world that they understand through symbolic thought. This area tracks how children represent their thoughts and feelings.

---

### **Movement (Infant /Toddler) – Music and Movement (Preschool/Kindergarten)**

Motor activities are important to all areas of child development, including, but not limited to, physical development. For infants and toddlers developing sensory-motor skills, movement plays a major role in all learning. Their emerging sense of themselves as doers and people of action is strongly connected to their developing ability to control their motions, communicate through the language of gesture and action, handle objects with ease, and move at will from place to place. Children explore and represent themselves and the world around them through movement. They develop important physical abilities by becoming aware of what their bodies can do when they move with and without objects. As they move, they acquire an understanding of the concepts and language that are connected to actions, positions, and space. This area also tracks their ability to respond to music.

### **Communication and Language (Infant/Toddler) – Language and Literacy (Preschool/Kindergarten)**

The development of communication and language abilities – listening, speaking, reading, writing – is critical to a child's success in school and life. This area tracks children through their earliest communication efforts in speaking and listening, in how they show interest in the spoken and printed word and stories, following directions, vocabulary, and beginning to read and write.

### **Exploration and Early Logic (Infant/Toddler) – Logic and Mathematics (Preschool/Kindergarten)**

From infancy, children explore the properties of things, relationships, and concepts of number, space, and time. They are observers by nature; much of what they learn, right from the beginning, results from keen observation and from their natural inclination to learn through sensory exploration and physical manipulation of objects. As they develop, they begin to order and classify the elements in their world. They construct their own understanding of concepts in logic and mathematics as they work with materials, people, events, and ideas. They learn the language of the basic concepts of logic and mathematics from the people in their lives.

# Toddler Developmental Milestones

Sense of Self	Social Relations	Creative Representation
<p><b>Expressing Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moves until reaching a desired object</li> <li>▪ Says "No"</li> <li>▪ Expresses a choice using words</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Self from Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognizes own body parts</li> <li>▪ Says an object is "mine"</li> <li>▪ Identifies self in mirror or picture</li> </ul> <p><b>Solving Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moves self or object to find other out of sight object</li> <li>▪ Makes varied attempts to solve problems</li> <li>▪ Verbally indicates a problem</li> </ul> <p><b>Developing Self Help Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeds self finger food or drinks from a cup</li> <li>▪ Attempts simple self-help task alone</li> <li>▪ Accomplishes some self-help tasks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Forming Attachment to Primary Caregiver</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeks physical contact with caregiver</li> <li>▪ Initiates playful give-and-take with caregiver</li> <li>▪ Uses words to communicate with caregiver</li> </ul> <p><b>Relating to Unfamiliar Adults</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiates contact with unfamiliar adult</li> <li>▪ Brings object to unfamiliar adult</li> <li>▪ Converses with unfamiliar adults</li> </ul> <p><b>Relating to Another Child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brings object to show affection toward another child</li> <li>▪ Uses another child's name</li> <li>▪ Comments about another child</li> </ul> <p><b>Expresses Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses physical contact to express emotion</li> <li>▪ Shows pleasure when completing an activity</li> <li>▪ Names an emotion</li> </ul> <p><b>Responding to Feeling of Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek ones comfort when another is distressed</li> <li>▪ Comforts another when in distress</li> <li>▪ Uses words to name others feelings</li> </ul> <p><b>Playing With Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeks company of another child</li> <li>▪ Hides an object for another to find</li> <li>▪ Watches and imitates actions of another</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pretending</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Imitates eating or drinking</li> <li>▪ Makes sounds or actions when imitating</li> <li>▪ Uses one or more object to represent another</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Building and Art Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scribble, stacks blocks, squeezes play dough</li> <li>▪ Builds up or out, makes marks or flattens play dough</li> <li>▪ Uses words or phrases to name something they created</li> </ul> <p><b>Identifies Pictures or Photographs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gestures to familiar item in photograph</li> <li>▪ Uses words to identify item in photograph</li> <li>▪ Uses sentences to identify what is happening in a picture</li> </ul>

# Toddler Developmental Milestones

Movement	Communication and Language	Exploration and Early Logic
<p><b>Moving Parts of the Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Throws ball</li> <li>▪ Kicks a ball</li> <li>▪ Uses small objects in activities requiring precise coordination</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving the Whole Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Walks unassisted</li> <li>▪ Climbs and runs</li> <li>▪ Jumps</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving with Objects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carries, pushes or pulls an item while walking unassisted</li> <li>▪ Propels self on a riding toy with wheels</li> <li>▪ Pedals a bike or attempts to pedal</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving to Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moves body to music while standing unassisted</li> <li>▪ Moves from one foot to another while standing unassisted</li> <li>▪ Walks, turns and jumps to music</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening and Responding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Looks around when name is spoken</li> <li>▪ Acts on a direct request or statement</li> <li>▪ Acts on an indirect quest</li> </ul> <p><b>Communicating Interests Nonverbally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeks out and plays with others</li> <li>▪ Shows or guides a person to an object</li> <li>▪ Engages in an activity for a sustained period of time</li> </ul> <p><b>Participates in Give-And-Take Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participates in babble-like conversations</li> <li>▪ Uses two or more words to make a request</li> <li>▪ Sustains verbal conversation by taking two or more turns</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses a single word as representation</li> <li>▪ Uses two to three word phrases</li> <li>▪ Uses four or more word sentences</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Picture Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turns pages of a book</li> <li>▪ Points and makes an object in a book</li> <li>▪ Uses sentences to explain pictures in books</li> </ul> <p><b>Showing Interest in Stories, Rhymes, Songs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participates in pat-a-cake and others</li> <li>▪ Joins in on a story, rhyme or song</li> <li>▪ Asks to hear specific story or song</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exploring Objects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performs an action on an object</li> <li>▪ Uses two objects together using opposing hands</li> <li>▪ Uses an object as a tool to complete a task</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses a sound to name an object</li> <li>▪ Uses the same word to name more than one object</li> <li>▪ Gathers two or more similar objects</li> </ul> <p><b>Developing Number Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ points to body part or object</li> <li>▪ uses word or phrase to ask for more</li> <li>▪ Uses one standard or nonstandard number while pointing to an object</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ fills container</li> <li>▪ retrieves object unseen for a while</li> <li>▪ Makes an enclosure</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actions show anticipation for upcoming event</li> <li>▪ Indicates the end of an activity using words</li> <li>▪ Uses words to indicate a past event</li> </ul>