

## WAC

## WAC 170-295-2120

## Are there special program requirements for infants and toddlers?

- When you care for infants and toddlers you must:
  - Encourage them to handle and manipulate a variety of objects
  - Provide a safe environment for climbing, moving and exploring
  - Provide materials and opportunities for large and small muscle development
  - Read and talk to them daily
  - Provide daily indoor opportunities for freedom of movement outside their cribs in an open, uncluttered space
  - Place them in a prone (lying on the tummy) position part of the time when they are awake and under staff observation
  - Not leave them in car seats once they arrive at the center even if they are asleep
  - Not be left in playpens for extended periods of time excluding sleep time
  - Talk to and interact with each infant and toddler often; naming objects and describing care encourages language development
  - Hold and cuddle infants and toddlers to encourage strong relationships, and
  - Respond to and investigate cries or other signs of distress immediately.
- You must provide toys, objects and other play materials that:
  - Are cleanable
  - Are nontoxic, and
  - Cannot cause a choking hazard for infants or toddlers.
- You must not use baby walkers.

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Infant and toddler caregivers have an awesome responsibility. It is now known that the first three years of life are more critical to a child's development than ever imagined. Research shows that more rapid brain development takes place during these years

than at any other time of life. Babies are born learning. Children need the right experiences at the right times for their brains to fully develop.

Because infants and toddlers have special and unique developmental needs, three separate areas of this guidebook have been devoted to their child care requirements. Please see Section 3 (WAC 170-295-2030 and 2040) for information regarding infant and toddler emotional, social, intellectual (cognitive) and physical developmental needs. Please see Section 5, Care of Young Children for a complete discussion of the health, safety, and nutritional requirements for infants and toddlers in child care.

Special program requirements for infants and toddlers are discussed here.

### Mobility, Exploration and Stimulation

To maximize infants' and toddlers' overall development, they should be in an environment that is safe and developmentally appropriate for climbing, moving, and exploring. They need age-appropriate toys and objects to handle and manipulate for the development of small muscles and fine motor skills. They also need materials and opportunities for development of large muscles and gross motor skills.

Infants need to lie on their tummies when awake and alert several times each day in an open, uncluttered, safe space, with the caregiver observing or interacting nearby. Freedom of movement and exploration outside the crib is important to a young child's development. An infant must not be left in a swing, bouncer, saucer or other piece of equipment for extended periods of time. Infants should be removed from their high chairs when they are done eating and taken out of their cribs when they wake up.

When babies have their needs met, they learn to trust. It is important to respond immediately, in a positive way, to their cries or other signs of distress. If you cannot get to the infant right away, you should call the child's name and reassure the child that help will be there soon. The sound of your caring voice can be very soothing and can help a young child calm down for a brief while.

Make the most of any opportunity to hold, cuddle and interact with infants and toddlers. Talk to infants and toddlers often in loving tones with descriptive words. Make this a part of your routine care. These activities promote attachment and bonding – crucial components for normal growth and development.

During the first three years of life, infants and toddlers are learning who they are. The daily interactions that you have with them help them gain a sense of themselves and how to relate to others. When infants' needs are met promptly, gently, and lovingly, they learn to trust. When toddlers' behaviors are guided in positive and respectful ways, they learn self-discipline and acceptable ways of behavior and expression. How you respond to young children helps them to create a picture of who they are, what they can do and what they think and feel. When you are respectful and show interest in their feelings, accomplishments, and discoveries, you are helping them develop positive self-images and self-esteem.

Care routines such as feeding and diapering are important times during young children's lives. They are wonderful opportunities for spending one-to-one time talking to and sharing with each individual child. These times should be relaxed and unhurried and used as special bonding time between caregiver and child. Be sure to:

- ◆ Create a physically and emotionally safe environment
- ◆ Respond to infants and toddlers in a loving, consistent way
- ◆ Soothe young children when they are upset
- ◆ Provide infants and toddlers with a structure and routine that they can depend upon
- ◆ Hug, cuddle, and lovingly touch young children
- ◆ Give infants and toddlers individual undivided attention at times throughout the day
- ◆ Praise and encourage young children
- ◆ Help young children to identify, accept, and express their feelings in safe and respectful ways
- ◆ Coach young children in social skills, and
- ◆ Be a model (children learn by watching the important adults in their lives).



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Young children learn through their five senses. They learn by doing. They explore the environment through sight, touch, smell, sound, and taste. In order for this to happen, provide a safe environment and supervised freedom for them to move and explore. Play is young children's important work. They need lots of hands-on experiences and opportunities for climbing and moving. They also need plenty of interesting things to look at, touch, and manipulate. Infant and toddler toys include:

- ◆ Unbreakable mirrors mounted on the sides of cribs and changing tables and along the bottom of walls where they can see and admire themselves
- ◆ Cuddly toys such as stuffed animals, hand puppets, and one-piece washable dolls
- ◆ Grasping toys and rattles to shake, drop, and explore
- ◆ Balls with indented surfaces to make it easier to handle and carry, throw, and retrieve
- ◆ Activity toys such as stacking rings, nesting cups, shape sorters, busy boxes, measuring spoons and plastic pitchers to fill and dump
- ◆ Push and pull toys such as toy vacuum cleaners or toys that play music as they move
- ◆ Transportation toys such as large buses, trains, trucks, and airplanes to grasp and push
- ◆ Soft washable blocks made of foam or cloth, and
- ◆ Equipment such as low shelving to pull themselves up with and low carpeted climbers, tunnels, and riding toys (large cardboard boxes for exploring are especially inviting to young children).

Toddlers who are cared for in language-rich environments with plenty of adult attention learn an average of nine new words a day. Even though they might not yet be talking, they are collecting and storing words and learning their meanings. They need caregivers who talk to them and interact with them, sing, tell rhymes and fingerplays, and read to them. This not only encourages bonding and positive social interactions, but it also lays the groundwork for learning to read and write and for later school success. You can encourage their language development by:

- ◆ Pointing to things and describing them: “There’s the kitty-cat walking by the window!”
- ◆ Using words to describe what the children may be experiencing: “Who’s that coming up the walk? Is that mama?” “Look, there’s a baby in that mirror!”
- ◆ Identifying their emotions: “Oh, you want your

mommy. You do not want her to leave.” “You love your stuffed animal so much!”

- ◆ Explaining what the child is doing: “You are running to get the ball, aren’t you?”
- ◆ Providing vocabulary as they explore: “You have a big red ball. Oops, it rolled under the table.”
- ◆ Reading picture books with them and asking them to recall details (books should be a part of their daily routines)
- ◆ Repeating favorite stories and rhymes to them
- ◆ Talking with them on a one-to-one basis and actively listening and responding to what they have to say, and
- ◆ Building their confidence: “You did that all by yourself.”

The following charts will serve as a guide to help you meet the program requirements for infants and toddlers in your care:

## Infant/Toddler Program Developmental Highlights:

Adapted from Children’s Home Society of California

### Birth to 6 months

#### What I may do

Follow movement and sounds with my eyes and by turning my head.

Make eye contact with you.

React to loud noises.

Like to put objects in my mouth.

Make sounds like ahh and ooh.

Cry to tell you I need something. I may be hungry, hurting, or wet.

Look/turn away from you or cry when I need a break from an activity.

Lift my head while lying on my stomach.

Kick my legs and move my arms.

Roll over from my stomach to my back.

Move an object from one hand to the other.

Smile and laugh.

Sleep a lot.

#### How you can help

Move objects slowly in front of me so that I can follow them with my head and eyes.

Keep me away from loud noises.

Do not throw me in the air or shake me.

Stroke my head and skin.

Softly talk and sing to me.

Show me books with large, colorful pictures and different textures.

Keep my head from sliding around. My neck muscles are weak.

Give me safe toys like plastic/rubber rings, rattles, or soft objects.

Make eye contact with me and smile a lot.

Change my diaper as soon as it is wet or dirty.

To quiet me down, gently pat my back, hold/rock/walk me, and use a soft voice.

## 6 to 12 months

### What I may do

Copy sounds and movements that you make.  
 Recognize you from strangers.  
 Repeat actions over and over again to help me learn.  
 Respond to my name.  
 Make vowel sounds like aah-aah or ooh-oooh and other sounds like bbbb, dada, gaga, or mama.  
 Understand what "no" means. (But I may not follow your instructions.)  
 Hold objects with my hands.  
 Reach for objects in front of me.  
 Roll over from my back to my stomach.  
 Keep my head up and sit without support.  
 Move around on my stomach or crawl.  
 Pull myself up onto things.  
 Move objects in and out of a container.  
 Drink from a cup and begin to eat solid foods with your help.

### How you can help

Play games like "Pat-a-Cake" and "Peek-a-Boo."  
 Give me safe objects and toys that make sounds.  
 Read books with large, colorful pictures and different textures.  
 As I learn to communicate and show you what I like and dislike, respond to the sounds and body movements that I make.  
 Sing or play songs that have a lot of repetition.  
 Give me room to move my arms, body, hands, and legs.  
 Keep objects that I can choke on away from my reach.  
 Give me safe toys that I can bite, bang, shake, or throw like blocks and cups.  
 Help me comfort myself with my favorite blanket, music, or stuffed animal.

## 12 to 18 months

### What I may do

Begin to think of ways to solve problems.  
 Have a short attention span.  
 Remember things that happened hours or a day ago.  
 Follow simple instructions.  
 Say 10-15 words.  
 Respond to a question like "Where is the ball?" by pointing.  
 Cry, hit, or have a tantrum when I am frustrated.  
 Walk without support, but I may crawl sometimes.  
 Stack one object on top of another.  
 Turn a page in a book.  
 Get upset when I am apart from you.  
 Drink from a cup by myself, but I may spill.  
 Do things you have told me not to do.

### How you can help

Encourage me to practice carrying, climbing, pulling, and pushing.  
 Take walks with me.  
 Speak slowly to me face-to-face.  
 Talk to me about what I feel, hear, see, smell and taste.  
 Play hide-and-peek and finger games with me like "Itsy Bitsy Spider."  
 Repeat my favorite books, rhymes, songs, and stories.  
 When I am frustrated, encourage me to use words.  
 Praise me with phrases like "Good job!" or "You're working so hard!"  
 Provide board books.  
 Make sure I get enough rest.  
 Offer choices to me.  
 Be patient with me. Remember that spills and mistakes are learning experiences, too.

## 18 to 24 months

### What I may do

- Be able to name and point to body parts.
- Be able to make sounds that animals make.
- Say two-word sentences like "Hold me!"
- Use words that focus on myself like "I, me, and mine."
- Say 15-50 words and use new words every month.
- Climb, jump, run, and walk.
- Walk up and down stairs with your help.
- Begin to drink with a cup instead of a bottle.
- Not like to share.
- Help you with dressing and undressing me.

### How you can help

- Give me toys that I can play "pretend" with like plastic food and telephones without cords.
- Read to me and encourage me to find objects in the pictures.
- Help me put my feelings into words.
- Talk to me about what I'm doing as I do it.  
For example: "You're rolling the ball."
- Provide safe areas indoors and outdoors for me to move around.
- Give me large crayons to scribble.
- Give me toys that I can pour, scoop, squeeze, and stack.
- Keep your eye on me because I may wander away.
- Make available two of the same objects so that I don't have to share.
- Help me eat with a spoon and drink with a straw.

## 24 to 36 months

### What I may do

- Copy your words and actions.
- Be able to say my age.
- Show an interest in using the toilet.
- Match objects by shape and color.
- Talk to myself to practice new words.
- Ask "Why?" a lot.
- Have many tantrums because I am frustrated.
- Use three-word sentences like "Mommy hold me!"
- Say about 50-300 words and have better pronunciation.
- Walk up and down stairs using one foot (instead of both feet) for each stair.
- Like to use one hand more than the other.
- Be able to open doors.
- Show an interest in other children.
- Know if I am a boy or a girl.

### How you can help

- Give me four-piece puzzles and musical instruments to play with.
- Watch me to see what I like and do not like. I may refuse many foods.
- Sing the alphabet song and read books with colors and shapes.
- Ask me about things that happened in the past like "Who gave you that toy?"
- Read to me.
- Ask me questions when I play like "What are you doing?"
- Kick and throw balls with me.
- Give me beads (1 1/2" wide) to put on a string.  
Make sure I don't swallow them!
- Give me opportunities to play with other children.
- Keep objects you do not want me to touch away from my reach.
- Help me do things by myself like buttoning.



### Use of Infant Carriers or Front Carrying Packs

Some infant caregivers choose to use infant carriers or front packs to soothe fussy or colicky infants. The baby is soothed by the rhythm of the caregiver's walking and the closeness it provides in human contact. However, keep in mind the following considerations when using infant carriers in child care centers:

- ◆ Make sure the infant's head does not slump from inadequate support
- ◆ Ensure there is a clear area around the infant's face for adequate breathing
- ◆ If infants fall asleep in the carrier, they should be removed immediately and placed on their backs in their crib
- ◆ The staff person should not diaper or feed another child while carrying an infant in a front pack
- ◆ Ensure that the carrying device is safe and has not been recalled for safety issues
- ◆ Have each parent who wants their child to use a carrier bring one for their own child (to prevent contamination from one infant to another)
- ◆ Limit the amount of time the infant is in the carrier to ensure they get adequate tummy time, and
- ◆ Make sure it is a choice for infant caregivers to use an infant carrier (they may not want to bear extra weight due to a possible back injury).

It is very rewarding to watch young children grow and develop, knowing that you are helping to lay the groundwork for who they are becoming and what they will be in later years. Providing children with warm and caring interactions and stimulating activities within a safe and healthy environment promotes their future success.

### WAC

#### WAC 170-295-2130

### Do I need an outdoor play area?

- You must provide an outdoor program that promotes the child's coordination, active play, and physical, mental, emotional, and social development based upon their age. The play area must:
  - Adjoin the indoor premises directly or be reachable by a safe route or method
  - Have adequate drainage and be free from health and safety hazards
  - Contain a minimum of 75 usable square feet per child using the play area at any one time. If the center uses a rotational schedule of outdoor play periods so that only a portion of the child population uses the play area at one time, you may reduce correspondingly the children's play area size.
- If you provide full-time care, the activity schedule must provide the child daily morning and afternoon outdoor play.
- If you provide drop-in care only, at DEL's discretion they may approve equivalent, separate, indoor space for the child's large muscle play.
- You must ensure appropriate child grouping by developmental or age levels, staff-to-child ratio adherence, and maintain group size.
- Staff must be outdoors with the children in continuous visual and auditory range.
- You must provide a variety of age-appropriate play equipment for climbing, pulling, pushing, riding and balancing activities, and
- You must arrange, design, construct, and maintain equipment and ground cover to prevent child injury.

### WAC

You can help ensure healthy physical development when you offer children opportunities to use their large and small muscles in a wide variety of developmentally appropriate ways. Even in the coldest of climates, children need to go outdoors every day for at least a few minutes. Fresh air is vital to children's health. Have the children spend as much time as