

Welcome to Our Program!



Our Commitment to Your Family

Early Head Start and other programs that serve infants and toddlers offer your child a safe place to learn. We know you are your child's first teacher and want to work with you to care for him. As your partner in your child's education and care, we are dedicated to:

- Valuing your culture, beliefs, and traditions in raising your children.
- Listening to your concerns and share ideas on healthy child development.
- Supporting and encouraging you throughout your child's time in our program.
- Sharing your child's progress in our program through daily reports.
- Helping you find community resources, such as those for food, housing, and medical care.
- Contacting you in case of an emergency. You can help us by keeping your child's emergency contact phone numbers updated.

Our Commitment to Your Child

We care for your 18-month-old baby by meeting her physical needs, but also following health and safety guidelines, supporting her in meeting milestones, and creating strong bonds between your child and her caregivers. We encourage you to do these things at home, too. We are always available to answer any questions you may have.

Nutrition

We encourage you to have meals as a family whenever possible. Eating together on a regular basis will have a positive effect on you and your child. Healthy eating habits start early, and we work with your child during the day to get them on the right path.

- Sitting together during meals helps children talk to each other, solve problems together, and learn how to feed themselves.
- We provide healthy foods for meals and snacks including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, dairy foods, and foods low in sugar. We offer the children whole milk and water to drink.
- We encourage your child to feed herself. She decides how much of her meal to eat.
- We never use food as a reward or punishment.
- We help your child have a healthy smile by brushing teeth at least once after a meal during the day.



AT HOME TIP!

Set up regular meal and snack times. Give your child healthy choices and small portions. If she finishes and is still hungry, you can give her another small portion. She will stop eating when she has had enough.



Guidance

Setting limits and being consistent is key. Guiding your child to follow simple rules will help him understand and follow rules on his own. In our program, we work to provide a consistent, stable environment for your child.

- We focus on what he should do instead of what he shouldn't do. For example, we say, "Use your indoor voice," not "Don't shout."
- We offer him choices: "Do you want to put the toys on the shelf or in the box?"
- We praise his efforts and successes by telling him what he did right. This reinforces good behavior right after it happens.

Physical Development

Your child is becoming more mobile. Most 18-month olds can walk without support and can climb steps while holding onto an adult's hand. Children this age also are able to carry a ball and walk at the same time. Hand and finger movements are also improving, and 18-month-olds begin to scribble with a big crayon. Some children this age may show signs that they are ready for toilet training.

- We give your child safe spaces to play and be physically active.
- We watch your child carefully to see whether she might be ready to begin toilet training. If she is ready, we take her to the bathroom and help her learn what to do.

Remember, each child is unique and develops at her own rate. Talk to us or your health care professional if you have any concerns.



AT HOME TIP!

To prevent injuries, make sure you put cleaning supplies, lighters, matches, electrical cords, and medications in locked cabinets.

Learning through Play

Your child is learning as he plays. We help him build language skills by participating in toddler games and activities. We suggest you choose active play rather than TV time. Games like follow the leader, marching band, or ring-around-the-rosy are fun ways to keep moving. Children often like dancing to music, too. Throughout the day, he will be provided many opportunities to learn and explore.

- We teach your child about everyday things like the correct names for objects and body parts.
- We read and sing with him every day.
- Our classrooms are free from TV, videos, and other digital media to allow your child time for active play.

Staying Healthy and Safe

We provide a clean and safe environment for your child. We follow a consistent daily routine to help her grow and develop in healthy ways:

- We practice good handwashing throughout the day, especially around mealtimes and diaper changes. We help your child learn how to wash her hands properly.
- Your child will nap every day as part of the daily schedule.
- We support you in working with your child's health care professional to make sure she is up to date on all her immunizations (shots).
- We provide a safe and clean place for your child to play and explore.

[The Health Tips for Families Series](#) from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness offers valuable information on a variety of health topics.



AT HOME TIP!

Handwashing reduces the spread of infections. Make sure your child washes her hands before meals, after toileting, and after play time

Relationships

At this age, your child is focused on himself and his own needs. He may want to interact with other toddlers but is not ready to share or play cooperatively. While in our program, your child will have many opportunities to develop his social skills.

- We support the relationships in his life by talking about his family and other familiar people.
- We praise him for treating others in kind ways. We make sure the children don't hit, bite, or hurt other people.
- During playtime, we help your child learn how to share and take turns.

Questions to ask your health care professional at your child's 18-month check-up:

- How can I set limits and use time-outs?
- How can I prepare my child for the birth of another baby?
- What can I read with my child?
- How much media usage should my child have at this age?
- How can I keep my child safe at home and in the car?

Use the [Well-Visit Planner](#) to help get organized and learn more about what to expect at your baby's well-visit! For strategies to keep your baby safe on the road and in the car, read [Keeping Children Safe in Vehicles](#) and explore the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) website .