



Parent Handbook

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Program Information

Welcome

We're happy to welcome you and your child to the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center. Our parents and toddlers have made us the special place we are. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a part of your child's life.

We offer a special opportunity for 1-3 year old children to explore in a new, safe and nurturing environment. In a center with caring adults and other children their age, children are able to broaden their horizons and increase their communication skills. Parents have peace of mind knowing they have chosen the highest quality of child care for their children in a program that encourages them to connect with other families and grow in parenting skills, while enabling them to pursue work and training opportunities.

Please take the time to read this handbook. It contains valuable information you will need to know about the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center's philosophy, purpose, and policies. It is important that you are familiar with our program and its philosophies so you know what to expect from us, and what we'll need from you. Be sure to place it in a convenient spot for future reference. We look forward to a close and lasting relationship with your family.

Non-Discrimination Provisions

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center does not discriminate against families, employees or applicants for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition (cancer related and genetic characteristics), marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age (over 18), veteran status, gender, pregnancy, or any other non-merit factor unrelated to job duties. Such action shall include, but not be limited to the following: recruitment; advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship; employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer. Any person who believes that they have been discriminated against can contact the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center's Board of Directors.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is licensed by and accountable to the:

State Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing
2580 N. First Street, Suite 300, MS 29-08
San Jose, CA 95131
(408) 324-2148

Statement of Professionalism

We recognize the following as our ethical responsibility to the profession of Early Childhood Education and to the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center as an institution and a business. We acknowledge our obligation to adhere to the following ideals and principles to the best of our abilities.

We are committed to serving, protecting and fostering the development of all children. We acknowledge the following to be our ethical responsibility to children:

- To acknowledge each child as an individual, and treat them as such
- To create and maintain a safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate environment
- To plan curriculum for each child, and the group as a whole, using our knowledge of child development.

We are committed to creating a partnership with the families of all children we serve. We acknowledge the following to be our ethical responsibilities to families:

- To maintain confidentiality in all matters at all times
- To respect and support the diversity and individuality of each family
- To become a resource for parents in the areas of child development and center policies and philosophy
- To respect each family's right to make decisions concerning their child based on their own values
- To create a bond of mutual trust with each family
- To involve parents in Toddler Center Activities as much as possible

We recognize staff to be the greatest resource of our center. We acknowledge the following to be our ethical responsibilities to each other and the center:

- To respect and support the learning process of each staff member
- To contribute to team cohesiveness
- To respect diversity among staff
- To maintain confidentiality at all times in all matters
- To make communication as effective as possible
- To maintain principles of personal hygiene and appropriate dress
- To adhere to our general philosophy at all times
- To be reliable and consistent
- To foster growth and awareness, of self and center
- To listen to, be open and flexible with the ideas of others
- To demonstrate honesty and trustworthiness
- To observe the hierarchy and proper protocol
- To have a willingness to work on goals, for self and center

We desire to foster a sense of community with others involved in the development of young children. We acknowledge the following to be our ethical responsibilities to our community:

- To connect with other agencies and professions, with the goal of furthering awareness of the issues of young children
- To become advocates for the field of Early Childhood Education as far as we are able
- To be a model center, setting an example for others to follow
- To send our message out as much as possible, to as many people as possible

Program Philosophy

Over the years we have developed a philosophy of childcare which guides every aspect of our program. The methods of care based on that philosophy are very effective. Our well thought out philosophy of care sets us apart from many other programs and has earned us a reputation of excellence.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center follows the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) philosophy of care for children developed by Magda Gerber. RIE stresses respect and consistency for children. Respect for children is demonstrated by a belief of children as active participants in their own care and learning, and honoring their individual skills and interests with minimal adult direction or intervention. When adult participation is required, the teachers make sure to talk with the child(ren) to develop trust and communication skills, as well as to encourage an awareness of self and others. Consistency is developed through our primary care giving system, where one teacher is assigned the primary care of each child. The primary care teacher attends to the personal needs of the children in their group, and strives to develop a personal relationship with the child's parents. The classroom environment and daily routines are predictable yet flexible to children's needs. Whenever possible, children are invited to make choices, participate in care giving routines, (including eating, diapering, and resting), and to choose their activities. The foundation of our approach is to treat all of our children with complete respect for their individuality and for their capability. Respect is our guiding principle.

One practice we use to convey respect is that of selective intervention based upon sensitive observation of the children. When children are experiencing a conflict over a toy or space, for example, we try to give them the room and support to solve it themselves, encouraging them to express their needs and act on them, but without hurting other children. By impartially reflecting back to them what is happening "*You both really want that ball.*" rather than solving the problem for them "*Who had it first?*" we give them the chance to learn real problem solving skills and to develop a view of themselves as capable individuals.

Many of the principles of our program are promoted through careful use of language. We avoid "baby talk", using normal tone of voice and sentences with even the youngest of our children, who can understand us long before they have actually mastered speech. We use active listening techniques to acknowledge emotions, "*You're really mad right now!*" and to acknowledge the importance and validity of their play, "*You're working hard on that puzzle.*" We enhance predictability by talking to the children about what is going to be done or is happening and giving them time to respond. We never use labeling, "*You're bad!*" but rather use "I messages" whenever possible, "*I don't like it when you bite kids.*", and talk about the specific action rather than criticizing their character. While caring for the children we talk to them just as if we are having conversations with them.

Teachers are careful to distinguish through their language situations where the child has a real choice “*Would you like to run or walk to the diaper room?*” and those where the child really doesn’t have a choice. Giving children choices as often as possible gives them the feeling that they have some power in their lives. Because autonomy is such an important developmental task for toddlers, we find that giving them small but real choices, within the limits we set for them, helps them to develop a sense of self and self-esteem. This makes it easier to accept what they don’t have choices about. Reflecting our philosophy in our daily routines, we offer toddlers appropriate choices whenever we can “*Would you like your water in a green cup or a blue one?*”.

Consistency is very important for young children. Regular routines, consistency in teachers, and clearly defined limits and expectations help children to develop an internal sense of discipline.

Parents often ask us what kind of discipline we use. “Discipline” usually refers to the process of setting limits on children’s inappropriate behavior. Toddlers are active, curious people who often act on impulse. They “test” us by sometimes doing things that are dangerous, and sometimes by intruding on others’ rights. These are learning situations, and through them children learn a sense of their personal power as well as reasonable limits and social skills. Our goal is to help children develop their internal controls without threatening their self-esteem. Our method is to show children alternative, appropriate behavior and by avoiding labeling or judgmental language. Sometimes children are removed from other children briefly if they seem to be asking for space or if they need help stopping themselves from hurting other children. Physical punishment is never used.

Expressing feelings is important to the growth of healthy individuals. We work with our children, even those who can’t yet speak, to accept and acknowledge their feelings and to help express them. We work to accept all emotions, even “negative” ones such as anger and grief, and help children acknowledge that all emotions are OK for them to feel. You will observe us not trying to distract toddlers who are unhappy when their parents are leaving, but rather saying “*You’re sad that Mommy/Daddy is leaving. I’ll be close to you until you feel better*”, giving them support but letting them work it through at their own pace. Even when we are imposing limits, we try to do it in a way that acknowledges feelings (“*I see that you’re mad, but I can’t let you hit. You can say “No!”*”).

Caregiving is the main curriculum at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center. Daily care giving routines are seen not just as necessary chores but also as important learning opportunities for focused one-on-one interaction with the children. We encourage children to be active participants rather than passive observers during these activities, and engage their full involvement, cooperation and participation. For example, the diaper change is considered prime quality time. Children are encouraged to help; they can lift their legs up, help pull up their plastic pants, and so forth. Teachers try not to talk to other adults during caregiving routines, but rather to focus one to one with the children. Toilet learning is introduced when the children are ready, in a non-threatening, child-motivated way. Children are never pressured into it, but usually try out the toilet because they see other children using it; this activity often becomes quite a social time at school.

Our toddler-oriented environment was designed to reflect our philosophy. Our large, well-equipped facility is physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing; it is child-structured, rather than adult-structured. There are fewer planned or structured activities; most of the activity is based on the child’s freedom to choose what to do and when to do it, whether to play inside or out, with blocks or

bikes, etc. While children are engaged in independent exploration, they experience basic trust to be initiators, problem solvers, explorers and learners. Our emphasis on uninterrupted playtimes and child directed play reflects our belief that young children do not need direct teaching to achieve states of development but learn best while freely exploring and manipulating in a safe, carefully designed and predictable environment.

We work hard to build a bias free learning environment. The environment reflects the diversity of the world we live in a way that does not exclude or stereotype anyone on the basis of skin color, ethnicity, gender roles and expectations, family configuration, age, class, or physical ability. The walls, posters, books, materials, dolls, games, songs, and other teaching tools are carefully selected to acknowledge, accept and welcome the idea that each of us is different and that differences are a part of life.

Our program emphasizes active discouragement of sexism. Girls and boys are both encouraged to explore their active, assertive, gentle and nurturing parts of their personalities. It is a safe environment, where there is an atmosphere of caring and respect for every child's way of being in the world. There are clear rules that protect the rights of children to ask questions, have opinions, and be accepted and respected for who they are.

It is an environment where each child is esteemed, and therefore gains esteem, based on how he or she is unique and different, individually and culturally.

It is an environment that supports those children who might be recognizing for the first time that their friends have values different from those they've learned at home. It is a place where they can find guidance to develop skills to sort through the sometimes complex issues of ethnic/cultural awareness and pride.

Some children may be having their first experiences with meeting or socializing with friends from different backgrounds. A bias conscious learning environment introduces them to differences through positive experiences that can shape their attitudes for the rest of their lives.

Program Description

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is committed to providing services to families who would otherwise be prevented from obtaining work or pursuing training opportunities. Our goal is to have enrollment reflect the diverse composition of the community. We reserve at least one-third (1/3) of our slots for low-income families. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center operates on a non-discriminatory basis.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center encourages family participation in all aspects of the program. Family involvement and participation is supported through daily check-ins, home visits, Parent gatherings, meetings,, and a variety of other parenting resources. Staff work closely together to ensure open communication and the exchange of information to better meet the needs of the child in the center. Our goal is to become partners with parents through communication and education to support the individual needs of the child and family.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is governed by a Board of Directors that is composed of current parents, past parents, staff, and community representatives. The administration is composed of two co-directors: one Program Director and one Administrative Director. The classroom is staffed by morning and afternoon teaching teams who are coordinated by a Head Teacher. All teachers have received formal education in child development and infant-toddler care.

Enrollment Options

To keep our rates as low as possible it is important that enrollment stays constant. We have made available a combination of full time and part time options:

Full-Time

- *Monday-Friday*
- 7:30-5:30 PM

Part Time

- *MWF*
- 7:30-5:30 PM
- *TTH*
- 7:30-5:30 PM

Parents can drop off their children during the following time frames:

- 7:30 - 9:00 AM (parents say goodbye by 9:15)
- 10:00 - 11:00 AM (parents say goodbye by 11:15)
- 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Please arrive early so you have time to check in with your child's primary care teacher. We ask that parents arrive before 5:15 and leave by 5:30 PM so the building is empty and staff can do their clean-up and leave on time.

If you need to change your schedule, talk to the Program Director. We will try to accommodate you if the space you want is available. It may take a while before we can change your schedule. If you change your child's schedule, you may also be required to change their primary caregivers.

All parents contract for a specific schedule and pay in advance on a monthly basis, even when children are absent due to illness or vacation. This applies to parents that are students as well. When school breaks or holidays approach, students are faced with the choice of paying for their child's regular hours or deciding to give up their space by giving the appropriate 3 weeks notice. Parents who give up their slot can be at the top of the waiting list, but we can make no guarantee that they will get back in when they need to, as turnover is slow at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center

Enrollment Information

We ask that parents visit the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center prior to enrollment to observe and become acquainted with our facility, program, and policies. Upon agreement to begin enrollment, the following fees are collected:

- 3 week deposit
- \$ 150.00 non-refundable enrollment fee – includes a Toddler Center t-shirt our book, 1,2,3...The Toddler Years, and a Toddler Center photo book for the child to become familiar with the center.

Two one-hour visits are scheduled with your primary care teacher(s) for your child to spend at school without you as a transition into his or her regular schedule.

The following forms must be completed prior to the first day of attendance

- **Contract**

Once the contract has been signed it is a legal and binding document.

- **Emergency Information**

Each child must have complete emergency information in the classroom and on file at all times. This authorizes us to provide emergency medical treatment if you cannot be reached. We require at least three people to be listed on your emergency card who are available to pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Remember, they must be able to be at the center in 30 minutes, or you will be charged \$1 per minute thereafter. It is your responsibility to keep all of the information current. We will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on the Emergency Card. If you are a student, make sure to attach an up-to-date class schedule to your card.

- **Physician's Report**

California law requires that all children in centers must have immunization records on file at the center. Personal, religious, or medical waivers are allowed; however in the event of an outbreak of an illness your child would be excluded from the program. When your child has boosters or other immunizations after enrollment, please give us written notification so that we may update our records.

- **Income Form**

We require an Income Form to determine your tuition. You may report your income based on the previous three months or averaged over the previous 12 months. Self-employed families have an additional form to complete. We ask for verification of income through pay stubs or tax forms. If you do not return the form in a timely manner, you will be billed at the highest rate.

- **Child Care Food Program (CCFP) Allergy Statement**

Documents any food allergies, restrictions, or substitutions to your child's diet and must be signed by your health practitioner.

- **Request for Fluid Milk Substitution**

Required only if you would prefer that your child drink an alternative to cow's milk.

In addition, we need the following forms completed for your child's permanent file:

- Health History
- Enrollment Needs and Services
- Topical Applications Release
- Consent for Medical Treatment
- Parent's Rights
- Personal Rights
- Photo/Video Release
- CCFP Eligibility Application
- Statistical Information Sheet
- Family Resource List
- Resource Questionnaire
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment of Receipt

Food Program

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center strives to provide a model, health conscious, nutritious, and practical meal program that can work both at school and at home. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center provides a menu based on philosophical and practical guidelines, and is committed to providing healthy meals for children within the following guidelines:

- Vegetarian
- Whole grain
- Mostly organic
- Non-GMO
- Sugar-free
- Low salt
- Peanut-free

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center provides all vegetarian meals. We strive to purchase organic milk products, whole grains and produce when available and financially feasible. All of our pasta, bread, tortillas, and muffins are bought or made with whole grains.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is committed to providing a sugar-free, low salt menu to children. We do not use any sweeteners in our food. Philosophically we would like children to taste the true flavor of food without sweeteners, salt, or heavy spices to "make it taste good". Practically, children can participate more fully without having sugar in their system and they learn to enjoy a variety of natural flavors.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center does not serve any peanut products. Peanuts and products containing peanut oil are not used due to the high frequency of children with or developing allergies to peanuts.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center serves toddler appropriate finger food that provides children with at least two choices at each meal. Our philosophy supports choices for children when appropriate.

Therefore we provide at least two choices for children at meal times. An example would be to offer plain rice with a vegetable and beans. Children can have rice, vegetables and beans, or both. Teachers also respect children’s choices when they choose not to eat.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center participates in the Child Care Food Program (CCFP). We receive federal reimbursement for serving healthy, nutritious meals. We serve more food than CCFP requirements because we feel it is important for children to have choices when eating meals. The Child Care Food Program guidelines for reimbursement are as follows:

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Guidelines</u>
AM Snack:	1 grain Milk 2 fruits	1 grain or fruit Milk
Lunch:	2 vegetables 1 grain 1 protein Milk	2 vegetables 1 grain 1 protein Milk
Supper:	2 fruits 1 grain 1 protein Milk	2 fruits 1 grain 1 protein Milk

When feasible the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center will accommodate many allergies and food restrictions or preferences. If you have any questions about our food program, recipes, or dietary information, please talk to the Nutritional Coordinator.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors

One of the very special things about the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is that it is run for and by parents. Parent participation and guidance are at every step an integral part of our program. One example of the important part parents play here is their role on our Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is composed of parents whose children are currently enrolled, parents whose children formerly attended and still want to keep involved, community members who find our program vitally important to family welfare in our community, staff, and administrative representatives. Together they make all the important decisions which guide our program. Board responsibilities include financial overview, policy-making, parent contact, public representation, and long-range planning. Board members are also the "prime movers" in our fundraising campaigns.

The Board of Directors meets once a month. Additionally, some members attend Parent Meetings to facilitate parent involvement and contact. Occasionally special committees are formed and Board members participate according to their interests and talents. All Board members participate actively in fundraising.

Joining the Board requires a commitment of time and energy, but there are rewards. By participating on the Board you can:

- directly influence the quality of care your child receives
- gain valuable experience in budget planning, personnel issues, policy development, and other aspects of program administration
- exchange ideas with other concerned and committed parents and community members
- assure the long-term stability of Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center
- perform a valuable community service by volunteering on the board of a nonprofit organization
- share and develop your unique skills
- experience gratitude and recognition; be rewarded with yummy food at every meeting.

We need dedicated and giving people to serve on our Board of Directors. Joining the Board is straightforward. You don't need experience only a strong willingness to participate, and a commitment for at least one year is required. If you have questions or are interested, please talk to one of the directors.

Parent Information

Days of Closure

In an effort to provide a safe, supportive environment for all, the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center does not actively celebrate holidays in the classroom.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
President's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Armistice (Veteran's) Day
Thanksgiving Day, the Wednesday before and the following Friday
December 25
Two teacher in-service days

Winter Break **Approximately two weeks.** Occurs at the end of December
Spring Break **One week.** Varies depending on the schedules of Santa Cruz City Schools, Cabrillo College and other pertinent schedules.
Summer Break **One week.** Occurs in the beginning of August.

The actual dates of the closures will change from year to year. We will provide advance notice to families. When a holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center may be closed on the following Monday or preceding Friday.

Days of closure will not change the monthly amount you are billed. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center averages the cost of childcare throughout the entire year, including days the center is closed. This method of calculation allows the center to charge a lower, stable monthly parent fee. If you would like more information about billing or the method of calculation, please see the Administrative Director.

Daily Schedule

7:30	AM	SCTCC opens
7:30 – 9:00	AM	Families arrive, check in with teachers, indoor/outdoor play
Families arriving after 9:00 AM will be asked to return at 10:00 AM.		
9:00 – 9:15	AM	Families say goodbye
9:15 – 9:30	AM	Transition into breakfast
9:30 – 10:00	AM	Breakfast
10:00 – 11:00	AM	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes

Families arriving after 11:00 AM will be asked to return at 1:00 PM.

11:00 – 11:15	AM	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes, naps
11:15 – 11:30	AM	Transition into lunch.
11:30 – 12:00	PM	Lunch
12:00 – 12:30	PM	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes, naps
12:30	PM	PM staff arrives
12:30 – 1:00	PM	Staff check-ins, indoor/outdoor play
1:00	PM	AM staff leaves

Families can drop off from 1:00 – 2:30 PM.

1:00 – 3:30	PM	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes, naps,
1:15 – 2:00	PM	Second Lunch for children who slept through first lunch
3:00 – 4:00	PM	Afternoon meal
4:00 – 5:25	PM	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes, greetings with PM teachers, pick-ups
5:30	PM	SCTCC closed

If you arrive outside of the designated drop-off times you will be asked to return during the next drop off time, or remain in the environment with your child until the next drop off time.

Children who are asleep during lunch will have one saved for them to eat during the second lunch period. Children arriving after a meal will not have a meal saved for them.

Children nap and have their diapers changed according to their own individual needs.

During indoor/outdoor play times, a variety of activities are offered according to the needs of the children.

**Arriving at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center
Dropping Off**

During drop-offs and pick-ups from the center, teachers need to be able to talk to parents to exchange important information and focus their attention on the needs of your child. Throughout the day, there are certain times that are ideal for teachers to check-in with parents, help your child transition, and still provide supervision in the classroom. In an effort to provide the most consistent, calm, and relaxed transitions for you and your child, we ask that you respect the following guidelines:

Drop-Off Times:

- 7:30 - 9:00 AM
- 10:00 - 11:00 AM
- 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Pick-Up Times:

- 7:30 – 12:30 PM
- 1:00 – 5:15 PM

Cubby Room

Sign your child in and out using your full signature before you leave. Please leave an approximate time when you plan to pick up your child. **It is a licensing requirement that you sign your full name.** Before leaving make sure you check your Parent Pocket, Daily Information Board, and the Family Information Board. These all contain important information about activities at the center.

Food

Try to make sure your child has had something to eat before coming to the center. Although our meals are spaced closely together, an hour or two can be a long time for a hungry toddler to wait.

Naps

Bring a blanket to school for your child each day. It should be clean, not too large, and marked with his or her name. **It is a licensing requirement that blankets go home daily.** Please do not bring toys from home unless the item is important to the child's feeling of security for napping. Please do not bring any toys that light up or make noise, as they can be distracting in the nap room.

Diaper Changes

We ask that parents bring their child to school in a dry diaper. We invite you to change your child into a center diaper when arriving at school. Diaper changes are a great opportunity for you to transition with your child into the center and help your child establish a consistent routine to help say good-bye. Please ask for assistance if you are unfamiliar with our diaper changing routine and procedure.

Check-Ins

While dropping off or picking up your child, we require that parents take the time to exchange information with their primary care teacher. Information about your child's health, sleep patterns, and important details about your home life are helpful for teachers assessing your child's needs at school. All information shared with staff is confidential and beneficial to providing individualized support for families and care for your child.

Separating

For some parents, leaving your child may be a new experience. Saying good-bye can be the hardest part of a parent or child's day. However, it is important to remember that both parents and children benefit from time apart. Children get to explore an environment created for their needs and they also get to learn their parents do come back. They learn to trust and enjoy other adults, which encourages their independence and self-reliance.

Each child responds differently to good-byes. Here are some guidelines that may help your transition:

- Connect with your primary care teacher. Make sure they are able to give your child full attention. Exchange important information about your child and establish this as part of your routine.
- Acknowledge your emotions. If there are sad feelings, accept them whether they are yours or your child's. It's ok to say, "I'm sad to leave you too." By modeling how we express our emotions, we can help children learn to deal with theirs.

- ❑ Avoid distracting your child before you leave. Be clear that you are leaving and say good-bye. Children can be frightened when you sneak away. Your child needs to know that they can trust you to leave when you say you are going to leave and return when you are going to return.
- ❑ Your primary care teacher will help you say good-bye. When you are ready to leave, let your child know that you are leaving, say good-bye, and really leave. Prolonged, lingering good-byes are hard on everyone. Make the good-bye short. It's okay to be sad, but if you stay around and are upset, your child may think something is wrong and get more upset. Show your child your confidence and trust in the program that you have chosen.

It has been our experience that eventually children will stop crying and be ready to start their day. Primary care teachers are available to help children transition and work with their feelings. Please feel free to call the classroom at (831) 476-1233 anytime during the day if you are feeling uneasy and want to know how your child is doing.

Staff

Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is proud to have a highly professional staff comprised of individuals who have studied in the field of Early Childhood Education, are trained in the philosophy and procedures of the center, and are experienced in working with children of this young age. They are chosen not only for their background and qualifications, but equally importantly for their ability to be caring and nurturing to the children within the center's philosophy. We call our staff people who work with children "primary care teachers". We have a minimum of one adult for every four children at the center.

Each family has a primary care teacher with whom child and parent can develop a special connection. Although all of the teachers work as a team and are aware of all of the children, the assignment of a primary care teacher assures that your child will get the bonding and individual care so necessary to children this young. Primary care teachers are involved in all the major care activities with the children (helping to say good-bye, diapering, napping) and talk daily with the parents about the child's day at home and at the center.

All of our caregivers either meet or exceed the California State Licensing requirements for teachers, with many holding degrees in Early Childhood Education or related fields. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center also offers stipends for our teachers to further their education through college classes or attending conferences in the areas of child development, curriculum, health, or communication.

We have a morning staff and an afternoon staff. This means if your child stays here all day, she or he may have two primary caregivers.

At the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center, we consider a work week over 20 hours to be Full Time. Caring for children is important work, and we believe the value of this work should be reflected in optimal conditions for childcare employees. Staff turnover and teacher burnout are successfully minimized in our program by offering good salaries and benefits to our staff. Full time staff receive cost-of-living raise when possible, sick/vacation pay, paid holidays, conference/training allowances, paid staff meetings, health, life and dental insurance.

Primary Care Teacher

At the time of enrollment, your child is assigned a primary care teacher solely on the basis of which teacher has an available opening in her/his schedule. It is not possible for families to request a primary caregiver since it is very rare that there is more than one opening at any given time. We employ highly skilled teachers, all of whom are qualified to provide primary care.

We will make every attempt possible to keep a child's primary care teacher consistent. If your schedule changes, however, the center cannot guarantee that your child's primary care teacher will stay the same.

Home Visits

We recommend that each family have at least one home visit with their primary care teacher(s) within the first three (3) months at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center. This is an enjoyable and enriching time for children, families, and teachers. It is usually a low-key occasion. Sometimes we have dinner, or just get together for an hour or two at your home. Toddlers get to see that teachers really do not live at the center. What a surprise! Home visits are a great opportunity to deepen the connection between child and teacher, to enhance our knowledge of your child, facilitate our care giving, and to improve the family/teacher partnership. Home visits are an opportunity for families and teachers to discuss aspects of your child's development and for us to answer your questions about our program. We know that sometimes it is difficult to find a time to get together, but it is well worthwhile. Your teacher will contact you to schedule a home visit if you have not already scheduled one.

Parent Conferences

For the most part, the twice daily check-ins between parents and caregivers serves as sufficient communication. However, parent conferences can also be a time where you can gain a new perspective on your child's development or enhance your parenting skills. Staff may initiate a conference if they feel the need to spend more time discussing observations of your child's development. Furthermore, we may need your help in handling any situations needing attention. Parents may also initiate a parent conference with either their Primary Caregiver or the Program Director, as needed.

Leaving the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center

Our program is designed for toddlers. Children generally exceed the scope of our program between 30 and 36 months; therefore we do not always recommend that children stay until he or she turns 3 years. Talk with your primary care givers(s) to help determine the optimum time for your child to transition to preschool. We require 3 weeks written notice per your contract. We use this time to prepare your child and the other children for the transition, and to begin the enrollment of a new child.

Saying good-bye is a time of mixed emotions for all of us! We usually talk with the group about what the child will be doing (going to a new school, new home, etc.) Sometimes parents like to bring special treats (fruit, muffins, bagels, etc.) for their child's good-bye day. We love it, but remember we don't serve any sugar or peanuts, so please check in with the cook if you need recipe ideas and to let her know that you will be bringing something.

If you need ideas on new schools or other childcare arrangements for your child, talk to a director or your child's primary care teacher. Remember that other schools may have long waiting lists too, so begin the search early.

We always welcome children and parents back to visit!

Parent Participation

Much of the quality of our program depends on the quality of parent participation. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center was founded by parents who wanted input into the quality of their children's child care experience. We still believe that parent involvement is an essential part of our program's success. Get involved with your child's center by attending parent gatherings, helping with fundraising events and improvement projects, writing letters of support at funding time, donating materials or money, or joining the Board of Directors. Share your talents and ideas with us. We welcome them! Be sure to read the Family Information Board regularly, check your parent pocket and emails for information and announcements, and pay attention to posted signs. **Each parent is required to do 2 (two) Parent Task Hours per month, or pay a charge of \$11.00 per hour in lieu of work.** We have many tasks available for parents to do. For example, if you make play dough for the center, you have completed 1 (one) Parent Task Hour.

Because of our limited budget and the extensive amount of work needed to keep the center going, we depend heavily on parents doing their Parent Task Hours and fundraising. Check the cubby room for posted tasks or ask a staff member what is the current fundraising activity. Make sure you fill out the Parent Task/Fundraising Credit Slip that are emailed to you each month so you will not be billed when you have done work. Record any work or money that you have done or generated for that month, and return it to the Administrative Director.

We encourage each parent to attend at least one Parent Meeting, Parent Workday or Parent Potluck per year. These are held mostly on a quarterly basis to provide information, education, and build community within the center. We cover a wide variety of topics of interest to toddler parents in our parent meetings: toilet training, discipline, nutrition, pre-school readiness, etc. You can earn Parent Task Credits by attending these functions, and we provide free childcare. Before a function, we will post a sign-up sheet. If you sign up for childcare, please make sure to attend, since we pay for childcare arrangements. We are always eager to hear your ideas or suggestions for future meetings.

We also have a Parent Resource Area that has a variety of books, magazines, and articles on different topics relating to parenting, child development, and education. Please see the Program Director for more information.

Payment Policy

Toddler care is expensive compared to preschool, due to the high ratio of adults to children mandated for this age group. The teacher to child ratio for toddlers almost triples the personnel costs, compared to preschools. We are able to offer a sliding scale by partial subsidies by the City and County of Santa Cruz and by supplementing parent fees through fund raising.

In order to best serve our families, we determine fees on a sliding scale depending on family size and income. Parents have two income reporting options. They may fill out an income information form which reflects the previous three months earnings, or they may fill out a form which reflects the previous twelve months' income. Parents are asked to complete a Parent Income Information form upon enrollment and annually thereafter in April. It is important to fill out and return your Quarterly Income Statement promptly. **Parents who do not return their income form will be billed at the top of the scale.** If you need more information or clarification, contact the Administrator Director.

Monthly parent fees include meals and diapers. Tuition is paid in advance monthly. Parents will be emailed bills a week before the first of the month indicating the charges for the coming month. We prefer payments via check or money order. Most parents schedule payments directly from their bank. There is a \$29 charge for all returned checks.

Tuition is due no later than the 1st of the month and is considered late on the 10th. **There is a \$1 per day late charge for every day thereafter that the bill remains unpaid, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Administrative Director.** Your bill may also include charges for unmet Parent Task Hours (\$22 per month per parent) and late charges which apply when children are picked up after our closing time of 5:30PM.

Late Pick Up Policy

Although we officially close at 5:30, we prefer that parents arrive by 5:15 in order to be able to engage in thorough check-ins with primary caregivers. If you arrive much later than 5:15, please be advised that we may not be able to spend as much time with you as we'd like.

At 5:30 sharp, the teachers must begin their chores in order for them to be able to go home by 6:00. Because the impact of late pickups is very disruptive to the afternoon staff, the following policy applies:

- First late arrival A warning is given to the family.
- Second late arrival \$3 for each minute late after 5:30 pm.
- Third late arrival \$6 for each minute late after 5:30 pm.
- ***Charges continue to double thereafter, in addition to the Directors' reassessment of the viability of the continuation of the enrollment contract.***

Any changes to the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center's fee schedule will be given to parents in writing at least 30 calendar days prior to the effective date.

Parents are required to pay for contracted hours even during periods of vacations, closures and sickness. For planned vacations parents have the option of selling their child's time to another family enrolled in the center. Parents can post the times they wish to sell on the Buy/Sell Time Sheet in the cubby room. When parents sell their time, financial arrangements must be worked out between parents. Staff are not responsible for coordinating Buy/Sell time and should not be solicited to do so. Please refer to the Buy/Sell Guidelines for more information about this system.

It is the policy of Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center not to allow outstanding bills. We are financially dependent on the timely payment of all parent fees. **Therefore, if parents have outstanding bills past one month of the date of issue and they have not made special arrangements with the Administrative Director, the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center reserves the right to revoke their child's slot in the program, and turn over the bill to a collection agency.** In operating the center we wish to support and cooperate with parents in every way possible. However, we've found that in financial matters it is necessary to maintain firm policies. This is crucial in assuring the stability of the program we offer.

Parents are responsible for giving a minimum of three weeks written notice before withdrawing their child from the program.

Subsidized Care

If Voucher or CalWorks is paying for your childcare there are additional mandatory forms to complete monthly. Note that the Voucher Project and CalWorks have limited coverage for holidays, breaks or vacations. Parents, therefore, **are responsible for any payment that those agencies will not cover.** If parents are not able to pay out of pocket for scheduled hours during breaks or vacation, you will need to give us three week's notice and give up your slot. Please keep track of your contract renewals or changes in coverage from the agency funding your care.

Parent Rights

California Health and Safety Code Section 1596.867 require that parents or guardians be informed of the following:

1. Parents/guardians, upon presentation of identification, have the right to enter and inspect the child day care facility in which their child(ren) are receiving care, without advance notice to the provider. Entry and inspection is limited to the normal operating hours while their child(ren) is receiving care.
2. The law prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any child or parent/guardian for exercising their right to inspect.
3. The law requires that parents/guardians be notified of their rights to enter and inspect.
4. The law requires that this notice of parents' rights to enter and inspect be posted in the facility in a location accessible to parents/guardians.
5. The law authorizes the person in charge of the child day care facility to deny access to a parent/guardian under the following circumstances:
 - a) The parent/guardian is behaving in a way which poses a risk to children in the facility, or
 - b) The adult is a non custodial parent and the facility has been requested in writing by the custodial parent to not permit access to the non custodial parent

Regulations in Title 22, California Administrative Code, require that persons receiving care from a child day care facility shall be advised of the following:

Personal Rights

Community Care Facilities and Child Day Care Facilities.

Each person receiving services from a community care facility and/or a child day care facility shall have rights which include, but are not limited to, the following:

The Right:

1. to be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationship with staff and other persons.
2. to be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.

3. to be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with the daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
4. to be informed, and to have the authorized representative informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the licensing agency's complaint receiving unit, and of information regarding confidentiality.
5. to be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice. Attendance at religious services either in or outside the facility shall be on a completely voluntary basis.
6. to leave or depart the facility at any time, except for house rules for the protection of clients or for minors and others from whom legal authority has been established (pertains to Community Care facilities only).
7. not to be locked in any room building, or facility premises by day or nights.
8. not to be placed in restraining devices without advance approval by the licensing agency.

Grounds for Termination of Child Care Services

The primary goal of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center is to provide a nurturing, learning environment for children between the ages of 12 to 36 months. To insure the program is beneficial to all involved at Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center, we reserve the right to determine whether continued use of our services is in the best interest of all concerned.

The following are situations where the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center may determine that continued placement might be inappropriate. Grounds for termination of childcare services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Children who are overwhelmed and cannot function in the group size and who would do better in a smaller group.
- Children who have outgrown our program and need one geared for older children.
- Children whose behavior is extreme and disruptive to the program, endangers the child or others, or who requires one-to-one attention or intervention by teachers on a continuous long-term basis.
- Families who fail to comply with the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center's policies as described in the Parent Handbook. An example is continued late pick-ups or failure to pay fees.
- Parents whose behavior causes disruption, distress or endangerment. An example is verbal or physical abuse, intoxication, threats toward children or adults, or boisterous actions which reflect an insensitivity to classroom conditions. Such behavior may result in termination of services as well as formal action with the appropriate authorities.

An attempt at documentation of any situation determined by the administration to be causing problems may occur, and a conference may be scheduled to discuss the situation and set up a course of action with a timetable for resolution. However, an emergency situation may create the need for immediate action, with or without documentation and conference. An appeal of the decision may be made to the Board of Directors, given in writing before the next regular Board meeting. The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center Board of Directors and staff are committed to evaluating each situation and working out an appropriate plan of action to resolve the situation. However, if reasonable attempts fail to improve the situation, a notice of termination of service could occur.

Grievance Procedure

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center wishes to provide each parent/guardian fair and impartial treatment. Accordingly, it has established the following grievance procedure that is available to all parent/guardians and non-supervisory employees who have completed their introductory period. It should nevertheless be remembered that the center provides contract childcare services that can be terminated by either party. Nothing in this grievance procedure is intended to create an express or implied agreement that alters the childcare contract and terms.

1. **Direct Communication:** If a parent or staff member has a communication difficulty or conflict we ask the parent or staff member to first approach the person with whom they feel there is a problem. Often the matter can be clarified and mutually resolved in this matter.
2. **Direct Supervisor:** If the problem does not feel resolved, we ask that the parent or staff member speak to the direct supervisor of the person with whom you have a grievance within 10 days of the occurrence. An example is after talking to a teacher or parent, you can talk to the Head Teacher of that program.
3. **Program Director:** If the problem is still not resolved, we ask that you go directly to the Program Director and refer your grievance in writing within 3 days. The Program Director will promptly schedule a meeting to provide an opportunity for each party to present her/his case. Within 3 days after that meeting or such a period as is required under the circumstances to properly investigate the matter, the Program Director will provide each party with a verbal or written response to the grievance.
4. **Board of Directors:** If either party is not satisfied with the decision at the third step, each party will have an additional 3 days to request in writing a personal interview with the Board of Directors, who will discuss the problem and investigate the basis for the grievance. The Board of Directors will provide either a verbal or written decision within 10 working days unless it has been determined that additional time is required under the circumstances. The decision at this step shall be final and conclusive for all parties.

It is the intention of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center to be fair and impartial in order to establish the smoothest relationship possible. No party will be discriminated against or retaliated against, or in any way penalized for using this procedure.

It is the goal of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center to support all families and staff in resolving issues, while respecting individual values, goals and privacy. We hope that with this process we are able to resolve differences or conflicts with respect and concern for all parties involved.

Health and Safety

Health Guidelines

The staff at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center strive to provide the best care for your child, utilizing individualized care and assessment; however children who are sick do not belong in group situations. A child with a fever, an upset stomach, diarrhea, a cold, or who just does not feel well, should be with a parent or friend. The staff, working in partnership with families, will determine whether a child should attend school.

Keeping children home when they are sick is important to your child as well as to the other children being cared for at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center. Besides spreading illness, a sick child has a lower resistance; it may take longer for your child to get well, or s/he may get another illness.

Young children often get sick. Toddlers are very tactile and curious by nature, and when they start spending time with other children, they are exposed to many different immune building illnesses. They explore all aspects of their environment, with touch, sight, sound, and taste. The staff at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center wash toys daily, require children and parents to wash their hands when entering the center, and use many other methods to help minimize illness at school. It is with the needs of all the children in group care in mind that the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center has created specific health guidelines.

It is a licensing requirement for the staff at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center to perform daily health assessments upon your child's arrival at school. The staff will assess your child's ability to participate at school based on their observations. It is important to provide staff with all information pertaining to your child's health at the beginning of the day so they have the information necessary to provide individualized care for children.

Please refer to the chart at the end of this handbook for a quick reference regarding our wellness policy. We suggest that you post it in a prominent place in your home for easy reference. You will also find a copy of it posted in our cubby room.

Your child is able to participate at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center if they are:

Alert

Active

Free of continuous discharge for reasons other than teething and allergies.

Free of a debilitating respiratory illness for reasons other than teething and allergies.

Free of any open sores, skin eruption, rash, or unusual discoloration other than psoriasis, eczema, or allergies.

Without fever for a 24-hour period.

Having normal bowel movements for a 24 hour period.

Able to keep down food for a 24-hour period.

Free of lice and nits, scabies, pinworms, and other infestations of similar character

Please pull out the *Top 10 Common Ailments and Symptoms* chart at the back of this handbook and keep it handy as a reference.

Your child **may not** be at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center if they have or show symptoms of any of the following:

Inattentiveness

If your child is inattentive or unable to focus on normal daily routines for reasons related to illness.

Lethargy

If your child seems uncharacteristically lethargic or tired for reasons related to illness.

Discharge

If your child has any unusual discharge from the eyes, whether green, white, or clear, or if they have red or swollen eyes. If your child has a continuous runny nose, green, clear, or otherwise. If your child has any other unusual discharge from any other orifice.

Respiratory Illness

If your child is experiencing a debilitating cough, wet or dry, sneezing, or other respiratory illness for reasons other than teething and allergies that interfere with their participation at school.

Skin Conditions

If your child has any skin conditions, including but not limited to chicken pox, impetigo, scabies, poison oak, cold/canker sores, and fever blisters. Any skin conditions of unknown origin will require a note from an appropriate health care provider stating that it is not a contagious illness.

Fever

If your child had an axillary (underarm) temperature of 99 degrees Fahrenheit or greater in the last 24 hours.

Bowel Movements

If your child has had an unusually frequent, loose, watery or smelly bowel movement, or if bowel movements cannot be contained in a diaper in the last 24 hours. Mothers who are breast-feeding should give that information to their primary care teacher.

Vomiting

If your child has not been able to keep down food or drink for a 24 hour period.

Infestations

If your child has nits or lice. If your child exhibits any signs or symptoms of infestation, including, but not limited to, scabies and pinworms.

Anesthesia

If your child has undergone anesthesia and/or any surgical procedure s/he must stay home for a minimum of one entire day following the day of the procedure.

In addition to being a health risk for other children, families, and staff at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center, providing care for sick children at school is programmatically challenging as sick children must be separated from well children. If your child has or shows any of the symptoms mentioned during the daily health assessment, s/he will be asked not to attend school that day. If your child has or shows any of the symptoms at school, a staff member from the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center will contact you, or someone on your emergency card to come and pick up your child.

Sick Child Pickups

It is the policy of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center that there be at least three (3) persons listed on your child's emergency card that can pick up your sick child from school within **30 minutes** of receiving a call from the Center staff. If the staff is unable to reach anyone on the emergency card, the ½ hour time period begins after the last person on the emergency card is called. Late fees apply for pick-ups that occur later than 30 minutes after receiving a call notifying you that your child's illness or condition prohibits program attendance. Families will be charged **\$1 a minute for every minute beyond the 30 minute time period.** Therefore, it is very important that the people on your child's emergency card know they are listed and can be available to pick up your child within the 30 minute time parameter.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center respects and honors family choice in health care providers. **Conditions that are of unknown origin, or that may be contagious will require documentation from an appropriate health care provider for your child to participate at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center.** The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center provides a Health Information Exchange form that must be filled out by your health care provider and given to the staff when your child returns to school. **Your child will not be admitted if you do not have your Health Information Exchange Form signed by a health care provider.** In cases of long-term, chronic, medical, or allergy situations, documentation from a health care provider will be required for your child to participate at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center. *Please be aware that due to the unique dynamics of toddlers in childcare, our policies in terms of exclusion may be more conservative than those of your health care provider.*

In all situations, if you are unsure or questioning whether your child should attend school, s/he should probably stay home with a parent or friend. It is in your and your child's best interest not to attend school if your child is ill.

Medication Guidelines

Occasionally it is necessary for children to receive medications while attending school. If you bring medication for your child, be sure to give it directly to your primary care teacher so that she/he can assist you in the appropriate documentation.

The staff of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center will not administer the first dose of any medication and we ask that families do not administer the first dose immediately before bringing their child to school in case of an allergic reaction.

For the protection of all children, families, and staff of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center, children who require, or have taken, any medications that mask cold symptoms, or any form of aspirin, prescribed or otherwise, within the last 4-6 hours, should stay home. We ask that parents do not come to the center to administer these medications.

If your child needs to receive medication, whether prescription or non-prescription while attending the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center, the following criteria must be met:

- Medication Release Form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian.
- Medication must be in its original bottle labeled with:
 - The name of the medication,
 - The child's name,
 - The appropriate dosage written on the label,
 - The expiration date.

Parking Lot and Car Seat Policy

It is the policy of the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center that regardless of age, competency, state of awareness, or otherwise, children are not to be left unattended in cars or in the parking area. In addition, children are not to be left unattended in any area of the center. You are responsible for watching your children while in the center. If you need support please talk with a staff person.

The Center enforces the California car seat law that requires children under the age of 8 years old and 4' 9", be transported in an approved car seat. California also requires all persons in a motor vehicle to utilize the appropriate restraint system.

The Center has limited car seats to loan out to families. Borrowed car seats should be returned to the program when no longer needed. Families are welcome to leave car seats in the cubby room for other persons transporting their child. **Please clearly label any car seats that are left for other persons transporting your child.** Staff members will contact local authorities if it is observed that a child is being transported without the appropriate restraint system.

For more information about car seat laws, you can contact the California Highway Patrol at <http://www.chp.ca.gov/community/safeseat.html>

Safety and Emergency Information

Our staff is keenly aware of the importance of a well-supervised and safe environment. When minor accidents happen (scrapes, cuts, etc.) the staff will provide the necessary first aid. An accident report will be put in your parent pocket and in your child's file. In the event of a more serious accident, we will contact you immediately and perform all other necessary actions. **It is the parent's responsibility to have a medical release form, as well as an up to date emergency card on file at all times.**

We have extra food, bottled water, bedding, lighting, and other emergency supplies. We practice monthly evacuation drills. All children and staff are active participants. The center is protected by smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

In case of a disaster, the staff will care for the children at the center until parents arrive. If it is unsafe to remain at the center, we will evacuate to:

Live Oak Family Resource Center
1740 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(831) 476-7284

If there are injuries requiring medical attention and the need for evacuation, staff will transport children to:

Dominican Hospital 1555 Soquel Dr. Santa Cruz, CA 95062 (831) 462-7700

If we evacuate the building, we will try to leave a sign on the front door, a message on the answering machine, and a message with the American Red Cross as to our location.

American Red Cross 462-2881	Emergency Radio 107.5 FM or 1080 AM
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We also contract with an automated emergency contact system called BOMA IC. Whenever possible, we will use this system to contact our entire parent population to give updates during emergency situations.

RIE Philosophy

Core Concepts of RIE Philosophy

Respect is the guideline of RIE philosophy. The educator (primary care teacher) shows respect by treating children as active participants rather than as a passive recipient in all interactions.

The following outline defines the principles and philosophy we believe in.

1. A toddler derives security from a predictable environment, and the opportunity for anticipation and making choices.
2. A toddler needs an intimate, stable relationship with one constant person. This relationship is best developed during individualized care-giving activities.
3. The toddler does not need direct teaching or help to progress through natural stages of gross motor and sensorimotor development.
4. Toddlers learn best when allowed to freely move and explore in an environment that is physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing.
5. The educator's (primary care teacher's) sensitive observation results in an understanding of the toddlers needs.
6. The educator (primary care teacher) allows for long uninterrupted times for play and fosters interaction between toddlers.

Goals for Children

We believe toddlers' two main challenges are to become independent and autonomous beings and to develop a clear self-image. Consistency and clearly defined limits and expectations are integral to develop self-discipline and problem solving skills. With awareness of this, our goals for toddlers are:

- **To have self-confidence and a positive self-image.**
Some of the ways we support this are by providing a developmentally appropriate environment, i.e. we have activities they can be successful in. We provide an environment that offers toddlers choices and allows them to be self directed in their play. We also give children time, space, and encouragement in their self-help skills, such as dressing, eating, washing, etc.
- **To learn it is okay to try new experiences.**
In our daily set-ups we provide a variety of choices of activities. While we always have a balance of small motor, large motor, language, fantasy, tactile, and sensory art activities available, we change the curriculum so it stays intriguing for toddlers and gives them opportunities to try new skills in a safe and consistent environment.
- **To build a basic trust in the world.**
We facilitate this by keeping children's teachers as consistent as possible, by allowing children to have predictable routines and by building strong connections between teachers and parents with daily greetings, home visits, conferences, Parent Meetings, and potlucks.
- **To develop social skills and facilitate conflict resolution skills in a developmentally appropriate way.**
To foster social interactions, we must first be aware of what toddlers are capable. Because they are working on defining themselves, this requires toddlers to be possessive and focus on their own needs or wants. In our environment we never have just one of any toy; we have at least 5 or more so there are plenty for children to use. Teachers model respect to children and adults. When children are showing an interest in interacting with each other, teachers may suggest ways for them to initiate play. For any conflicts that may arise teachers stay close to keep participants safe, while encouraging children to express themselves in a positive way.
- **To value the process of learning over the end product of an activity.**
Young children are process oriented; it is the doing of the activity that interests them, rather than the end product. We believe it is in the doing of activity that children learn the most. With this in mind we provide activities for children that are open-ended and encourage creative experimentation within the boundaries of safety.

At the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center we will do all we can to support the special needs of children and their families. As far as we are able, we will make modifications in the environment, plan staffing schedules, and create and integrate activities to facilitate the development of any child with special needs.

We share our way of doing things with you because consistency is so important for young children, and because the messages we give to the children are more meaningful when reinforced by parental guidance.

Integration Clause and Right to Review

This Parent Handbook contains the policies and practices at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center in effect at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are suspended.

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center reserves the rights to revise, modify, delete, or add to all policies and procedures stated in this handbook or any other document. Any written changes to this handbook will be distributed to parents at least 30 calendar days prior to the effective date

Please refer to this chart of the *Top 10 Common Ailments and Symptoms* to help you determine whether or not your child should attend the Toddler Center. Note that your child will be sent home if s/he is showing signs of being sick or is unable to participate in the program. Please refer to our Parent Handbook for our complete Health Guidelines.

Please call the classroom line at (831) 476-1233 with any question, or to let us know that your child will not be attending.

Condition	Stay Home if Symptoms Include:	Come Back When:
Common Cold/ Runny Nose	Mucous of any color that is profuse or continuous, and is not a result of teething or allergies.	Runny nose is no longer profuse or continuous.
Vomiting	Inability to keep down food or drink.	Child has not vomited for 24 hours.
Fever	An axillary (underarm) temperature of 99°F or greater within the last 24 hours.	Child has been fever free for 24 hours.
Diarrhea	Frequent, loose, watery, or smelly bowel movements, or if bowel movements cannot be contained in a diaper.	Child has been diarrhea-free (having normal bowel movements) for 24 hours.
Cough or Respiratory Illness	Frequent and/or debilitating cough (wet or dry), sneezing, or other respiratory illness for reasons other than teething or allergies.	Child's cough is no longer debilitating or frequent.
Inattentiveness	Inattentiveness or inability to focus on normal daily routines for reasons related to illness.	Child is alert, not showing an unusual lack of attentiveness.
Infestations (i.e. Lice, Scabies and Pinworms)	Presence of nits, mites, or eggs, or symptoms (usually including intense itching, and the presence of raised red spots or lines) indicating the presence of infestations such as lice, scabies, or pinworms.	Appropriate treatment has been completed as directed, and all eggs have been removed.
Lethargy	Uncharacteristic lethargy or tiredness for reasons related to illness.	Child is active, not showing an unusual lack of energy, and is able to participate in the program.
Pink Eye or Conjunctivitis	Any unusual discharge from the eyes, sometimes accompanied with redness, swelling and itching.	Child's eyes are discharge free and without redness, itching or swelling.
Skin Conditions and Rashes (not including eczema, psoriasis, or allergic reactions)	Presence of any contagious skin condition, including but not limited to chicken pox, Coxsackie's virus, impetigo, scabies, poison oak, ring worm, cold/canker sores, and fever blisters. Usually accompanied by raised red spots or lines, swelling, and intense itching.	Child is rash free or free of the contagious skin condition; or, if the skin condition is of unknown origin, the child may return with a note from an appropriate health care provider stating the skin condition is not contagious.

Buy/Sell Time Full Days Only

Rate: \$60

Effective February 1, 2011

The Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center allows currently enrolled families the option to buy time needed or sell time not used to other enrolled families at the center.

- **Buy/Sell Time Protocol**

- Sign up on the “Buy/Sell Time” sheet located on the bulletin board in the cubby room.
 - You need to sign up at least **the day before** you buy/sell time, by 5:30pm.
 - This sheet is operated on a **first come, first served** basis.
 - ***All Sales are final. If you buy time and are unable to use it, you may sign up to try and sell that time to another family. If you sold time that you end up needing, you may sign up to try and purchase time from another family.***
 - It is your responsibility to remove your own name should your buy/sell needs change **prior** to the occurrence of any sale or purchase.
- **Payment is made directly to the family** you are purchasing the day from, and is **due on the day that you sign up for it.**
 - **If your child has any special dietary restrictions or needs, please inform the Program Director or the Cook as soon as possible, so that we’re able to accommodate your child on that day.**
 - Payment for days purchased from families will NOT be reflected on your Toddler Center bill.
 - Occasionally, the **Toddler Center will have time for sale.** Please put a check for that time in Sandy’s pocket – **noting the date you purchased from the center on the check.**
 - This program is for, and solely coordinated by, **families currently enrolled** at the Santa Cruz Toddler Care Center.
 - This program operates on the “good faith” system. **Families are expected to honor their commitment to pay for time purchased.**
 - **The teachers and directors are not responsible for any component of the Buy/Sell option. Please do not call or email the classroom or office to inquire about space to buy or sell.**
 - Please use the buy/sell cubby for your child’s things.
 - Your primary caregiver may not be available to provide primary care on the day you have purchased.