



*Katie's Kids Learning Center
Curriculum Information.*

Learning For Life!

Infant/Toddler Curriculum

At Katie's Kids Learning Center we believe that relationships and routines are the curriculum in an infant toddler classroom. We focus on the following:

- Building strong relationships through responsive interactions-this is the foundation.
- Meeting basic needs, with lots of love and care.
- Letting babies make their own schedules.
- Toddlers like predictability and schedules give them comfort. They like a stable routine.
- We believe in the power of touch. We are constantly holding, comforting, hugging, and holding hands with the youngest members of our school community.
- We want children at this young age to feel safe in their environment.

Young children learn about their world by using their senses, we facilitate this by:

- Following the interests of the children.
- Exposing them to new textures and experiences.
- Lots of sensory exploration ex- paint, cotton balls, sand, water etc.
- Exposing them to different sounds through music

Environments in our infant toddler room are set up very intentionally. Our goal is to provide children with:

- A Balance of active and quiet toys to play with.
- Multi-levels for climbing, and Push toys for learning to walk. Soft areas for babies to lie, sit, and crawl, and mirrors for encouraging tummy time.
- Ways for children to be independent ex. stools to reach sinks for washing, finger food for self feeding, keeping toys down on their level.
- Age appropriate stimulating toys.

We plan our curriculum to help develop the whole child. We want our curriculum to incorporate all areas of development including:

Social/Emotional

- Plenty of time to play—this is how children learn.
- Use emotional breakdowns or behavior issues as teachable moments.

Cognitive

- Encourage children to be problem solvers.
- Expose them to new things.
- Have materials that are challenging but not frustrating.

Motor (Large and Small)

- Lots of gross motor time to practice and master new skills.
- Materials to encourage developing fine motor skills

Communication/Verbal skills

- Expose children to lots of language with books and songs.

-Give simple directions to promote receptive language. Encourage conversation to improve expressive language.

Toddler/Twos and Preschool Curriculum

At Katie's Kids Learning Center our curriculum is research based. It stems from the work done by researchers such as Erik Erikson's stages of social-emotional development, Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Dr. Barry Brazelton, and many other innovators in the field of child development.

We, at Katie's Kids Learning Center find social-emotional development to be at the core of early childhood. Developing these skills is what drives our curriculum. We also believe strongly in the importance of strong relationship building. We work hard to build positive relationships with the parents and children enrolled with us. We strive to build a sense of community in each of our classrooms that fosters acceptance, trust, and mutual respect. Children who feel they belong, and are valued for their uniqueness will be more successful in their future ventures.

Our curriculum can be found everywhere at every moment because we believe learning is both spontaneous and planned. We follow the interest of the children who spend their days with us. We value what they value and what matters most to them matters most to us. This method is called child-centered curriculum. The approach we go about using to teach is called the Project Approach.

A project consists of three phases:

Phase 1 - "Getting Started" This is when the teachers carefully observe the children's play to find where their interests lie. Webbing and discussion are used to refine this process.

Phase 2 - "Field Work" This is the bulk of the project and can last anywhere from several months to just a few weeks depending on the interest level. In this part of the project children are investigating and discussing to gain a better understanding of the topic. This is the part where the teachers facilitate learning by incorporating the different areas of development into the project. Teachers generally do a "teacher web" in which we discuss how we are going to integrate the Illinois Early Learning Standards into the project. Some ways in which we do this is relating literacy to the topic, creating graphs and charts, cooking projects, building vocabulary, drawing, and writing, and hands on constructing. By the end of phase 2 the children will be "experts" on the topic.

Phase 3 - "Culminating Event" This is the formal presenting of the knowledge acquired during or project. We will often have displays in which parents and other members of our school community observe what we have learned.

During the project teachers are carefully collecting work sampling, pictures, artwork, and documentation from the entire process. We then gather these and put them on "panels" to document the entire process. These are generally displayed for all to see.

We find that by using the Project Approach we help to develop the whole child, and incorporate all of the areas of development into the topic chosen by the children. When children have a say in what they are learning it makes it more meaningful to them and they share in the learning process. Giving them ownership helps to hold them accountable for learning, creating a life-long love for learning!

Portfolios **Developmental Milestones**

At Katie's Kids Learning Center we use a portfolio system to track the developmental progress of each child. We take some time when your child first enrolls to get to know him or her. We work on building relationships, establishing routines, and making the transition from their previous experiences to their days at Katie's Kids. We then prepare a folder in which we keep a collection of your child's work. Documentation, art work, photos, and other work your child has done at school are kept to be put into the portfolio. This is why we may not be sending much home with your child. We have a developmental milestones chart that we put in each child's portfolio; we use this as our guide to keeping track of the skills your child is acquiring.

Portfolios are a great way to look at each individual child's areas of strength as well as areas that may need reinforcing. Teachers use this as a tool to help expose children to areas they may need strengthening. This is how we assess each individual child. This portfolio is a work in progress and we do not plan on completing them until the child graduates from their current room. When the child is ready to move on we, put their work all together in a bound form for you to have as a collection of their work.

If you ever have a question about your child's developmental progress you may contact your child's teacher to discuss it. We have yearly parent-teacher conferences to discuss this, however you may schedule a meeting at any time, and your child's teacher may do the same.