



ChildCareGroup

SELECTING AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR YOUR TODDLER (18 Months to 3 Years)

When selecting an early care and education program for your toddler you will want an arrangement that will give your child opportunities to practice motor skills, develop a sense of independence, play with others, and practice language.

Look for the following when selecting an early care and education program for your toddler:

- Plenty of space and a safe environment for play, exploration, and climbing.
- Duplicates of toys and books available to children and enough materials available so your child will not have to wait too long for her turn.
- Equipment, toys, and books are safe and interesting to the children.
- A wide variety of activities and materials, such as art, dramatic play, movement, music, reading, puzzles, blocks, etc. are available
- Opportunities for children to make their own choices in play.
- A schedule of activities that is followed everyday.
- A safe outdoor space where children can run and play everyday.
- The caregiver interacts with the children at their eye level.
- The caregiver listens to each child and redirects his attention, when appropriate. She does not just tell him what to do.

Some developmental characteristics of toddlers:

- Constantly moving and exploring.
- Test the limits of their environment.
- Start to learn rules and behavior control.
- Show interest in other children, but have difficulty sharing or playing with others for long periods of time.
- Begin to use words to communicate thoughts and feelings.
- Build trust and attachments with adults and other children.
- Become easily frustrated.
- Have short attention span.
- Play, not just to see how things feel or taste but to figure out what can be done with them.
- Imitate what they see.
- Love the word “No”—this is how they practice making decisions all by themselves.

Call ChildCareGroup’s Resource and Referral service at 214.631.2273 or 1.800.441.7865 for more free tips on choosing child care, other parenting resources or assistance in finding child care. Or visit us at www.ChildCareGroup.org/rr.

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