

Blue Door Parent Handbook/Appendix

Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care

Primary care is a key component of our infant and toddler classrooms. It is the assignment of a special caregiver to each child and encourages the forming of close relationships and secure attachments. These relationships allow infants and toddlers to comfortably explore their environment, learn, grow and develop while also forming meaningful relationships with other caregivers in the classroom. It also fosters the development of closeness and trust between caregiver and the child's family. The primary caregiver becomes the expert regarding feedings, diapering and nap times for each child for which he/she serves as primary caregiver. Your child's primary caregiver will also complete their assessments and schedule regular parent conferences. Primary caregiving is not about the exclusion of relationships between the child and other caregivers in the classroom. All of the teachers will engage with and form relationships with all of the children in their care. In Blue Door the lead classroom teachers will be assigned as primary caregivers to specific children. Your primary caregiver will do a home visit to meet you and your child prior to starting in Blue Door. A sign will also be posted in the classroom to let you know who your primary caregiver is.

Consistency in caregiving (meaning having the same people caring for a child for an extended period of time) is also very important for infants and toddlers as they form close attachments and meaningful relationships which allow them to comfortably explore their environment, grow and develop. In Blue Door we work to maintain this continuity in care through an openness between our infant and toddler programs. The children in both classrooms are familiar and comfortable with all the caregivers and children in the program, making for a smooth transition from the infant to toddler program. We also maintain this continuity by having two teachers rotate classrooms approximately once a year as the children are also transitioning. One infant teacher will move to the toddler classroom with the children moving to this classroom and one toddler teacher will move to the infant classroom at this time. One infant teacher always remains in the infant classroom to keep consistency and continuity of care with the youngest children.

Personal Supplies Needed

Please provide the following items for your child on an ongoing basis:

- Adequate supply of disposable or cloth diapers and/or training pants (if using cloth diapers, please bring a bag for disposal of used diapers)
- At least two complete changes of seasonal clothing including socks and shoes
- Appropriate outdoor apparel (e.g., hats, mittens, warm jackets, shoes, sun hat, etc.)
- Any creams, wipes, etc. used for diapering
- Comfort items your child uses (pacifiers, lovie, etc.)

- **Infants: Plastic** bottles needed for each day (parents are asked to bring clean bottles and take home used bottles daily)
- **Infants:** If breast fed, breast milk (provision can be made for storing frozen) labeled with child's name, date expressed and number of ounces
- **Infants:** If formula fed and using formula other than the center-provided formula, factory sealed formula labeled with your child's name
- **Infants:** Any additional food items needed
- **Older infants and toddlers:** Water bottle (please take your child's water bottle home each evening to wash and return the next morning)

Please label all items with your child's first and last name.

Diapering supplies should be placed on your child's shelf in the bathroom or under the infant changing table. Infant bottles, supplies, etc. should be placed in your child's personal "cubby" or in the refrigerator. Please check these areas each day to see that your child has adequate supplies for the following day. We do not have extra diapers, bottles, or pacifiers, and we have limited supplies of spare clothes.

Donations of the following items are always welcome:

- Washable plastic bibs
- Soft tissues/kleenex

Blue Door Arrival

Arrival times are special times for your family and the Blue Door teachers to share together and the Blue Door teachers will work with your family to make these transitions as smooth as possible.

Between 7:30 am – 8:30 am, infants and toddlers are often together as staff arrive and teachers prepare the room for the day. As this is a busy time, when you arrive, please check your child's diaper and if necessary, change it in the bathroom before your child enters play. (Diaper changing procedures are posted in the bathroom. Please follow these procedures for the health and safety of all the children.), and assist your child in washing his/her hands. Parents of infants should also be sure their child is fed before arriving as teachers may not be able to feed your child immediately after their arrival.

When you arrive, please sign-in, complete your child's daily chart, assist your child in washing his/her hands and apply sunscreen if needed. We encourage all parents to enter our play areas and spend time interacting with your child's teacher and helping your child become involved in play before leaving. The teachers will assist you in saying good-bye to your child as you and your child are ready to do this (see suggestions for separation in CDL Handbook). This allows your child to feel comfortable saying good-bye and gives you an opportunity to interact with the teachers on a daily basis.

Blue Door Departure

Departure times are also special times for Blue Door teachers, children and parents to interact and share experiences from the day in Blue Door. Be sure to allow time to visit with your child's teacher prior to the CDL closing time.

When you arrive for departure, after you greet your child, be sure to sign out and pick up your child's daily information sheet. This provides details of how your child ate, slept, etc. throughout the day.

While you gather up belongings, give your child enough time to wrap up his or her play. As with arrival, we invite parents to join their child in our play areas and to visit daily with your child's teacher about their day, play experiences and ongoing development.

As always, be sure and follow all safety guidelines when exiting from the building.

Daily Information Sheets

Daily information sheets facilitate communication between parents and teachers and provide parents and teachers with information as to what the child has done each day. Parents are asked to fill out a daily sheet when the child arrives, giving any specific instructions for the day and informing us about your child's previous evening and current morning. This information will help us to meet your child's needs each day.

Blue Door teachers will fill out the bottom half of the sheet during the day as they care for your child. This information will let parents know how their child's day at school has been and track naps, diaper changes, meals and other information. Teachers will also share notes on the child's daily activities and observations of developmental milestones. We depend on this consistent ongoing communication with parents to meet each child's individual needs and encourage parents to take this sheet with them at pick-up each day.

Infant Schedule

Each infant is cared for according to her/his own schedule and needs. The infant/pre-toddler curriculum includes activities conducted throughout the day as time and your child's interest permits.

Activities focus on the following areas of development as outlined in the Creative Curriculum: social/emotional, physical (fine and large motor, health and safety), language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science, sensory and technology, social studies and the arts. Feel free to ask your child's teacher for more information on any of these areas. Naps and feedings are scheduled on an individual basis with each child's needs in mind. Pre-toddlers are gradually transitioned to a more regular nap and meal schedule.

A variety of developmentally appropriate toys and materials are always available for infant's free play. Daily curriculum plans are posted in the classroom for you to know what the children are playing with and learning each day. A flexible daily schedule is also posted in the classroom and attached here.

Toddler Schedule

Children enter the toddler classroom between 15 and 18 months or when they are developmentally ready on an individual basis (space permitting). A more regular routine is followed in the toddler classroom which provides security for these children.

Daily activity plans are posted in the classroom to inform you of your child's play and learning. Toddlers have opportunities daily to participate in small and large group experiences as well as free play in a variety of areas including the ten areas outlined in the Creative Curriculum (see Infant Schedule). They are also provided opportunities daily to interact with each other and practice self-help skills.

The daily schedule for routines and planned experiences is flexible and based on children's interests, moods and weather conditions. The schedule is posted in the classroom and attached here.

Food Policy/Program

Proper nutrition and feeding are important aspects of a child's growth and development and in Blue Door we also consider mealtimes to be important social opportunities to build relationships with peers and teachers. The CDL provides nutritious meals and snacks for toddlers and infants who are ready for solid food in accordance with the childcare food program. We also request parents to provide a daily eating schedule for their infant.

All infants will be fed on demand which is the best way to meet an infant's nutritional and emotional needs. We will also communicate individually with each family regarding their child's feeding schedule and how each child communicates when they are hungry and ready to be fed.

Breast feeding mothers are welcome and encouraged to nurse their infant as needed throughout the day. The CDL has a private lactation room that provides a private, comfortable place for moms to nurse their infant. Nursing moms are also welcome in Blue Door and other family members are welcome to feed their infant either in the classroom or the private lactation room.

Breast milk may be brought in fresh daily and stored in the Blue Door refrigerator or brought in frozen and stored in the CDL freezer. Breast milk must be labeled with the child's name, date and time expressed, and how many ounces are in the container.

Breast milk/formula may not be kept at room temperature for more than one hour if it has been previously frozen or refrigerated. Freshly expressed breast milk may be kept in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours. If breast milk was frozen and then thawed it may be kept for 24 hours.

Breast milk may be stored in the freezer for up to 3 months. To warm a bottle, water will be warmed in a cup in the microwave and the bottle will be placed in the cup of warm water. With parent permission a bottle of breast milk/formula will be offered a maximum of 2 times. After offering the bottle a maximum of two times, any remaining contents will be discarded.

All infants are held when being given a bottle. Giving an infant a bottle when they are lying down or in their crib is dangerous and may lead to choking, ear infections, or dental problems and is against the center's policy.

The CDL provides Parent's Choice Gentle formula for parents choosing to use formula. You may also choose to provide your own formula; it must be factory sealed and labeled with your child's name. Formula will only be given as per the instructions on the container, unless a doctor's note is provided. Formula bottles are prepared using tap water and warmed using water warmed in the microwave. If you prefer to have bottles prepared using bottled water, please provide the factory sealed bottled water labeled with your child's name.

In keeping with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDL does not add cereal to bottles and does not serve cow's milk to children prior to 12 months of age.

The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that infants are generally ready to be introduced to solid foods from 4-7 months of age. The ability to chew and sit without support, drinking more than 32 ounces of formula or nursing more than eight times a day may be signs that your baby is ready for solid foods. The CDL provides iron fortified rice and oatmeal cereal, stage one and two fruits and vegetables, whole milk, soy milk and 1% milk for children over 2 years of age. Parents are also welcome to bring their own baby food for their child. The Blue Door teachers will communicate individually with each parent regarding the introduction of baby foods. Parents of infants under 12 months of age will have the option to choose to provide all foods for their child or to use all foods provided by the CDL.

Infants are generally ready to try table foods around 8-11 months of age. The Blue Door teachers will communicate individually with each family regarding the gradual introduction of table foods. All foods offered will be mashed or cut into pieces no larger than ¼ inch square, and served to the child according to their chewing and swallowing capabilities.

By age one most children will have transitioned into eating all table foods provided by the CDL. Menus are posted in the hallway, Blue Door classroom and on the CDL website. All food allergies must be reported to the CDL office. If your child cannot eat what is being served due to a food allergy, vegetarian diet or religious reasons, the CDL will provide an alternative item. Due to a high incidence of peanut allergies, no peanut products will be served at the CDL.

Naptime/Rest Time

Infants: In the infant room teachers work with families to ensure routines and schedules closely resemble those at home. Communication between parents and teachers is essential. As infants grow and develop, sleeping preferences, schedules, and soothing techniques change frequently.

Parents are encouraged to communicate and update teachers as changes occur at home. Infants are placed on their backs in individual cribs or pack-and-plays to sleep. Teachers use soothing techniques such as singing and rocking to help infants fall asleep. Some infants fall asleep more easily when placed in the crib awake. If a parent desires, infants may be allowed to self-soothe and fall asleep in this manner. Infants are not left awake in their crib for more than 15 minutes if content and less than 5 minutes if unhappy. If your child has a condition that requires positioning on the side or tummy for sleep, a doctor's note is required. Children do not sleep in bouncy seats, car seats or swings.

Blue Door will provide crib sheets for all children and has some sleep sacks for children to use. Parent may also bring sleep sacks from home. No blankets will be used in cribs. Crib sheets and sleep sacks are washed weekly or more often if needed. Each infant is assigned their own crib. Crib rails and mattresses are cleaned and disinfected weekly or more often if needed.

Pre-toddlers (over 1-year-old) and Toddlers: The toddlers nap daily from approximately 12:30-2:30. Pre-toddlers will gradually be transitioned to this schedule. Child care licensing requires that written permission be obtained for children to sleep on a rest mat at age one. All toddlers sleep on their own rest mat. The CDL provides a sheet and blanket for each child which are washed weekly or more often if needed. Parents are also welcome to provide a blanket from home. If a child needs assistance to settle to sleep, teachers will sit with them, pat their backs or for younger children, rock them to sleep. The lights are dimmed and soft music is played at a low level to help relax children for naptime. Parents are encouraged to share information regarding how their child is put to sleep at home and any changes in their child's sleep routines. Children who awaken will be allowed to leave their mat within a reasonable amount of time (within 2-3 minutes if unhappy or 15 minutes if content).

Safe Sleep Practices:

- Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. If an infant requires an alternative sleep position or special sleeping arrangements, a doctor's note and specific instructions must be provided.
- When infants can easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be initially placed on their backs, but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep.
- Sleeping infants will be closely supervised while sleeping. The caregiver will check on the infant frequently and will remain in close proximity to the infant in order to hear and see them if they have difficulty during napping or when they awaken.
- All caregivers will receive in-person or online training on infant safe sleep based on AAP safe sleep recommendations.
- Room temperature will be kept at no less than 68F and no more than 85F to ensure infants are not overheated or chilled.
- Infants' heads and face will not be covered during sleep. Infants' cribs will not have blankets or bedding hanging on the sides of the crib. We may use sleep clothing (i.e. sleep sack, sleepers) that is designed to keep an infant warm without the possible hazard of covering the head or face during sleep/nap times.

- No blankets, loose bedding, comforters, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed animals, or any object that can increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation or strangulation will be used in cribs or pack-and-plays.
- Parents must provide pacifiers and these cannot have cords, attaching mechanisms or attached toys. Pacifiers will be cleaned and sanitized daily.

Diapering and Toilet Training

All Blue Door teachers and student teachers follow a consistent diapering procedure to ensure that diapers are changed in a sanitary and healthy manner. These procedures are posted in all changing areas. Procedures for cleaning and sanitizing changing tables are also posted.

In preparation for toilet training, children are encouraged to participate in the diapering procedure as is developmentally appropriate. Toddlers and pre-toddlers are encouraged to assist in pulling up and down their pants, removing diapers and sitting on the toilet as they are interested. All children wash hands after diapering or toileting. To further prepare for using the toilets, toddlers' wet diapers are usually changed while the child is standing.

Infant Shoe Policy

Our infant play and sleep areas are completely shoe free environments. Infants' hands and bodies frequently touch the floor, therefore we want our floors free from gravel, dirt and germs that can be tracked in on shoes. Everyone entering these areas will need to remove their shoes at the door or put on shoe covers that are available by the entrance to Blue Door.

Changing Programs

Blue Door children will transition from the infant program to the toddler program as space is available and children are developmentally ready. No guarantee can be given that these children will then be placed in the preschool program once they've reached the age limit of the toddler program. Priority will be given to these children for preschool enrollment, and placements will be made as space is available. With all transitions, your child's teacher will communicate with you prior to the transition and will work with you to develop a transition plan that is comfortable for you and your child. See Transition Plans attached here and Transitioning Children in CDL Handbook.

MU Student Involvement

Practicum students enrolled in the Infant-Toddler Practicum course are assigned weekly lab hours with either the infants or toddlers in the fall, spring and summer semesters. The students participate in the daily caregiving routines and assist in classroom planning as they learn about

how infants and toddlers learn and develop in a supervised setting. The student's names and lab hours are posted in the hallway each semester.

Each student is given a focus child/family that they will build an individualized relationship with. They are responsible for observing their focus child's development over the semester and will share their observations with their focus family at the end of the semester. They will also contact their focus child's parents at the beginning of the semester to ask some questions to help them get to know their focus child and family better. Throughout the semester, they may share additional observations or ask additional questions.

Occasionally we have students from other classes observe and participate with the children. You will be informed of any research projects or other events needing your attention or awareness.