

# WELCOME TO THE WADDLER GROUP!

*Please take the time to read these few pages of information that will help give you a basic understanding of the Waddler Group. Thank you!*

## CHILDREN

The children in the Waddler Group range in age from 15 months to approximately 22 months.

## STAFF

There is a ratio of one caregiver for every three children. This enables us to provide a good deal of attention to the individual needs of each child.

## ROOM

The Waddler room is accessed through the preschool gym area. The Waddler room has a small kitchen area (with a refrigerator for lunches), a bathroom and diaper changing area. The Waddlers share their kitchen and diaper changing space with the Infant Two Group but have separate play space. The Waddlers also share their gym, which doubles as a sleeping area, with the Toddlers. Each child has a coat hook and mailbox (which should be checked daily for artwork and notices from the office).

## DAILY ROUTINES

Caring for your children is very important to our staff and one of the first goals is to get to know the children and their personalities. The next goal is to help the children adjust to the child care experience. Some children adjust quickly and others will take some time to feel comfortable separating from parents. Caregivers will help you by inviting children to play and get involved with other children.

Another goal of the Waddler Group is to provide for the basic needs of each child in our care. This includes nurturing, feeding, sleeping, changing and playing. In addition, staff spends time helping children to reach developmental milestones through planned and improvised activities.

The daily schedule for the Waddler Group is flexible but there is an overall plan to the day. A copy of this schedule is posted in the room and copies will be distributed at orientation or upon request.

Parents inform the staff about their child's schedule each day by completing a **WADDLER DAILY REPORT**. These forms are available in the Waddler room and must be completed each day that your child attends. The information you provide on this form gives staff important guidelines for your child's day.

In addition to the daily form, you should also complete a **WADDLER INTAKE FORM** when your child starts in our program and at any time that there are significant changes in eating, sleeping, health needs, etc. The Intake Form gives caregivers an overview of your child and is something they will refer to periodically for guidance. These forms are given to you at registration but additional copies are always available in the Waddler room or in the office.

## ACTIVITIES

Waddlers are a fascinating developmental group. Some still have characteristics of infants (they are crawling, babbling, needing to be fed, etc.) and some have characteristics of toddlers (walking, starting to say words, eating independently, etc.) The Waddler caregivers are expert at meeting the needs of this diverse and interesting group!

Keeping their developmental levels in mind, caregivers plan a variety of activities for the children and each day includes: art activities (coloring, painting, gluing), music and movement, story time (both group and individual), water and sand table play, playdough, puzzles and other manipulative toys, and free play.

The Waddlers go outdoors to the small playground each day, weather permitting, to climb, ride on bikes and cars, dig in the sand and play with outdoor toys. Using our wagons that safely seat six children, the group will occasionally go for walks to enjoy the sights and sounds of the campus. On rainy or very cold days, the Waddlers will use the indoor gym area for gross motor play.

## MEAL SCHEDULES

In addition to lunches that come from home, snacks are provided for the children three times per day.

- **Morning Snack** - consists of a variety of nutritious breakfast foods and is served at approximately 8:45 AM.
- **Breakfast** – you may send in breakfast from home, if you would like. It will be served to your child at morning snack time or if you are scheduled to arrive before 8:00 AM, it will be served when your child arrives.
- **Lunch** - at the beginning of a semester, lunch starts out quite early as the Waddlers are hungry from a busy morning of activities. As days and weeks progress, lunch time becomes more set at about 11:15 AM. Children are given their lunch at this time but if they do not eat well, they are offered lunch again at afternoon snack.
- **Afternoon Snack** - is served at 2 PM and this is also when lunch will be served again for those children who did not eat well earlier.
- **Late Afternoon Snack** - a light snack is served at approximately 4:00 PM.
- **Bottle/Cup Time** - occurs several times throughout the day. This gives the children who need it time to have their milk and others to have a drink of water, juice, or milk.
- **Beverages** – the children are given diluted white grape juice, milk, or water as a beverage with all snacks.

## **MEALS**

The Waddler children sit as a group for meals and there is a good deal of adult interaction to help them with eating. Special attention is given to the children to ensure their nutritional needs are met: staff will feed children, will help to feed them as they become more independent with eating, and will encourage them to learn how to feed themselves. Parents bring lunches and we provide snacks for the children three times per day. Please refer to the “Meals” section in Parent Handbook for specific food guidelines and keep the following in mind when preparing lunches:

- Please cut all food into bite-sized pieces and remove bones from meat.
- Please send a beverage, milk or 100% fruit juice, with lunch.
- Food intended to be served warm will be heated by our staff.
- Please label all bottles, bottle caps, cups, and food containers.

**SPECIAL FOOD NEEDS** – health or allergy related, nutritional, religious, or cultural, will be accommodated. The most important factor in special situations is to discuss these needs with administrators and caregivers.

## **SLEEPING**

Parents give staff guidance as to how their child goes to sleep and staff do their best to duplicate the child’s usual sleeping habits.

It is our goal to have all the children sleep on cots in the sleeping area. Occasionally, particularly when a child starts in the program, they may not be able to sleep on a cot and may sleep in a stroller or on the mattress, always within the sight of caregivers and with the consent of parents. Children who are sound sleepers may be moved to a cot once they are asleep and as time passes, more often than not, children will eventually be able to sleep on a cot without difficulty.

Waddler parents will be asked to sign a form giving us permission to have their child sleep on a cot.

Cots are labeled with children’s names and are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

## **DIAPERING**

Children's diapers are changed every two hours or when needed. Parents provide all diapering supplies and will be asked to sign a form giving us permission to apply creams or lotions. Each child has a storage bin, in the changing area, which holds a daily supply of diapers, wipes, etc., as well as a change of clothing.

Department of Health guidelines are followed for diapering and these procedures include but are not limited to:

- Staff wear gloves when changing diapers
- Diapering area is covered with exam table paper
- Soiled diapers and paper are disposed in covered trash cans
- Diapering area is wiped down with a disinfecting solution of bleach and water
- After diapering, children are helped to wash their hands and adults wash their hands
- CHILDREN ARE NEVER LEFT ALONE ON THE CHANGING TABLE

## **SUPPLIES**

Please bring these items to the Greenhouse for your child and please write your child's name on each item:

- One change of clothing that includes a shirt, pants, onesie or undershirt and socks.
- A sweater or sweatshirt just in case it's cool in the building.
- Diapering supplies including diapers, wipes and diaper ointment or cream. It is advisable to bring in a large pack of diapers and as you run low on diapering supplies, you will receive a note asking you to bring in additional items.
- A crib sheet and light blanket for sleeping. (Sheets and blankets will be laundered weekly at the Greenhouse.)

## **MOVING TO THE NEXT AGE GROUP**

We generally transition children to the Toddler Group at the start of a new semester. Occasionally, we will move a child during a semester if there is an opening and if the child is developmentally ready. When the decision to move a child is being made, parents will be informed and given an opportunity to meet with new caregivers. As part of the transition process, children will make several visits to the new room, accompanied by caregivers they know.

## **IN CLOSING**

We want your time in the Waddler Group to be a positive experience for your child and for you. At any time, please do not hesitate to ask questions of caregivers and to speak with administrators if you have concerns.