TODDLER CURRICULUM

During their time in the toddler class, children awaken to the joy of connecting with people outside their families. In a nurturing environment, toddlers learn to trust adults and, little by little, to take care of themselves.
TODDLER CURRICULUM
Language

Language development is one of the major accomplishments in the first three years of life. During these years, children learn the meaning and usage of over one hundred words, these can be any language that they are exposed. Language is not formally taught; children absorb it simply by being around older people who communicate with them and encourage their communication in any language. Children develop language at their own individual rates; the teacher’s task is to respect the individual differences in language development.

In the Toddler Program, children increase the number of words they can speak and understand. They begin to use language to make their needs known, to follow instructions, and to make observations about their environment, and they start to use words rather than actions to communicate feelings.

Expressive and Receptive Language

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics

1. Recognize and produce rhymes

   Activity Example: A teacher stops while reading a book and identifies rhyming sounds from the text.

   Activity Example: A child takes two baskets filled with objects off the shelf. The child chooses one object from basket 1 and finds the rhyming object in basket 2, continuing in this way until the baskets are empty.

   Activity Example: A teacher sits with a child and and repeats pairs of words, some rhyming, some not. The child tells her when the words rhyme, as in “dog, fog”, “run, fun”, but not “hold, happy”, etc.

2. Children will use language to communicate in small and large groups.

   Activity Example: At circle time, toddlers sing, listen to stories, do finger plays, and share observations of one another and of their environment.

   Activity Example: Toddlers learn to follow two-step directions like, “Annie, please pick up your mittens and put them in your cubby. Thank you.”

3. Children begin to develop their working knowledge of language mechanics.

   Activity Example: The child begins to use many words that tell what people are doing (action verbs). To encourage this development, a teacher asks a child, such as “What is Gabrielle doing?” The child answers, “She is building with blocks.”

4. Children learn to ask, to listen, and to acquire new knowledge through verbal communication.
Activity Example: Toddlers play the “Listen and Say” game with their teacher. The teacher announces, “We are going to be so quiet – let’s just listen.” After fifteen seconds of silence, children tell the noises they heard, saying things like, “I heard a car go by,” or “I heard the sound coming from the fish tank.”

Activity Example: Toddlers play Listening Lotto with animal sounds on the iPad. They hear sounds of different animals, and they identify and label each sound they hear.

Activity Example: In the spring toddlers play a game with stuffed birds. When squeezed, each mimics the sounds of the wild bird’s song. In circle teachers hold a bird, saying the name of it. She then squeezes it so they hear the bird’s song. Later a teacher hides the bird, squeezes it and asks the toddlers to guess the name of the bird making the sound.

5. Children begin to express feelings verbally rather than through actions.

Activity Example: A Toddler, upset or frightened by unfamiliar people, listens as the teacher gives words to their feelings, saying, “I know you feel shy, Grace. This is Matthew’s dad. He is going to help us in the classroom today.” The child may use this language later, independently.

Activity Example: A Toddler learns to use accurate language. When a child says, “I want this,” a teacher responds, “Do you want the car? You can say ‘I want the car, please.’”

Literature

Listening to stories, poems and rhymes read aloud teaches children the importance of language and begins a life-long love of reading. A foundation for literacy is built through this activity, as children begin to look through books on their own and start to label the pictures they see.

6. Children will associate literature to elements of their daily routine.

Activity Example: When a child is having difficulty settling down for a nap, a teacher recites passages from Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown.

Activity Example: While children are transitioning to a next activity, a teacher sings songs to help ease the change.

7. Children will experience literature as a source of movement and music.

Activity Example: Children sing the story of Old McDonald had a Farm, and they accompany their song with movements.

8. Children will hear stories about children and animals whose daily lives are similar to their own.

Activity Example: Children listen to readings of books like Once Upon a Potty by Alona Frankel, When You Were a Baby by Ann Jonas, and Tickle, Tickle by Helen Oxenbury.

9. Children are exposed to different genres of literature.

Activity Example: At circle, toddlers are introduced to the concept of poetry by learning a rhyming game.
10. Children develop an understanding that books are sources of information with themes.

  Activity Example: Having been introduced to a wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, about owls, Toddlers share things they have learned about “Owls.”

**Composition**

11. Children begin to identify the alphabet by letter name and sound.

  Activity Example: Letters are introduced slowly to children through books, games, puzzles and objects.

12. Children begin to explore their own abilities to tell a story through the use of symbols.

  Activity Example: A child learns about story telling and sequence through interaction with a set of pictures showing a day in the life of a little boy, hearing and then telling, “The boy wakes up in the morning, he gets dressed....”

  Activity Example: A child uses a story board and objects to recite a story as she plays.

  Activity Example: In circle children hear stories told by their teachers and peers. They each share their own stories when they are ready.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Math

As toddlers explore their environment, they are exposed to basic mathematical concepts such as one-to-one correspondence, rote counting, geometric shapes, vocabulary, the concept of number, number symbols, problem solving, and early concepts of measurement. Through the prepared environment, the materials allow the toddlers to sort, match, count, and absorb the language used relating to math.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples include:

1. Children learn the concept of number through counting in sequence, experimenting with dimension, sorting, matching, and using one-to-one correspondence.
   
   Activity example: A child experiences counting aloud at circle time as we count the slices of apple that we cut for Food Tasting.
   
   Activity example: A child strings large beads and then counts how many beads are on the string.
   
   Activity example: A child stacks nesting cups that vary by diameter and depth.
   
   Activity example: A child places three small bears next to the symbol for three, matching the amount to a picture card as well as to the numeral.
   
   Activity example: A child uses one-to-one correspondence as he/she puts a peg in each hole on a pegboard.
   
   Activity example: A child sorts small wooden hearts, squares, and circles, placing them into three separate compartments on a tray.
   
   Activity example: A child matches small animals to the corresponding picture of each animal.

2. Toddlers begin to associate the name of a number with a symbol.
   
   Activity example: At circle time, each child has a turn to roll an oversized die on which numerals one through six are printed. The group jumps the number of times indicated on the die.
   
   Activity example: A child reads a counting book; on each page he/she sees the number symbol.
   
   Activity example: A child manipulates a puzzle consisting of individual pieces, one through five.

3. Children learn the names of shapes and numbers through repetition and experience.
   
   Activity example: Children count together during circle time as the toddler teacher leads a finger-play about bees, saying, “...Let’s watch them come out of the hive. One, two, three, four, five! Bzzzzz...”
   
   Activity example: A child works with a shape puzzle as the teacher (or a peer) points to the square and asks, “Where does the square go?”

4. Children begin to develop a concept of measurement through experimentation with materials.
Activity example: Children pour water back and forth between differently shaped containers of the same volume.

5. Children experience activities that have a control of error and learn to problem solve.
   Activity example: A child tries a puzzle piece in various places until it fits.

6. Children learn the geometric shapes through the manipulation of both two and three-dimensional geometric figures and solids.
   Activity example: A child fits three-dimensional shapes through the corresponding holes in a box.
   Activity example: A single slot puzzle of different shapes gives toddlers the experience of discriminating between two-dimensional shapes.
   Activity example: A child holds objects of various shapes, and using her senses, differentiates among the different objects.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

History and Geography

Toddlers are moving from the unconscious absorbent mind to the conscious absorbent mind. They begin to make sense of the world through routine and experience. Toddlers learn familiar vocabulary words associated with time and start to develop an understanding of the meaning of these terms. Being part of a group, outside of their family, helps children develop empathy and the fact that their actions impact others. By being part of a school toddlers learn that there are other classrooms, students, teachers, and buildings as well as where they are located.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples include:

1. Children experience order and routine which helps them to feel safe in a predictable environment.
   
   Activity Example: At the end of circle time, a toddler puts his carpet square away and walks to the front of the classroom to put on his jacket and change into his outdoor shoes in preparation for the playground. He knows what to do because this is the same routine every day.

2. Children begin to understand the meaning of some vocabulary words associated with time, such as ‘yesterday’, ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’.
   
   Activity Example: A toddler asks the teacher, “Are we going on a nature walk today?” and the teacher replies, “Tomorrow we will go on our nature walk.” The following day the teacher says to the child, “Remember yesterday you asked me about the nature walk? Today we are going on our nature walk.”
   
   Activity Example: In the classroom a teacher says to some children, “In five minutes it will be time for circle.” After five minutes the teacher says, “Now it is circle time.”

3. Children learn what it means to be part of a group and a school.
   
   Activity Example: A child names the members of her family and learns about the families of other children in the class.
   
   Activity Example: At circle time, a child crawls forward into the middle of the circle. Several children say, “I can’t see.” The child realizes that she is sitting in front of other children and she crawls back to her spot.
   
   Activity Example: At the playground, a toddler sees the middle school students walking along the path. The toddler says, “Look! There are our Middle School buddies! They are walking back to their classroom.”
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Science

Toddlers experience basic science concepts through caring for their environment, experimenting with activities, and asking spontaneous questions about the natural world.

**Learning Objectives and Activity Examples include:**

1. **(Physical Science)** Children begin to develop an understanding of physical science through experience with objects and learning the vocabulary to describe different properties of objects.

   **Activity example:** Through hand washing children learn the vocabulary “wet” and “dry”.
   **Activity example:** Children experience objects sinking and floating at the sensory table.
   **Activity Example:** The children use tongs to transfer ice cubes from one cup to another. The children notice that the ice cubes start to melt and then turn to water.
   **Activity example:** Children wash their snack dishes in warm water and rinse in the cold water. They feel the difference between the temperature of the separate bins of water.

2. **(Physical Science)** Children experience gravity and balance through gross motor activities in the classroom.

   **Activity example:** A child experiences the pull of gravity by jumping on the trampoline.

3. **(Life Science)** Children learn the names and characteristics of animals through language, objects, and experience.

   **Activity example:** A child uses language cards with realistic pictures to identify and name different types of animals.
   **Activity example:** Using animal objects a child matches an object to a like object. Later, he will match the same object to a corresponding picture card.
   **Activity Example:** On a nature walk, a child turns over a rock and discovers an insect. A teacher says, ”That’s a beetle” and the child repeats, “beetle.”

4. **(Life Science)** Children learn to care for plants and animals.

   **Activity example:** Children take turns feeding the pets in the classroom and observing how each animal lives.
   **Activity Example:** Children feel the soil of plants and determine whether it is moist or dry. They water the plants using a watering can.
   **Activity Example:** In the spring, children plant seeds and watch the plants grow.

5. **(Life Science)** Children begin to experience the life cycle of living things.

   **Activity Example:** Children look at photographs of the life cycle of a frog. The children see pictures of an egg, a tadpole, and a frog.
   **Activity Example:** The children use a puzzle where each piece shows a different stage of the metamorphosis of a caterpillar.
Activity example: A child plants seeds in a small pot and watches, over time, as the seed sprouts and grows into a plant.

Activity example: Children observe a chrysalis in their room, watching to see when the pupa inside has changed from a caterpillar's body to emerge in a butterfly's body.

6. (Life Science) Children learn the characteristics of fruits and vegetables

Activity Example: Every week the children taste a different type of fruit or vegetable at group time. The children experience different tastes, textures, and flavors.

Activity Example: At our group food tasting and at snack, the children learn to identify a variety of fruits and vegetables. They learn vocabulary such as “seeds” and “peel.”

7. (Earth and Space Science) Through every day experiences and conversations the children discover earth science.

Activity example: The children notice and talk about the weather related to what they see and feel, and, therefore, what they wear, such as mittens when it is cold and shorts when it is hot.

Activity Example: The children sing songs about the weather and ask questions, such as, “Rain, rain, we love you, Mother Nature needs you. The trees are green, the earth is clean, put on your coat and come out and play”

8. (Earth and Space Science) Children learn about space from things that they can see - moon, sun, stars

Activity example: When the moon can be seen in daylight, the children find it in the sky saying, “Look, the moon!”

9. (Science in Personal and Social Perspectives) Children learn to care for their own bodies through a variety of self-care activities.

Activity Example: Children learn to wipe their nose with a tissue using a low mirror to see their face.

Activity Example: In the bathroom, children learn to use the toilet, undress and dress, and wash their hands with soap and water.

10. (Science in Personal and Social Perspectives) Children notice their social surroundings.

Activity Example: Children participate in reporting the attendance and become aware of who is absent and why.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Spanish

When there is a bilingual teacher present in the toddler team, integrating Spanish into the classroom is spontaneous and informal. No formal expectations or assessment is made with regards to Spanish learning. The bilingual teacher often speaks to the children in Spanish, identifying objects, making requests of the children, playing games, singing songs, etc.

Toddlers are exposed to Spanish spoken by a native speaker. This occurs through spontaneous conversations and interactions throughout the day, and also through books, songs, and activities.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples include:

1. Toddlers hear Spanish spoken by one of their teachers, who is a native Spanish speaker.
   
   **Activity example:** A child joins Gladys at circle time and sings along to “Los Pollitos”.

   **Activity Example:** A child carries a Spanish book to Gladys and asks her to read it to her. Gladys reads the book to the child in Spanish in the book corner.

2. Toddlers hear verbal directions in Spanish accompanied by body language. Eventually, the body language becomes unnecessary and the child follows verbal directions in Spanish.

   **Activity Example:** In the beginning of the year, a child washes her hands after Gladys says, “Lavate las manos” and gestures to the sink motioning for the child to wash her hands.

3. Through interactions and conversations, toddlers absorb the names of familiar words in Spanish.

   **Activity Example:** A toddler carries a glass over to the snack area and says to Gladys, “agua por favor”.
LMS aims to nurture in each student the construction of a knowledgeable, confident identity as an individual and as a member of multiple cultural groups (such as gender, race, ethnicity, or class). We enable children to have comfortable, empathetic interactions with people from diverse backgrounds. We also foster each child’s ability to recognize bias and injustice, and cultivate each child’s ability to stand up, individually and with others, against bias or injustice.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples Include: (The four objectives listed below are adapted from the goals proposed by “Start Seeking Diversity,” Redleaf Press)

1. Nurture the construction of a knowledgeable, confident identity as an individual and as a member of multiple cultural groups (such as gender, race, ethnicity, or class).
   a. We create conditions (prepare environments) so that all children are able to like who they are without needing to feel superior to anyone else.
   b. We challenge “internalized superiority” and “internalized oppression”?
   c. We help children of non-dominant cultures develop abilities to operate in both their home culture and the dominant culture.
   d. We help children develop the ability to negotiate and problem solve when issues arise from difference between home cultures and the dominant culture

   **Activity Example:** The artwork in the toddler room represents a wide spectrum of America. A toddler sees pictures representing different ages, gender, skin color and cultural media.

   **Activity Example:** Toddlers see and interact with teachers of varying accents, skin color and hair texture allowing for opportunities for spontaneous inquiry.

   **Activity Example:** In the toddler room each child’s family picture is displayed throughout the year. This gives toddlers the opportunity to learn about different cultures and family structures. A toddler picks up a photograph and says, “My family! I have two moms.” Another child finds her family picture and carries it over to the child saying, “This is my family. That’s my brother and my sister.”

   **Activity Example:** A child approaches the book corner and sees a newly added book. He sits down and flips through the pages, viewing photographs from around the world.

   **Activity Example:** A toddler chooses the “baby-washing” work in the classroom, using a sponge and soap to wash the baby doll. The teachers provide dolls of varying skin colors during the year, encouraging toddlers to recognize differences.

   **Activity Example:** A toddler in the classroom is celebrating the Chinese New Year. Her parents join our circle time to talk about the Chinese New Year, show pictures, share food, and sing songs.

   **Activity Example:** A teacher speaks Spanish in the classroom and tells a toddler, “I am from Peru and I speak Spanish.” Another toddler says, “My daddy speaks Spanish!”

   **Activity Example:** A toddler parent who is a female dentist (or male nurse, or female farmer, etc.) joins our circle time and talks with the toddlers about being a dentist.
**Activity Example:** A toddler listens to a teacher read the book *The Princess Boy*, which is about a boy who likes to wear dresses and the color pink. The toddler looks at the pictures and listens as the teacher comments, “Boys can wear dresses or pink if they want to.”

**Activity Example:** A large part of the toddler conflict resolution work happens related to toddlers waiting their turn. In the snack area, a child sits in the “waiting chair,” to waiting for her turn to sit at the table.

**Activity Example:** A toddler sets up a place at the lunch table, using a placemat, plate, fork, spoon, and knife. He learns these dinner table customs, though his family eats differently at home.

**Activity Example:** A toddler enters the book corner and sees books on the shelf about Kwanzaa (or other holidays, as determined by the population of the classroom). She smiles and says, “I celebrate the Kwanzaa at my house!”

**Activity Example:** A toddler begins touching another child’s work. The child shouts “NO!” and the other child begins to cry. A teacher says, “Look at his face. He’s crying. I think your loud voice scared him. You can say, ‘This is my work’ in a gentle voice.” The child repeats those words.

**Activity Example:** Toddlers gather in a circle to taste a mango. (This food tasting ritual is repeated regularly throughout the year, with foods from throughout the world.)

2. Promote comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.
   a. We foster children’s interest in and empathy with difference.
   b. We counter children’s fear or judgment of difference.
   c. We help children learn to negotiate day-to-day natural discomfort, tensions, problems or conflicts that can arise from difference.
   d. We engender in children recognition of commonalities that all people share.

   **Activity Example:** A toddler is looking at a teacher’s skin. The teacher says, “Look, my skin is darker than your skin. Let’s put our hands together and look at our skin color.”

   **Activity Example:** Two toddlers are in the bathroom with a teacher changing their diapers. The teacher asks closely at the boy and asks, “What’s that?” The teacher responds, “That’s a penis. Boys have penises and girls have vaginas.”

   **Activity Example:** At lunchtime, a toddler looks at the teacher’s food and asks, “Why do you always eat rice?” The teacher responds, “I am from Peru, and in Peru we eat rice every day.”

   **Activity Example:** A toddler seems uncomfortable when she sees our diversity coordinator, a dark skinned male. He continues to visit the classroom every week, reading and working with the children, helping the toddler become comfortable with him and developing a positive relationship.

   **Activity Example:** A toddler is crying and needs attention from a teacher. Another child asks the teacher for help. The teacher responds, “Aman needs my help right now.” The child solves the problem on her own. In this way the child comes to understand that children have different needs and temperaments.

   **Activity Example:** A few toddlers find their family pictures in the classroom. They walk around the classroom looking at everyone’s family picture, realizing that everyone has a family and that families have different structures.

3. Foster each child’s ability to recognize bias and injustice.
a. We help children develop the knowledge and analytical skills to identify unfair and untrue images (stereotypes) directed at one’s own or another’s identity.

b. We help children develop the knowledge and analytical skills to identify unfair and untrue comments (teasing and name-calling) directed at one’s own or another’s identity.

c. We help children develop the knowledge and analytical skills to identify unfair behaviors (discrimination) directed at one’s own or another’s identity.

Activity Example: Matthew arrives at school with pink hairclips in his hair. The teachers respond, as they would to a girl wearing hairclips, saying, “You’re wearing hair clips today. I like them.” The model that it is okay for boys to wear hairclips.

Activity Example: A toddler is in the hallway and hears an older child say, “You’re a baby.” The toddler says, “I’m NOT a baby!” A teacher adds, “You’re right. You’re not a baby. You’re two years old.”

Activity Example: At the playground, an older child tells a toddler, “You’re too little to climb this big rock.” The toddler becomes upset. A teacher helps saying, “Actually, he can climb it.” The toddler says, “I can do it” and climbs the rock.

4. Cultivate each child’s ability to stand up, individually and with others, against bias or injustice.

a. We help every child learn and practice a variety of ways to act in the face of bias expressed by other children and adults.

Activity Example: A toddler is chasing another child at the playground. The child being chased does not like it and starts to cry. A teacher models, “Tell her, ‘Stop. I don’t like that!’” The child repeats these words, learning to stand up for himself.

Activity Example: All LMS children participate in annual discussions of the ways that UNICEF seeks to counter inequitable distribution of goods and resources. They are encouraged to help raise funds during the Trick or Treat for UNICEF campaign.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Physical Education

Toddlers are in the sensitive period for movement. In all of our activities, we try to incorporate movement. We also have a specific large motor area of the classroom with equipment for the toddlers to be active. In addition, the toddlers visit the playground every day, weather permitting.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples include:

1. Movement is incorporated into all activities.
   
   **Activity example:** A child finishes the hand-washing activity, pours the water from the bowl into the bucket, and carries the heavy bucket across the room to pour the water into the sink.

2. Our large motor area of the classroom contains equipment that we rotate throughout the year such as a sit-and-spin, a balance beam, a trampoline, steps, a small basketball hoop, and a rocking horse.
   
   **Activity example:** A child walks to the large motor area, steps up onto the trampoline, and begins jumping.

3. The toddlers visit the playground every day and experience slides, ride-on toys, tricycles, rocks to climb, open space to run, balls, and digging in the sandbox.
   
   **Activity example:** A toddler holds the railing of the structure, climbs up the steps, walks to the top of the slide, and slides down.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Music

Toddlers are exposed to music in a variety of ways. In our classroom, we sing songs, use musical instruments, dance and move to music, and practice keeping rhythm. Toddlers also experience different types of music.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples Include:

1. Children experience a variety of musical instruments.
   
   **Activity Example**: A toddler takes a basket of instruments off of the shelf and carries it to the rug. She takes out each instrument and explores the sounds of a tambourine, castanet, maraca, and claves.

   **Activity Example**: A child sits at the table and uses the classroom piano, pressing the keys and listening to the notes.

2. Toddlers experience rhythm and dancing through a variety of movement songs.

   **Activity Example**: A child joins in at circle time clapping along to the beat of “We Can Clap Together”

3. Toddlers are exposed to different types of music.

   **Activity Example**: At naptime, a toddler rests on his mat, listening to the quiet sounds from an Ocean CD.
TODDLER CURRICULUM
Practical Life

Our classroom is designed to foster independence and self-care skills through our routines and activities. Toddlers practice dressing and undressing, caring for their environment, and caring for their personal belongings. They learn everyday skills such as pouring, scooping, spreading, and cutting.

Learning objectives and related activities include:

1) Children begin to develop self-care skills.

   **Activity example:** At arrival, toddlers take off their jacket, hang it on a hanger in the classroom, and change out of their “outdoor shoes” and into their “indoor shoes”

   **Activity example:** In the bathroom, the toddler assists the teacher to change her diaper by pulling down her pants, pulling the tabs off of her diaper, and finding a new diaper from the drawer. The child looks in the mirror, pulls up her pants, and washes and dries her hands.

   **Activity example:** In the snack area, children pour their own water into a glass and serve their own snack using tongs into a bowl.

   **Activity example:** At the Food Preparation table, a toddler prepares himself a soy-nut butter and jelly sandwich by using a small dull knife to spread jelly onto a slice of bread

2) Children begin to care for their own belongings

   **Activity example:** At dismissal, the toddler changes into her “outdoor shoes” and returns her “indoor shoes” back to their cubby. She carries her backpack and lunch box outside.

3) Children care for their environment

   **Activity example:** Children water the classroom plants, learning to feel the soil to see if it is wet or dry.

   **Activity example:** Children use small dustpans and crumbers to sweep the floor or the crumbs off of the table.

   **Activity example:** Children use towels to clean water that has spilled on the table or the floor.
TODDLER CURRICULUM

Visual Art

Toddlers are exposed to a variety of art media, tools, vocabulary, and colors. They are introduced to art materials in an order, from simple to more complex throughout the year. Through the freedom of exploration, the children develop creativity and an appreciation for art.

Learning Objectives and Activity Examples may include:

1. Children have the opportunity to experience a variety of art media, such as paper, markers, crayons, paint, watercolors, glue, and scissors.
   
   Activity example: A toddler walks to the art shelf and chooses a tray with a watercolor palette. She carries it to the table, gets a piece of paper, and uses the materials to create a painting.

2. Toddlers practice manipulating a paintbrush; holding it, painting with it, and washing it when finished.
   
   Activity example: A toddler works at the easel moving the paintbrush up and down. When he finished, he brings the paintbrush to the sink to wash the paint off.

3. Toddlers experience a variety of colors at the easel, at the beginning of the year with one color at a time and moving towards mixing colors toward the end of the year.

   Activity example: A child paints with yellow paint on his paper. He then uses a different paintbrush to add blue paint. He notices that mixing the colors is creating green.