



Little Angels  
Early Learning Program  
Information

# What You Will Find InThe Toddler Program Family Handbook

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to our new Little Angels Early Learning Classroom! We are very excited you have chosen our school for your child to attend! Our Toddler Program provides a safe and nurturing learning environment where children can grow and develop through love and their faith in God. Many great things will be happening in our program and we are excited to share and experience the year with you.

Please become familiar with the information provided in this packet, as it has important information that will help you understand our program better and find your way around the classroom. If you have any questions, or concerns, please know that we are here for you. Our doors are always open and you are always welcome.

Thank you so much again for taking this journey with us and we look forward to becoming a strong team with you, for your child!

God Bless,

Ms. Lyndsay Parnigoni  
Lead Teacher

# Little Angels

## Early Learning Program

This is such an exciting time for children! They have many opportunities to learn new things and participate in unique and fascinating experiences. Our roll, as teachers, together with you as parents, is to provide children with a strong foundation in faith and life skills, on which we'll continue to build so they become active and excited learners!

### **Question**

*What measures have you taken to ensure a smooth transition when entering and departing the program?*

### **Answer**

*Transitioning to and from the program is not always easy. Establishing and sticking to a routine helps your children feel secure, they begin to learn what to expect next. We suggest the following...*

Checking In: Please be sure to, first, check your child in each morning.

Where to Go: The side doors outside of the classrooms around the building.

Personal Items: Each child will have a cubby labeled with their name. We also have cabinets available for additional storage of personal care items.

Important Information: If your child's teacher is not currently in the room, please feel free to inform the teacher aides of any information you would like passed on.

Saying Goodbye: Saying goodbye isn't easy, but there are a few things you can do to help ease the transition. It is so important to develop a routine that works for you and your child. Always say good-bye and communicate with them when you'll be back. This helps reinforce that you support and feel comfortable with them being here.

Upon Departure: Please be sure to check your child out when you depart for the evening.

## Question

*How will I get and give important information about my child's day?*

## Answer

*We strive every day to create a strong Parent Partnership with you and welcome and invite verbal communication at any time. We also feel, however, that written communication is a very important and essential part of our communication exchange. We use the following methods...*

Daily Care Sheets: Information sheets about your child's day will go home daily. Daily sheets contain important information about your child's experiences while at the program that day.

Mailboxes/Folders: Each child will have their own mailbox/folder. Please check with your child's teacher to find out where they are located in the classroom. Your child's mailbox/folder is used to send important information to you that will need to go home such as newsletters, announcements, current events, etc.

Parent Conferences: As a program, we conduct regular parent conferences. We would like you to know that we are open to scheduling a conference with you at any time.

## Question

*Who will care for my child?*

## Answer

*The teachers and aides in Early Education Program are a team of caring professionals. Together they care for, plan, teach, play with, interact with, observe, assess, and meet the needs of every child in a loving and nurturing atmosphere. Your child will have a **primary teacher** as well as teacher aides.*

A **primary teacher** is responsible for...

- Daily communication with you; either written or verbal
- Documentation of your child's growth and development
- Important paperwork such as accident reports, medicine forms, etc.
- Creating and updating your child's portfolio
- Developing individual child goals and objectives with you
- Child assessments
- Parent conferences

**Please feel free to communicate concerns with any teacher or aide in the room, and please know they will be addressed appropriately.**

## **Question**

*How do I know what learning experiences are being provided for my child?*

## **Answer**

*We develop education plans that are individualized to meet the current needs of the children in the classroom. The learning that is happening in our room is made visible through the following...*

Parent Board: Our parent board has a lot of great information and should be visited regularly. Please ask your child's teacher where this will be located...

*What is Planned for Today*- This is a form we post informing you of what is planned for the day and what actually happened at the end of the day.

*Activities and Projects*- This is a form we post that highlights the activities and projects planned for the week. It is intended to be a brief overview at a glance, for more details, refer to the posted "What is Planned for Today" form.

*Weekly Menu*

*Classroom/School Happenings*- Here we will post any current events that are happening in the classroom/school such as luncheons, parent meetings, staff changes, etc.

Child Development Portfolios: Each child will have their own portfolio. Their portfolio will contain writing samples, art work, newsletters, milestones, projects, and pictures of your child in action. Your child's primary care teacher will be responsible for helping your child build their portfolio. Please do not remove their portfolios from the center.

Documentation Board: Please visit our documentation board regularly. It highlights the learning that is taking place in our room in a very visual way. It contains pictures, children's work, summaries written by the teachers, and at times, even recipes and items you can take with you.

Our Classroom Board: We are constantly hanging up children's artwork. The artwork hung will always be rotated and current to the activities that are taking place in the classroom. Please visit the classroom board regularly to see all the creative work that is taking place in our room. Artwork is always displayed at the child's eye level.

## **Question**

*How do you celebrate birthdays and other special events and occasions?*

## **Answer**

*We value and welcome your customs and culture. Please let us know what we can do to help your child share their special days and culture with their friends. Please no home baked goods to celebrate only store bought for allergy and ingredients purposes.*

## **Question**

*Will my child be leaving the center for any reason?*

## **Answer**

*Outside time is an important part of our day. Children can develop through their senses when exposed to what outside time has to offer. We practice the following...*

Playground: To promote physical development, two opportunities are available daily for your child to visit the playground. The group will spend time on the playground both in the morning and the afternoon.

## **Question**

*Is it OK for my child to bring toys to school?*

## **Answer**

*A soft sleep toy may be brought from home to be taken out at nap time. Please help your child deliver their soft toy to their cubby in the morning. Please do not bring other toys from home, they may cause fighting or may break or get lost.*

## **Question**

*When does my child have an opportunity to rest?*

## **Answer**

*Our scheduled rest time is from 12:00 to 2:00. We are aware, however, that some toddlers may require more or less time than this scheduled time allows. We make accommodations for children needing additional rest time by providing appropriate quiet places for children to rest during the day. Children who wake up before 2:00 are openly encouraged to participate in a quiet activity on their cot that allows the other children the rest time they require.*

## **Question**

*Will my child get messy?*

## **Answer**

*Many activities that yield a messy outcome are very exciting, educational, and fundamental to your child's development. We do our best to keep their clothing from becoming soiled, but cannot prevent it 100% of the time. If you have somewhere to go and need them looking their best, please let us know in the morning, and we'll be happy to help them into a clean change of clothes for your expected pick-up time.*

## **Question**

*When do you begin to potty train?*

## **Answer**

*Each child in our program is exposed to potty training procedures as part of our daily routine. Many factors determine when potty training will begin.*

*We take into consideration the following...*

- Your child's interest*
- When you feel it's time*
- When we feel it's time*



# Checklist For What To Bring On The First Day In The Toddler Program

Please label all items with your child's name.

Crib Sheet for Rest Time	
Small Blanket for Rest Time (optional)	
Soft Sleep Toy (if needed)	
Bag to Keep Rest Items Inside	
Diapers	
Wipes	
Bath Towel	
Extra Shirt/Sweatshirt	
Extra Pants/Shorts	
Extra Socks	
Extra Underpants (if potty trained)	
Diaper Ointment, Lotion or Other Personal Needs	
Family Photos to be used for a Family Poster	

# Little Angels Daily Schedule

7:30am	Extended Care Hours Free Choice	Greetings and Snuggle Time (as needed) All learning centers are open for child choice
8:00am	Morning Snack	Socialization/Table Manners
8:30am	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks Morning Announcements/Prayer/Pledge
9:00am	Circle Time	Morning circle time primary teacher
9:30am	Activity Time	Group planned activities with primary teacher
10:15am	Outside Time	Group outside time with primary teacher
11:00am	Lunch	Socialization/Table Manners
11:30am	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks for some
12:00pm	Rest Time	Quiet music and cots available for all children
2:00pm	Afternoon Snack	Socialization/Table Manners
2:30pm	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks for some
3:00pm	Circle Time	Afternoon circle time primary teacher
3:30pm	Activity Time	Afternoon planned activities with aide
4:15pm	Free Choice	All centers are open for child choice
5:00pm	Care Time*	Diaper Changes/Restroom Breaks*
	Free Choice	All learning centers are open for child choice
5:30pm	Center Closes	

\* Restroom breaks and diaper changes are done as needed between care times and potty training is always ongoing.

## **The Little Angels Program**

Monsignor Clarke recognizes that the first two years of life are an extraordinary time that sets the stage for all the years that follow.

During these years, children need to acquire what psychologist Erik Erickson called “basic trust,” a pervasive sense of the essential trustworthiness of oneself and others. It is the sense of safety and security that comes from responsive, predictable care from familiar people to whom one is attached. Without this sense, the world is far too scary a place to cope with and learn about.

Each child also needs to develop a sense of autonomy, the sense of being a separate, independent self that comes from being treated as an important individual and being allowed increasing opportunities for independence. The “no” of toddlers is an assertion of autonomy that leads to freely saying “yes” and developing the power to begin to control their bodies and feelings. Only when children personally feel a sense of personal power (“I can affect things”), are they ready to move to the next critical level – a sense of competence (“I can achieve things”) as they step out into the wider world as active learners and problem-solvers.

The child’s first two years are critical for the development of the brain and language development. During this period, the child’s life experience plays a fundamental role in the “hard-wiring” of the brain, laying the foundation for all intellectual and emotional development to follow. From birth, babies are marvelous learners, immediately investigating the sights, sounds, and feel of the world. Long before walking and talking, they are exploring their own bodily powers and what the world has to offer. They need a safe world rich with opportunities to actively explore and enjoy: to see, hear, feel, touch and move. They need a world filled with responsive interactions and language: many “conversations” with others, books (for even the youngest babies), songs, and a great deal of listening and responding to their vocalizations and words. The infant, toddler and two-year-old program for learning is based on the book *Prime Times: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Programs* (Jim Greenman and Anne Stonehouse). The program includes:

### **The First Year of Life**

The first year of life is a critical time for development. It is responsive, language- rich attention that follows the child’s lead that is essential to optimize development. Recent studies demonstrate that both psychological and neurological development depend on responsive stimulation. At Little Angels early learning teachers and parents work together to ensure responsive caregiving for each child.

### **My Place to Grow**

Toddlers are sensory motor beings. They explore the world with their senses and developing motor skills. Long before they understand concepts like “under” or “far” with their minds, their bodies are learning to navigate the up and down, over and under of the physical world. Their perceptions are sorting out sizes, colors, and shapes. The curriculum provides toddlers with a rich learning environment with appropriate learning centers planned and organized to maximize experiences in large and small motor, sensory, cognitive, personal, language and music.

## **Active Learners**

Children are active learners who learn best from activities they plan and carry out themselves. They are little scientists and builders, acrobats and artisans who need active experience with the world of people and things; who need opportunities to set goals, plan, reflect, and take responsibility. From birth, they are communicators who need a world filled with books, language experiences, and great conversation. Our program offers each child a world rich with discovery opportunities guided by skilled and sensitive teachers who recognize each child's individual strengths, optimum opportunities to learn, and what he or she needs to succeed in school and life.

## **Not “How Smart is This Child?” But “How is This Child Smart?”**

The concept of a single unified intelligence has been replaced by the understanding that there are multiple intelligences: ways of knowing and achieving in the world. Success in school and success in life draw upon multiple intelligences that are interrelated and interactive. Optimum development requires identifying a child's strengths and using those strengths to help the child succeed in school and life. The program is individualized to meet each child's needs.

## **Appropriate Learning Environments**

Our program creates developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate learning environments in which each child learns what the world is like, how it works, what he/she is capable of, and his/her place in it integrated within a faith based classroom. The daily schedules, learning centers, and the way learning is incorporated into our program furnishings and the playground are all carefully planned to allow children to independently explore, discover, and learn through developmentally appropriate experience. The routines and environment are organized to teach: labeled shelves use color, symbols, and language; science experiences are built into the playground; and language and numbers are built into meals and clean-up. Children are confronted with new challenges and have opportunities to practice and master skills through play and exploration. Teachers prepare and rotate the learning centers and provide large and small group experiences, extended projects, and in house field trips to enrich children's learning. Themes and directions emerge from the interests and experiences of the children, families, and teachers. In-house field trips and enrichment programs extend children's experience into the world beyond the center.

## **Documentation and Assessment**

Documentation of learning experiences and child assessment are critical program requirements. Teachers and children document experiences, projects, and in-house field trips using journals, documentation panels, and other means of public display. As children develop and progress through the program, individualized child observation and assessment are important features guiding parent/teacher/child goal setting. Assessment characterizes a child's strengths and achievements as well as noting areas for growth. Each child develops a portfolio of accomplishments that begins at enrollment and continues throughout their experience at Little Angels.

## **Parents are Full Partners**

Parents are full partners in every aspect of curriculum: participating in creating child development profiles, helping to set goals and priorities, planning and evaluation, and sustaining the learning through coordinated experiences at home.

# Tracking Child Development

How do we come to know a child? Obviously we learn about each child through what we observe day-to-day in the classroom. But our program is only one of the child's settings and a rather atypical one at that: a group setting mostly organized by age. We also need to recognize that we come to know and understand the child through our partnership with parents.

Parents see the child in a range of settings over time and bring to light a much broader context of development; their views are essential. Our knowledge comes from seeking to understand and appreciate the child together, sharing observations of the child's experience and behavior at home and at the center.

We begin tracking development at the initial enrollment conference and establish the development of personal care plans. This effort continues through daily communication with parents, primary teacher observations, documentation of experience in the classroom, and discussions during the planning cycle.

## **Development is a Journey, Not a Race**

When we are in settings with lots of children of the same age, in a society that sees time as a precious commodity and *getting ahead* and *being first* as prime goals, it is hard not to see development as a race to achieve milestones. But development is not a race and *earlier is not better*, nor is earlier generally an indicator of future development.

Children benefit from the individual, measured pacing of the journey, not from achieving developmental milestones at the earliest opportunity.

## **What are the Key Components you use to track development?**

- Sense of Self
- Social Relations
- Creative Representation
- Movement
- Communication and Language
- Exploration and Early Logic

## **Sense of Self (Toddler) - Initiative (Preschool)**

Through their actions with objects and interactions with trusted teachers toddlers gradually begin to understand that they themselves exist as separate and individual beings. As children develop, they construct an image of themselves as distinct and capable people who can both influence and respond to their immediate world.

Initiative is the child's ability to begin and follow through on tasks. It is the power to make and carry out choices and decisions. As children develop, they initiate and carry out activities of increasing complexity, solving problems and coordinating their activities and ideas with others.

## **Social Relations**

Children's social interactions begin as soon as they discover the presence of others in their world. Toddlers learn about how human beings act and treat one another through their day-to-day interactions with parents, family members, teachers, peers, and other adults. These early social relationships influence their lifelong approach to people, the manner in which they develop attachments, become empathetic, make friends, work cooperatively, lead and follow, work through conflict, and express feelings naturally and appropriately.

## **Creative Representation**

Representation is the process by which children depict objects and experiences through imitation, pretending, building, artwork, and written language. Toddlers build a critical body of direct experience from their ongoing sensory-motor explorations - acting on objects with their whole bodies and all their senses and repeating these actions at will. They learn to imitate the actions of others, interpret pictures and photographs of actions and objects they have experienced, and begin to use actions and materials to show or represent something they know about their world. Gradually, with repeated experiences, they begin to form mental images of the object or person. This process is the beginning of representation - the ability to internalize or mentally picture an absent person, object, or action. Representing is important developmentally because it indicates that young children, who tend to see things in very concrete terms, are moving towards a more abstract understanding of their world - from the world that they only understand through their senses to the world that they understand through symbolic thought. This area tracks how children represent their thoughts and feelings

## **Movement (Toddler) - Music and Movement (Preschool)**

Motor activities are important to all areas of child development, including, but not limited to, physical development. For toddlers developing sensory-motor skills, movement plays a major role in all learning. Their emerging sense of themselves as doers and people of action is strongly connected to their developing ability to control their motions, communicate through the language of gesture and action, handle objects with ease, and move at will from place to place. Children explore and represent themselves and the world around them through movement. They develop important physical abilities by becoming aware of what their bodies can do when they move with and without objects. As they move, they acquire an understanding of the concepts and language that are connected to actions, positions, and space. This area also tracks their ability to respond to music.

## **Communication and Language (Toddler) - Language and Literacy (Preschool)**

The development of communication and language abilities - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - is critical to a child's success in school and life. This area tracks children through their earliest communication efforts in speaking and listening, in how they show interest in the spoken and printed word and stories, following directions, vocabulary, and beginning to read and write.

## **Exploration and Early Logic (Toddler) - Logic and Mathematics (Preschool)**

From a young age, children explore the properties of things, relationships, and concepts of number, space, and time. They are observers by nature; much of what they learn, right from the beginning, results from keen observation and from their natural inclination to learn through sensory exploration and physical manipulation of objects. As they develop, they begin to order and classify the elements in their world. They construct their own understanding of concepts in logic and mathematics as they work with materials, people, events, and ideas. They learn the language of the basic concepts of logic and mathematics from the people in their lives.

# Toddler Developmental Milestones

Sense of Self	Social Relations	Creative Representation
<p><b>Expressing Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves until reaching a desired object</li> <li>• Says “No”</li> <li>• Expresses a choice using words</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Self from Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes own body parts</li> <li>• Says an object is “mine”</li> <li>• Identifies self in mirror or picture</li> </ul> <p><b>Solving Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves self or object to find other out of sight object</li> <li>• Makes varied attempts to solve problems</li> <li>• Verbally indicates a problem</li> </ul> <p><b>Developing Self Help Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeds self finger food or drinks from a cup</li> <li>• Attempts simple self-help task alone</li> <li>• Accomplishes some self-help tasks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Forming Attachment to Primary Caregiver</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks physical contact with caregiver</li> <li>• Initiates playful give-and-take with caregiver</li> <li>• Uses words to communicate with caregiver</li> </ul> <p><b>Relating to Unfamiliar Adults</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates contact with unfamiliar adult</li> <li>• Brings object to unfamiliar adult</li> <li>• Converses with unfamiliar adults</li> </ul> <p><b>Relating to Another Child</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings object to show affection toward another child</li> <li>• Uses another child’s name</li> <li>• Comments about another child</li> </ul> <p><b>Expresses Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses physical contact to express emotion</li> <li>• Shows pleasure when completing an activity</li> <li>• Names an emotion</li> </ul> <p><b>Responding to Feeling of Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek ones comfort when another is distressed</li> <li>• Comforts another when in distress</li> <li>• Uses words to name others feelings</li> </ul> <p><b>Playing With Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks company of another child</li> <li>• Hides an object for another to find</li> <li>• Watches and imitates actions of another</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pretending</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates eating or drinking</li> <li>• Makes sounds or actions when imitating</li> <li>• Uses one or more object to represent another</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Building and Art Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scribble, stacks blocks, squeezes play dough</li> <li>• Builds up or out, makes marks or flattens play dough</li> <li>• Uses words or phrases to name something they created</li> </ul> <p><b>Identifies Pictures or Photographs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gestures to familiar item in photograph</li> <li>• Uses words to identify item in photograph</li> <li>• Uses sentences to identify what is happening in a picture</li> </ul>



# Toddler Developmental Milestones

Movement	Communication and Language	Exploration and Early Logic
<p><b>Moving Parts of the Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throws ball</li> <li>• Kicks a ball</li> <li>• Uses small objects in activities requiring precise coordination</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving the Whole Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks unassisted</li> <li>• Climbs and runs</li> <li>• Jumps</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving with Objects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carries, pushes or pulls an item while walking unassisted</li> <li>• Propels self on a riding toy with wheels</li> <li>• Pedals a bike or attempts to pedal</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving to Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves body to music while standing unassisted</li> <li>• Moves from one foot to another while standing unassisted</li> <li>• Walks, turns and jumps to music</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening and Responding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks around when name is spoken</li> <li>• Acts on a direct request or statement</li> <li>• Acts on an indirect quest</li> </ul> <p><b>Communicating Interests Nonverbally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks out and plays with others</li> <li>• Shows or guides a person to an object</li> <li>• Engages in an activity for a sustained period of time</li> </ul> <p><b>Participates in Give-And-Take Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in babble-like conversations</li> <li>• Uses two or more words to make a request</li> <li>• Sustains verbal conversation by taking two or more turns</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a single word as representation</li> <li>• Uses two to three word phrases</li> <li>• Uses four or more word sentences</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Picture Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turns pages of a book</li> <li>• Points and makes an object in a book</li> <li>• Uses sentences to explain pictures in books</li> </ul> <p><b>Showing Interest in Stories, Rhymes, Songs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in pat-a-cake and others</li> <li>• Joins in on a story, rhyme or song</li> <li>• Asks to hear specific story or song</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exploring Objects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performs an action on an object</li> <li>• Uses two objects together using opposing hands</li> <li>• Uses an object as a tool to complete a task</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a sound to name an object</li> <li>• Uses the same word to name more than one object</li> <li>• Gathers two or more similar objects</li> </ul> <p><b>Developing Number Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• points to body part or object</li> <li>• uses word or phrase to ask for more</li> <li>• Uses one standard or nonstandard number while pointing to an object</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fills container</li> <li>• retrieves object unseen for a while</li> <li>• Makes an enclosure</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions show anticipation for upcoming event</li> <li>• Indicates the end of an activity using words</li> <li>• Uses words to indicate a past event</li> </ul>