



Little Scholars

Preparatory School

Curriculum Guide: Infant/Toddler Program

For children ages birth-3 years of age, we follow the guidelines according to the Michigan Department of Education's Early Childhood Standards of Quality for infant and toddler program. This program is broken down into 5 strands. The strands and goals are summarized below.

STRAND A – WELL-BEING:

The health and well-being of each infant and toddler is protected and nurtured.

Goal 1: Infants and toddlers experience environments where their physical health is promoted.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Increasing awareness, understanding, and appreciation of their bodies and how they function
- Increased coordination (e.g., eye-hand movements)
- Emerging self-help and self-care skills for eating, drinking, toileting, resting, sleeping, washing, and dressing
- Positive attitudes towards eating, sleeping, and toileting

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Caregivers observe and respond promptly to signals of distress, hunger, and tiredness.
- Caregivers are guided by each infant's individual rhythms, leading toward some regularity in feeding and sleeping.
- Caregivers use the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)/USDA standards to plan and provide appropriate food and sleep environments for infants and toddlers.
- Familiar, relaxed, and individualized routines for feeding, toileting, diaper changing, and dental care are established with parents and carried out by familiar caregivers.

- Caregivers provide opportunities for physical development to occur through movement and exercise.
- Caregivers respond with attention and respect to infants' and toddlers' attempts to communicate their feelings of well-being or discomfort.
- Daily routines are flexible, individualized, calm, and positive.
- There is a supportive approach to toilet learning, using unhurried and familiar routines that do not cause shame or embarrassment.
- Plenty of time is given for children to practice their developing self-help and selfcare skills when eating, drinking, toileting, resting, washing, tooth brushing, and dressing based on each child's developmental level.
- Toddlers are offered a widening range of familiar and unfamiliar foods that are culturally sensitive and diverse.
- Comfortable safe spaces and opportunities for rest and sleep are provided with some flexibility about routines.

Goal 2: Infants and toddlers experience environments where their social and emotional well-being is nurtured.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Emerging skill in self-regulation
- An increasing capacity to pay attention, focus, concentrate, and be involved
- A growing capacity to tolerate and enjoy a moderate degree of change, surprises, uncertainty, and potentially puzzling events
- A sense of personal worth and the worth of others, and knowledge that personal worth does not depend on today's behavior or ability
- An increasing ability to identify their own emotional responses and those of others
- Confidence and ability to express emotional needs without fear
- Trust that their social-emotional needs will be responded to
- A trusting relationship with nurturing and responsive caregivers
- The ability to respond and engage in reciprocal interactions

- Emerging capacities for caring and cooperation

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Infants are handled in a gentle, confident, and respectful way.
- Infants experience continuity of care.
- Unhurried time and opportunity are provided for the infant and familiar caregivers to build a trusting and caring relationship together.
- There is help and encouragement for infants to feel increasingly competent.
- Infants have opportunities to see and react to their reflections in mirrors.
- There are one-to-one interactions that are intimate and sociable.
- The environment is predictable, dependable, and has reasonable adaptations to the physical setting or program to accommodate children with special needs.
- There are opportunities for toddlers to be independent and make choices knowing that comfort, emotional security, and familiar caregivers are available.
- Toddlers who are trying to do things for themselves or for other children are encouraged and supported.
- Caregivers accept and support expression and resolution of a wide range of feelings and emotions from toddlers.
- Toddlers are helped to resolve conflicts and move on to new challenges.
- The environment is stimulating and caregivers acknowledge that the “comfort threshold” is different for each toddler.
- Caregivers help toddlers understand and accept necessary limits without anxiety or fear.
- Caregivers recognize that at times toddlers need to be the center of attention.

Goal 3: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they are kept safe from harm.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Increasing awareness of what can harm them

- Increasing confidence that they can participate and take risks without fear of harm
- Comfort in expressing their fears openly and trust that their fears will be taken seriously
- Ability to respond to caregiver instructions related to safety

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Infants are closely supervised at all times.
- Quick attention is given to any changes in an infant's temperature, health, and/or usual behavior.
- Vigilant caregiver supervision protects infants from potential hazards in the environment (e.g., from insects, litter on the ground, over-exposure to sun).
- Infants are protected from rough handling or accidents with older children.
- Caregivers have support from other staff who can step in to comfort chronically crying infants.
- The environment is challenging but safe for all infants and toddlers.
- Playthings and surfaces are kept clean and maintained throughout the day, and attention is paid to avoiding cross-infection.
- Caregivers are alert to possible hazards and vigilant over what is accessible, can be swallowed, or can be climbed on, and toddlers are encouraged to recognize genuine hazards.
- Toddlers are encouraged to communicate their needs and wants without the use of such behaviors as biting or hitting.
- Toddlers are promptly supported, but not overprotected, when an accident occurs.
- Caregivers raise toddlers' awareness about what is safe and what is harmful and the probable consequences of certain actions.
- Toddlers have opportunities to develop self-care skills and to protect themselves from harm within secure and safe limits and at their own level.

STRAND B – BELONGING:

Infants and toddlers feel a sense of belonging.

Goal 1: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they know they belong and have a place.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- An increasing ability to play an active part in the day to day activities of the program
- Skills in caring for the environment (e.g., cleaning up, wiping the table, flushing the toilet, helping others)
- Confidence in and an ability to express their ideas
- A feeling of being valued as an important individual who belongs within the group setting
- A comfort level in taking on different roles in their environment (e.g., helping others, turning off the water, holding the door)
- An attachment to their primary caregivers and primary care group

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Each infant and toddler has a primary caregiver whose temperament fits well with the temperament of the infant.
- A primary caregiver has major responsibility for each infant's care, so that infants can anticipate who will welcome and care for them.
- Caregivers respond promptly when infants communicate their needs in order to foster infants' feelings of competence.
- Each infant has a familiar sleeping space and eating area.
- Infants' favorite comfort items are available to them.
- The program is sufficiently flexible to routinely meet infants' needs and preferences for a particular person or way of doing something.
- Caregivers affirm toddlers' growing recognition of things that belong to themselves or others, such as shoes, clothing, comfort items, and/or toys.

- The program provides opportunities for conversations with toddlers that affirm their identity and self-knowledge.
- The program enables toddlers to take part in small group activities (e.g., at the water table or the art table).
- Caregivers recognize and respect toddlers' passionate attachment to particular people and things.
- Caregivers affirm toddlers' efforts to move physically away from primary caregivers while reassuring the children of their presence.
- Caregivers listen to toddlers' ideas, preferences and dislikes.
- Caregivers allow toddlers to select from among activities and experiences offered in the program.
- Toddlers are able to express spontaneous affection to one or more of the people with whom they spend a lot of time.
- Toddlers help to arrange and put things away.
- Each infant and toddler has a place for personal possessions and creations.
- Infants and toddlers are encouraged to take opportunities for cleaning up and caring for the indoor and outdoor environment and the people in it.

Goal 2: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they are comfortable with routines, schedules, and activities.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- An understanding of the routines, family customs, and regular events of the program
- An understanding that these routines, customs, and regular events can be different in other settings
- An understanding that they and others can be a part of the group
- Capacities to predict routines and regular events that make up the day or the session
- A growing ability to cope with change
- Enjoyment of and interest in a moderate degree of change

- Increasing mastery of self-help skills to assist with daily personal routines
- An increasing sense of independence and competence during daily routines and activities

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- The pace and time of routines is guided, as much as possible, by each infant's needs.
- A regular but flexible schedule is established that allows for participation throughout the day (e.g., going for a walk, going outside).
- The program includes familiar rhymes, songs, and chants.
- There are predictable routines with reassuring emphasis on the familiar, with new elements introduced gradually and thoughtfully into the program.
- Caregivers are comfortable with reading the same story again and again.
- Toddlers' favorite games and happenings are identified and included in the program.
- Toddlers are able to maintain their own routines and ways of doing things (e.g., wearing a favorite hat, sleeping with a favorite blanket).
- Rules are kept to a minimum through the establishment of comfortable, well understood routines.
- The program allows unhurried time for the repetition and practice of toddlers' developing skills and interests.
- Caregivers accept toddlers' unique ways of doing things as being part of their developing sense of self.
- Caregivers take time to listen and talk with children about upcoming events (e.g., visitors, fire drills) that are out of the ordinary, so that they can anticipate and be comfortable with them.

Goal 3: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they increasingly understand the nature and boundaries of acceptable behavior.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- An increasing capacity to successfully communicate their feelings, needs, and wants

- A recognition that the setting has reasonable boundaries and expectations for behavior
- The beginning of an understanding of the reasons for boundaries and expectations
- Expectations that the setting is predictable, fair, and consistently caring
- An increasing awareness of the impact and consequences of their actions
- An increasing ability to self-regulate their behavior
- The ability to express disagreement with peers and caregivers in developmentally appropriate ways

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Infants' behaviors are accepted without judgment and the program has sufficient flexibility to accommodate natural variations in moods and behavior.
- Caregivers gently encourage infants to accept that the caregivers will also attend to and care for other children.
- Unhurried primary caregivers and other familiar caregivers are always nearby.
- Infant needs are responded to promptly to minimize causes of distress or disengagement.
- Caregivers help toddlers begin to express and regulate their feelings as appropriate to each toddler's development.
- Caregivers offer only genuine choices to toddlers and respect their decisions.
- Possible causes of frustration and conflict for toddlers are minimized (e.g., avoidance or elimination of large group activities, waiting periods, abrupt transitions, a crowded environment).
- Toddlers are given support in dealing with conflict and frustrations.
- Toddlers' intensity of feelings is understood, accepted, and guided and the resulting behaviors are seen as a normal and important part of their development.
- Desired and reasonable expectations and limits are set and applied in a consistent and equitable manner.

Goal 4: Infants and toddlers experience environments where positive connections among their families, the program, and the children are affirmed.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- An understanding of the links between the early childhood education and care setting and their homes through people, images, objects, languages, sounds, smells, and tastes
- Interest and pleasure in discovering new environments where the people, images, objects, languages, sounds, smells, and tastes are sometimes different from those at home
- The ability to interact with an increasing number of significant people in their lives, beyond their families and primary caregivers

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Breastfeeding is supported by providing mothers with opportunities to breastfeed while their children are in care.
- Language, songs, key words, and routines that infants are familiar with at home are used in the program setting.
- Caregivers talk to and with infants and toddlers about family members.
- Opportunities are arranged for families to meet each other and the infants and toddlers in the program setting (e.g., breakfast, a shared lunch, a picnic).
- The program includes short walks to see other people and other places.
- Programs display pictures of infants' and toddlers' families.
- Conversations with caregivers about home, family members, and happenings are a natural part of the program.
- Special playthings and comfort items from home are respected, accepted, and made accessible to infants and toddlers.
- Toddlers have regular small outings around the neighborhood.
- Toddlers are encouraged to show parents things they have done, made, or found and talk about them.

- The program provides toddlers with widening experiences of the world through a range of playthings, books, pictures, and happenings.

STRAND C – EXPLORATION:

Infants and toddlers learn through active exploration of the environment.

Goal 1: Infants and toddlers experience environments where the importance of spontaneous play is recognized and play is valued as meaningful learning.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Strategies for exploring and satisfying their curiosity
- Symbolic, pretend, and dramatic play
- Creativity and spontaneity in their play
- The ability to make decisions and choose their own materials
- An emerging sense that not knowing and being uncertain are part of learning
- An emerging sense of intentionality in their play and relationships

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Interesting and challenging playthings are easily within reach of infants and available to toddlers so that they can try out new things and explore the further possibilities of familiar objects.
- Infants have freedom to move and to practice and extend skills.
- Everything in the immediate environment is regarded as a learning resource.
- Caregivers are aware of the potential for all interactions and experiences to result in learning.
- Meaningful and, where possible, authentic contexts are provided for toddlers' play and work (e.g., brooms are used to sweep, water is used for cleaning walls).

Goal 2: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they gain confidence in and greater control of their bodies.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Increasing control over their bodies, including increasing abilities in the use of large and small muscles, balance and coordination of eye-hand movements, and increasing agility, coordination, and balance
- Strategies for actively exploring and making sense of the world by using their bodies, including active exploration with all the senses, and the use of tools, materials, and equipment to extend skills
- Confidence with moving in space, moving to rhythm, and playing near and with others
- Awareness of good hygiene practices (e.g., tooth brushing, hand washing, covering mouth/nose when coughing)

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Infants experience a safe environment with equipment or furniture to hold on to, to balance against, or to pull themselves up on.
- Infants are encouraged to mouth, finger, grasp, pull, and push materials that are safe and interesting, can be manipulated in a variety of ways, and require minimal caregiver assistance.
- Toddlers are encouraged to develop skills at their own rates and to know and begin to understand their own abilities and limitations.
- Caregivers, insuring children's safety, wait to let toddlers indicate that they need assistance rather than assuming that they need help.
- Toddlers have access to an increasing range of safe and interesting materials that can enhance both large and small motor skills.

Goal 3: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking, and reasoning.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- The confidence to explore and make sense of their world through simple problem solving, recognizing patterns, learning from trial and error, asking questions, listening to others, simple planning, observing, and listening to stories
- An attitude of themselves as “explorers” — competent, confident learners who ask questions and make discoveries
- The confidence to choose and experiment with materials, to explore actively with all the senses, and to use what they learn to generalize their learning to other experiences
- The ability to learn new things from the materials and people around them

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Young infants experience various positions during the day so they see things from a variety of perspectives.
- Infants experience different play spaces, such as smooth floors, carpet, grass, sand, soft and hard surfaces, and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Infants have opportunities to watch and join in with other children and to see and hear new things.
- Infants have a variety of indoor and outdoor sensory experiences (e.g., a range of smells, temperatures, sounds).
- Infants can move freely and touch things (e.g., games for exploring their toes, faces, hair, fingers and those of other familiar people are encouraged and repeated).
- A variety of different kinds of materials are available for infants to feel and explore.
- Toddlers are encouraged to manipulate various materials in ways that change them from continuous to discrete and back again (e.g., cutting up dough and squashing the pieces back together again, transferring water to small bottles and emptying them).
- Toddlers have opportunities to collect, sort, and organize objects and play materials in a variety of ways and to develop a sense of order (e.g., by grouping similar materials or putting things in their right place).
- Toddlers have opportunities to recognize similarities and differences (e.g., matching, symmetry).
- Caregivers talk with children in ways that promote toddlers’ thinking and reasoning about what they are doing.

- Toddlers have opportunities for active exploration with the support, but not the interference, of caregivers.

Goal 4: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they develop a growing sense of social relationships, the natural environment, and the physical world.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- The ability to question, explore, generate, and modify their own ideas about the world around them
- Familiarity with a variety of materials (e.g., sand, water, ice, bubbles, blocks, paper)
- Spatial understandings, including an awareness of how two- and three dimensional objects can be fitted together and moved in space
- A knowledge of the natural environment in the outdoor area of the program and the local neighborhood (e.g., the neighborhood park, grassy field, a wooded area)
- Social relationships and social concepts (e.g., friendship, authority, social rules and understandings)

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- The environment includes features that infants can become familiar with, recognize, and explore and which caregivers talk about with them.
- Caregivers demonstrate that they share infants' pleasure in discovery.
- Infants are helped to see familiar things from different positions (e.g., close up or from a distance, from the front or back).
- Infants are encouraged to try things out by using objects as tools.
- Older infants are encouraged to name objects and people in their environment.
- Caregivers respond to infants' explorations, provide commentary about what they are experiencing, and share infants' pleasures in discovery.
- Toddlers have access to books and pictures about aspects of their every day world.
- Toddlers are encouraged and helped to name, think about, and talk about what they are doing.

- Toddlers have opportunities to explore the ways that shapes and objects fit together by using two- and three-dimensional materials.
- Toddlers have opportunities to help safely, and with consideration of good hygiene practices, take care of animals and other living things.
- Caregivers initiate questions, and answer toddlers' questions, about why things happen.
- Toddlers have opportunities and are encouraged to help other children in the group.

Goal 5: Infants and toddlers experience environments where their interests and initiative provide direction for learning opportunities and for the practice and mastery of developing skills.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Progressively more complex skills
- The ability to pursue interests independently
- The understanding that they have a significant role in initiating exploration, play, and learning

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Caregivers place objects within reach for young infants to encourage exploration and making choices.
- For older infants, objects and toys are placed within reach and in close proximity to encourage infants to move to materials of interest and to make choices.
- Familiar and consistent objects are available to develop skills (e.g., including eyehand coordination, their sense of competency), and to promote an understanding of cause and effect.
- Caregivers organize the environment to capitalize on infants' curiosity as a prime motivator for exploration and learning; they encourage infants to develop skills at their own pace.
- Caregivers assess the environment and make changes to respond to toddlers' interests and developing skills.
- Caregivers understand the importance of curiosity in toddlers' exploration and learning and encourage and support toddlers' questioning and experimenting.

- Toddlers have opportunities for in-depth exploration with caregivers providing guidance and expansion.
- Caregivers ask toddlers open-ended questions.
- The environment is arranged to provide toddlers with easy access to a variety of materials and opportunities to make genuine choices and to learn from them.

STRAND D – COMMUNICATION:

Infants and toddlers use a variety of means to communicate their needs and thoughts, and to understand and respond to other people and ideas.

Goal 1: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they develop attitudes and skills to communicate successfully with others.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- The ability to express their feelings and emotions in a range of appropriate ways
- Confidence that their first languages [e.g., whether spoken English, a spoken language other than English, or American Sign Language (ASL)] are valued, supported, and understood
- Responsive and reciprocal communication skills (e.g., turn-taking)
- A playful interest in repetitive sounds and words, and aspects of language (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, alliteration)
- Increasing skill with and understanding of non-verbal messages, including the ability to attend to and make non-verbal requests
- The inclination and ability to communicate, pay attention, and respond appropriately to others
- Increasing knowledge and skill in syntax, meaning, and vocabulary in at least one language
- Language skills in real, play, and problem-solving contexts as well as in more structured language contexts (e.g., through books, finger plays, singing, story telling/re-enacting)

- Communication skills for increasingly complex purposes (e.g., expressing and asking others about intentions, expressing feelings and attitudes, negotiating, predicting, planning, reasoning, guessing, storytelling)

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Caregivers are aware of infants' sensitivity to caregiver body language/facial expression and of the need to use expressive body language to assist infants to read signals.
- Caregivers respond positively to infants' gestures, expressions, and sounds (e.g., infants turning their heads away from food, breaking eye contact, crying or babbling, pointing).
- Caregivers are promptly aware of how children communicate signs of tiredness, discomfort, or stress.
- The program includes action games, finger plays, and songs.
- The program includes role models who are home language communicators of the child's natural language (e.g., deaf role models whose first language is ASL, role models in spoken languages other than the primary spoken language of the program).
- Infants are regarded as active participants in verbal communication and nonverbal communication and caregivers respond to their early attempts at communication/verbalization.
- Simple words and/or signs are used to make consistent connections with objects and people who are meaningful to each infant.
- Many and varied opportunities are provided to be playful with sounds.
- Language is used to soothe and comfort.
- Infants and toddlers hear adults conversing with one another so that they have exposure to complex adult conversation and novel vocabulary.
- Toddlers have opportunities to use their bodies as a way to communicate (e.g., through action games, listening games, pretend play, dancing).
- Caregivers carefully attend to toddlers' requests and suggestions.
- Toddlers are helped to communicate feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.
- Caregivers help to extend toddlers' verbal communication ability by accepting and supporting early words in their first language, modeling new words and phrases,

allowing toddlers to initiate conversation, and giving them time to respond and converse.

- Caregivers use simple, clear phrases with toddlers and have realistic expectations of toddlers' verbal, signed, and listening skills.
- Caregivers model increasingly complex language and novel vocabulary.
- Toddlers have many opportunities to communicate with other children, to play language-based games, and to encounter a widening range of books, songs, poems, stories, and chants.

Goal 2: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they have opportunities to communicate through the use of symbols/pictures, signs, and stories.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop

- An understanding that symbols/pictures can be “read” by others, and that thoughts, experiences, and ideas can be represented through gestures, signs, words, pictures, print, numbers, sounds, shapes, models, facial expression, and photographs
- Familiarity with symbols/pictures and their uses (including print) by exploring and observing them in activities that have meaning and purpose and are developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers
- Familiarity with an appropriate selection of the stories and literature valued by the cultures in their community
- Familiarity with numbers and their uses by exploring and observing the use of numbers in activities that have meaning and purpose for infants and toddlers
- An interest in exploring and using mathematical, reading, and writing materials
- An interest in creating and using symbols/pictures
- An expectation that words, books, numbers, and other symbols/pictures can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform, and excite

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Caregivers read books to infants, tell/sign them simple stories, and communicate to them about objects and pictures.

- Infants are able to feel and manipulate books and to see and handle photographs and pictures.
- Numbers are used in conversation and interactive times (e.g., finger plays, chants); every day number patterns are highlighted (e.g., two shoes, four wheels, five fingers).
- Caregivers draw attention to concepts (e.g., differences between more and less, big and small).
- The program includes songs, rhymes, stories, books, and chants that repeat sequences.
- Toys with a variety of colors, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore freely are available in the environment.
- Toddlers have many opportunities to play simple games and to use an increasing range of toys and materials, which feature a variety of symbols/pictures, shapes, sizes, and colors.
- Caregivers' conversations with toddlers are rich in number ideas, so that caregivers extend toddlers' knowledge about numbers.
- Caregivers model the process of counting to solve every day problems (e.g., asking "How many children want to go on a walk?").
- Toddlers are encouraged to develop the language of position (e.g., above and below, inside and outside) and the language of probability (e.g., might, can't).
- The toddler's name is written on belongings and any personal space, and names or symbols/pictures are used to enable toddlers to recognize their own possessions.
- The language of the child's culture is used as well as the primary spoken and written language of the program.
- Books are available for the toddler to read and carry about; reading books and telling stories are frequent, pleasurable, intimate, and interactive experiences.
- Children experience a wide range of stories and hear and practice storytelling.
- Children are frequently exposed to storytelling in their natural/home languages.

Goal 3: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive about their feelings and thoughts.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Familiarity with the properties and characteristics of the materials used in the creative and expressive arts
- Skill and confidence with the processes of art (e.g., drawing, collage, painting, print-making, constructing)
- Skill with media that can be used for expressing a mood or a feeling or for representing information (e.g., crayons, pencils, paint, blocks, wood, musical instruments, movement)
- An ability to be creative and expressive through a variety of activities (e.g., pretend play, art, storytelling, music)
- An awareness that music, art, drama, and dance can be expressions of feeling, mood, situation, and culture
- Confidence to sing songs, including songs of their own, and to experiment with chants and pitch patterns
- An increasing ability to keep a steady beat (e.g., through speech, chants, dances, movement to simple rhythmic patterns)
- An expectation that music, art, drama, and dance can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform, and excite
- Familiarity with a variety of types of music, art, drama, and dance as expressions of feeling, mood, situation, occasion, and culture

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Caregivers respect, support, and enjoy the variety of ways that infants sense, interact with, and respond to the environment.
- Infants see, hear, and participate in creative and expressive activities in their own ways (e.g., by putting a hand in the paint, clapping hands, babbling).
- Infants have opportunities to experience patterns and sounds in the natural environment (e.g., leaves in sunlight, the sound of rain).
- Caregivers respond and encourage infants' expressive and creative actions (e.g., reflecting movements, joining in clapping).
- Toddlers have experiences with creative materials (e.g., paint, glue, dough, sand, found objects) and are given opportunities for creative play using natural materials (e.g., collecting leaves, arranging pebbles).

- Toddlers are introduced to tools and materials for art and allowed to experiment with them.
- Toddlers have opportunities for movement that involve their whole bodies with abandon and opportunities to participate in dance.
- Props for pretend play are available, and caregivers interact with toddlers' emerging make-believe play.
- The program provides opportunities for toddlers to learn skills with musical instruments (e.g., drums, shakers, bells).

STRAND E – CONTRIBUTION:

Infants and toddlers have opportunities for learning that are equitable, promote social competency, and value each child's and family's contribution.

Goal 1: Infants and toddlers experience environments where the opportunities for learning are equitable, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity, or background.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- Empathy, understanding, and awareness of others' feelings, and make comforting and accepting gestures to peers and others in distress
- Emerging concern for other children who may be excluded from activities because they are different
- Understanding of the pro-social value of honesty and truthfulness to the extent their construction of and perception of reality permits it
- The ability to carry out or follow through on simple tasks that help or benefit themselves or others
- Positive and accepting attitudes toward people of a variety of backgrounds/ characteristics (e.g., race, physical characteristics, culture, ethnic background)
- The ability to respond and engage in developmentally appropriate reciprocal interactions
- Emerging skills in caring and cooperation

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Both girls and boys are encouraged to enjoy challenges.
- Picture books are selected which show girls, boys, women, and men in a range of roles.
- Caregivers avoid making developmental comparisons between children, recognizing that their development is variable.
- The program encourages care practices that are culturally respectful and appropriate in relation to feeding, sleeping, toileting, clothing, and washing.
- A primary caregiver is assigned to each infant and toddler to promote continuity of care and responsive care giving.
- Infants and toddlers wear clothing that does not restrict their movement and play.
- Caregivers expect and encourage boys and girls to take similar parts in caring and domestic routines.
- Caregivers expect and encourage exuberant and adventurous behavior in both girls and boys.
- Caregivers respect the needs of toddlers to observe and be apart at times, and to take on new challenges at other times.
- In talking with toddlers, caregivers do not link occupations to gender (e.g., by assuming that doctors are men, that nurses are women).
- Activities, playthings, and expectations take account of the fact that each toddler's developmental stage and mastery of skills is different.
- Each child's culture is included in the program on a continuous basis through song, language, pictures, playthings, and dance.
- Caregivers model the kind of behaviors they would expect and value in young children.

Goal 2: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they are affirmed as individuals.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop...

- A sense of “who they are,” their place in the wider world of relationships, and the ways in which these are appreciated
- A range of abilities and interests (e.g., spatial, visual, linguistic, physical, musical, logical or mathematical, personal, social) which build on the children's strengths

- A sense of being able to make something happen that matters to them and to others
- A growing sense that they are valued and that their presence and activities gain positive responses from others
- A sense of optimism, that life is exciting and enjoyable, and they have a positive place within it
- The ability to look forward to events that affirm their growth (e.g., getting taller, getting new shoes, a first haircut, looking forward to upcoming visitors and events)
- An awareness of themselves as unique individuals

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Infants are carefully observed so that caregivers know individual infants well, respect their individual ways (e.g., in food preferences, handling), and respond to them appropriately.
- Caregivers learn each infant's individual preferences and rituals (e.g., for going to bed, for feeding).
- Caregivers respond to infants' signals of pleasure, discomfort, fear, or anger.
- Caregivers help to extend infants' pleasure in particular activities (e.g., hearing specific music, responding to colors, enjoyment of certain rhythms).
- The program builds on the passions and curiosity of each toddler.
- Toddlers are encouraged to do things in their own particular ways when this is appropriate.
- Toddlers' preferences in play activities (e.g., liking sand but not water) are respected.
- Toddlers are encouraged to contribute to small-group happenings (e.g., joining in the dance, bringing chairs around the table for snack time).
- Caregivers talk positively with toddlers about differences in people, places, things, and events.

Goal 3: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they are encouraged to interact and learn with and alongside others.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop

- An increasing ability to take another's point of view and to empathize with others
- Ways to enjoy solitary play when they choose to be alone
- An increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities
- Acceptable ways to assert their independence
- 'Friendship skills,' where they can play harmoniously with their peers through cooperation and participate in the give and take of ideas
- An increasing ability to share by showing interest in and awareness of the feelings of others

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- The program enables infants to be safe in the company of other children or older children.
- Caregivers talk to infants about what other children are doing and encourage the infant's interest in other children.
- Caregivers respond to infants' social communication (e.g., smiles, gestures, noises).
- Infants are included in appropriate social happenings.
- Caregivers provide guidance and support in resolving conflicts (e.g., sharing floor space).
- Many opportunities are provided for self-selected small-group activities (e.g., action songs, listening to stories, exploring novel materials together, going for a walk).
- Toddlers have opportunities to help with the care of others.
- Group activities for toddlers have an individual aspect to them as well (e.g., using brushes to paint water on concrete involves both individual and team efforts).
- Toddlers' preferences for solitary or parallel play are accommodated.
- Sufficient playthings are available for parallel play, and caregivers mediate in toddlers' conflicts over possessions.
- Caregivers support toddlers' attempts to initiate social interactions with other children and staff.

- There are realistic expectations about toddlers' abilities to cooperate, take turns, or wait for assistance.

Goal 4: Infants and toddlers experience environments where they and their families are empowered to make contributions within the program and as members of their communities.

Early Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Infants and Toddlers Begin to Develop

- A growing sense of themselves as part of a family
- A sense of pride in themselves and their families
- A growing sense of connection and consistency across their homes, the program and their community
- A positive sense about their participation in the program, their families, and their community

Examples of Experiences and Strategies:

- Parents and caregivers communicate with each other in order to attain a consistent and understanding approach to the care of their children.
- Families play various roles in the program setting because their special strengths and skills are recognized and utilized.
- Families are given the opportunity to create connections between activities at the program and at home.
- Infants and toddlers experience security, connection and consistency between home and the program as a result of sharing information about concerns, interests, and activities.
- Infants and toddlers experience natural learning opportunities in the community as part of the family and caregivers' daily routine and activities (e.g., walks in the neighborhood, grocery shopping with the family, visiting the local park).
- Both the families and the program offer infants and toddlers an array of activities and resources, including those that promote physical health, appropriate to their developmental characteristics and needs.
- Caregivers and parents model appropriate behavior and values for other parents and children.