



Playgroup “Squirrel” Programming For children aged 2-3 year olds

Discovery’s Playgroup for 2 & 3 year olds is often the first time children of this age are in a group setting. Playing and learning to get along with others is the focus. Developmentally appropriate activities are offered to help them explore and discover the environment around them. Floor time abounds for both children and staff.

Social / Emotional Development: Relationships are at the core of programming for this age. Without a trusting relationship with staff, children are less likely to freely explore the environment. Learning how to share space and materials, and learning and utilizing simple words to get their needs met take a prominent role. Oftentimes, the Playgroup is where children develop their first relationships with a peer. Daily routines and activities are planned that allow for interactions with other children and adults, creating opportunities that expand children’s vocabularies and understanding of concepts and that promote self-confidence by allowing them ownership of their choices.

Language Development: The most exciting area of development for 2-3 years old is the blossoming of speech and language. They begin the year with about 200 words and by three have 1000+! They can put together 2-4 word questions and sentences and enjoy repeating syllables over and over in a sing-song way. Children are given opportunities to talk about what’s going on around them with adults and the other children. This development of language is crucial to children moving from solitary play to cooperative play with others. Expanding their vocabulary to include “feelings” words helps them express frustration through words rather than inappropriate behaviors. Dramatic play centers on family roles - situations they are familiar with.

Physical Development: Each day brings opportunities for children to run, jump, and climb in the outdoor environment. Balls and bikes are also available. Sometimes just maneuvering over the variety of different ground covers provides a physical challenge. Development of fine motor skills is also a focus, as children are introduced to scissors and writing tools. Hand strength is also needed for self-help skills like dressing and toileting, major milestones for this age group. A variety of manipulatives (e.g. legos), and blocks are available to the children every day.

Creative Arts: From easel painting to finger painting and everything in between, creative arts is experiential for this age. A variety of medium and tools are introduced as children explore the properties of paint. Music is used to ease transitions as well as to encourage movement, and often is the first ‘teacher-directed’ large group activity this age will experience.

Cognitive Development: Pre-math, pre-writing, and pre-literacy activities are included within the learning center environment. Shape sorters, math counters, peg boards, and matching games are available. Simple games are played indoors and out. Staff use descriptive language when labeling, including color, shape, and placement vocabulary. Access to pencils, crayons, and paper promote development of fine motor skills needed to write. Books are available for individual use, as well as in small and large group activities. Their own name is often the first word they “read”.