

A letter to our Infant, Toddler, and 2 year-old families for JANUARY

SHARING THOUGHTS ABOUT GETTING DRESSED

Dear Families:

Infants, toddlers, and twos are dressed and undressed throughout the day—every day—at home and in our program. Dressing is one routine that adults and children often want to finish as quickly as possible. After all, dressing a squirming infant, a protesting toddler, or a 2-year-old who insists on putting on her own clothes is not a simple task. From the child's point of view, stopping what she is doing and being still while an adult dresses her is not fun, either.

We view the dressing routine as rich in learning possibilities and as an opportunity to focus on one child at a time. As we pull on a shirt or pants, we talk, listen, sing, and play a simple game. We offer children choices, letting them select which shirt to wear or which item of clothing to put on first. By asking rather than telling, we reduce the struggles we might otherwise have and engage the children in helping us instead.

How We Can Work Together

- **Please provide extra articles of clothing.** We want your child to be warm enough or cool enough, dry, and as clean as possible. Spare clothes that your child is used to wearing help us keep your child comfortable. When extra clothing is labeled with your child's name, we have time to interact with your child because we do not need to spend it to figure out which clothes belong to whom. Remember that, as your child grows and as seasons change, you will need to replace the extra clothes you have left with us.
- **Select clothing that is easy to manage.** Pants with elastic waists, shoes with Velcro® fasteners, and overalls with straps that stretch make getting dressed easier for your child and for us.
- **Share ideas with us about dressing your child.** Let us know what works well when you dress your child at home. We will let you know what works for us, too. By sharing ideas, we can learn from one another and strengthen our partnership to benefit your child.
- **Dress your child for active, sometimes messy play.** Also be sure that your child's clothes are appropriate for the weather. That way, playing outside will be healthy and pleasurable. Remember that clothes with a snug fit or that need to be kept clean prevent children from fully enjoying such activities as climbing, food preparation, and painting. If you want to bring your child to our program in clothes that you do not want to become soiled, we'll be happy to help him or her change into play clothes that do not restrict movement or handling messy materials. We will do our best to take care of your child's clothes.

Together, we can make getting dressed a positive learning experience for your child.

Sincerely,

Your child's Teacher at Play and Learn