**Toileting-Skill Building and Readiness**

Our toddler program is designed to assist our children as they develop good toileting skills.  Their classroom environment and daily schedule has been specifically designed to promote these skills.  We can work together to help the child reach success by following the same steps both at home and at school.  We think of toileting (diaper changing and using the toilet) as something that is done with the child rather than to the child.  Diapering takes place in the bathroom with the child standing up.  We remind children to come to the bathroom at regular intervals throughout the day (shortly after morning arrival, shortly after lunch and snacks, shortly before leaving school, etc.).  As the child nears independence, we begin to give fewer reminders.  Montessori emphasizes using a lot of language during toileting.  We use correct terminology for body parts and body functions.  We also talk about toileting ALL THE TIME, and how great it is to become, “the boss of your own body.”

Maria Montessori observed that the use of rewards and punishments is unnecessary, ineffective, and can actually delay a child’s success as well as have negative effects on the child’s intrinsic motivation.  Please do not use rewards such as stickers or treats during your child’s toilet training process.  In addition, a child should NEVER be shamed when accidents occur.  Accidents are a normal part of the toilet training process and should be handled in a very calm matter-of-fact manner.  Expression of anger or frustration is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Diapering Process

Throughout diapering, we ask the child between every step, “What do we need to do first?” and “What do we need to do next?” and we verbalize every action.  The child participates as fully as possible in every step.

* Approach the child and say, “Is your diaper dry? I am going to check.”
* “What do we need to do?”
* “Let’s go to the bathroom.” (“Vamos al bano.”)
* Pants down please (“Bajate los pantalones, por favor.”)
* Shirt up please (“Subete las camisa, por favor.”)
* Diaper off – “This diaper is very heavy. There is a lot of urine in it.” Or “This diaper is dry.”  Or “You’ve had a bowel movement.  This goes in the toilet.” Etc.
* We clean the child’s bottom, vulva or penis. “I am wiping the urine/bowel movement off of your skin.  Front to back.”  “Would you like to try?”
* “Please sit down on the toilet.” (“Sientate en el indoor por favor.”) If the child resists, we move on to the next step and encourage the child to try next time.
* “Let’s put on a new diaper.” (“Vamos a poner un nuevo panal.”)
* “Please pull up your pants.” (“Subete los pantalones, por favor.”)
* “Please wash your hands.” “(Lavate las manos, por favor.”)

When determining the right time to make the leap of faith from diapers to underwear, we consider several developmental signs of readiness (please see page 2).  We will let you know when we think your child has reached this point.

 Watch for these developmental signs of toilet training readiness:

* Shows interest in exploring the bathroom. Make your bathroom at home child friendly by providing a stool, books, etc.
* Shows interest in others’ toileting procedures. Encourage your child’s interest by inviting your child to sit on the toilet.
* Has the ability to remove clothing with an interest in dressing/undressing. Wearing loose fitting clothing and elastic waistbands are essential to the child’s success.
* Shows awareness/feeling the need to go, exhibited by squatting and/or hiding. Immediately take your child to the bathroom when this occurs.
* Asks to use the bathroom.
* Expresses discomfort/complaining about soiled/wet diapers. Comment on how great it feels to use the toilet and have clean and dry clothing.
* Has dry diapers for three to four hours during the day
* Has regular, well-formed bowel movement at fairly predictable times. Take your child to the bathroom when you anticipate these times.
* Is not resistant to using the toilet.
* Has a dry diaper through the night. Discontinue intake of liquids an hour and a half before bedtime.
* Can climb a staircase using one footstep per stair
* Has the ability to follow instructions
* Has a desire to be a “big kid”

 Toilet Training is fully recognized when a child:

* Can take his/her clothes off and on independently (loose clothing is a must for this)
* Can ask for help
* Does not have more than two urination accidents in a week at school
* Does not have bowel movement accidents at school
* Can clean up independently after a urination accident
* Is not anxious about toileting

Development of good toileting skills indicates that a child may be ready to begin transitioning into our Primary Program.

Please let your child’s teacher know if you would like more information about our toilet skills program or support as you work with your young child at home.