

Age Specific Classroom Policies

As with most other decisions at Hilltop, we reference general guidelines, but do not impose them largely across the board, as no two children or situations are exactly alike. Rather, we consider the uniqueness of each child, recommendations from faculty, family preference, and Hilltop's bigger picture in making our decisions. Administration will make the final decision regarding a child's placement, with careful consideration of all factors, some of which can be made public to families and others which might be confidential, based on the needs of individual children and families. We make these decisions deliberately, intentionally, and with deep care for each child and family.

Infants and Toddlers - (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

Your child is one of your most precious gifts and we are honored to be a part of their journey from the very beginning. We ensure a smooth transition to communicating milestone achievements; we're not a daycare, we're an extension of your home.

Our highly trained infant and toddler primary educators' partner with you to ensure your child's developmental needs are met every step along the way. They create predictable routines and nurturing classroom environments that foster social and emotional development.

Through age-appropriate, natural materials inspired by our Reggio Emilia approach, your child will be introduced to sensory play, art, music, language, and fine/gross motor activities that are documented and shared with you through our daily activity log on BrightWheel.

Diapering Procedure - Children will always be attended to during the diapering procedure. Diaper changing is handled on an individual basis. Different ages require different times therefore we care for each child's needs as they present themselves. Diapers are changed at regular times and as needed between scheduled times. Diapers are checked at least every two hours and changed at least every four hours and always as needed. Families provide disposable diapers and wipes. Proper hand washing is practiced, washing child's hands also with soap and water.

Diaper changing area will be sanitized after each use and air dried. Dirty diapers will be disposed of by the provider in a garbage bin with a tight-fitting lid. The following steps will be used during all diaper changes:

- Have access to necessary materials.
- Wash hands both the child's and the staff.
- Put on gloves.
- Remove soiled diaper
- Clean diaper area with wipes, using only one wipe per swipe, wipe front to back.
- Place diaper, wipes and soiled gloves in a plastic bag and place in garbage can with a tight-fitting lid.
- Using a diaper wipe to clean hands.
- Diaper child and dress child.
- Wash child's hands and your hands at sink with soap and water, small infant's hands will be washed with a diaper wipe.
- Clean and disinfect the diaper-changing table. Let air-dry.
- Disposable diapers are disposed in sealed garbage; cloth diapers are placed in plastic bag and sent home with the child

Toilet Training - Before a child is ready to start toilet training, we will discuss with the family their views on toilet training. Please talk to us ahead of time about what your techniques are at home, so we are aligned with the same practices. For toilet training we use positive reinforcement, culturally sensitive

and developmentally appropriate methods, as well as a routine developed in agreement with the family.

Training will be discussed and coordinated with family when the child shows an interest. We will not begin toilet training until family is ready to follow through at home. Toddlers will never be allowed in the bathroom alone. We will assist in teaching proper training and hand washing. Children will need to remain in "Pull Ups" or diapers until they are no longer having accidents. Children need to wear appropriate clothing which is easy for them to remove. Families are required to supply the needed supplies and plenty of extra clothing. All soiled clothes will be placed in a sealable plastic bag and sent home with family to launder. Working together as a team is crucial to the success and comfort of your child.

Infant Feeding - Bottles and food in order to maintain consistency from home to the center, and to meet the individual needs of children, infants will eat according to their own schedule. Fresh formula or breast milk (refer to breastfeeding procedures below) and baby food will need to be supplied to the center daily. All bottles should be capped and labeled with your child's full name. Each infant will be assigned a color code that will be placed on all bottles and food containers. A color-coding chart will be kept in the classroom. Faculty also use a verbal double check procedure to be certain all infants receive the correct bottles. Microwave ovens are not used to heat infants' bottles or food due to uneven heating and placing the children at risk of burns. It is Hilltop's policy that all leftover contents of a bottle shall be discarded after 60 minutes to avoid contamination. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. For older infants, the center will supply all snacks (e.g., crackers, fruit, etc.).

NOTE: Solid food and cereal will not be fed in a bottle unless the child has specific written instructions from their medical provider. Solid food in a bottle is not only a choking hazard, but it also teaches the child to eat solid foods incorrectly. Additionally, please note that medications should not be put in a child's bottle. If your child is not feeling well and does not complete the bottle, they may not get the full dosage of the medication. See the Medication Policy for further information.

Breastfeeding - A meaningful benefit of having childcare near your work site is the opportunity for a new mother to breastfeed throughout the day. If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at any time. If the center is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. All breast milk bottles will be stored in the refrigerator or freezer until needed. Mothers are welcome to come and breast feed at any time. Bottles or sippy cups will not be given to any child in a prone position. Infants will not be allowed to share bottles or sippy cups. Children will not be allowed to walk around with a bottle or sippy cup. Bottles will be heated in warm water never in microwaves. Breast milk or formula will be discarded if it has been sitting at room temperature for more than one hour. We will wash and sanitize the bottles. All bottles must be given directly to a staff member when you arrive.

Infant Sleep Patterns - In order to maintain consistency from home to the center, and to meet the individual needs of children, infants will sleep according to their own schedule and never be forced to sleep. At Hilltop infants will be put to sleep on their backs unless family request otherwise (See Infant Safe Sleep Positions) and were allowed by state licensing with a release form signed by family and a physician.

We will offer a quiet rest time for all children. Infants will use napping equipment approved by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission or ASTM international Safety Standards. Napping equipment will be clean and firm with a snug-fitting mattress that does not have tears or holes. Children will be removed from car seats, swings, rockers, or other similar equipment if they have fallen asleep. When children can climb out of a crib, or it is no longer developmentally appropriate for the child to sleep in an infant crib we will consult with the family and develop a transition plan to a mat or other approved sleeping equipment.

Infant Safe Sleep Positions - To reduce the risk of *Sudden Infant Death Syndrome* (SIDS) We have completed yearly safe sleep training and will complete new training each year. We will actively supervise infants and toddlers by visibly checking often and being within sight and hearing range, including when an infant or toddler goes to sleep, is sleeping, or is waking up. We will follow the current standard of American Academy of Pediatrics concerning safe sleep practices including SIDS/SUIDS risk reduction. We will place an infant to sleep on his or her back or follow the current standard of American Academy of Pediatrics. If an infant turns over while sleeping, we will return the infant to his or her back until the infant is able to independently roll from back to front and front to back. We will not use a sleep positioning device unless directed to do so by an infant's or toddler's health care provider. The directive must be in writing and kept in the infant's or toddler's file. We will have sufficient lighting in the room in which an infant or toddler is sleeping to observe skin color. We will monitor breathing patterns of an infant or toddler and allow infants and toddlers to follow their own sleep patterns.

We will not allow loose blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, crib bumpers, and similar items inside an occupied crib, bassinet, or other equipment where infants commonly sleep. We will not allow a blanket or any other item to cover or drape over an occupied crib, bassinet, or other equipment where infants commonly sleep. We will not allow a blanket, bedding, or clothing to cover any portion of an infant's or toddler's head or face while sleeping and will readjust these items when necessary. We will prevent infants or toddlers from getting too warm while sleeping, which may be exhibited by indicators that include, but are not limited to, sweating; flushed, pale, or hot and dry skin, warm to the touch; a sudden rise in temperature; vomiting; refusing to drink, a depressed fontanelle; or irritability. Pacifiers must not have anything attached to them and must have a device or container to store the pacifier in when not in use that prevents contamination.

Rainbow Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages six (6) weeks to eighteen (18) months
- Infants are never mixed with other age groups and ratios are always maintained throughout the day.
- Eight (8) children to 2 Primary Educators.
- Baby Signs will be used during your child's day. You will receive a handbook of baby signs to help you and your infant.

Raindrop Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages twelve (12) months to twenty-eight (28) months
- Ten (10) children to 2 Primary Educators.

- Baby Signs will be used during your child's day. You will receive a handbook of baby signs to help you and your toddler.

Items Needed - The following is a list of items to bring to the center to help your child be comfortable. Please label every item. We will do our best to keep track of everything that you bring, but just like home, things do get misplaced, and we cannot be responsible for replacing items. Families are responsible for laundering their child's extra naptime bedding and extra change of clothes when used, these will be sent home regularly. We encourage you to provide a family photo prior to your child's first day of school. The photo will be attached to your child's cubby area to identify his/her personal space and to help your child with transitioning into our program by having a picture of their loved ones nearby.

Infants

- Prepared bottles (please label each bottle with your child's name and the date)
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Special sleeping sack (optional)
- Two pacifiers (optional)
- Disposable diapers and wipe
- Cereal and baby food
- Suction cup bottom bowl (optional)
- Bibs (optional)
- Family Photo

Toddlers

- Training cup (optional)
- Training underwear (several pairs)
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Nap blanket
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Bibs (optional)
- Lunch labeled with your child's name and the date
- Seasonal clothes for outdoors
- Family Photo

Early Preschool - (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

Your two-year-old is becoming more verbal, continuing to explore new things around them and is beginning to develop social skills. A balanced routine and flexibility are important at this age as your child's developmental needs are different from their peers.

To do this, your child's primary educator and our classrooms create a nurturing, home-like classroom environment where your early preschooler is treated as a capable individual, whose opinions, actions and thoughts are respected and valued.

Our Reggio Emilia-inspired, emergent learning curriculum is designed to stimulate the whole child through experiences in math, science, language, drama and music. Language development is rapid at this age, so we also take this opportunity to help increase their vocabulary. All lessons are presented in a way to help develop each child's imagination by learning through play.

Cloud Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages eighteen (18) months to thirty (30) months
- Six (6) children to 1 Primary Educators.

Mountain Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages two (2) years to three (3) years
- Twelve (12) children to 2 Primary Educators.

Preschool - (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

Your preschooler is growing up fast, potty-trained and eager to learn new things. At this age, your child is more coordinated and is absorbing lots of information every day.

At Hilltop, your child's day is carefully planned out with a variety of hands-on activities to encourage learning and socialization. At this age, we also put a large focus on teaching self-awareness and fostering independence by helping your child master their self-help skills.

We design our preschool classrooms with these developmental milestones in mind and equip each classroom with age-appropriate, educational toys to help continue inspiring your child's curiosity and desire to learn and engage with their classmates and their environment.

Sunlight and River Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages three (3) years to four (4) years
- Fourteen (14) children to 2 Primary Educators.

Garden and Ocean Classroom

- Only available at Queen Anne location.
- Ages four (4) years to five (5) years
- Fourteen (14) children to 2 Primary Educators.

Prekindergarten (PreK) - (8:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

Hilltop Children Center's half-day (six hours) prekindergarten program is for children three to five years. Our classrooms are open from 8:00am-2:00pm, Monday-Friday and run from September to June and follow the Seattle Public Schools academic calendar from September to June. Our skilled primary educators help build essential skills by carefully crafting engaging activities that balance instructed learning and purposeful play.

We also offer an optional 2:00pm-5:00pm, Monday-Friday extended day program for children enrolled in our morning half-day program for those needing care after school.

Our Reggio Emilia-inspired, emergent learning curriculum is designed to stimulate the whole child through experiences in math, science, language, drama and music. Language development is rapid at this age, so we also take this opportunity to help increase their vocabulary. All lessons are presented in a way to help develop each child's imagination by learning through play.

Your child will also be taught fine motor skills, reading, writing and math readiness. They will be able to retell stories and, in the process learn to sequence. Simple analogies are also introduced to expand critical thinking skills. Throughout their time in pre-kindergarten, your child will develop self-esteem, learn how to follow instructions, listen, and communicate effectively, practice self-control, connect with others, manage bathroom needs and actively participate in physical activities. We consistently evaluate your child's kindergarten readiness based on age-appropriate benchmarks to assess individual growth and development.

Maple, Alder, and Oak Classroom

- Only available at Fremont location.
- Ages two and half (2 ½) years to five (5) years
- Seven (7) children to 1 Primary Educators.

Spruce Classroom and Extended Day

- Only available at Fremont location.
- Ages three (3) years to five (5) years
- Fourteen (14) children to 2 Primary Educators.
- Extended Day available for those needing care between 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM

School-Age After School – (arrival – 6:00 PM) and Full Day Care (8:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

We believe that children learn best when they are given the opportunity to explore and interact with an environment in a constructive way at their own pace. Consequently, our programs are designed to provide the maximum opportunity to experience a variety of materials, ideas and social situations at a level appropriate to the individual child.

Alder, Oak, and Maple Classrooms

- Only available at Fremont location.
- Kindergarten to Fifth grade students
- Fourteen (14) children to 1 Primary Educator.
- After school care only.
- Full Care Days (optional) – When school is closed, we provide a full-day care option
- Community projects: the children will decide on their own community projects (the local Food Bank) and create plans to achieve their goals.
- We provide homework support for your child.
- Children will also have the opportunity to play and visit with our younger children at our Queen Anne location (not during COVID-19). This encourages empathy in children of all ages. Empathy is part of our anti bullying project.
- The Youth Program Quality Initiative will be part of the day-to-day activities of our school age program to encourage youth choice and voice.

Daily Schedule and Routines

Each classroom has a daily schedule designed by the teachers to meet the needs of the children in that group. These schedules may change from day to day depending on class interests and activities, but everyone has a predictable routine for breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and rest time. The day consists of a balance of flexible times where children are free to interact with each other and the environment, and educator-facilitated times with small or large groups. Every day there are at least two active play times scheduled either outdoors or inside. Special events may include walks to local parks, field trips by bus or by foot, cooking projects, visits from community resource people, and other special events to support children's investigations.

Bathroom Access

All of Hilltop's bathrooms are gender-neutral, in compliance with non-discrimination laws and in support of all children and adults, regardless of gender identity. The multi-stall bathrooms are for children's use only, while children are in the building. Adult bathrooms are gender-neutral and single stall with a locking door.

Each classroom has access to a bathroom that meets licensing standards for young children. Children will be able to use the bathroom in an unregimented fashion. In addition, educators will invite children to use the bathroom before leaving the building for outdoor trips or play, before lunch, before naptime and following wake-up from nap. After each time of using or attempting to use the toilet, teachers will ensure that children thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water. This ensures that children spend ample time disinfecting their hands. Hilltop does not use antibacterial soap; we have found it to be exceptionally harsh on children's delicate skin and the King County Department of Public Health advises against its use. The single most significant thing families can do to keep their children healthy is to teach, model, and reinforce proper hand washing.

Children will occasionally have toileting accidents. This is a normal part of childhood. We do not make a big deal out of these accidents. We ask that a complete change of clothes is available in your child's cubby in case it is needed. Please check your child's cubby for soiled clothes at the end of each day and replace any extra clothes that your child has used. Hilltop has a limited supply of spare clothing. If your child is sent home in Hilltop spares, please launder them, and return them the next day so that they may be used for another child.

Naptime Routine for Early Preschool, Preschool, and PreK (ECE)

Children in our ECE classrooms rest in their rooms on mats for at least forty-five (45) minutes each day. This is a state licensing requirement. Each child has their own cotton flannel sheet and pillowcase, provided by Hilltop. Some children bring a favorite blanket and soft toy from home. Families are expected to take bedding home at the end of each week and wash it. Make sure to bring it back to the center on your child's next day. Children generally start their rest time between 12:30 and 1:30, and get up between 2:00 and 2:30, depending on the age group. Each room has naptime rituals, like reading a book to children or playing music. Educators will help children relax, sometimes offering to rub the backs of children that respond to this kind of soothing touch. After a period of relaxation and rest, quiet activities (books, stories read aloud, quiet toys) may be provided for those children who do not need to sleep. We do not have a separate space for children who do not nap. Any special requests and changes in nap routine will be discussed between family and educators.

Field Trips

Field trip notices will be posted at least two days before the trip. The general permission form that you sign before starting will cover all walking and bus field trips. When children go on walks to neighborhood parks a note will be posted on the door informing you where they are.

Birthday Celebrations

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom, please let an educator in your child's classroom know in advance. Each classroom has its own approach to celebrating birthdays. You may bring treats to share with the class (muffins, cupcakes, or a favorite food of your child's). We encourage families to bring food that is low in sugar content. Nuts, nut oils, or shellfish are strictly prohibited as there are children at the center who have life-threatening allergies to these foods. Please check with your child's primary educator regarding any food allergies or dietary restrictions in your child's group.

Holidays

There are many different holidays celebrated and they are all special and wonderful to the families who celebrate them. It is our goal at Hilltop to approach holidays in a way that reflects the children and families in our program and that acknowledges the wider world in which we live. Holidays are an opportunity to live our commitment to anti-bias practices at Hilltop. Hilltop has a Holiday Policy that we revisit and revise periodically and which each classroom adapts to fit its own unique culture. As with many of the other home-to-center connections, we offer a standing and enthusiastic invitation to families to share their rituals and traditions. Classroom educators can work with you about timing and methods of involving the classroom in a meaningful way. Please ask an educator if you have questions about our holiday practices.

Transportation

Transportation for Field Trips – Hilltop uses the Metro bus system for many field trips. We also take a lot of walking field trips. Families or faculty who are driving for field trips may only transport their own children and must provide proof of insurance. An adult in each car must be certified in First Aid/CPR training and provide written proof of certification to Hilltop administration prior to the field trip.

Transportation from Seattle Public Schools - Hilltop does not provide transportation from any of the local schools. Transportation is provided to Hilltop from these schools through the Seattle Public Schools Transportation Department. Hilltop commonly serves children enrolled at schools such as Coe, Lawton, Hay, Lincoln, and Queen Anne Elementary Schools (and sometimes others), depending on what the Seattle Public Schools Transportation Department makes available to us. Children are dropped off in the afternoon at the bus stop directly in front of the 4 Nickerson building. Educators wait at the bus stop for the bus to arrive to ensure the safety of the children. If other plans become necessary to accommodate bus schedules, this will be discussed with families and a plan will be agreed upon.

Children attending BF Day will be picked up by an educator and they will walk to our after-school program located at our Fremont location. Children arriving via school bus at our Queen Anne location will walk over to our Fremont location.

Meals

Breakfast, morning snack, and afternoon snacks are served at Hilltop Children's Center for all children, while families provide a sack lunch. Hilltop provides milk or soy milk at lunch time. Meals and snacks are served "family style" when age-appropriate and educators are encouraged to eat with the children. Educators participate in mealtimes, both to assist the children when needed and to model appropriate mealtime behavior. Daily records of meals and snacks given to the children are recorded and posted at the time of serving the snack or meal. Families may arrange with educators to provide treats for special occasions such as birthdays. Regular planned meals and snacks will still be served on those days. High sugar treats should be limited.

Dining with children is as important as any other time of day in a child's life. Children learn lifelong habits and develop relationships with food and their bodies during meal times. It is our goal that lunch will be a relaxed and conversational period for children and educators to visit and enjoy their meal. We encourage children to try what's in their lunch at least twice but will not insist that children eat everything or even that they prioritize certain foods over others they have brought. Research tells us that children can learn to listen to their bodies if they are given healthy foods from which to choose and are not forced to eat. This is how children learn to listen to and trust cues from their bodies about hunger and fullness.

Hilltop makes an effort to accommodate each child's food allergies and dietary choices and restrictions, including vegetarian, vegan, and dairy-free options. Hilltop strives to be tree nut/peanut free and shellfish free as children currently at Hilltop have life-threatening allergies to these foods. This includes sack lunches and potluck gatherings. While we cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to allergens, we do our best to create a safe eating environment for all children. Soy and sunflower seed butter are OK to pack in your child's lunch and will be used in snacks served at the center.

Sack Lunch Guidelines - At Hilltop we provide a breakfast consisting of a low sugar cereal, juice and milk or a non-dairy alternative (soy milk or rice milk). We also provide an afternoon and late-afternoon snack. Families provide a sack lunch. We encourage you to involve your child in learning about nutrition, and in the planning and preparation of his/her lunch. Here are some guidelines we think you will find helpful as you plan sack lunches for your child:

What about refrigeration? Please pack an ice pack in your child's lunch box to keep items cold. Upon arrival, please place lunches in your child's cubby.

Is there a way to heat foods? Unfortunately, we are unable to heat meals for children, however; you may wish to try a good quality thermos or other insulated container to keep leftovers or soup warm.

Do I need to send a drink? No. Hilltop will provide milk or a non-dairy alternative per your request. Please do not send additional beverages with your child's lunch.

What if my child has a food allergy or intolerance? Please let our Enrollment Coordinator know right away, as there are forms, we are required to have you fill out to ensure we are effectively supporting your child's dietary restrictions. You may also contact our Nutrition Coordinator about specific food allergies or preferences.

Why no shellfish? We have children enrolled who have a life-threatening allergy to shellfish, so no scallops, shrimp, prawns or crab should be included in lunches or potluck items.

Can I bring peanut butter? No. We currently have children onsite with severe peanut and tree-nut allergies, so Hilltop is peanut-free and tree-nut free (including almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.). This is because nut allergies are potentially fatal and, as much as we love the convenience and taste of peanut butter, we cannot justify the risk. Please do not send items that have been cooked in nut oil or contain traces of peanuts or tree-nuts. We recommend and use seed butters like sunflower seed and soy as a safe and delicious alternative.

What if I forget my child's lunch? If we happen to notice at drop off time that you've forgotten your child's lunch, we will ask you to make a quick trip to purchase a lunch for your child, or come back later in the day with a lunch. PCC is nearby and has a huge selection of fresh foods, fruit, and other lunch items from which to choose. If we notice after your departure that your child doesn't have a lunch, we will provide an emergency lunch.

Are there any guidelines about what should be included in sack lunches? Yes, the Washington Administrative Code that pertains to childcare programs lists certain regulations about what must be included in sack lunches in order to meet daily nutritional requirements. It is recommended that each child's sack lunch includes a dairy product (such as cheese, yogurt or cottage cheese), a meat or meat alternative (such as beef, fish, poultry, legumes, tofu, or beans), a grain product (such as bread, cereal, bagel, or rice cake), and fruits or vegetables (two fruits or two vegetables or one fruit and one vegetable to equal the total portion size required). Keep in mind that we do offer milk (or a non-dairy alternative) with lunch, which meets the daily requirement.

What is the lunch-time culture at Hilltop? Eating food with children is as important as any other time of day in a child's life. Children learn lifelong habits and develop relationships with food and their bodies during mealtimes. It is our goal that lunch will be a relaxed and conversational time for children and teachers to visit and enjoy their food. We will encourage children to try what's in their lunchbox but will not insist that children eat everything or even that they save some foods for the end of the meal. Research tells us that children can learn to listen to their bodies if they are given healthy foods from which to choose and are not forced to eat them. This is how children learn to listen to and trust cues from their bodies about hunger and fullness.

Items Needed for Early Preschool, Preschool, and PreK (ECE)

Proper dress is an important part of the Hilltop experience. Durable clothing that can withstand the energetic activity of young children—digging in dirt, exploring sand, experimenting with water, or painting, among other activities—is best. We consider our playground to be an extension of our classroom and we conduct programs outside whenever weather permits. That makes it important for your child to dress for the elements—rain gear including boots for wet weather; jackets/snowsuits, hats, mittens, and boots during the winter and snow.

When buying indoor or outdoor clothing for when at the center, please make sure older children can put it on themselves. If you are using boots (rain or snow) as shoes, please send slippers or sneakers so that your child will not have to keep their boots on indoors.

Each child attending the program must have a complete change of clothing labeled with his or her name. Clothing will be kept in each child's cubby and used as needed. Hilltop provides cots, cribs, and sheets. The center is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. We will take all precautionary methods to be certain that your child's belongings are well cared for; please keep in mind, clothes that look a little less clean at the end of the day are a sign that your child was actively engaged in learning.