



Welcome parents/caregiver to the Social Communication Playgroup! We are excited to have you join. This packet will give you an overview of our guidelines and expectations of parent/caregiver participants and child participants.

Location and Space:

We utilize the Nan Tolbert Nurturing Center located at 555 Mahoney Ave in Oak View, which is a space specifically designed with young children in mind. The space is as much as a “yes space” for children as possible.

Absences:

We ask that all parents/caregivers let us know if they need to miss group. This is imperative that we ensure appropriate staff supervision and enough children participants to make a group. Please either text or call Ellen (908) 917-6777 or Kira (805) 718-1731.

Schedule:*

9:00 - 9:35	Exploration and Observation	10:30 – 11:05	Exploration and Observation
9:35 – 9:40	Clean Up	11:05 – 11:10	Clean Up
9:40 – 9:55	Snack	11:10 – 11:25	Snack
9:55 – 10:15	Outside Time with songs	11:25 – 11:45	Outside Time with songs

*Schedule will be adjusted based on the needs of the group that day.

Group Goals for Children:

- Communicating with peers and adults
- Self-regulation
- Increased conflict-resolution skills
- Play Skills
- Social-emotional development
- Self-help skills
- Improved ability to transition from one activity to the next

Group Goals for Parent/Caregiver:

- Increased skills in supporting their toddler with communication skills
- Increased understanding of social-emotional development
- Develop understanding of ways to support communication in the community
- Increased strategies for supporting transitions and overall development
- Increased observation skills of their child

On the first day of group, we will ask parents/caregiver to think of a goal they would like for their child and for themselves from the social communication group.

Arrival:

Upon arrival, we ask that parents/caregivers come in, take off their and their children's shoes before joining the parent/caregiver circle. At this point in our schedule, this is the opportunity for parents to settle in while observing. We ask all parents to remain quiet and present during this time. Please refrain from cell phone use during the full 1.25 hour group. If child come to interact with you, please respond appropriately to them by modeling communication. Please remember to talk low and soft during this period. For some parent/caregivers, this may be harder than others. It is rare that as parents/caregivers we get an opportunity to just sit and it can fill a bit uncomfortable for some in the beginning. This quiet observation time for parents/caregivers is a crucial opportunity for children to settle their nervous system. Settling the nervous system is important in developing self-regulation. Children are invited to explore the environment, stay near their caregiver/parent and/or play. Staff will support children with conflict resolution, transitions, and communication while also observing. Parents are invited to observe the techniques and methods that our staff use during this time. The techniques may be useful within the community such as at the library, parks, or community classes.

Transitions:

Transition activities such as cleaning up toys before snack and cleaning up their bowl and cup are viewed as an activities themselves and should not be rushed through. We slow down and help children problem solve. We focus on working on receptive listening skills, self help skills and closure to the activity the previous activity during the time of transition. We utilize a lot of songs during this time as we wait. Songs can be soothing and a good way to start to develop an understanding or sense of time.

Snack:

We usually offer "O's" and occasionally an additional snack (bananas, cuties, apple slices, etc.). We serve children water in an open cup to work on self-help skills of navigating drinking from a regular cup. If the child doesn't use an open cup at home this is an opportunity for them to try. We know spills happen and we are prepared to help children navigate such situations. Snack is an opportunity for children to develop self-regulation skills. They sit on small stools at a small toddler size table. Children are learning to come together and to sit at a table with others. We don't expect this to happen immediately, but for them to acquire the skill as they become more familiar with the snack routine. Parents/caregivers are invited to sit close with their children and help them wait for snack. We allow children to leave the table as they wish, but request that snack foods stay at the table. At the end of snack, we help children put away their snack in the "all done basket/box" before we move on to putting on shoes. Please let staff know ahead of time if your child has any food allergies or food needs.

Outside Time:

Outside Time is a great time for parents to connect with each other. It is a opportunity for children to explore the nature around them. We go outside rain or shine, within reason, and ask parents to dress their children appropriately. In the winter, we suggest a coat and warm clothes. In the summer, we suggest cool clothes and a hat for sun protection. Please understand children may get wet or muddy during this time. We also provide sensory activities that may get clothes messy with paint or glue. Please come in clothes that are okay to get dirty and messing for both you and your child. We strongly recommend bringing an extra pair of clothes for children on the day of group. Outside time is another opportunity where children begin to come together in cooperative activities like the parachute or songs. Children may initially feel more

comfortable observing versus participating. Similar to the snack routine, we allow children to leave our circle as they wish knowing they are developing the skills to participate in group interactions.

Communication:

Communication is the cornerstone of our group. ELP staff and parent/caregiver will use respectful communication when interacting with children AND discussing children. Remember children learn communication skills from the adults around them and it is imperative that we model respectful communication as a teaching tool for them. If parents need an opportunity to address a stressful situation with staff and feel they are unable to use respectful communication then, please ask a staff member to step outside and they will when they can step away from group. We ask that parents refrain from yelling across the room or yard at the children. If you find it important to address something with your children, please walk up to your child and talk directly with them. Remember other children are learning and working on their communication and skills. When shouted across the room such types of communication may startle, upset, or interrupt others.

Parent Education:

ELP is fortunate to have Carol Castanon, former Executive Director at the Nan Tolbert Nurturing Center (Secure Beginnings) with us on the last Friday of every month for parent education and support on a variety of topics.



Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Caregiver's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Parent/Caregiver's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Individual Goal for Child:

Individual Goal for Parent/Caregiver:
