

## Preparing Your Baby for Daycare

### **Let your baby nap in their crib**

Your baby is growing and needs plenty of sleep. Infants who have not learned to sleep independently have a harder time transitioning to day care. Your baby will not be able to sleep in a swing, car seat, carrier, or providers arms, so for your baby to get the sleep they need, it is *imperative* that they learn to sleep on their own in a crib or pack 'n play. Make sure you start the transition to a crib for naps at least a month before starting daycare.

### **Recreate the same sleep environment your baby will have at day care.**

As a licensed provider we are not able to swaddle your infant, however generally infants have grown out of the stage of needing to be swaddled by the time they start care. Make sure you always place your baby on their back for naps and don't use any equipment, clothing, or other items that will not be used at day care. We provide a pack 'n play for your child with a fitted sheet. We do not use blankets, pillows, stuffed toys or padded bumpers to support our 'Back to Sleep' program. (Refer to our Resource - Safe Sleep for more details) Also make sure nap time is not a silent time because for the baby to sleep soundly at day care, they must be accustomed to some noise.

### **If breastfeeding, give baby a bottle on a regular basis**

Bottle feeding and breastfeeding can often be a difficult combination, but it is essential to your baby that they can drink from a bottle consistently throughout the day. As caregivers we want to ensure your baby gets adequate sustenance during their day with us and if they are not accustomed to taking a bottle meeting their needs can be challenging.

### **Try Pumping at the same intervals you will at work if you will be pumping**

It may be hard to maintain your supply because pumping is much different than your baby emptying the breast. Try pumping for a few days and bottle feeding to get your body used to this new routine and to figure out how much milk your baby drinks prior to your returning to work.

### **Write things down for your childcare provider**

You know your baby better than anyone, so your baby's cues are something that a provider needs time to learn. Therefore, it is essential for a provider to know when your baby naps, how often, how many dirty/wet diapers they typically have and how

often/much your baby eats. This will assist us as your baby's caregiver in learning your little ones cues.

### **Don't use sick leave on maternity leave**

Children are bound to get sick not just at day care, as well as interacting with anyone that comes in contact with your child such as family and friends and exposure to the world. While illnesses help build immunity, we don't want illnesses spreading in day care and exposing not only your child but other children in our care. It is common that the first few weeks in a childcare an infant may get sick. You may then find you need to take days off from work caring for a sick baby shortly after they start childcare.

### **Expect your baby to be clingy and extra hungry in the evenings**

If your baby is extra clingy and hungry the first couple of week of starting day care, don't automatically assume they are not receiving quality care. Babies often will eat less at day care so they can eat more at home bonding with their parents. Your child also missed you, so they will want to spend extra time with you at night and on weekends. Snuggle your baby but be sure not to hold your baby constantly, as your infant will quickly learn to expect being held on a regular basis and it is impossible for a caregiver to hold your baby consistently while in their care. Also your little one greatly benefits from tummy time and back time as they explore their world and build those little muscles.