



Parent Handbook

Rooted in Faith
Ready for the Future

Monday - Friday
6:30a.m. to 6:00p.m.



1010 Lake Miriam Dr.
Lakeland, FL 33813



863-646-9333



pchighlands.com/preschool



directors@pchighlands.com

Directors: Kelly Dorfman & Arika Marshall

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

01.

WELCOME TO PCH

- Who We Are
- Welcome to our Program - Tours
- Mission Statement
- Vision
- Goals
- Core Values
- Personnel are Mandated Reporters

02.

ADMISSIONS & REQUIREMENTS

- Enrollment/Admission
- Required Forms for Admission
- Supplies Needed

03.

PCH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Drop off/Pick Up
- Open Door Policy
- Notification of Absence
- Ratios & Group Size
- Walks, Special Events/Activities
- Licensed/Contracts/Curriculum
- Developmental Screenings
- Transitions
- Holiday Calendar
- VPK
- Summer Enrollment
- Athletics Program
- Rest Time
- Dress
- Toys/Items from Home
- Screen Time
- Exceptions
- After School Care
- Field Trips for School Age
- Summer Camp

04.

SAFETY & HEALTH

- Environment
- Inclement Weather
- Emergency Procedures
- Smoking and Drug Free Campus
- Safe Sleep Practices
- Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Nurse's Elbow
- Discipline Policy
- Illness Policy
- Medication Policy
- Allergy/Health Considerations
- Toilet Learning
- Biting
- Positive Guidance
- Disenrollment Policy

05.

FOOD & MEALS

- Meals at PCH
- Birthdays/Special Occasions
- Lunch Tips

06.

TUITION & FEES

- Tuition Table
- Refunds/Holidays/Vacation/Sick Days
- Fees
- Payment Method/Custody Payments/Placement
- Withdraw Procedures
- Chronic Payment Delinquency and Dismissal Policy
- Payment Arrangements
- Outstanding Balance and Collections
- School Readiness
- Step Up Scholarship

07.

COMMUNICATION

- Procure
- Questions/Concerns
- Family Involvement
- Incident Reports
- Internal Communication
- Newsletters

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

08.

CONFIDENTIALITY & SECURITY

- Security/Access Control
- Confidential Information
- Social Media Policy
- Employment by Client
- Photos/AI Apps

09.

FAMILY/CHILD SPECIFIC

- Families with Custody Agreements
- Restraining Orders & Restricted Access
- Ryla Wilson Act Children
- Therapist/Case Workers/DCF Representatives visiting Children

10.

DCF BROCHURES

- Know Your Child Care Facility
- Influenza
- Distracted Driver

Who we are

Welcome to Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool (PCH Preschool)!

We are a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands, and we are truly honored that you have chosen us to care for your children. Our mission is to provide a nurturing, high-quality, and educational environment for all children in our care.

Since opening our doors on November 26, 2007, we have been dedicated to serving children from ages 6 weeks to 12 years. From 2011 to 2019, our preschool was proudly accredited by the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) for Early Care and Education Programs. While we are no longer NAC accredited, we want to assure you that we continue to uphold the same high standards of care and education that earned us this recognition.

We remain committed to providing an exceptional program that supports the individual growth and development of each child. Our focus on professional development for our staff and our commitment to exceeding state licensing requirements ensures that we maintain a high-quality experience for every child in our care.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's early education. We look forward to partnering with you in their learning journey!

The policies in this handbook are routinely reviewed and may be updated as needed throughout the year. If any updates are made, you will receive an email notification as soon as the changes go into effect. By signing the acknowledgment statement on your enrollment form, you agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the preschool.

Welcome to Our Program! - Tours

We are thrilled to have you and your child join our community. During your Program Tour, we will provide you with an in-depth overview of our center to ensure that you feel comfortable and informed about your child's upcoming experience with us. Here's what you can expect:

- A tour of our facility, with priority given to families who have been called off our waitlist.
- Introduction to our dedicated teaching team, including their training and credentials.
- A visit to your child's future classroom (and if needed, we can arrange extra time for you and your child to explore together).
 - Explanation of class capacity and teacher-to-child ratios.
 - Viewing of areas where lesson plans, daily schedules, and important information are posted.
 - A look at storage spaces for your child's personal items.
- A review of our curriculum and lesson plans.
- An overview of our security and sign-in systems to ensure your child's safety.
- The Parent Handbook, conveniently available on our website at pchhighlands.com/preschool, is available for easy reference. A brochure with key information will be sent home with you.
- Discussion of family expectations and communication, including the Procure app.
- Review of any special accommodations that might be needed.
- Information on available family support and community resources.
- Opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have.

Additionally, if language assistance is needed, we are happy to offer interpretation services (Spanish is available).

We look forward to partnering with you and providing a nurturing and educational experience for your child!

Mission Statement

At Precious Children in the Highlands, we create a nurturing, faith-centered environment where children feel loved, valued, and empowered to learn. Through inclusive and innovative early childhood education, we provide hands-on, developmentally appropriate experiences that foster curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning. Our educators model Christ-like compassion and integrity, guiding children to grow spiritually, academically, and socially. By building strong partnerships with families and the community, we cultivate a foundation that prepares children to thrive in school and in life, with faith leading the way.

Vision

We envision a community where every child grows in faith, confidence, and curiosity—prepared to thrive in school and in life. Through Christ-centered guidance, strong family partnerships, and a commitment to excellence in early childhood education, we aim to inspire a generation of compassionate, capable, and purpose-driven individuals.

Goals

To cultivate a nurturing, Christ-centered learning environment where children are spiritually, socially, and academically empowered through hands-on, developmentally appropriate experiences, while actively engaging families and the community in their growth journey.

Core Values

Faith – We keep Christ at the center of all we do.

Love – Every child is seen, valued, and loved.

Excellence – We foster curiosity through high-quality, hands-on learning.

Integrity – We lead with honesty, compassion, and respect.

Partnership – We work hand-in-hand with families and the community.

Inclusion – We welcome all children into a place of belonging.

Personnel are Mandated Reporters

All childcare personnel are mandated by law to report any suspicions of child abuse, including abusive head trauma, neglect, or abandonment, to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with section 39.201 of the Florida Statutes. Reports can be made online at www.myflfamilies.com or by calling 1-800-962-2873.

Administrative staff will not intervene in this process and will be available to any staff member who feels it is necessary to report suspected abuse or neglect. The safety and well-being of the children in our care are our top priorities, and all reports will be handled in strict compliance with legal and ethical guidelines.

Enrollment/Admissions

Enrollment is open to all children, with accommodations made when possible per ADA regulations. We do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, or gender.

To control the flow of outside people coming into the center, PCH does tours when a family is called off the waitlist.

- After the Tour: Notify us that you'd like your child to attend. The Preschool Administrator will send you a link to complete necessary paperwork and pay the registration fee (all done online). You'll receive a confirmation email once completed.
- A Few Weeks/Days Before the Start Date: Receive a welcome email containing: Information about your child's teacher. A copy of the Parent Handbook. A reminder to submit Immunization and Physical forms. A welcome letter. Reminders about tuition, door codes, and Procure details.
- If your child is joining the VPK program, you will receive the orientation date in the welcome email if you are starting before VPK starts
- Procure App: A Procure invitation will be sent closer to the start date to help you become familiar with the app.
- Tuition Invoices: If you are set up for weekly tuition, you'll receive the first invoice before the start date. If you are set up for monthly, semi-annual, or annual tuition, you'll receive your invoice on the 1st of the month.
- State Funding: If you receive state funding, please submit the certificate. You'll receive a paper outlining the costs and differences for the program.
- On Your Child's First Day: You can check in at the front desk or go directly to the classroom. Always sign in/sign out your child using the kiosk or the Procure app by scanning the QR code upon arrival.

Required Forms for Admission

Immunization and Physical Forms

In compliance with childcare regulation 65-C-20, all students must submit a current immunization certificate (DH Form 680) and a student health examination form within the first 30 days of enrollment. These forms can be obtained from your doctor or local health department. The physical exam is valid for two years, and the immunization form is valid until its expiration. Medical or religious exemptions are allowed with the DH 681 Exemption form. The administration can access the FL Shots website to retrieve and maintain up-to-date health records for each child.

Enrollment Forms Needed as Follows

- The Registration Packet (Done Online)
- Immunization Form (DH Form 680)
- Physical Form (FL Student Health examination form)

Additional Forms for the Following

- VPK Certificate, signed (If coming into the VPK program)
- School Readiness Certificate (If you have funding from the Early Learning Coalition)
- Allergy Action Plan Form (If child has an allergy)
- Topical Medication Form (If child requires a topical medication to be applied, that is over the counter)
- Medication Authorization Form (If child requires a medication that is prescribed by a doctor that is to be given at school, such as an Epi Pen or Albuterol Inhaler, or prescribed ointment)

Supplies Needed**Supplies Need for the Starfish & Whales Rooms (Infants)**

- Diapers (as needed)
- Wipes (as needed)
- Formula or Breast Milk (as much is needed)
- Bottles labeled with first and last name (as many needed)
- Sleep sack
- 2 Changes of Clothes in Ziplock bags labeled with first and last name.
- Plastic bib with snaps (not Velcro) for eating
- Cloth bib
- Crib Sheet – portable crib size
- Food (as needed)
- Diaper cream with permission forms (as needed)

Items Needed for Caterpillars, Sea Turtles (Ones & Twos)

- 2 empty sippy cups labeled with first and last name.
- At least 2 changes of clothes
- Diapers (average 4-5 a day)
- Wipes (as needed)
- Small Blanket and mat cover (body pillowcase)
- Diaper cream with permission forms (as needed)

Items Needed for the Jellyfish, Rainbow Fish, Dolphins, Clownfish and Butterflies Room (Twos, Threes, & Fours)

- Water Bottle with First and Last Name
- Several Changes of Clothes in a zip lock back labeled with first and last name (If potty training, ask teachers what they may want you to bring)
- Small Blanket and mat cover (body pillowcase)

Items needed for VPK Rooms (Four & Fives)

- Change of clothes in Ziplock bag labeled with first and last name.
- Water Bottle with First and Last Name
- Small Blanket and mat cover (body pillowcase) for those who still nap

See your child's classroom calendars for updates on items or special clothing needed.

Drop Offs/Pick Ups

Please sign your child in and out daily using the Kiosk or Procure app. Drop-off should be by 8:30 AM to avoid disruptions during lunch and naptime. Please avoid drop-offs between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM unless your child is ready for a nap. If your schedule varies, please speak with the director for special arrangements.

Keep your child close while entering or exiting, and always supervise them once signed out. Only adults should use access codes to open doors. Authorized adults (16 or older) can pick up as listed on the enrollment form. To authorize someone else for pick-up, please provide written or emailed notification, and a photo ID will be required.

Childcare regulations prohibit leaving children alone in a vehicle, whether it's running or off, as it can be dangerous. If this occurs, we may need to call 911. Please avoid parking in front of the garbage and recycling bins. Buses should park at the far end of the parking lot to leave space for them throughout the day. PCH is not responsible for parking lot accidents, so always drive slowly and be mindful of children and pedestrians moving through the area.

Additionally, there may be a fine if garbage trucks need to be called back out for pickup. We kindly ask that drop-off and pick-up interactions be brief to help children stay focused and allow teachers to supervise effectively. If you'd like to discuss your child in more detail, we're happy to schedule a one-on-one meeting at a more convenient time.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and supportive environment for all children!

Open Door Policy

Parents/Guardians are always welcome to visit and observe the classroom. If you wish to volunteer, please be aware that a background screening will be required for a small fee, and will need to complete the DCF required forms for Good Moral Character and the Volunteer form. Be sure to check in with the director and sign the visitor log before entering. To minimize disruptions, please follow the classroom routine, and keep visits brief and respectful of the children and staff.

Teachers will be respectful, but please understand that they cannot share detailed information about other children in the classroom.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us maintain a positive and focused learning environment for all the children.

Notification of Absence

If your child will be absent or late, please notify us in advance through the ProCare App, email, or a phone call. For any absence during the month, a sick note, doctor's note, or email to the director or admin is required. Be advised that for School Readiness and Ryla Wilson Act children, we must have *documented* absences.

Ratios & Group Size

PCH adheres to Accreditation Ratios and maximum group size. There may be instances where we will revert to licensing ratios for short periods of time if necessary.

Classrooms	Accreditation Ratio	DCF Ratio	Group Size
Starfish & Whales (Infants/Ones)	1:4 or 2:8	1:4	8
Sea Turtles & Caterpillars (Ones/Twos)	1:5 or 2:10	1:6	10
Rainbow Fish & Jellyfish (Twos/Threes)	1:6 or 2:11/12	1:11	11 or 12
Clownfish, Dolphins, Butterflies (Twos/Threes/Fours)	1:9 or 2:18	1:15	18 or 15
Penguins, Sharks, Narwhals, Seals VPK	1:10 or 2:20	1:10 (VPK) 1:20 (Non VPK)	20
Manatees and Orcas SA	1:15 or 2:22	1:25	22

Walks & Special Activities

Children in our program can participate in walks, events, and activities across the church property with staff supervision to ensure safety.

Outdoor Walks:

Children will take supervised walks around the church, with infants secured in strollers. Toddlers will be on line lead ropes. Staff will maintain headcounts and follow safety procedures.

Chapel Time:

Children will attend chapel regularly on Wednesdays, with staff ensuring safe transitions to and from the chapel.

Athletics & Special Events:

Children may join athletic and special events across the church, including outdoor areas. Staff will maintain supervision and follow safety protocols.

Emergency Procedures:

Staff will carry first aid kits, contact info, and medications during outdoor activities. In case of bad weather or an emergency, children will be safely returned indoors.

Licensed/Contracts/Curriculum

Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families and supported by the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands. We have contracts with the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County for VPK and School Readiness.

You can view our licensing reports at anytime on myflfamilies.com

We use the Frog Street Curriculum, along with other research-based resources, to guide our program. Daily lessons focus on social interaction, faith, and learning through play, and are approved by the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County.

Frog Street Pre-K is the primary curriculum for our VPK program, emphasizing theme integration, social-emotional development, differentiated instruction, and bilingual materials. It is also used in many Polk County school-based VPK programs.

For more information, visit <https://www.frogstreet.com/>

Development Screenings

At Precious Children in the Highlands, we conduct developmental screenings at the start, middle, and end of each school year. Results are shared with you through a parent conference or update report. We use SmartTeach by Teaching Strategies for infants through age five and the Renaissance STAR Early Literacy Assessments for VPK. Results are shared with the Department of Early Learning. If concerns arise, we will discuss them during a conference and provide referrals and resources, typically to Early Steps for children under 3 and FDLRS/Child Find for those 3 and older. We will collaborate with you on behavior or developmental concerns and provide resources.

Transitions

Children will move to the next age group at the start of the school year, based on developmental readiness, licensing requirements, and space availability. The director may move a child earlier if deemed appropriate, not based solely on birthdate.

During transitions, children will visit the new classroom and meet the new teachers. If you'd like to meet with them, please let us know so we can schedule a time. VPK orientation will be announced before the program begins.

Holiday Calendar

The Preschool will be closed on the following dates

Martin Luther King Day	January 20, 2025	January 19, 2026
President's Day	February 17, 2025	February 16, 2026
Good Friday	April 18, 2025	April 3, 2026
Memorial Day	May 26, 2025	May 25, 2026
Independence Day Week	June 30 – July 4, 2025	June 29 – July 3, 2026
Labor Day	September 1, 2025	September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving	Nov. 27 & 28, 2025	November 26 & 27, 2026
Christmas Week	December 24, 2025 – January 2, 2026	

VPK & Butterflies Classrooms follow the Polk County School Calendar for Holidays and School Closures.

PCH is open on the following dates, but will not have care for Narwhals/Seals/Butterfly Classrooms

- October 13, 2025
- November 11, 2025
- November 24-28, 2025
- January 2 – 6, 2026
- March 16-20, 2026

VPK

The VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten) program is a state-funded program in Florida. To enroll, a valid VPK certificate is required. This certificate covers the cost of the 3-hour instructional block, so there is no tuition fee for this portion of care. The program follows the Polk County School Board Calendar and offers the following time slots, based on the classroom assignment:

- 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

What is the difference between VPK and VPK Wrap-Around Care?

- VPK refers specifically to the state-funded, 3-hour instructional program.
- VPK Wrap-Around Care includes the hours before and after the VPK session, as well as full-day care on days when the VPK program is closed (such as certain holidays or breaks).
- Wrap-around care is not covered by the VPK certificate and is billed as part of your regular tuition.

Attendance Policy

To ensure children receive adequate instructional time, attendance is critical. Children are allowed to miss no more than three days per month (or 30% of the program). Consistent attendance supports the best educational outcomes for the children in the program.

Summer Enrollment

Our Preschool program operates on full enrollment to provide the best experience for all children and maintain a safe, enriching environment. This policy outlines the guidelines for part-time requests, holding slots, and withdrawal procedures during the summer season.

Full Enrollment Requirement:

The preschool is operatable when we have full enrollment of children. Children will remain in the same classrooms as during the school year. Any enrollment changes will be communicated to families.

Part-Time Status Requests:

Requests for part-time status are not guaranteed due to staffing requirements. Families requesting part-time will be waitlisted and offered part-time options if a matching slot becomes available. If part-time is unavailable, families can choose full-time enrollment or withdraw with a holding fee.

Part-Time Children in the Butterflies Program (Ages 2/3/4):

The Butterfly classroom closes for the summer. Part-time children may be waitlisted for the Three's Full-Time Classroom. If space becomes available, families will be notified before summer begins.

Holding Your Slot for the Upcoming School Year:

If you withdraw your child for the summer but want to hold the slot for the upcoming school year, a tuition holding fee may be required. This fee is separate from summer tuition and ensures your child's place when the school year resumes.

Withdrawal from the Program:

If your child will not return for the summer or next school year, the standard withdrawal notice applies. A two-week tuition fee may be charged if you decide not to return after confirming enrollment.

We strive to provide flexibility while ensuring quality care. Contact our office for questions about enrollment, part-time availability, or withdrawal.

Athletics Program

Our Athletics program is an optional addition to our preschool, promoting physical activity.

- **Tuition:** A separate fee is required, paid in full before participation.
- **Enrollment:** Full payment is needed prior to starting the program.
- **Inquiries:** Contact the coach at preschooladmin@pchhighlands.com for questions.
- **Optional:** Participation is not required for preschool enrollment.
- **Non-Participation:** If a child is unwilling, fearful, or has behavioral issues, they may be disenrolled with a refund for remaining weeks.
- **Instructors:** All instructors are PCH employees, background checked, and part of required child-to-staff ratios.

We strive to provide a positive experience and a love for sports and activity.

Rest Time

All children will have a scheduled rest time after lunch. A nap mat is included with your registration fee. Please provide a body pillow-sized pillowcase and a blanket for your child. Bedding will be sent home on Fridays for laundering.

Children who do not wish to nap will be given quiet activities during rest time to ensure they are still comfortable and engaged.

For the VPK program, we provide both a napping room and a non-napping room. Napping rooms will transition to shorter naps, with no naps by the end of the year.

Dress

Parents should dress their children in comfortable, easy-to-manage, and washable clothes. Our curriculum includes outdoor activities and "messy play," so a labeled change of clothes (with first and last name) is required.

Soiled clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag. Please ensure the change of clothes is season-appropriate. If your child wears a skirt or dress, consider adding shorts underneath.

Children should wear sturdy, comfortable, closed-toe shoes for safety on the playground. If inappropriate clothing or shoes are worn, you may be asked to provide a change.

Toys/Items from Home

Please leave personal toys at home to avoid loss, damage, or sharing issues. Special "show and tell" days will be provided.

If your child has a security item (stuffed toy, blanket, etc.), it can be used during rest time and stored in their bag the rest of the day.

Jewelry should not be worn during the day, as these can be considered choking hazards (rings) and strangulation hazards (necklaces)

Screen Time

At our preschool, we believe in providing a balanced approach to screen time to ensure that it supports the development of children in a meaningful way. The following guidelines are in place to promote healthy screen time habits while aligning with our educational goals:

- **Infants to Two Years Old:** Children in this age group will have no access to video or screen time. The focus will be on hands-on, sensory, and interactive activities that support their developmental milestones.
- **Three-Year-Olds:** Children in this age group may watch one 15-minute video per week that aligns with the theme of the lesson plans. This video will be educational and complement their learning experience.
- **Four-Year-Olds:** Four-year-olds may have up to 15 minutes of tablet time each day, using curriculum-approved apps such as those provided by Marco Polo, on center tablets. These activities are designed to enhance learning and will be closely monitored by staff.
- **School-Age Children (5+ years):** School-age children may use approved center tablets for up to 30 minutes a day. This time may be used for educational games or activities, or, if applicable, for homework using their approved tablets and computers from their elementary schools.

Note: PCH Teachers and Directors reserve the right to cancel any screen time at their discretion to ensure that children's focus remains on activities that are more hands-on and encourage socialization. Additionally, children are never forced to have screen time. They are always welcome to choose other activities over screen time, promoting a well-rounded and interactive learning environment. Our goal is to prioritize interactive learning experiences and foster meaningful social interactions over screen time.

Exceptions

Occasionally, exceptions to standard program rules (including age requirements or attendance schedules) may be granted under special circumstances. These exceptions are only permitted when all of the following conditions are met:

- The exception does not conflict with licensing regulations or safety protocols.
- Staff-to-child ratios remain compliant and are not exceeded.
- The exception is approved by all administrative staff in advance.
- The arrangement does not disrupt the operation or flow of programming.

These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis with the intent to support families while maintaining the safety, structure, and integrity of the program. Any questions regarding exceptions should be directed to administrative leadership.

School Age Program Policies

After School Program

PCH offers after-school care for the following schools:

- Cleveland Court
- Valleyview Elementary
- Scott Lake Elementary
- South McKeel Academy

PCH provides a faith-based and active after-school program with limited spaces available for children Kindergarten through the end of 5th grade or 12 years of age. While we make efforts to accommodate school-age siblings, space is not guaranteed. After-school care is available on days aligned with the Polk County School District and McKeel Academy calendars, as well as certain holidays. However, due to space and scheduling constraints, there may be days when school-age children are required to stay home.

Our buses are equipped with 13 seats for children and 1 for an attendant. Children must adhere to the guidance of bus personnel at all times. After drop-off, staff will escort children to their designated activities.

In the event that a child is not present at school, the bus driver will send a message to the preschool to inquire about the child's presence on the bus. The administrative staff will follow up with the parents to verify attendance on the bus. If the elementary school verifies whether the child is listed as absent or has been picked up early, and if the preschool administration confirms the child is absent or has been picked up early or all contacts have been exhausted and has been left a message, then the facility will assume that the child is with the parents/guardians.

In picking up children from surrounding elementary schools, students must be picked up in a timely manner. Please notify us at least 2 hours before 2:30p.m. This ensures that students are safely accounted for and stops unnecessary wait times while going to multiple schools. You may call, let teachers know in advance, message on the Procure app, or email the preschool administrators when a child will not be needed to be picked up on the bus.

For multiple calls for absences on the bus, a possible \$5 fee may be applied.

Field Trips

Children who are in grades K through 5 will be included in field trips. Field trip information will be emailed to you ahead of time and posted in the calendar on the Procure app. At least 2 days in advance, field trip information will be posted on the door to the school age room with information and Procure app.

At any time, field trips may be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. All children will be expected to follow rules while on a field trip. Childcare personnel will stay with the ratio requirement plus one extra staff member while on any field trip. Children must have blanket permission forms to go on field trips. A field trip permission form must be signed for any field trips for the summer.

Most of the communication while on a field trip will come via Procure. In the event that we need to contact you while out on a field trip, you may receive a phone call from a blocked number. We will try to message you via Procure to let you know that we are calling you. If you want to contact us, please use Procure or call the preschool and someone will contact personnel.

School Age Program Policies

Summer Camp

The School Age Summer Camp provides an enriching environment with a variety of indoor and outdoor activities focused on active involvement, socialization, and personal development. Regular field trips are an exciting part of the program, offering children the opportunity to explore new places and broaden their learning beyond the classroom.

Field Trip Schedule: Field trips are scheduled in advance, and a Field Trip Calendar will be provided that includes dates and destinations. This calendar will be:

- Posted on the doors of the two camp rooms.
- Available on the Procure app for easy access by parents and guardians.

Field Trip Participation: Children must be dropped off on time to participate in field trips. Parents are not allowed to drop off children directly at the field trip location. Field trip hours will be posted, but due to traffic or unforeseen circumstances, trips may be delayed. Camp counselors will notify parents if they are running late in returning to the preschool.

Summer Camp slots are for the full program, and children must attend on the scheduled days, unless have worked out arrangements with PCH administration. PCH does not offer "Field Trip Days" as a standalone option. Children who choose not to participate in a particular field trip will be asked to attend camp at a later time that day, as staff will be away with the field trip group.

Indoor and Outdoor Activities: Children will engage in a balance of active play and downtime during both indoor and outdoor activities, promoting creativity, physical activity, and social interaction. Please make sure that children are dressed in comfortable clothing that is for outside and inside comfort, and that they wear closed toe shoes at all times.

Communication Devices Policy: For the safety and focus of all children during field trips and camp activities, communication devices such as cell phones, and smartwatches are not allowed. These devices can distract from the activities and socializing. If a device is brought, it will be collected by staff and stored in a safe location until the end of the day. The camp is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Parents should avoid sending devices unless absolutely necessary.

Personal Items Policy: Children should bring minimal items from home. They may bring one toy or electronic device (not a cell phone) to play with during designated free time, but these items must be kept in their bags for the majority of the day. Children are not allowed to bring pillows, blankets, or other personal items not required for camp activities. We are not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, damaged, or "traded" with other children during the day.

Behavior Expectations and Communication: Children are expected to behave appropriately during field trips and while in care. If a child has behavioral issues, parents will be notified via the Procure app. In cases of repeated behavioral problems, the child may be temporarily or permanently restricted from attending future field trips. This decision will be made in consultation with the parents and camp staff.

We strive to provide a fun, positive, and enriching experience for all children. Field trips are an exciting part of the program, and it's important for children to be prepared and able to participate responsibly. If you have any questions or concerns about the policy or field trip participation, please contact our staff for further information.

Environment

Every effort will be made to maintain a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for your child. We strictly adhere to diapering and hand-washing procedures to promote hygiene and prevent the spread of illness. Our cleaning and sanitizing policies are reviewed with all staff on a monthly basis to ensure consistency and thoroughness. Additionally, all teachers are trained in Safe Sleep practices and Abusive Head Trauma prevention to ensure the well-being of every child in our care. We also follow mandated ratios at all times to ensure proper supervision and individualized attention for each child. The safety and health of your child are our top priorities, and we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of care.

Emergency Procedures

Monthly fire drills and other emergency drills will be held according to licensing and accreditation guidelines. A report of these drills is posted on the bulletin board in the hall for you to review. Evacuation and lock down procedures are posted in each classroom. We have developed an extensive emergency/school safety plan which included staff training. A copy of the plan is kept in a binder in the preschool office. If our facility needs to be evacuated, we will walk all the children to Lakeland Highlands Middle School. Each child will be closely supervised, and all parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

The safety and well-being of the children and staff will always be our first priority when making decisions regarding school closures. In most cases, if the Polk County School Board decides to close schools due to weather or other safety concerns, PCH will also close the center, however, the Preschool Director has the final say. In the event of a closure, we will notify families through Procure as soon as possible.

Additionally, PCH may require time to assess and recover from the effects of a storm or other emergency situation. We will keep families informed and provide an update on our reopening status via Procure once we have determined it is safe to resume operations. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we prioritize safety during these times.

Smoking and Drug Free Campus

All staff members undergo drug screening prior to employment and are subject to random screenings throughout their time at PCH. Additionally, PCH maintains a strict smoke-free campus. To ensure the health and safety of everyone, smoking is prohibited both inside and around our facility during licensed preschool hours. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a clean and healthy environment for all.

Safe Sleep Practices

At PCH, we follow strict Safe Sleep Practices to ensure infants' safety. Infants are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet in a crib meeting safety standards, free from blankets, toys, pillows, or soft objects.

The sleep area is kept between 65-82°F, with infants wearing no more than one extra layer than an adult. A sleeper or sleep sack may be used for warmth. Infants' heads remain uncovered, and they are actively observed during naps.

Rooms have sufficient light (at least 20 foot-candles). Infants sleeping in car seats will be woken up then moved to cribs. Cribs are spaced at least 18 inches apart, and infants do not share cribs.

Pacifiers may be given but not attached to anything, and will not be reinserted once the infant is asleep. Infants who can roll both ways are placed on their backs but allowed to shift positions. A signed waiver is required for any special sleep positions due to medical reasons. Infants have supervised "Tummy Time" when awake.

Prevention of Shaking Baby Syndrome

At PCH, we prioritize preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) to protect children and promote healthy development.

Background:

SBS and AHT are serious forms of abuse caused by violent shaking or head trauma, which can lead to severe injury or death.

Application:

This policy applies to all children up to five years old, their families, childcare providers, and substitute staff.

Prevention:

All staff complete SBS/AHT training within their first week, covering how to recognize, respond to, and report child abuse and neglect.

Prohibited Behaviors:

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Shaking or jerking a child
- Tossing a child in the air or into furniture
- Pushing a child into walls or doors

Coping Strategies for Crying Children:

If no physical needs are identified, staff may:

- Rock, hold, or walk with the child
- Gently bend knees while holding the child
- Sing, talk softly, or rub the child's back or tummy
- Play calming music or white noise
- Staff can also take breaks if needed, and families are encouraged to do the same.

Recognizing SBS/AHT:

Signs include:

- High-pitched crying, lethargy, or difficulty staying awake
- Breathing issues, seizures, or vomiting
- Bruises, poor feeding, or inability to track objects

Responding to SBS/AHT:

If suspected, staff will:

- Call 911 and notify the Director
- Contact the child's family
- Begin pediatric CPR if needed

This policy ensures staff are equipped to keep children safe and respond to SBS/AHT.

Nurse's Elbow

Nurse's Elbow (Pulled Elbow/Radial Head Subluxation) is a common childhood injury that can occur when a child is lifted or pulled by the arm. Our staff receive training on safe and proper ways to lift, guide, and support children. However, we also recognize that young children may sometimes suddenly drop their weight, resist, or move in unexpected ways, which can make handling situations more challenging.

What Parents Should Know:

- Staff are trained to use safe lifting and guiding techniques to reduce the risk of injury.
- Despite best practices, the natural and sometimes unpredictable movements of young children can create situations where Nurse's Elbow may still occur.
- If a child shows signs of arm injury (such as not moving the arm, crying when touched, or holding it close to the body), parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
- Depending on the severity, you may be asked to pick up your child for medical evaluation, or emergency medical services may be contacted.
- An incident report will be completed for any suspected injury.

How Parents Can Help at Home:

- Please also avoid lifting or pulling your child by the arms, hands, or wrists.
- Encourage safe hand-holding without tugging or yanking.
- If your child has experienced Nurse's Elbow before, let us know so we can take extra precautions.

Discipline Policy

No form of physical or verbal abuse/punishment is permitted. Discipline will not be severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. The only acceptable forms of discipline are prevention, redirection, and positive reinforcement. If a parent requests to use "time out" as a discipline action, the guidelines we use for children in "time out" are one minute for each year of their age. Outside play is not taken away as a discipline action. This will be accompanied by a discussion with the child regarding unacceptable behavior.

Section 402.305(12), F.S., requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary practices used by the childcare facility.

Illness Policy

To minimize spreading of disease between children and for the health of the children and staff, parents must keep their child/ren home when s/he shows symptoms of infection or illness. For your child's comfort, and to reduce the risk of spreading illnesses, we ask that children be picked up as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of notification. Your child will be kept as comfortable as possible, and we will continue to observe symptoms. Teachers will try to provide updates via Procure if a child seems like they are becoming ill. Parents must keep a current medical release form on file for their child. In case of an emergency, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest health care facility. Parents will assume financial responsibility for all medical transportation and treatment. If the Health Department notifies us of reportable communicable or infectious diseases that a child may be exposed to, we will notify you per Health Department Guidelines. For cases of RSV, Flu, or COVID-19 that have been confirmed in two or more children, PCH will inform you so you can be aware of symptoms of these illnesses.

PCH works with local health care providers, follows Childcare Regulation's communicable disease control guidelines, the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools Reference Guide, and the Florida Health Department guidelines for communicable diseases to determine the illness policy.

When a Child can Return

Children should remain home for 24 hours without symptoms and without the use of medication before returning to the program unless the center receives a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is not contagious and may return to the center.

Children may return when the following, if applicable, have been resolved –

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a full 24 hours without the use of medications.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- Free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless the child's medical provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and the involved areas can be covered by bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and that the child may return is required.

The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the center due to illness will be made by the childcare center.

Medication Policy

PCH will administer medications only for breathing or allergic emergencies (e.g., nebulizers, inhalers, EpiPens). For chronic conditions, we will work with parents, doctors, and directors to determine appropriate medications. Written consent, including dosage instructions, is required. Medications must be in their original container with a prescription and stored in a locked box. The first dose should be given at home.

Children under 5 cannot swallow life-sustaining pills whole. Parents should administer these or provide them in a safe alternative form. Medication should be given before/after care or during lunch when possible.

Parents must sign a form confirming staff training for medication administration. All medication and forms must be submitted to admin staff to be logged, and no medication is allowed in children's bags. Expired medications will be returned for disposal and replaced by parents. Doses will be logged, and unused medication returned.

Reasons PCH might exclude children can include, but are not limited to:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in program activities, such as going outdoors.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Fever of 101 degrees or above, regardless of method used to take temperature, with behavior changes (lethargy, irritable beyond usual, persistent crying, runny nose, coughing, etc.)
- A 101 fever that has no other behavior changes and continues after 30 minutes and/or starts to have behavior changes.
- Fever of 100.4 degrees in an infant younger than two months and should be medically evaluated as soon as possible.
- Fever of 104 degrees or greater in a child of any age (requires immediate medical attention)
- Diarrhea 2 or more in a 24-hour period; watery stool and/or decreased form of stool; stools that cannot be contained in a diaper; a potty-trained child that is unable to reach toilet and/or is having to go more often than normal to the toilet.
- Blood or mucus in stools not associated with very hard bowel movements.
- Vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours and/or vomits and looks or acts ill.
- Infants who projectile vomit, or spitting up forcefully, or seems to vomit/spit up more than what was taken in at a feeding.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours, and/or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs of illness.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- Head lice or nits until after 1st treatment.
- Severely ill (lethargic, irritable beyond usual, persistently crying, difficulty breathing, quickly spreading rash, severe coughing, etc.)
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.
- Skin sores weeping fluid on an exposed area that cannot be covered.
- Other infectious diseases, or communicable illnesses, that the Department of Health consider that have specific conditions for readmitting a child into care. (Ex – Rubella, Scabies, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, etc.)
- If child develops pink/red eyes with constant drainage from eyes, complains of eye pain, or eye drainage continues and there is greater need of care OR if multiple children in one classroom develops these symptoms.

Allergy/Health Considerations

Please indicate any allergies or health conditions your child may have on the enrollment application. If special accommodations or emergency care may be needed, please have your healthcare provider complete an Allergy Care Plan. Forms will be provided if needed.

Confidential allergy charts will be kept in the classrooms and on Procure to ensure staff are informed of any allergies or medical conditions your child may have.

If there are food items that your child prefers not to have, such as milk, a written note from the parent will be required stating that these items should not be given to the child. This is important as some foods may be part of the USDA guidelines for serving meals. While we take every precaution, there is no guarantee that the food served at the facility will be completely allergen-free. In all situations, there is still a possibility that a child may come into contact with an allergen.

In each room, a conspicuous chart listing all children in that room, along with a template showing any allergens or health conditions they may have, is posted. This ensures that all staff are informed of and can properly monitor for any specific needs or potential risks. We may throughout the year have a room have an allergy presented food not available in that room while a child with a severe allergy may be present.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children in our care and will work closely with families to accommodate any specific needs.

Toilet Learning

When toilet training, please:

- Bring several changes of clothes.
- Provide shoes that are easy to wash (like Crocs).
- Ensure clothes are loose enough for the child to easily manage.
- Note: We do not give food rewards for using the toilet.

Toilet learning is an important developmental milestone. We aim to support your child in a stress-free way, recognizing that success depends on their physical, mental, and emotional readiness. Positive toilet learning happens when a child shows signs of control over bodily functions. We will work closely with you and support your child's abilities, without force or punishment for accidents.

Teachers will provide further information, and progress will be updated in the ProCare App.

Biting

PCH recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through two-year-old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understand that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future.

The staff will not harshly discipline children in these classrooms for biting behavior, they will keep them close by their side and simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Staff will work with parents to identify methods and strategies to minimize this behavior.

Biting can occur for any number of reasons to include, but not limited to:

- oral exploration
- teething
- hunger
- lack of awareness that biting hurts
- fatigue
- inability to express feelings
- anxiety or stress
- excitement
- a way of showing affection

Positive Guidance

Young children in the toddler and preschool stages are focused on developing independence, self-control, and understanding.

They learn through exploration, experimentation, and testing limits, while also experiencing the consequences of their actions. Each child is accepted for who they are, including their unique development, personality, challenges, and needs.

Expectations are set based on the child's developmental level and clearly communicated to ensure understanding. Teachers model appropriate behavior, support the child's efforts and emotions, and offer alternatives, redirection, and reminders of the I-Care rules, using red and green choices and character development from the Frog Street curriculum.

To address challenging behavior, staff will meet with parents to create an action plan, implement strategies, and consider changes such as adjusting hours. If a child's behavior becomes disruptive or unsafe, they may be removed from the classroom, and parents will be contacted or a behavior incident may be sent. If efforts to support the child are unsuccessful, and they cannot benefit from the care provided, they may be disenrolled according to the disenrollment policy. The decision will be made by the director, and parent requests regarding other children's enrollment will not be considered.



Disenrollment Policy

Our program supports children's growth and development and respects individual learning styles and children's uniqueness. We seek a partnership with our families and work together to solve any challenges. We want all children to be given the chance for success. If a situation should arise that all possible interventions and supports (including a behavior plan agreed upon by the preschool and parents) have not been successful, then another appropriate setting might be recommended. PCH reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Child actions that may be cause for disenrollment:

- Child unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time.
- Ongoing uncontrollable tantrums, physical/verbal aggression and/or profanity
- Excessive biting that is non-age appropriate

Other actions that may be cause for disenrollment:

- Parent or Guardian fails to abide by Center policies or requirements of Childcare Regulations including, but not limited to current health forms.
- Non-payment of tuition or failing to adhere to the rules of a payment arrangement.
- Parent or Guardian is physically or verbally abusive or intimidating to Center staff, other parents, or children.
- Violation of Confidentiality Policy

The Center will not disenroll a child based solely on complaints to Childcare Regulations or reports of alleged abuse or neglect at the center.

Decisions to disenroll a child are difficult for the program and the family. We work to communicate, address, and resolve concerns with the families in our care.

Meals at PCH

Infants

Each child must have enough bottles and food each day to sustain them. All bottles, containers, and utensils must be non-breakable and labeled with your child's first and last name.

- Formula: If using powdered formula, please provide bottles pre-filled with the appropriate amount of water, along with the powdered formula.
- Breastmilk: If using breastmilk, please provide either a separate container for it or pre-measured amounts in each bottle.

Bottles will be heated in warm water, never microwaved. Baby food and cereal will be fed according to your instructions. Teachers will work closely with you to follow your child's eating routines.

Once breastmilk or formula is prepared, it must be used within one hour of feeding. Any leftovers cannot be saved due to the risk of bacterial growth.

Toddlers – Preschool:

A morning and afternoon snack with milk is provided. You can either pack or purchase a lunch for your child.

Purchased Lunches:

- Prepared in our licensed kitchen by a Certified Food Manager and Certified Food Handler.
- Cost: \$8.00 per day or \$85.00 per month.
- Menus are posted in classrooms, at the front desk, and sent via the Monthly Newsletter.
- Notify your child's teacher if they need a school lunch.
- If lunch is forgotten, we will provide one and charge your account.

Lunches are ordered a week in advance. No refunds will be given for unused lunches. We also offer options for 2 or 3 days a week, or pizza Fridays. Changes should be made in writing.

Birthdays/Special Occasions/Food Experiences

- Please check with individual teachers on how they celebrate birthdays. If food is brought in, it must be store-bought.
- Invitations can be given to the teacher to distribute unmarked. Please invite all children or send invitations privately.
- We have celebrations for special occasions and holidays, and your child's teacher or the preschool newsletter will provide details on how you can participate.
- There is to be no large cakes. There is no catered meals that can be brought in as a substitute to lunch.
- Balloons cannot be brought in to the building, as they present choking hazards.

Food experiences may occur throughout the year, and teachers will notify you, ensuring all allergies and preferences are respected. By signing the consent form, you agree to these events.

Packing a Safe Lunch

Mealtimes should be enjoyable and promote healthy eating habits. When packing lunch for your child, please consider these recommendations to ensure they are nutritious and pleasant. We suggest following the USDA's MyPlate guidelines to create balanced meals that provide the energy needed for a productive learning day.

Lunch-Packing Tips

When preparing your child's lunch, please keep these tips in mind:

- Use an insulated lunch/bento box or bag.
- Refrigeration is unavailable, so use a gel pack, ice pack, or frozen water bottle to keep lunch cold.
- We cannot heat or prepare food, so a thermos is a good option to keep food warm.
- Cut food into bite-size, easy-to-swallow pieces.
- Consider packing finger foods instead of a traditional lunch.
- Label the lunchbox/bag with your child's full name.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises against giving children under 4 foods that are small or pose choking hazards. In accordance with childcare regulations, Precious Children in the Highlands will not serve these foods unless cut into appropriate sizes:

- Banana Rounds
- Celery
- Cherry/grape tomatoes (whole)
- Chips
- Chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole
- Grapes (whole)
- Gum
- Gummy Candy (Fruit Snacks)
- Hard Candy
- Hard Twisted Pretzels
- Hot Dogs (whole or sliced rounds)
- Lollipops
- Marshmallows
- Whole Nuts & Peanuts
- Popcorn
- Raw Carrot Rounds
- Cheese Sticks

Food Suggestions

At Precious Children in the Highlands, you may choose to pack a lunch or have us provide lunches for your child. We also provide snacks, milk, and water to all children in care, regardless of bringing lunch from home.

COLD SANDWICHES

- CHICKEN SALAD
- EGG SALAD
- ROAST BEEF
- PEANUT/SUN/SOY BUTTER & JELLY
- TURKEY
- CHICKEN

CANNED FRUIT (IN LIGHT SYRUP OR ITS OWN JUICE)

- APPLESAUCE
- FRUIT COCKTAIL
- MANDARIN ORANGES
- PEACHES
- PEARS
- PINEAPPLES

FRESH FRUIT

- APPLES
- BANANAS (CUT APPROPRIATELY)
- BLUEBERRIES
- CANTALOUPE
- FRUIT SALAD
- HONEYDEW
- PEACHES
- PEARS
- PINEAPPLE
- PLUS
- RAISINS (3 & UP)
- RASPBERRIES
- STRAWBERRIES

VEGETABLES

(ALL VEGGIES SHOULD BE CUT APPROPRIATELY FOR TODDLERS)

- CUCUMBER
- MATCHSTICK CARROTS
- TOMATO
- BROCCOLI
- CAULIFLOWER
- ZUCCHINI
- PEAS
- SWEET POTATO
- SWEET PEPPERS

ADDING A DIP (SUCH AS RANCH DRESSING) CAN ADD A FUN TWIST TO VEGGIES!

MISCELLANEOUS

- FRESH SPINACH WITH DRESSING
- CHICKEN
- COTTAGE CHEESE
- YOGURT WITH FRESH FRUIT
- HARD BOILED EGG (CUT INTO SMALL PIECES)
- HUMMUS AND WHOLE WHEAT CRACKERS
- SALSA
- LEFTOVERS
- BREADS
- CRACKER SANDWICHES
- BEANS
- TORTILLAS
- CHEESE (IN RECTANGLES, NOT STICK)

FOODS TO AVOID

- WHOLE NUTS
- SODA
- SWEETS (CANDY, COOKIES, DOUGHNUTS, CAKES, AND SUGARY CEREALS)
- FRUIT JUICES
- SWEET TEA
- CHIPS

NOTE: HONEY SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE



TUITION LIST

2025-2026

FULL TIME CLASSROOMS

Classrooms	Monthly	Weekly
Infants (Starfish/Whales)	1250	300
Ones (Sea Turtles/Caterpillars)	1250	300
Twos (Rainbow Fish & Jellyfish)	1146	275
Threes (Clownfish/Dolphins)	1042	250
4 & 5 Non VPK (Summer or Private)	979	235
VPK (Full Day Extended)		
6:30a.m. - 6:00p.m.	650	175
VPK (1/2 Day Extended)		
2:00 p.m. Pick Up	460	115

PART TIME BUTTERFLIES

8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

	800 - Monthly - M-F
Two to Three Years	513- M/W/F
DOB - 9/1/22 - 8/31/23	342 - T/Th
	200 - Weekly - M-F
◆	
	700 - Monthly - M-F
Threes to Fours	456- M/W/F
DOB - 9/1/21 - 8/31/22	304- T/Th
	175- Weekly - M-F

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

School-Age After Care		
Includes Full Days on School Holidays	460	115
School Age Summer Camp		
K-5th Grade	787	175
School Age Summer Registration		
200		
School Age After Care Registration		
100		

REGISTRATION & LUNCHES

New Registration	200
Including Siblings	
Annual Registration	175
Returning Sibling	150
Lunches (Monthly)	85
Lunches (Weekly)	30
Lunches (Pizza Fridays for Month)	30

Ask us about Semester & Annual Rates!

A full tuition sheet of all options are available



Refunds/Holidays/Vacation/Sick Days

- Regular weekly tuition rates apply during weeks with holidays. These holidays provide our teachers with much-needed time off to spend with their families and return refreshed to care for your children.
- In the event of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, where the preschool must close, no reduction or refund will be provided.
- Discounts for holiday weeks are already factored into the Monthly, Semester, and Annual pricing options.
- There are no credits or allowances for sick days, missed days, or vacation days. Holiday days will not be prorated. Please note, your payment secures your child's slot at the preschool, regardless of attendance.

Fees

All Payments are Non Refundable

- **Registration Fees:** A \$200 non-refundable registration fee is due at registration, which includes a nap mat. For new enrollments with siblings, the registration fee is \$200 per sibling. School-age Summer camp is \$200, and covers the costs of field trips. After School Care is \$100. An annual \$175 non-refundable registration fee applies every August. Siblings incur an additional \$150 fee.
- **Invoice schedule and Late Fees:**
 - Weekly tuition is due the Friday before the week of care. A \$15 late fee applies if payment is received after 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Late fees increase by an additional \$15 x per week until the 4th week. Failure to pay 4 weeks of tuition results in dismissal. A \$25 fee applies for returned checks.
 - Monthly tuition is due on the 1st, with a \$25 late fee after the 7th. A second \$25 late fee is added on the last day of the month. Failure to pay by the 7th will result in dismissal. If paying monthly, you are paying for 50 weeks per year.
 - Annual and Semester Payments: Annual and semester rates are due within 30 days and must be paid by check, money order, or cash.
- **Late Pick Up Fees**
 - We understand that occasional delays may happen, and we strive to work with families while also respecting the time of our staff. To ensure consistency, the following late pick-up policy applies:
 - First Late Pick-Up (One-Time Grace): No charge if arrival is before 6:15 p.m. (If after 6:15, a \$25 dollar fee applies)
 - Second Late Pick-Up: If arrival is after 6:05 p.m., families will be billed \$1 per minute, per child, beginning at 6:00 p.m.
 - Third and Any Additional Late Pick-Ups: A \$25 flat fee plus \$1 per minute, per child, beginning at 6:00 p.m.
 - This policy also applies to part-time VPK students and Butterflies who are picked up after their designated dismissal time.
 - In cases of shared custody, the parent scheduled for pick-up will be charged.

**Payment Method/Custody
Payments/Placement**

- **Payment Methods:** Payments can be made through the ProCare App, or by cash, check, or money order. Checks and Money Orders can be made out to PCH
- **Custody Agreements:** Parents with a custody agreement must submit in writing or provide a court order. Accounts must be current before splitting tuition. Late fees apply to each parent, and registration fees will be split.
- **Placement and Tuition:** Children are placed in the age group they will be entering school with and will move up as appropriate. Tuition is based on the child's class, and rates change when they move to a new class.

Withdraw Procedure

Please provide a two-week written notice to withdraw your child from the program. If you choose to re-enroll later, you will be placed on the waitlist and required to pay a new registration fee. Re-enrollment is subject to availability.

Failure to provide a two-week notice may result in a charge for two weeks of tuition due after the final day of attendance.

To withdraw, email preschooladmin@pchhighlands.com or directors@pchhighlands.com. Informing teachers is acceptable, but written confirmation is required for formal dismissal.

**Chronic Payment Delinquency and
Dismissal Policy**

At PCH, we understand that financial difficulties can arise. However, if a parent or guardian repeatedly fails to pay outstanding balances and requires ongoing communication and reminders, PCH reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program. This decision may be made regardless of the ability to pay the balance in full.

It is critical that we receive timely payments to ensure we can continue providing quality care. Our team dedicates significant resources to contacting parents and managing overdue balances, and as a non-profit organization, we rely on these payments to cover the operational costs of our services.

Failure to meet payment expectations after repeated attempts at resolution may result in dismissal to maintain the financial stability of our programs.

Payment Arrangements

PCH may offer payment arrangements for past and current balances, including any late fees, with prior approval from the Director. These arrangements are available once per school year (August - July) and must follow the guidelines outlined below.

Approval Process:

- Payment arrangements for past balances require Director approval and can only be made once per school year.

Payment Arrangement Guidelines:

- Weekly Invoices: Payments must cover the past balance, current charges, and be paid off within 4 weeks.
- Monthly Invoices: Payments should cover both the previous and current month's charges, with full payment due by the end of the current month.

VPK Children with Wrap-Around Care:

- Families with VPK children may have the option for the child to attend only VPK hours until the balance is paid. Wrap-around care will be suspended until the balance is cleared.

Withdrawal and Non-Compliance:

- If the payment arrangement is not followed or the child is withdrawn, services will be suspended, and the final two weeks of tuition will be charged. The child may not return to the program or be put onto a waitlist until the balance is paid in full.

Director's Discretion:

- The Director can discontinue a payment arrangement if it's not adhered to or no longer in the best interest of the school. The Director may also deny approval for payment arrangements at their discretion.

Communication and Documentation:

- All payment arrangements will be documented in writing with clear payment schedules. Regular communication will be provided to ensure adherence.

Non-Compliance:

- Failure to follow the payment schedule may result in further actions, including service suspension or collection procedures.

This policy ensures structured and manageable payment arrangements while protecting the school's financial interests. It provides flexibility for families and ensures clarity in addressing outstanding balances.

Outstanding Balance & Collections

Please be advised that we are committed to collecting all outstanding debts if payments are not fulfilled in a timely manner. Accounts that remain unpaid may be subject to collections to recover the owed amount.

School Readiness Funding

School Readiness Funding is accepted. The difference from the subsidy funding plus parent fee will be charged to the parent/guardian. The fees will be explained and agreed upon with the eligibility certificate.

In the event that a family's School Readiness (SR) funding is terminated, the following procedures will apply:

- **One-Week Grace Period:** The family will have up to one (1) week to resolve the issue directly with the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) and have their funding reinstated.
- **Reapplication Period:** If a full reapplication is required, the children may be temporarily withdrawn for up to two (2) weeks to allow time for the parent to complete the necessary steps with the ELC.
- **Private Pay Option:** If funding is not reinstated within the allowed time frame, families may:
 - Choose to continue care under private pay rates, or
 - Withdraw their child(ren) from the program.
- **Parent Responsibility:**
 - It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to manage their case with the ELC, including obtaining, renewing, or updating their payment certificate. The school is not responsible for contacting the ELC on the family's behalf.

Step Up Scholarship

Step Up for Students Scholarship

We are happy to accept the Step Up for Students Scholarship. Please note that scholarship funds are only available for use once your Step Up account reflects that they are funded. Enrollment cannot be finalized until the funds are accessible. Until that time, private tuition payments may be required to secure your child's spot.

Parent Responsibility

Managing your scholarship account with the Step Up for Students Foundation is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. PCH Preschool does not contact Step Up on behalf of families and is not responsible for any delays or issues with funding availability.

Scholarship Types & Submission

Step Up offers several different scholarship types, and not all may be reimbursable through PCH Preschool. Your Step Up account must indicate that your scholarship is funded (not just awarded) before we can proceed. Tuition amounts will only be submitted through the EMA (Step Up portal) once funds are confirmed as funded.

For questions about your specific scholarship type or the steps required, please contact the preschool administrator directly.

Procare

Precious Children in the Highlands uses the ProCare app to keep you updated on classroom events, sign children in and out, view routines and pictures, message teachers, and make tuition payments. Messages are monitored by teachers and administrative staff to ensure confidentiality and appropriate use.

Communication with your child's teacher is key. Use the ProCare App or email to message your child's teacher or administrative staff. For phone calls or conferences, please schedule a convenient time for a more focused conversation.

Question/Concerns

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to visit the preschool office. We have an open-door policy and value your feedback. The director(s), team leads, and administrative assistant handle concerns, paperwork, and tuition. For inquiries through the preschool advisory team or the Pastor, contact the church office at 863-646-3121.

For escalated matters, the Pastor may become involved to be a neutral party for any concern.

Family Involvement

PCH Preschool believes that parents/guardians are a child's first teacher and welcomes parent/guardian participation. We invite parents to get involved and assist with special events, fundraising and enrichment opportunities. There will also be volunteer opportunities posted outside on your child's classroom whiteboard, and through various director emails.

Incident Reports

As children grow and explore, they may experience occasional bumps, scrapes, or behaviors like biting as part of their development. While these are normal, they require attention to ensure safety. Parents may notice a higher number of incidents reported from the Ones and Twos classrooms, as children are learning to move their bodies and respect personal space. These behaviors are developmentally appropriate, and most toddlers do not remember them after the moment has passed.

If a significant incident occurs—such as illness, injury, or behavioral concerns—staff will complete an incident or behavior report via the Procare App. This report will detail the event, those involved, and actions taken. The witnessing staff member ensures accuracy, the report will be reviewed with administration, and parents or guardians will be asked to review and acknowledge it the same day, either in person or digitally.

We value open communication and collaboration with families to support each child's well-being and development.

Internal Communication

Communication & Confidentiality

At our preschool, we prioritize clear and effective communication to ensure your child's safety, well-being, and development.

Ongoing Communication:

Teachers, staff, and administration stay in regular contact throughout the day, addressing any concerns about behavior, health, or classroom needs promptly.

Immediate Assistance:

Teachers can quickly reach administration or staff via a telephone system for urgent matters, ensuring swift action when needed.

Daily Collaboration:

For non-urgent updates, and for Child Care Personnel away from campus on buses, we use Slack (or another secure platform) to stay informed and aligned on your child's care and the flow of classroom activities and needs.

Timely & Confidential Communication:

We respond promptly to all inquiries while maintaining the utmost confidentiality and respect for your child's privacy. To support this, children's names are not specified when using communication platforms such as Slack, unless needed for specific people designated (administration & directors), in alignment with our confidentiality policy.

We view communication as a partnership and are committed to keeping you informed and supported every step of the way.

Newsletters

To help keep our families connected, we send out a monthly newsletter through the Procare system. This newsletter includes upcoming events, friendly reminders, notices, the monthly lunch calendar, and other helpful information. Our goal is to make sure you always feel "in the loop"! If you don't see the newsletter in your inbox, please check your junk folder or look in alternate folders such as "Updates" or "Promotions."

Security/Access Control

Our preschool building and outdoor classrooms are secured with an access control system. Each family has a unique PIN/code for entry during business hours. Please enter your code each time, even if someone enters ahead of you. Visitors must check in at the reception desk and will be escorted by staff. Staff diligently check IDs for safety. The playground gate is also secured, with only staff having access, ensuring no unauthorized entry. All outdoor areas and classrooms are monitored by surveillance cameras, viewable only by staff, regulations, or law enforcement.

Confidentiality

PCH is committed to protecting privacy. Confidential information, including names, addresses, health, and behavioral details, will only be shared with staff who need it to care for your child. Employees are prohibited from discussing other children with you, and parents must follow this policy. Confidential records may also be shared with local licensing authorities for compliance with regulations.

Social Media/Privacy Policy

For everyone's protection, we have a strict Social Media policy. Staff cannot connect with preschool clients on social media, and personal contact details (phone or email) cannot be shared. Please use ProCare, preschool email, or phone to communicate during business hours.

Employment by Client/Conflict of Interest

PCH employees are prohibited from being employed by any client in any capacity outside of the facility's services. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting, house-sitting, nanny services, or carpooling, whether paid or voluntary. Additionally, employees are not permitted to contact parents via personal social media platforms.

Any private arrangement between a client and an employee, whether formal or informal, is strictly outside the scope of PCH services. Should such an arrangement occur, PCH will not be held responsible or liable for any incidents, injuries, or disputes that take place outside of PCH property and/or normal business hours.

Families and employees who choose to disregard this policy risk undermining the professional relationship between home and school. As such, PCH reserves the right to terminate employment and/or client services if these arrangements are discovered or if they negatively impact the program.

Photos/AI in Photo Apps

At PCH Preschool, we value capturing moments of growth, learning, and community among our students. We want to ensure that both parents are informed about how photos and videos may be used during their time at the center.

1. Photo and Video Usage: PCH Preschool regularly takes photos and videos of children enrolled in our programs. These images may be used for various purposes, including but not limited to:

- The ProCare App (for parent communication and updates)
- SmartTeach by Teaching Strategies (for developmental tracking and evaluation)
- Curriculum support (to highlight and document activities)
- Center activities and events

2. Use in Communication and Marketing Children's photos may also be used in:

- The Church's Social Media Website
- Preschool Newsletters (including class and school newsletters)

3. Privacy and Identification: To ensure the privacy of all children, any photos shared via classroom photos, social media sites, or preschool newsletters will not have the child's name associated with the image. Only parents will be able to identify their own child from photos shared in these contexts.

4. Use of AI in Tablet Apps: Some educational apps and tools used on tablets during class may incorporate AI (artificial intelligence) features to enhance pictures. These apps are used in a controlled and monitored environment to support the children's development and are never used for commercial purposes. However, we cannot always know if an app will use the pictures taken for the app's publisher's use with AI, including, but not limited to, the camera app on iOS.

5. Opting Out: If you do not wish for your child's photo or video to be used in the ways described above, please indicate this on the enrollment paperwork on the various ways that we can use the photos. We will respect your preference and will ensure that your child's images are not included in any published materials.

By enrolling your child at PCH Preschool, you acknowledge and consent to this policy regarding the use of photos and videos.

Families with Custody Agreements

This policy ensures that your child's care at PCH Preschool is managed consistently, fairly, and in their best interest—while respecting legal custody agreements and parental rights. It also outlines expectations for communication and parental involvement in school events.

Custody Agreements & Parental Rights

- Unless PCH has a certified court order stating otherwise, each parent/guardian may pick up, visit, communicate with their child, and access records without the other's consent. A court order is required to restrict record access.
- PCH follows all court-ordered custody and decision-making agreements.
- Parents must provide current legal documents to clarify custody, restrictions, or decision-making authority.
- Both parents are expected to complete enrollment paperwork annually unless legal documentation limits one parent's rights. In such cases, only the authorized parent is required to complete the paperwork.
- If custody is shared, written agreement from both parents is required for major care changes (e.g., enrollment, schedule, pick-up list), even if one parent manages day-to-day decisions. In cases of disagreement, existing arrangements will remain until a legal resolution is provided.
- Parents should follow their time-sharing schedule and only check out the child on their designated days; however, PCH will not enforce or monitor these schedules without a court order.
- A parent with sole custody may make care changes. The other parent, if legally entitled, may receive child-related information but will not make decisions unless specified in the custody agreement.
- PCH cannot grant parental rights to individuals not listed on enrollment paperwork. Any unlisted parent must provide legal proof of rights to access information or participate in decisions.

Changes to Care Arrangements

- Only legal guardians listed on the enrollment form may request changes.
- Non-emergency changes (e.g., pick-up, schedule adjustments) must be submitted in writing at least 24 hours in advance.
- The day-to-day parent may manage minor matters (e.g., snacks, napping routines). However, changes to enrollment, schedule, or pick-up authorization require written consent from both parents in joint custody cases.

Parental Disputes

- PCH does not mediate or intervene in custody disagreements.
- All conflicts must be resolved through legal channels. Care changes will only be made with appropriate court documentation.

Emergency Contact & Communication

- In emergencies, PCH will attempt to contact the designated decision-making parent first. If unavailable, the other guardian or an authorized contact will be notified.
- Emergency contact and pick-up list updates must be submitted promptly in writing.
- Teachers will share updates with both parents by default, using ProCare or other platforms, unless legal restrictions apply. If parents prefer communication to be split per custody schedules, they may coordinate with administration.
- All communication systems, including ProCare, will follow any legal restrictions (e.g., restraining or no-contact orders). Parents must provide documentation to support such restrictions.

Parental Participation in Events

- Both parents are encouraged to attend events unless a court order restricts participation.
- If conflict occurs, staff will attempt de-escalation and may separate parents physically. A parent may be asked to leave only if needed to maintain a peaceful environment. Incidents will be documented, and administration may follow up as appropriate.
- Any legal visitation or attendance restrictions will be enforced.
- Concerns about the other parent's event participation should be addressed through legal channels.

Implementation & Review

- This policy is provided at enrollment and reviewed annually.
- Staff are trained to manage custody-related issues and verify care changes in accordance with the law.

PCH is committed to a respectful, child-focused environment that promotes cooperation between families while fully complying with legal custody requirements.

Restraining Orders and Restricted Access

If a parent/guardian is legally restricted from contact with a child, PCH requires a current, certified copy of the court order or injunction. Without legal documentation, PCH cannot deny a parent access to their child.

When a valid order is on file, PCH will enforce it as written. This may include denying pick-up, visitation, or communication. Families are responsible for keeping PCH updated with the most recent legal documents.

If a restricted individual attempts to contact or pick up a child, staff will not release the child and may contact the custodial parent and/or law enforcement immediately to ensure safety.

RYLA Wilson Act Children**Rilya Wilson Act (Florida Statute §39.604) – Attendance & Absence Policy**

Children under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home care are covered by the Rilya Wilson Act. These children must attend care five days a week unless a court order states otherwise. They cannot be withdrawn without prior written approval from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the supervising agency. The Early Learning Coalition typically provides information regarding children protected under this law.

Absence Reporting

- On the day of an absence, we will notify the Heartland Agency. Their staff or the child's caseworker may contact the caregiver for details.
- Caregivers must also promptly inform the child's teacher or administrative staff.
- Any required documentation (e.g., doctor's note) should be provided to properly record the absence.

Withdrawal Policy

- Children protected under the Rilya Wilson Act cannot be withdrawn without written approval from Heartland, a designated agency, or a DCF caseworker.
- If a parent fails to bring the child as scheduled, or if a parent provides verbal or written notice of withdrawal without proper approval, PCH will notify Heartland or the child's caseworker to ensure compliance with state law.

We follow this policy to ensure compliance with state law and to protect the well-being of all children in our care. Please contact us with any questions.

Therapist/Case Workers/DCF Counselors visiting Children

This policy ensures the safety, privacy, and well-being of children while complying with legal requirements and facilitating visits from therapists, Guardian ad Litems (GALs), caseworkers, and DCF representatives.

Therapist Visits:

- **Private Sessions:** If a therapist needs to work with a child, the child will be taken by child care personnel to a private area for the session. The session will be conducted in private but within hearing range of a child care personnel to ensure the child's safety and well-being during the session.
- **Return to Classroom:** After the session, the child will be escorted back to their classroom by child care personnel.
- **Therapist Pickup Policy:** Therapists are not allowed to check out a child unless they are listed as an authorized person on the child's pickup list, which must be provided by the parent/guardian in writing.
- **Permission Form:** A written permission form from the child's parent or guardian must be on file at the daycare. This form should specify which therapist the child will be working with and at what time of day.

Guardian ad Litems, Caseworkers, and DCF Representatives Visiting Children in Care:

Identification and Verification:

- All Guardian ad Litems, caseworkers, and DCF representatives must present valid identification upon arrival.
- Staff will verify the identity and purpose of the visit before granting entry.

Sign-In Process:

- Visitors must sign in at the front desk upon arrival.
- The staff member on duty will log the visitor's name, organization, time of visit, and the child they are visiting.

Notification and Consent:

- If the visit is pre-arranged, staff will notify the child's primary caregiver or legal guardian ahead of time to ensure appropriate consent has been obtained.
- For unplanned visits, staff will ensure any necessary permissions from the child's legal guardian are secured before proceeding.

Escorting Visitors:

- A staff member will escort all visitors while on the premises to ensure safety and proper supervision.
- Visitors will be taken to a designated area to meet with the child, as appropriate.

Care Visits from Caseworkers/DCF Workers Needing Privacy with a Child:

- If a representative must meet privately with a child, a staff member will remain just outside the private space to ensure the child's safety.
- The staff member will be available immediately after the meeting to be with the child and ensure their well-being.

Authorized Individuals for Child Pickup:

- Caseworkers or representatives must be listed as authorized individuals on the child's pickup list to check out a child. This authorization must be provided in writing by the child's legal guardian or primary caregiver.
- We request caseworkers, representatives, or guardians notify us in writing ahead of time about planned pickups, specifying the date and the authorized person who will be picking up the child.

Confidentiality:

- Any information discussed during visits will be kept confidential and shared only with authorized individuals as required, respecting the child's privacy and legal requirements.

Monitoring the Visit:

- All visits will be monitored, and staff will be available in the vicinity to address any concerns or issues during the meeting.

Exiting the Facility:

- Upon completing the visit, visitors must sign out and leave the premises.

Reporting:

- Any concerns or irregularities arising from visits will be documented and reported to the relevant authorities as required.

This policy is designed to ensure the safety, privacy, and well-being of children while complying with legal and regulatory requirements. We aim to facilitate positive interactions between parents, therapists, legal representatives, and child welfare agencies while maintaining a safe environment for all children in our care.

The following brochures are required by the Department of Children and Families to notify you about information for Childcare, information for Influenza, and information regarding distracted driving.

Know Your Child Care Facility

Section 402.3125(5), F.S. requires that parents receive a copy of the Child Care Facility Brochure, "KNOW YOUR CHILD CARE FACILITY"

Parent's Role

A parent's role in quality child care is vital:

- Inquire about the qualifications and experience of child care staff, as well as staff turnover.
- Know the facility's policies and procedures.
- Communicate directly with caregivers.
- Visit and observe the facility.
- Participate in special activities, meetings, and conferences.
- Talk to your child about their daily experiences in child care.
- Arrange alternate care for your child when they are sick.
- Familiarize yourself with the child care standards used to license the child care facility.

Quality Child Care

Quality child care offers healthy, social, and educational experiences under qualified supervision in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Children in these settings participate in daily, age-appropriate activities that help develop essential skills, build independence and instill self-respect. When evaluating the quality of a child care setting, you should consider the facility's quality indicators related to activities, caregivers, and environment.

Quality Activities

- Activities are children initiated and teacher facilitated.
- Activities include social exchanges with all children.

Quality Caregivers

- Caregivers are friendly and eager to care for children.
- Caregivers accept family cultural and ethnic differences.

Quality Environments

- Environments are clean, safe, inviting, comfortable, and child-friendly.
- Environments provide easy access to age-appropriate toys.

www.myflfamilies.com/childcare



For additional information, please visit www.myflfamilies.com/childcare or contact your local licensing office.

This brochure was created by the Department of Children and Families in consultation with the Department of Health.



KNOW YOUR CHILD CARE FACILITY

Know Your Child Care Facility

Know Your Child Care Facility - General Requirements

Every licensed child care facility must meet the minimum state child care licensing standards pursuant to s. 402.305, F.S., and ch. 65C-22, F.A.C., which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Valid license posted for parents to see.
- All staff appropriately screened.
- Maintain appropriate transportation practices (if transportation is provided).
- Provide parents with written disciplinary and expulsion practices used by the facility.
- Provide access to the facility during normal hours of operation.
- Maintain minimum staff-to-child ratios.

Health Related Requirements

Emergency procedures that include:

- Posting Florida Abuse Hotline number along with other emergency numbers.
- Staff trained in first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the premises at all times.
- Fully stocked first aid kit.
- A working fire extinguisher and documented monthly fire drills with children and staff.
- Medication and hazardous materials are inaccessible and out of children's reach.

Ratios



Age of Child	Child: Teacher Ratio
Infant	4:1
1 year old	6:1
2 year old	11:1
3 year old	15:1
4 year old	20:1
5 year old and up	25:1

Training Requirements

- 40-hour introductory child care training.
- 10-hour in-service training annually.
- 0.5 continuing education unit of approved training or 5 clock hours of training in early literacy and language development.
- Director Credential for all facility directors.

Food and Nutrition

Post a meal and snack menu that provides daily nutritional needs of the children (if meals are provided).

Record Keeping

Maintain accurate records that include:

- Children's health exam/immunization record.
- Medication records.
- Enrollment information.
- Personnel records.
- Daily attendance.
- Accidents and incidents.
- Parental permission for field trips and administration of medications.

Physical Environment

- Maintain sufficient usable indoor floor space for playing, working, and napping.
- Provide space that is clean and free of litter and other hazards.
- Provide sufficient outdoor play area.
- Maintain sufficient lighting and inside temperatures.
- Equipped with age and developmentally appropriate toys.
- Provide appropriate bathroom facilities and other furnishings.
- Provide isolation area for children who become ill.
- Practice proper hand washing, toileting, and diapering activities.



To report suspected or actual cases of child abuse or neglect, call the Florida Abuse Hotline 1.800.962.2873

Influenza Brochure

What is the influenza (flu) virus?

Influenza ("the flu") is caused by a virus which infects the nose, throat, and lungs. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu is more dangerous than the common cold for children. Unlike the common cold, the flu can cause severe illness and life threatening complications in many people. Children under 5 who have the flu commonly need medical care. Severe flu complications are most common in children younger than 2 years old. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

How can I tell if my child has a cold, or the flu?

Most people with the flu feel tired and have fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and sore muscles. Some people, especially children, may also have stomach problems and diarrhea. Because the flu and colds have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.



For additional information, please visit www.myflfamilies.com/childcare or contact your local licensing office.

This brochure was created by the Department of Children and Families in consultation with the Department of Health.

THE FLU

A Guide for Parents



Influenza Brochure

What should I do if my child gets sick?

Consult your doctor and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks a lot of fluids. Never give aspirin or medicine that has aspirin in it to children or teenagers who may have the flu.

Call or take your child to a doctor right away if your child:

- Has a high fever or fever that lasts a long time
- Has trouble breathing or breathes fast
- Has skin that looks blue
- Is not drinking enough
- Seems confused, will not wake up, does not want to be held, or has seizures (uncontrolled shaking)
- Gets better but then worse again
- Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes) that get worse

How can I protect my child from the flu?



A flu vaccine is the best way to protect against the flu. Because the flu virus changes year to year, annual vaccination against the flu is recommended. The CDC recommends that all children from the ages of 6 months up to their 19th birthday receive a flu vaccine every fall or winter (children receiving a vaccine for the first time require two doses). You also can protect your child by receiving a flu vaccine yourself.



What can I do to prevent the spread of germs?

The main way that the flu spreads is in respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and infect someone nearby. Though much less frequent, the flu may also spread through indirect contact with contaminated hands and articles soiled with nose and throat secretions.

To prevent the spread of germs:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Cover mouth/nose during coughs and sneezes. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Limit contact with people who show signs of illness.
- Keep hands away from the face. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



When should my child stay home from child care?

A person may be contagious and able to spread the virus from 1 day before showing symptoms to up to 5 days after getting sick. The time frame could be longer in children and in people who don't fight disease well (people with weakened immune systems). When sick, your child should stay at home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children and should not return to child care or other group settings until his or her temperature has been normal and has been sign and symptom free for a period of 24 hours.



During the 2009 legislative session, a new law was passed that requires child care facilities, family day care homes and large family child care homes provide parents with information detailing the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus (the flu) every year during August and September.

For additional helpful information about the dangers of the flu and how to protect your child, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/ or www.immunizeflorida.org/

Distracted Driver

A change in daily routine, lack of sleep, stress, fatigue, cell phone use, and simple distractions are some things parents experience and can be contributing factors as to why children have been left unknowingly in vehicles...



For additional information, please visit www.myflfamilies.com/childcare or contact your local licensing office.

This brochure was created by the Department of Children and Families in consultation with the Department of Health.

**WHEN LIFE
HAPPENS...
DON'T BE A
Distracted
ADULT**



Distracted Driver



Distraction Prevention Tips:

- Never leave your child alone in a car and call 911 if you see any child locked in a car!
- Make a habit of checking the front and back seat of the car before you walk away.
- Be especially mindful during hectic or busy times, schedule or route changes, and periods of emotional stress or chaos.
- Create reminders by putting something in the back seat that you will need at work, school or home such as a briefcase, purse, cell phone or your left shoe.
- Keep a stuffed animal in the baby's car seat and place it on the front seat as a reminder when the baby is in the back seat.
- Set a calendar reminder on your electronic device to make sure you dropped your child off at child care.
- ~~Make a routine~~ Always notify your child's child care provider in advance if your child is going to be late or absent; ask them to contact you if your child hasn't arrived as scheduled.

During the 2018 legislative session, a new law was passed that requires child care facilities, family day care homes and large family child care homes to provide parents, during the months of April and September each year, with information regarding the potential for distracted adults to fail to drop off a child at the facility/home and instead leave them in the adult's vehicle upon arrival at the adult's destination.

Facts About Heatstroke:


It only takes a car **10 minutes** to heat up 20 degrees and become deadly.



Even with a window cracked, the **temperature inside a vehicle** can cause heatstroke.



The body temperature of a child increases **3 to 5 times faster** than an adult's body.



You can also find all these brochures, and more information on the DCF website myflfamilies.com