

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the TodayCare Children's Center at Pasco-Hernando Community College (PHCC). We are delighted that you have chosen to enroll your child with us.

The Center has been designed to meet the needs of PHCC students, faculty and staff. We are committed to offering a quality program that is responsive to the needs of you and your child.

This Parent Handbook is intended to provide helpful information about the philosophy and operating policies of the Center. We know that this handbook will be useful to you, and we encourage you to keep it available for future reference when questions arise regarding Center policies. Likewise, our Center management team is available to answer any questions that you may have about the program. PHCC and TodayCare reserve the right to make changes to this Parent Handbook when deemed appropriate.

We look forward to a rewarding relationship with you and your child.

Sincerely,
Jayne Goldstein
Center Director
Today Care Children's Center at PHCC

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MISSION STATEMENT

TodayCare Children's Center at PHCC is committed to providing a safe and secure environment that is marked by excellence. We recognize the unique educational and developmental needs of our children. We are devoted to delivering a quality program that is rich in open communication, fosters lasting relationships and provides educational stimulation.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits early childhood programs that meet specific criteria for high quality. These standards go beyond the state standards, and fewer than 10% of the childcare programs in the United States meet the criteria. All of TodayCare Children's Centers meet these standards. For more information regarding the NAEYC you can find it at www.naeyc.org and click on accreditation.

CHILDCARE IN A CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

Childcare on a campus is slightly different than childcare in other settings. Childcare sponsored by a college or university is a three-way partnership - parents, college and the Center. The Center is much like a private school, with policies that reflect the needs of the campus community.

TodayCare Children's Center at PHCC offers a high quality, developmentally appropriate program - it is not a baby-sitting service. We adhere to guidelines set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and state licensing requirements. This commitment to quality ensures that the needs of the children are met and that policies and practices are for the good of the children. The Center enables parents to focus on their jobs and education, knowing that their children are receiving the best care.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Involving parents in Center activities is important for both you and your child because it strengthens the continuity between a child's experiences at home and at the Center. Our program offers a variety of ways that you can become involved.

Open Door Policy for All Parents

You are welcome to visit the Center at anytime and are encouraged to do so should it not interfere with your educational or work responsibilities. Areas have been created so that you can spend one-on-one time with your child. Please discuss with your child's teacher the best time to visit your child's classroom.

Parent Volunteers

Parent participation in the classroom is a special treat for the children and the teachers. You are invited to "help out" whenever your schedule permits. You may wish to bring a special activity for the children or simply participate in the activities underway. Please coordinate these activities in advance with your child's teacher.

Parent Support Committee

A Parent Support Committee will be solicited to serve in a supporting capacity to the childcare Center. The primary purpose of this committee is to provide support and suggestions to the Center Director regarding:

- Policies at the Center – both current and proposed
- Need for additional services or programs
- Changes to the facility
- Need for additional equipment
- Risk Management issues

The Parent Support Committee will typically be composed of 8 to 10 members. Members of the committee will include staff and parents who currently have children in the Center, and a liaison from PHCC. The committee will stay intact for one year, at which time all parents in the Center will be solicited to become members of the committee.

To help assure that the Center's program meets the needs of parents and children, the Parent Support Committee will meet regularly. The Center Director will post the dates and times of the meetings and workshops on the Parent Bulletin Board and also will publish them in the monthly newsletters.

OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

It is the Center's responsibility to communicate with you regarding your child's experiences at the Center. Daily communication, monthly newsletters and parent/teacher conferences will keep you updated on your child's experiences in Center activities. Remember, teachers are interested in working with you to meet your child's individual needs. Please feel free to talk with them about any questions and concerns.

Daily Communication

We believe it is important that all of us who care for your child have a sense of the child's experience, both at home and at the Center. The daily/weekly communication sheets provide information about your child's day/week at the Center and a critical communication link with home. Infants and toddlers up to age two will receive a daily report and all other children will receive weekly reports. In addition, we encourage informal daily communication between you and your child's teachers. Some classrooms will have a daily intake form for parents to complete.

Along with routine information, the daily/weekly communication sheet completed by your child's teacher will indicate if there is a special need to meet with them and/or whether any significant health information has been reported.

We understand that you have a busy schedule; however, please set aside time to talk with your child's teacher each day, and look for notes on the Parent Bulletin Board.

Newsletters

You will receive a monthly newsletter containing general information about Center activities. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter, contact the Center Director.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year (fall and spring) for full-time and part-time enrollees. The purpose of these conferences is to provide parents with an overview of their child's developmental progress, to get parent input into their child's care, and to answer any questions or concerns parents may have regarding their child's stay at the Center. In addition, any parent or teacher may request a parent/teacher conference at any time.

Resolving Parent Concerns

Just as teachers are encouraged to discuss concerns with parents, parents are encouraged to ask their child's teachers any questions they may have about their child's care at the Center or about general Center issues. It is important for parents to clear up any questions or misunderstandings quickly. Most concerns are best addressed at the classroom level, but if parents and teachers are not able to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution, parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Center Director. Open communication between staff and parents is vital to the smooth operation of the Center. We are committed to the satisfactory resolution of parents' concerns.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Philosophy

Our Center philosophy is to provide experiences for children that meet their developmental needs. Every child is a unique individual, and the program is designed to promote each child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. The development of a positive self-concept is encouraged. Center staff works as partners with parents to promote continuity in a child's experiences at home and at the Center.

Young children learn much differently than adults. They learn by exploring their environment through hands-on experience and play. To the casual observer it may appear the children are "just playing"; however, they are acquiring the skills and abilities needed for Kindergarten and beyond through carefully planned and developmentally appropriate activities.

Program for Infants and Toddlers

Experiences for the youngest children are designed to provide a warm, loving environment that promotes a sense of security and trust. Infants begin to develop positive relationships with adults and the nurturing environment enables them to explore the world around them. Toddlers are encouraged to explore the world as teachers help them develop skills needed to meet the challenges of learning to walk, talk and make friends.

Program for Preschoolers

Experiences for the older children (3 to 5 years) are designed to enable them to learn about themselves and the world around them. Opportunities are provided for individual and group activities in a variety of learning Centers including block building, water play, dramatic play, art, music and story telling. Teachers guide the development of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills that will help prepare your child for the future. The curriculum serves as a planning tool for teachers to use in preparing the daily experiences with their group. During this developmental stage, children are classifying and manipulating small objects, building, and acting out the life they are trying to understand. Language and new cognitive powers enable them to question and explore new worlds through books and conversation.

Throughout the day, children plan and make choices about which aspects of the learning environment to focus on and participate in small groups.

Learning centers include more complex materials, and their choices reflect the child's changing interests and capabilities. An integral part of the daily routine includes opportunities to work at the writing center, computer center, and other centers.

Positive Guidance

Young children are eager to learn about the world around them. They are trying to make sense of their experiences and to learn how to behave in this mysterious place. They strive for understanding, independence, and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting, testing the limits of their environment, and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they come to understand how the world works and their own limits.

Our approach to guidance and discipline is to promote a sense of independence, autonomy and self-esteem, while maintaining the control necessary for a safe and non-threatening environment. The basis of this control is a secure, orderly, developmentally appropriate, caring environment. This atmosphere allows children to experiment and test their own behavior within clearly defined limits.

We will not subject children in our care to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening. We will not associate discipline with food, rest, or toileting. Under no circumstances will we spank strike or use other forms of physical punishment. When needed, staff will use a variety of methods to teach children self control and how to express their feelings in acceptable ways. These include redirecting children to acceptable activities, using logical consequences to help children be responsible for their actions, using firm words and tones to help children understand how someone feels, and modeling acceptable ways to express negative feelings.

CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

Diapering

Parents are asked to provide diapers in bulk. Parents also must provide appropriate wipes, ointments, and other needed supplies.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning efforts of parents are assisted and supported. Toilet learning will begin when both the parents and teachers feel the child is ready. A child should show signs of readiness before toilet learning can begin. Independence – not cleanliness – is the central issue in teaching a child to use the toilet. For the process to work, the child must have almost complete control over it. Parents and caregivers should do little more than arrange the environment so that the child can use the toilet easily.

A child will show readiness in two ways:

Physical readiness is the attainment of adequate bladder capacity and control. A physically ready child is able to stay dry for two or more hours during the day, wake up dry from naps, and possibly wake up dry in the morning.

Mental readiness occurs when the child understands what toilets are for and is curious to learn more about them. Signs of mental readiness include wanting to watch people use the toilet (allow it), wanting to flush the toilet, and asking questions about it.

The presence of both readiness signals defines the most opportune time for toilet learning. This critical period usually emerges between ages 2 and 3, give or take 6 months, and lasts for about 3 months. During this phase, the child is “primed” for toilet learning skills and needs only support and encouragement from parents to be successful.

Please discuss techniques with your child's teacher so that your child can experience continuity in adult expectations in this important area.

Clothing

Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for a variety of active and sometimes messy activities. Please provide a minimum of two to three complete changes of clothing appropriate for the season. Mark your child's name clearly on all articles of clothing to minimize confusion and loss. Girls should wear shorts under their dresses and all children should have closed sneakers that support their heels and keep their toes covered.

The Center staff will make every effort to keep track of your child's clothing. However, the Center is not responsible for lost articles. A Lost and Found box will be provided.

Celebrating Holidays

Holidays are special times to celebrate and opportunities to teach the children about different traditions and cultures. Although no specific religious instruction is offered, different holidays are discussed in order to help the children understand and gain an appreciation of various traditions and cultures. Parents are encouraged to share with the staff information about the customs and celebrations that are important to them. If you do not celebrate holidays for religious reasons, please discuss these with your child's teacher so that your wishes are honored in an appropriate way for your child and his/her class.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays may be celebrated at the Center. If so desired, parents may provide a special birthday snack at afternoon snack time. Only whole fruits or commercially prepared and packaged foods can be offered to the children. We may not serve home made foods. You are requested to bring enough birthday snacks for all children in your child's classroom. The snack should be easy to serve. Parents are encouraged to participate in this activity. Please inform your child's teacher if you plan to provide a snack and attend the celebration.

If you do not celebrate birthdays for any reason, please discuss these with your child's teacher so that your wishes are honored in an appropriate way for your child and his/her class.

Personal Belongings

On designated days throughout the year, children may bring personal items or toys to share during a special part of the day's activities. Teachers will inform you about "Share Days." Please do not allow your child to bring personal items to the Center except on these special days. To avoid loss and confusion, please label all personal items. Please do not allow your children to bring breakable objects, money, candy, food, gum, toy guns or other toy weapons to the Center.

Nap Time

Licensing guidelines require a rest time for all children. Your child needs to feel comfortable during naptime; therefore, he/she may bring a sleep toy from home. Please bring a blanket for nap time and launder it weekly. These personal items must also be able to fit into each child's individual cubby. If the items do not fit, they will be sent home. The Center provides and launders cot sheets. If after 30 minutes a child is not asleep, he/she will be offered quiet activities to do on his/her cot, such as a book or small toy. Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep unless otherwise ordered by a physician.

Field Trips

The activities for all may include walking visits to special places within the campus community. Special precautions are taken to assure the safety of children on field trips. You will be notified in advance of planned field trips; parent permission is required. You may request that your child not participate. Alternate care can be arranged while the field trip is occurring. Parents are welcome to participate in field trips as their work or educational schedules permit.

Outdoor Play

Your child's experiences on the playground at the Center are an important part of the program and his/her development. The playground is an extension of the classroom. It combines opportunities for exploration, creativity, and play.

Our private playground features separate play space for younger children and older children. A wide range of riding toys for the trike path, water play, climbing structures, sandbox, playhouse and a covered area for rainy days are among the playground's amenities.

Children will go outside each day as weather permits. Parents can assure their comfort by providing appropriate outdoor clothing. Due to staffing demands, children are not allowed to stay inside while their group is on the playground. Children who come to the Center will be expected to join the others in outdoor play.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Nutritious meals and snacks are an important part of your child's day. All children, present at appropriate times, are served an early-morning snack, a mid-afternoon snack, and an evening snack provided by the Center. It is extremely important that you do not drop your child off in the morning with their breakfast from home. Please be sure to have your child finish their breakfast before they enter the classroom.

Lunch

Lunch is scheduled about 11:00 each day. Parents should send a nutritious lunch with their child if he/she will be in attendance at this time. Food from fast food restaurants will not be acceptable and can not be served at the lunch tables. If a child arrives after 11:30, it is expected that he/she will have already eaten lunch. Lunches should be packed in a container or bag labeled with the child's first and last name. We will not be able to heat lunches for the toddler and preschool children. **We recommend a cool pack be placed in the lunchbox to keep food chilled.**

You are welcome to take your child out of the Center for lunch or join your child for lunch at the Center. Notify the teacher in advance if you wish to eat with your child.

Dinner

Children attending the evening program should have already eaten dinner before arrival. All children in attendance will receive a snack around 7:30-8 PM. If a child is transitioning to the evening program from the day program, we recommend that the parent take him/her out of the Center for dinner.

All snacks served by the Center will meet the standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture, local and state health departments, and licensing guidelines. Children on special diets for medical reasons must have a physician's statement on file. Children with dietary restrictions due to religious reasons must have a written statement from parents stating the food products that are restricted. Any food products provided by parents must meet all State of Florida regulations.

Infant Feeding

Children in the infant program are fed on demand. For children 6 weeks to 12 months, parents provide food and formula. The Center can accommodate the use of frozen breast milk. Formula must be in ready-to-feed, non-glass bottles with the child's first and last name clearly displayed. Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Nursing mothers should coordinate the nursing schedule with their child's teacher to facilitate the child's and the mother's needs. Breast milk must be labeled with the date and child's first and last name. Pediatrician's diet orders must be updated regularly.

Nutrition Guidelines

NAEYC standards state that our curriculum includes teaching children healthy eating habits. Studies show that after eating sugar a child's immune system drops immediately, making them more susceptible to airborne germs. In order to keep all children healthy, we enforce the following nutritional guidelines for bringing lunches. Foods should be easy to swallow.

Acceptable Foods

Fresh/dried fruit
Cooked vegetables
Cheese slices or sticks
Granola bars
Variety of sliced breads
Muffins
Bagels
Wholesome cereal (non-sugar)

Unacceptable Foods

Soda
Raw carrots
Candy (gummy bears, hard candy)
Doughnuts
Raisins (for toddlers)
Nuts
Whole grapes
Hot dogs (children under 4 years)
Popcorn
Sugary cereal

ADMISSION

Eligibility for Admission

Children between the ages of 6 weeks and age 11 (or end of fifth grade) are eligible for admission to the Center. Children of students at PHCC receive priority enrollment. Priority enrollment is also given to siblings of children already enrolled in the Center. Parents who are pregnant may place their child on the waiting list, subject to availability, when the child is 6 weeks of age.

Special Needs Children

All children are special, with individual needs that require careful attention and flexible programming. Because labeling a child's "special needs" may have considerable implications for a child's future, it is a step taken only after much thought and professional evaluation. A child's behavior while in childcare may be very different from his/her behavior in other settings. The behavior we are concerned about may be a function of the setting, the environment, staff expectations, and routines or scheduling.

Each child in the Center is enrolled after individual discussions between the parent(s) and Center staff. The Center will attempt to accommodate special needs of children, as much as possible, and to work with parents if group care does not appear to be the best environment for an individual child or, if for other reasons, we cannot meet your child's needs.

Full-Time Enrollment

A full-time enrollee is defined as a child attending the Center on a regular schedule between 7:00AM and 6:00PM, Monday through Friday per week, up to 11 hours per day and on four to five days per week. Tuition is due for the full week whether the child is in attendance or not (See Financial Policies for details about tuition payment and vacation/absenteeism). The evening program is separate from the full-time or part-time care programs. Full time/part time enrollees may use the evening program at the hourly rate, after 6:00PM. Parents are encouraged to pick up their child for dinner, and bring him/her back for evening care. Children may not be left at the Center for more than 11 hours consecutively, without a break away from the Center.

Families may not move from full-time to part-time or hourly simply to avoid paying full-time enrollment fees for a given time. If special circumstances apply, a move between these categories will be considered, but must be discussed with the Center Director.

Part-Time Enrollment

A part-time enrollee is defined as a child attending the Center on a regular schedule, either two or three days per week.

Add Care

On any day that you might need additional care for your child, you may call 24 hours in advance to request a day of add care. Space is limited and you will need to have a back up plan in case the time you request is not available.

ENROLLMENT

To provide you and your child with the best possible start in the Center, the following enrollment procedures must be followed.

Enrollment Orientation

You and your child will need to attend an enrollment orientation to facilitate your child's adjustment to the program. During the visit, your child will meet his/her teacher and the other children in the group, if possible. The Center Director/Assistant Director will review Center philosophy, curriculum goals, policies and procedures, and enrollment forms with you. You must complete all enrollment forms and submit them to the Center Director prior to your child's first day at the Center.

Intake Procedures

First meeting: Parent only - Discuss childcare needs and enrollment information.

Second meeting: Parent returns with child and spend time in the classroom. Parent observes teacher working with children. We suggest that parents spend a half-day in classroom with the child. By being present, parents give the child permission to transfer to his/her teacher. Parents communicate that school is a safe place to be if they are quiet observers and make themselves available to mediate the unfamiliar. Because children are different and temperaments vary, we will work with parents to meet the individual transition needs of each child. Some children may benefit from a longer transition time, while others might transition better with a shorter time.

Infants and Toddlers

Obviously, infants and toddlers have different needs than preschoolers. We would encourage parents of infants and toddlers to spend the first half-day with them in the classroom. Infants and toddlers transition better if the parents are the first to interact with them in the classroom environment. Parents should be the first to put them on the diaper-changing table, to put them down in their crib, etc. This is different than a preschool parent who is asked to be an observer in the classroom only.

Should Parents Stay? It Depends...

Most early childhood professionals believe that a caring policy allows parents to stay as long as necessary, especially if children appear to need parental support. No optimal policy exists. Children are different and temperaments vary. Children who adapt to change well or know about school from others cannot understand why a parent might stay, but are perfectly amenable to parents in the room.

Other children approach new experiences with hesitation and adapt better if the parent remains. Parents offer valuable support by staying, but if they make themselves too available, children may be reluctant to relate to other children or to teachers.

Circumstances vary as well as children's temperaments. Children who have had few babysitters and whose parents rarely left them may need a more gradual separation than children with a large extended family or a history of multiple caregivers.

Saying Goodbye the First Day -

At some point, parents must leave. Saying goodbye to your child builds trust. Repeated goodbyes strengthen children's beliefs that parents will come back. If children know that a parent is leaving, they will be better prepared to begin their day.

Enrollment Forms

The forms you must complete/bring to the center are:

1. Registration Form
2. Child's Emergency Information Cards with signature for Medical Release
3. Child's Developmental History
4. State of Florida Immunization Record (Blue Form 3040)
5. State of Florida Physical (Yellow Form 680)
6. Parent Agreement - including scheduled hours of care (needed for staff planning.)
7. Signed verification of receiving Parent Handbook
8. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee per child enrolled covers the administrative time and costs associated with processing your child's enrollment information. The initial fee is payable at the time of enrollment. Students can pay by term or annual. All other registration is paid annually. Because of the administrative costs involved with enrollment, the fee still applies even if you disenroll your child after the orientation visit or immediately upon enrollment.

Waiting List

Once the program reaches capacity enrollment, a waiting list will be maintained by date of application. When space becomes available in the Center, parents on the waiting list will be notified. Once notified, parents have two working days to enroll their child. If a parent does not complete enrollment within two working days, the next parent on the list will be notified. Parents have two weeks to transition their child(ren) into the Center. In order to hold a slot more than two weeks, weekly tuition must be paid. If the parent declines the offered enrollment, the parent will be removed from the waiting list. Siblings of children already in the Center have priority. Unborn children may be put on the waiting list, subject to availability, when the child is at least six weeks of age.

Transitions

Transitions of children to the next classroom occur at various times during the year. Transitions are dependent on the child's readiness (chronological age is only one factor in determining readiness) to be moved to the next classroom as judged by the present teachers, the teachers in the proposed classroom, and available space in the next age group.

Preparation for the transition occurs long before the actual move. Teachers will begin to talk to children about their new room, their new teachers, and the activities in their new room several weeks in advance. The hope is to instill in transitioning children a sense of anticipation regarding the move. Similarly, parents also are prepared for the transition. Their child's teachers will discuss with them why their child is ready to move, the signs of readiness the child has shown, the types of things the child will be doing in the new room, and the specific differences between the rooms. Parents are encouraged to visit the child's new room and meet the teachers before the transition occurs.

Several days before transitioning, the child will visit their new classroom. One or two days of morning visits are followed by a full-day visit, including a nap in the new room. Generally, within a week, children have moved their things into the new classroom and are taken there by their parents, which marks the end of the transition period.

Around transition time, a child's behavior may change slightly. He/she may experience separation difficulties such as crying or clinging to parents, or the child may talk about returning to his/her old classroom. Such reactions are not unusual and rarely last long. Children need time to feel comfortable with new teachers, classmates, and surroundings. Parents, too, may take some time to adjust to the child's new room and teachers. Good parent-teacher communication helps both the parents and the child feel at ease during transition time.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Days and Hours of Operation

The Center is open from 7:00AM until 10:00PM, Monday through Thursday, and 7:00AM to 6:00PM on Friday. During the summer semester the hours change to 7:00AM to 6:00PM Monday through Friday. We ask that you adhere to a planned schedule of arrival and departure so that daily classroom activities can be structured accordingly. Your child and his/her teacher need to know what to expect on a daily basis. Please ask the Director for a list of scheduled closings for the year.

Emergency Closing

In case of an emergency or Center closing, parents will be informed by message on the Center's voice mail and, when possible, by public radio and television announcements. Tuition adjustments will not be made for emergency closings.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Coming to and leaving the Center are exciting times for children. Upon arrival, they will be anxious to see friends and share experiences of the previous evening. And, of course, nothing can compare with seeing mom or dad at the end of the day. These transition times deserve special attention.

Arrival

For your child's safety and to provide an opportunity for your child's teacher to talk with you, please escort your child to his/her classroom. The childcare Center is a secured environment with a coded key pad entry. You will receive the current code upon your child's enrollment, however, please do not pass this code to friends or family members. This could jeopardize the security of the center. The code will be changed in the beginning of each new semester. Parents must sign in and out in the sign-in book located at the front desk.

Departure

For your child's protection, only persons authorized by the parent are permitted to take a child from the Center. Parents must list the names of anyone who might escort the child from the Center on the Enrollment Application, Release Authorization Form and the Child's Emergency Information Cards. Escort permission is only granted to individuals whose names are on this list. You must also be sure to call the center and inform them of any pick up changes. Although the pick up person is authorized, if you do not notify the center beforehand, we will not release your child to them. You may also give us proper notification of an alternate pick up by entering this information in our DPI (Daily Points of Interest) Log that is kept at the front counter. You can change the list and add or delete names on it, but you **must** make all changes in person. Changes will **not** be accepted by telephone. It is extremely important that you maintain current information on all of your child's records and emergency information. Please be sure to notify the center administration of any changes immediately. This includes a change of phone numbers as well.

If the adult picking up the child is unfamiliar to staff, the adult will be required to show his/her driver's license or photo I.D. for identification. Whenever an adult takes a child from the Center, he/she must sign out in the sign-in/out book in the lobby.

A special word on picking up your child later than expected: It can be difficult for young children to stay at the Center longer than they are used to. Please notify the Center if, due to an emergency, you are unable to arrive on time. The teacher can then tell your child that you will be late.

Withdrawal and Disenrollment

A parent's decision to withdraw a child from the Center will be respected. However, you will be required to provide a two-week written notice of intent to withdraw, if you are a full-time or part-time enrollee. You will be charged your regular tuition for that two-week period, whether your child is in attendance or not.

Tuition past due may not exceed one week. There is a late payment fee (see Financial Policies). After one week of non-payment, the child will be disenrolled from the Center. Any outstanding monies due will be turned over for collection.

If, in the judgment of the Center Director, the individual needs of a child cannot be met in group care, the Director reserves the right to disenroll the child. When a situation is identified that could lead to disenrollment, the Director and teacher will work with parents to overcome the problem. Should disenrollment become necessary, a two-week written notice is generally provided.

Attendance Schedules

It is important for parents to stay within the hours they have scheduled as closely as possible, because staffing is based on children's schedules. Early drop off or late pick up can jeopardize the Center's teacher/child ratios.

Occasionally, parents may need to temporarily change the hours their children are scheduled at the Center. When this happens, parents are asked to first check with the Center Director 24 hours in advance to make sure the change can be accommodated. If parents need to change their child's schedule permanently, they should notify the Center's office.

Additional hours for students using the Center on an hourly basis will be accommodated as much as possible. While there can be no guarantee that the Center can always meet the needs of all students with variable schedules, we will do our best.

Reporting Absences

Because teachers plan their daily activities based on the children expected for the days and hours children are scheduled, we ask that parents notify the Center if their child is going to be absent or late for any reason or if they plan to pick up their child early.

Extended Hours and Late Charges

It can be difficult for young children when they stay at the Center longer than they are used to, and it can mean that teachers have to work unscheduled overtime. **A late pickup fee of \$1 per minute will be charged if a child is picked up after the scheduled pick up time. This policy also extends to student's children are on an hourly schedule.**

Risk Management

Every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment for children. The entrances are locked and monitored from the Center Management offices. Unauthorized persons will not be admitted. The Center has a central intercom system as well as central fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the Center.

The staff is trained in Pediatric First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and emergency procedures. The Center Director is responsible for risk management, including periodic inspections and training of staff. Parents are encouraged to identify and discuss with the Center Director any perceived risks to a child's health or safety.

Staffing

The Center staff is trained and dedicated early childhood professionals. They exceed the education and experience requirements of the Florida Department of Children and Families. The high quality of the staff is a benefit to you and your child. The results are the positive development of your child and the increase in your ability to focus on your work and/or education. We encourage you to treat your child's teacher and the rest of the Center staff with dignity and respect. They are early childhood professionals with whom you have entrusted the care of your child.

Cooperating with Regulatory Agencies

The Florida Department of Children and Families licenses the TodayCare Children's Center. The Center meets and/or exceeds state standards. The license is clearly displayed in the Center. All Center staff is mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Child Custody

Legal decisions regarding issues of child custody will be respected. In fairness to parents and children, documentation of the rights of each parent is required in order to restrict visitations when necessary. Please be advised that the Center cannot refuse to release a child to the child's parent or legal guardian without a court order or legal document restricting or denying that person of such right.

MEDICAL AND ILLNESS POLICIES

The Center will operate in a manner to ensure a secure, healthy, and safe environment for the children and staff at the Center.

Physical Examinations

All children enrolled in the Center must present a physician's certificate of good health (physical) prior to the time of admittance. A certificate of physical examination (Yellow Form 680) is valid for 2 years.

Immunizations

Children must be immunized in accordance with standard pediatric practice in order to be admitted to the Center. Infants and toddlers must follow the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended immunization schedule and provide a written record to the Center verifying each immunization so that the Center's records are kept current. Pertussis vaccine is included in this requirement due to the large group of susceptible (one year and younger) children at the Center.

All children must be immunized against Hemophilus Influenza type B (HIB) and MMR. Children will receive three HIB vaccines with a booster at 12 and 15 months. The first HIB vaccine should be administered at two months.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following schedule:

Immunizations	Age(s) given
DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)	2 months 4 months 6 months 15 - 18 months 4-6 years
Polio	2 months 4 months 6 - 24 months 4-6 years
Measles Mumps Rubella (usually given with MMR)	12 - 18 months 4 - 6 years 11 - 18 years, if missed at 4 - 6 years
HBCV (Hemophilus Influenza 6 conjugate vaccine - formerly HIB)"	2 months 4 months 6 months 12 - 18 months
Varicella	12-18 months 4-6 years
Hepatitis B Influenza	At birth, 2 months, 6 months Annually

- Children whose health records are not kept current are subject to disenrollment.
- As children's immunizations are updated, you will need to provide the Center with the most current immunization record (Blue Form 3040).

Chronic Medical Conditions

Children with pre-existing medical conditions will be evaluated for admission on an individual basis. After admission, documentation of regular medical follow-up will be required. Children with chronic asthma will be allowed to remain in the Center if there is no "whistling" and/or difficulty breathing and the child is not running a fever.

Medications

Only prescription medication will be administered. The Center Director, Assistant Director, or Evening Coordinator will be able to administer medication when the proper forms have been completed.

If prescription medication is to be administered, you must bring the completed medication form to the Center Director. This dosage cannot conflict with the instructions provided with the medicine. The medication must have a prescription label stating the child's name, the name of the medication and the dosage. It also must have a current date. The medication must also be accompanied with a signed prescription from the doctor stating that the medication can be dispensed. In all cases, parents should ask their physician to prescribe medication that can be administered at more convenient times such as at 8 or 12 hour intervals, whenever possible. Parents and a member of the Center Management Team must complete the medication log.

Ill Children

Parents will be notified immediately if their child becomes ill at the Center. Parents shall remove children from the Center within one hour after notification. Children exhibiting signs of illness listed below should remain at home. The following are indications of illness that will necessitate removal:

1. Fever

Defined as children who develop a fever (100° oral) while at the Center. Children with 101 °F temperature will not be readmitted to the Center until their temperature has been normal without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.

2. Vomiting

Defined as two or more episodes within one day (regurgitation in small infants excluded). Children must be free of vomiting for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

3. Diarrhea

Defined as more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period. Child must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the Center. If the episodes develop an erratic, but recurring pattern, the child may attend the Center if a doctor's written statement is presented verifying that there is no infectious cause.

4. Rashes

Rashes that are not identified or that have not been diagnosed as non-communicable by a physician will need to be seen by a physician.

5. Colds

Severe colds with fever, sneezing, and/or thick nose drainage.

Children who appear ill without obvious symptoms should be kept home from the Center. Examples include children who are unusually pale or flushed, irritable, unusually tired or lethargic, not eating or drinking well and/or complaining of a stomach or headache.

The staff will evaluate children who appear to be ill when they arrive at the Center. If the child's condition is such that we feel that he/she cannot be made comfortable and should be excluded from the Center, you will be asked to take the child home.

An infant who receives an immunization may develop a fever, but not be contagious. If the pediatrician has indicated this situation on the return to school form and authorized the administration of medication, the child may remain in the Center.

If your child is sent home for any of the above reasons, you will be given an Illness Report from the teacher with any information or instructions pertaining to the illness.

Diseases

Certain diseases or medical conditions may require the attention of a physician before a child may be admitted to the Center. These include:

1. Impetigo - a skin infection consisting of blisters surrounded by a reddened area. Impetigo requires a doctor's release before admittance to the Center.
2. Conjunctivitis - an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye." The eye will have unexplained redness, and there may be a thick yellow drainage. The child may be admitted to the Center after taking medication for at least 24 hours.
3. Strep Throat - if a doctor diagnoses a strep throat infection and places the child on an appropriate antibiotic, the child may return to the Center if he/she no longer has a fever and has taken the medication for at least 24 hours.
4. Chicken Pox - and other childhood contagious diseases (i.e., Measles, Mumps, Rubella, etc.) require a written Doctor's release for admittance to the Center. Children infected with Chicken Pox will be excluded until the lesions have dried and scabbed over.
5. Head Lice - a parasitic infestation unrelated to cleanliness or quality of care. A child can be admitted to the Center the morning after receiving treatment, provided that he/she is nit free.
6. Pinworm - an intestinal parasite. A child may become restless and irritable and may complain of or be observed as having rectal itching. Children may not be admitted until treated with prescription medications, and with a doctor's release.
7. Bronchitis - a condition characterized by a severe continuous cough that interferes with activity and well-being. Bronchitis is different than chronic asthma.
8. Ringworm – a fungal skin disease (not a worm) characterized by an itchy, raised ring. After receiving initial treatment from a physician, the child may be admitted, with physician's release. The treated area must be completely covered.

Notification of Communicable Diseases

Parents of every child enrolled in the classroom will be notified when a communicable disease has been introduced into the classroom. You will be advised of symptoms and incubation periods, if appropriate.

Accidents and Injuries

In non-life threatening instances, the Center staff will provide on-site first aid. The injury will be assessed by the administration and immediate notification to the parents will be determined. If a child requires medical attention, the child's parent will be contacted, informed of the injury and asked to pick up the child.

If an accident or injury is life-threatening or requires immediate medical attention, the local ambulance service will be called to transport the child to the nearest Medical Center Emergency Department.

The staff member who has observed the incident will fill out an accident report. A copy will be retained at the Center. Parents will be asked to sign the accident report and will be given a copy.

Special Health Procedures

During outbreaks of contagious illness (i.e., epidemic diarrhea - to rule out Shigella, Bacterial Meningitis or Hemophilus Influenza Type B), parents may be required to have their children cultured or tested prior to entry into the classroom. Children who do not receive the required testing may be excluded from the Center in order to protect the health of other children and staff.

Parents of children with physical, emotional, visual, or dental problems will receive referral notices from the Center. Parents will be responsible for contacting the appropriate agency for screening. A child whose parents fail to comply with the Center's medical policies may be disenrolled.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

A Tuition Schedule for the PHCC fall, spring and summer terms will be published annually. See Center Director for a copy. Tuition will typically be adjusted each year, in order to balance the Center expenses. Policies and tuition rates are meant to allow for the flexibility and convenience that students need, while at the same time provide some economic predictability in the Center expenses. Rates are set through consultation between PHCC Administration and TodayCare Management.

Registration Fees

Registration fees may be paid by term (students) or annually. Please see Tuition Schedule for the fee amount. If registration is paid by term, please notify the Center Director and pay the next term's registration fee as soon as you know your intent to use the Center. Your child's space is not reserved for the next term until you complete this process.

Tuition Payment – Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment

Weekly tuition for full-time or part-time care may be paid by check, money order or cash on the first day your child is present each week. Checks should be payable to TodayCare Children's Center. There is a late payment fee of \$2 per day for tuition not paid on the day that the child first attends that week. Tuition and late fees unpaid for one week will be turned over to collections and the child will be disenrolled.

Vacation

Full-time enrollees may take two weeks of vacation time during the school year (August-July) at which time they will pay one/half tuition. Children must use the full week. Refunds or credits are not given for absences due to illness or when the parent keeps a child out of the Center. Parents should notify the Center Director in advance when they are taking a vacation week. Parents may not disenroll and re-enroll simply to avoid paying tuition for a week's absence.

Holidays

The Center will not be open on holidays. There will be no adjustments made to your tuition for Holidays. The center is also closed several days during the winter break. At this time only will there be an adjustment on your weekly tuition rate. Please ask for a copy of the Annual Family Calendar so that you can plan accordingly.

We encourage you to discuss any of these policies with the Center Director. A true partnership between PHCC, TodayCare and parents make the TodayCare Children's Center a special place for your child.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of TodayCare Children's Center at PHCC Parent Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and abide by the policies and programs described in this handbook.



Parent Signature and Date