



**St. Paul's
Children's Center**

**Parent Handbook
2022 - 2023**

St. Paul's Children's Center

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Mission Statement

The mission of St. Paul's Children's Center ("School" or "Center") is to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where learning flourishes for children aged 2 months to 3 years old, to parishioners of St. Paul's Catholic Church and families in the community, by using an integrated curriculum plan to accommodate the broad range of children's needs and in accordance with the Pinellas County Licensing Board Rules and Regulations.

Philosophy Statement

At St. Paul's Children's Center, we encourage the continuing growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world. We recognize that children are individuals and that each child is unique. Our program accommodates the broad range of children's needs, their learning rates and styles, and their knowledge, experiences, and interests to facilitate continuous learning. We achieve this through an integrated curriculum incorporating a variety of instructional models and resources.

At St. Paul's Children's Center, we respect the development of the whole child. We understand that children learn through active involvement and play. Children demonstrate and represent their knowledge in a variety of ways. We recognize the social nature of learning and the essential role of language in developing thought, communication and learning.

We view assessment and evaluation as integral components of the teaching – learning process. Assessment and evaluation support children's learning and assist the teachers and parents in making educational decisions. At St. Paul's Children's Center, we value parent / teacher partnerships to foster the best environment for your child. Teachers and parents should work together to consult and collaborate in order to create a climate of respect, success, and joy that is necessary for lifelong learning.

Standards

St. Paul's Children's Center was established in August 2003 in an effort to provide quality child care to St. Paul's parishioners and to residents of St. Petersburg, Florida. We are a Catholic early childhood center of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and a ministry of St. Paul's Catholic Church. We are licensed and comply with Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Board for children's centers, Pinellas County Health Department, and Pinellas County Fire Services.

Asbestos Management Plan

The Facilities/Maintenance Department maintains the St. Paul's Children's Center, St. Petersburg Asbestos Management Plan, which is available in the Maintenance Office for review upon request.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14

Non- Discrimination and Admissions Policy

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and St. Paul's Children's Center maintain an open admission policy; namely, that no person on the grounds of race, color, national or ethnic origin is discriminated against in admission or in receiving services in any school operated by them, nor do they hire or assign staff on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin of either the staff or the students. Contributing and supporting parishioners and siblings of St. Paul's Children's Center and St. Paul Catholic School are given priority. Catholic Schools within the Diocese of St. Petersburg require enrolling students to submit a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunization as provided for in Florida Statute 1003.22 as a condition precedent to acceptance. Catholic schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg do not recognize a religious objection to this immunization.

Harassment Policy

St. Paul's Children's Center strives to provide an establishment of a Christian, professional, and supportive educational environment free of harassment for all persons engaged in or involved with our religious education program and early childhood center. St. Paul's Children's Center prohibits harassment based on an individual's race, religion, color, creed, sex, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical condition, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. The policy applies to and protects all persons involved with St. Paul's Children's Center and prohibits harassment by or toward any employee of St. Paul's Children's Center, as well as clients, vendors, parents, students, and other persons doing business with the Center. Prohibited harassment may include, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, derogatory comments or jokes, intimidation, negative stereotyping, threats, assault or any physical interference with another's normal work or movement, whether directed at an individual or the individual's relatives, friends, or associates. Harassment may also include written or graphic material placed on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on the school's premises or circulated in the children's center or campus, which denigrates, or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of the characteristics identified above. St. Paul's Children's Center will not be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at our parish, school, or early childhood center sponsored event.

Technology Policy

Blogs: Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Facebook®, Instagram®, Twitter® or other social media platform may result in disciplinary actions (including expulsion) if the content of the student's or parent's blog includes defamatory comments regarding St. Paul's Children's Center, St. Paul Catholic School, the faculty, other students or the parish.

Cell Phones: At no time during business hours are parents and staff to communicate with each other via cell phone, this includes texting. Teachers have strict cell phone limitations, and parents are required to call the office to leave a message. It's very important that the staff is not distracted while caring for the children.

Technology Policy (cont'd)

Cyberbullying: St. Paul's Children's Center attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Any students or parents making such threats (seriously or in jest online) face suspension and/or expulsion.

Social Media/ Instagram/Facebook/Other:

Engagement in online social media such as, but not limited to, Instagram®, Twitter®, Facebook®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions (including expulsion). Negative or defamatory comments, photos, or captions on a student or parent's Instagram/Facebook/Other on line account that depict the children's center, the faculty, other students, the school, or the parish in a negative or defamatory way may result in the children of the parent being separated from the school. If a student is involuntarily separated from the school, there will be no reimbursement for tuition and/or fees. Parents should refrain from creating a class/grade social media page without the written authorization of the Director.

Registration Information

The following forms must be completed and submitted to the Director to register at St. Paul's Children's Center with your annual non-refundable registration fees and registration supplies* prior to the start date of the 2021-2022 school year.

- ___ Application with Registration Fees
- ___ Tuition Withdrawal Form (Include a voided check)
- ___ Admissions Policy
- ___ Child Enrollment Record
- ___ Emergency Medical Release (must be notarized)
- ___ Written Plan for Infants (Infants Only)
- ___ Infant/Toddler Health and Development Questionnaire (Infants and One year Old's)
- ___ Child Health and Development Questionnaire (Two Year Olds Only)
- ___ Copy of Birth Certificate (New Students Only)
- ___ Current Certificate of Immunizations Form (receive a copy from your pediatrician)
- ___ School Entry Health Exam Form (receive a copy from your pediatrician)
- ___ Promotional Media Release
- ___ Food Experience Permission Form
- ___ Influenza Virus Parent Acknowledgement "The Flu Guide for Parents" (Every Sept.)
- ___ Distracted Driver Signature Form (Every Sept. and April)
- ___ Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form (for diaper cream)
- ___ Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

All forms including health forms must be completed and returned before the first day of new classes each August. **Parents are responsible for submitting current, up to date health forms from the pediatrician to the Director. Children with incomplete or expired paperwork will not be allowed to attend St. Paul's Children's Center until new paperwork is submitted to the Director.**

*Registration Supplies are due to your classroom teacher during open house or on the child's first day of school.

Fees

In consideration of services performed by St. Paul's Children's Center, the following conditions apply:

- All registration fees are due prior to the child's start date and are non-refundable.
- Weekly tuition must be paid by automatic funds transfer through our debit system. We do not have the availability to charge a credit card.
- There is no reduction in tuition when St. Paul's Children's Center is closed for in-service days, holidays such as Labor Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, etc. OR should St. Paul Children's Center close for maintenance.
- There is no reduction in tuition when a child is absent for any reason including illness.
- *The fee for children picked up late is \$3.00 per minute.*

Debit Transactions

- A \$30 transaction fee per family is added to your first debit withdrawal and annually each August.
- After 2 weeks of debit returns, the child may not return unless other arrangements have been made.
- Any return fees incurred by the church must be paid.

Withdrawal Procedures

Parents may withdraw their child from St. Paul's Children's Center at any time. A TWO WEEK written withdrawal notice is required when a child is withdrawn. Parents wishing to withdraw their child and fail to provide a two-week written notice will still be responsible for two weeks of tuition. Withdrawing revokes any registration for the next school year. Your family would need to reapply for acceptance to the center.

St. Paul's Children's Center operates year-round. Summertime withdrawals are not permitted. Students completing EC-2 are expected to remain in the center until the August start date for the new school year.

There are in the end three things that last: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 9

Hours of Operation

St. Paul's Children's Center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Children may not arrive before 7:30 a.m. We begin our morning routine promptly at 8:30 a.m. **All children are required to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m.** Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and other students, therefore arrivals after 8:30 a.m., or mid-day drop offs are not permitted. Appointments should be made in the afternoon as to not disrupt the classroom morning routine. **(Special circumstances must have prior approval by the Director)**. Please email the Director/ lead teacher OR call St. Paul's Children's Center office phone line at 727-8223481 ext. 18 if your child will be late or absent. If your child does not arrive by 8:30 a.m. our staff is required to contact you, the parent or guardian. If you are unable to be reached, your emergency contact must be notified.

Arrival / Departure Procedures

Arrivals: To ensure your child's safety, parents/guardians must follow and obey all traffic laws during arrivals & departures. Parents may park on 14th St., 20th Ave. or in the parish office parking lot. All children/ staff must use the Children's Center front entrance for arrivals. Parents are asked not to enter the facility unless it is an emergency. **Children should arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. ready for school** have eaten breakfast prior to arrival and arrive in clean diapers. Parents must be vigilant in watching for signs of illness daily, before bringing your child to school. Each child/ staff member will be visually screened for signs of illness and have their temperature taken before they will be allowed to enter the facility. Parents must use the Sign- In Sheets available at the entrance area documenting the student arrival time.

Departures: All parents/ guardians must use the Children's Center front entrance for Departure/ Pick up. Parents are to remain in the front entrance area and not enter the building unless there is an emergency. Please ring the bell at our entrance and a staff member will escort your child to you. Parents must use the Sign- Out Sheets available at the entrance area documenting the student departure time. No child will be released to anyone less than 18 years of age OR to anyone who is not listed on the Child Enrollment Record Form as an emergency contact. Anyone who is not known by St. Paul's Children's Center staff and is picking up a child will be asked to show photo ID. Please notify us in writing (via email or letter) immediately of any changes to the list of people authorized to pick up your child. Letters allowing friends or relatives to pick up your child **MUST** be emailed or signed and dated by the parent, and must include the person's name, address, and phone number as it is listed on their ID. Students may not use any of the areas in front of our entrance or the parish building as a play area, including but not limited to trees, planters, and fire escape steps. This poses a safety risk and families are asked to leave our campus promptly after picking up children from school.

Late Pick- Up Fees

St. Paul's Children's Center closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. Parents should arrive by 5:25 p.m. for pickup. The fee for children picked up late is \$3.00 per minute. Parents must contact St. Paul's Children's Center if they will be late in picking up their child. We understand emergencies do arise; however, parents must have a backup plan for those instances. Excessive tardiness/late pick-ups are prohibited. All late fees are at the discretion of the Director.

Custody Agreements

The director must be given written notification when there are any changes to your family's emergency contact information. St. Paul's Children's Center cannot prevent a parent from picking up his/her child without a court ordered custody agreement. All custody agreements are kept in a confidential file in the director office.

Illegal and Harmful Objects

Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs may not be carried or used at any time on our campus. Matches, fireworks, knives, guns, slingshots, chemicals and objectionable materials or objects are not to be brought to the center at any time. Use of any of the above may result in immediate expulsion. Smoking of any type is not allowed on campus including e-cigarettes and vaping.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-up

The staff of St. Paul's Children's Center will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent, or other authorized pick-up person, appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent or authorized person access to their child even if that person is or appears impaired. However, St. Paul's Children's Center staff will delay the impaired person as long as possible while contacting the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Child Restraints – Car Seats and Booster Seats

Florida law requires children age 5 and under to be secured properly in a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device. Children ages birth to 3 years must be in child restraint device of a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat in the back seat. Staff is prohibited from assisting with removal or placement of any child restraint/car seat. Parents/Guardians must unload/load children from car seats/restraints. Staff is required to report any parent/guardian who is not following this law.

Daily Prayers

Prayer is an integral part of St. Paul's Children's Center philosophy and curriculum. All classrooms practice daily prayers with the children and encourage, when developmentally appropriate, the children to recite and use hand motions. All prayers begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.

Our pastor and associate pastors visit the classrooms regularly. The children will receive ashes and a special blessing on Ash Wednesday.

Classroom Angel Sponsorship

Parents and business owners are given the opportunity to sponsor a class by becoming a Classroom Angel. Donations are tax deductible and support the children with instructional enhancements and enriching student learning. Be an Angel and Sponsor a classroom! Please contact the director for details.

For he will order his angels to protect you, wherever you go.

Psalm 91:11-13

Infant Classroom

Required Supplies

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school*.

- Large size back pack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Diapers-(2 week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 1 Baby wipe plastic container and 2 refill packs (refill as needed)
- 2 FITTED crib sheets to fit mattress size 36 inches in Length & 24 inches in Width
 - Crib sheets must fit snugly around mattress
- 2-Pack Long Sleeve Sleeping Bag (Sleep Sack Shirts)
- 3 complete change of clothes
- 5 cloth bibs
- Feeding spoons, 1 for each meal- (must be labeled)
- Bottles- prepared and ready to feed (daily)
- Baby food and snacks- (daily)
 - Finger foods, starting at 8 months (see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy")
- 2 pacifiers
- Diaper rash cream (Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- 1 sippy cup with lid, starting at 7 months, **each piece must be labeled**
- Written Plan for Infants (Daily Routine) completed by parent – includes feeding times, amount of formula, napping times, etc.

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 boxes of facial tissues
- 3 Disinfecting Wipes 75 count each (must say "kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 2 boxes sandwich size zip-top bags
- 1 box quart size zip-top bags
- 1 box gallon size zip-top bags
- 1 pack, Size C batteries
- 1 pack, Size AA batteries
- 2 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap Pumps, Aquarium - 7.5 fl oz Clear Softsoap brand handsoap only. No other soap is acceptable per PCLB. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")

*Registration Supplies are due to your classroom teacher during open house or on the child's first day of school.

Infant Classroom

Infant Classroom Information

- Anyone entering the infant classrooms must remove their shoes or wear shoe covers.
- Parents are responsible for completing the Parents Section of the “Daily Written Report for Infants” prior to arrival. Teachers will complete the caregivers section and return this sheet to parents in your child’s backpack at the end of each day. This sheet is a great form of communicating with the infant staff. Teachers will list your child’s daily activities, along with any additional supplies needed including: bottles, diapers, crib sheets, blankets, and extra clothes (in the correct size and season).
- Parents must bring in all Bottles, Food, Sippy Cups, and Daily Sheets every morning.
- Our Infant classroom follows an “Infant Classroom Feeding/Sleeping Daily Routine” by your child’s age. We will vary from the routine depending on the needs of each individual child. As always, Daily reports are essential, as Parent and Teacher communication is the key to success. The classroom daily routine is sent to families via the Infant Classroom Welcome packet.
- GLASS containers are not permitted. This includes bottles & food containers.
- Bottles must be prepared by parents and arrive ready to feed with a lid covering the nipple.
- Bottles will be heated in crockpot until age 1. **NO bottles after a child’s first birthday.** (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).
- Cloth diapers are not accepted at the center. Alternatives for children with allergies suggested are: bamboo or hypoallergenic diapers.
- We cannot refill sippy cups, so please send enough for the entire day.
- By 8 months of age, parents must provide finger foods for their child (we recommend beginning with one fruit and one vegetable) Please see our “Food Safety and Nutrition Policy” for additional information.
- Once your child turns 1 we do not heat anything. Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send in any food in a Thermos that you would like served warm (all items must be labeled).
- Everything must be labeled with your child’s first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child’s name on them and go around sippy cups.
 - Permanent marker on bottles/containers or permanent marker on masking tape is not permitted or an acceptable form of labeling.
- Jewelry is not permitted to be worn at St. Paul’s Children’s Center, with the exception of stud earrings with screw backs, subject to director approval.
- As your child begins standing, walking, OR no later than 8 months old, your teacher will discuss your child’s readiness to begin wearing shoes. We require hard bottom, closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes that tie, with ankle socks for safety and stability. Velcro shoes are not permitted if a child can remove the shoes. Please see our shoe policy under “Dress to Play” for more information.
- All other Infant classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

EC 1 Classroom

Required Supplies

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school.

- Large size back pack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Diapers-(2 week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 1 Baby wipe plastic container and refill packs -(2 week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 3 complete change of clothes including socks and 1 extra pair of shoes
- Blanket for rest time and a small lovey (must fit in backpack and make no noise/ sounds)
- Diaper rash cream (Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- 3 Sippy Cups with lids (daily, See "Food Safety & Nutrition Policy" for recommended cups)
- Monthly group snack (sign-up sheet will be emailed from teacher)
- Lunch box (daily, see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy" for more information)
- 1 Small Cot sheet (Purchased from SPCC during open house)

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 Disinfecting Wipes 75 count each (must say "kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 3 boxes of facial tissues
- Size AAA and AA batteries (1 package each)
- 2 boxes sandwich size zip-top bags
- 1 box quart size zip-top bags
- 1 box washable glue sticks, disappearing purple (pack of 2)
- 1 box washable markers, 10 count, classic colors
- 1 bottle Elmer's Washable School Glue, 7 5/8 oz.
- 1 two pocket **Plastic/ Vinyl** BLUE Folder (no paper folders please)
- 2 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap Pumps, Aquarium - 7.5 fl oz Clear Softsoap brand handsoap only. No other soap is acceptable per PCLB. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")

EC 1 Things to Know

-All one year olds must be fully walking and off bottles to enter our EC1 classrooms.

-EC1 Children should not be carried and use walking feet when arriving to school. Shoes must be worn at all times; see our "Shoe Policy" for more information.

-☐ Cloth diapers are not accepted at the center. Alternatives for children with allergies suggested are: bamboo or hypoallergenic diapers.

-Parents are responsible for checking Daily Report, Blue Folder and emails where teachers communicate supplies needed such as: diapers, cot sheets, extra clothes (in correct size and season).

-Bottles are not permitted. (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).

-All food must be sent in a labeled lunch box, with all containers labeled. The food must be ready to eat per our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy". Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send food that your child can feed themselves. Pack ice packs in the lunchboxes to keep food chilled, or send warm food in a thermos.

-We cannot refill sippy cups, so please send enough for the entire day. We recommend 3 sippy cups each day- one for a.m. snack, one for lunch, and one for p.m. snack.

- Everything must be labeled with your child's first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child's name on them and go around sippy cups.
- All other EC1 classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

EC 2 Classroom

Required Supplies-

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school.

- Large size back pack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Pull ups with Velcro sides only- (2 week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 2 Baby wipe containers and refill packs -(2 week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 3 complete change of clothes, including socks and 1 extra pair of shoes
- Blanket for rest time and small quiet lovey (must fit in backpack and make no noise/ sounds)
- Diaper rash cream (Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- Monthly group snack (sign-up sheet will be emailed from teacher)
- Lunch box (daily, see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy" for more information)
- 2 sport bottles filled with water daily (No glass permitted)
- 1 Large Cot sheet (Purchased from SPCC during Open House)

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 Disinfecting Wipes 75 count each (must say "kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 3 boxes of facial tissues
- Size AAA and AA batteries (1 package each)
- 2 boxes sandwich size zip-top bags
- 1 box of quart size zip-top bags
- 1 box washable glue sticks, disappearing purple (pack of 2)
- 1 box washable markers, 10 count, classic colors
- 1 box of 24ct Crayons, classic colors
- 1 bottle Elmer's Washable School Glue, 7 5/8 oz.
- 1 two pocket **Plastic/ Vinyl** BLUE Folder (no paper folders please)
- 2 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap Pumps, Aquarium - 7.5 fl oz Clear Softsoap brand handsoap only. No other soap is acceptable per PCLB. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")

EC 2 Things to Know

- There is no daily report given in EC2. Teachers use the Blue folder and Emails for communication.
- Parents are responsible for checking emails and the Blue folder for communications from teachers including refills of any supplies needed such as: diapers, cot sheets, and extra clothes (correct size/season).
- All food must be sent in a labeled lunch box, with all containers labeled. The food must be ready to eat per our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy". Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send food that your child can feed themselves. Pack ice packs in the lunchboxes to keep food chilled, or send warm food in a thermos.
- Bottles are not permitted. (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).
- Beverages in lunch boxes should be disposable juice boxes, small disposable water bottles, or disposable milk chugs.

- Everything must be labeled with your child's first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child's name on them and go around sippy cups.
- No Binkys/ Pacifiers are permitted.
- All other EC2 classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

St. Paul Children's Center is required to follow guidelines set forth by the USDA and the Health Department, with regards to nutrition and food safety. These guidelines are required for snacks and lunches being provided by families for their children while attending St. Paul's Children's Center.

Nutrition

1. Good nutrition is critical to proper growth and development.
2. Children should arrive to school having had breakfast prior to their arrival. Due to allergies, students may not walk into the children's center or classroom with food in their hands.
3. Parents must provide a nutritious and healthy snack/lunch and drink for their child.
4. Two food groups must be part of the snack/meal provided, with portions and choices appropriate for your child's age.
5. Refer to the nutritional information and requirements outlined on **The USDA MyPlate website at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>** which has the guidelines for diet/food groups/ serving size/ age appropriateness.
6. Families will receive a 'gentle reminder' note if their child's snack/lunch was missing or incomplete.
7. Children are encouraged to eat all of their lunch. Therefore, it's important to send only as much as your child can eat in 20 minutes. Please send food your child can eat unassisted in EC1 and EC2. All fruit must be peeled and sectioned. Sandwiches and meat must be cut up and ready to eat. We cannot microwave food. A thermos can be used to keep food warm.
8. St. Paul's Children's Center will supplement your child's snack/ lunch on any emergency situations where the proper nutritional requirements were not met.

Food Safety

1. Food for infants must be cut into pieces 1/4 inch or smaller to prevent choking.
2. Food for toddlers (EC1 and EC2) must be cut into pieces 1/2 inch or smaller to prevent choking.
3. We are not able to refrigerate or heat lunch items.
4. Fast food lunches, junk food of any kind, candy, gum, sports drinks and carbonated drinks will not be permitted and will be sent home.
5. Parents must include ice packs to keep perishable food cold.
6. Lunch boxes and all inside containers (all parts and ice packs) should be labeled with the child's first and last name.
7. The children will be taught not to share their food with others at school for safety reasons, such as allergies.

Food Safety and Nutrition Policy(cont'd)

8. Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents will not be served to children under 4 years of age; such as, but not limited to
- whole/round hot dogs
 - popcorn
 - chips
 - pretzel nuggets
 - whole grapes
 - nuts
 - whole spoonful of peanut butter
 - cheese cubes
 - any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe

Food Allergens/ Special Diet

For children with specific food allergies or special diet: Parents must document this on their Food Experience Form and Child Enrollment Record. Parents must also include a note from your pediatrician with the type of allergy the child has and what foods their child may not eat or handle while at school. Any child requiring a special diet shall have a copy of the physician's order, a copy of the diet, and a sample meal plan for the special diet as documentation in the student file. Parents should provide extra snacks to be kept at school to use as needed for 'special occasions'.

Food Experiences at School

Classroom cooking experiences will occur periodically throughout the school year. All families will indicate on their Food Experience Form and Child Enrollment Record if their child has any food allergies. Parents must also include a note from your pediatrician with the type of allergy the child has and what foods their child may not eat or handle while at school. Parents should provide extra snacks to be kept at school to use as needed for 'special occasions'.

Snacks and Lunches

EC1 & EC2 participate in community snack. Each child is requested to bring in a large nonperishable snack donation for the month. An email will be sent to parents at the end of each month with requests. Please choose from the list provided and do not deviate from the requested items without prior approval from the teacher due to other student allergies.

Birthday Celebrations

We celebrate birthdays! Check with your child's teacher prior to the big day for classroom guidelines and any allergies. We require 1 week notice before bringing in a birthday treat. We

encourage healthy choices for birthday treats. (Popsicles, frozen yogurt, etc.). Small/ mini cupcakes or cookies are also acceptable. All treats must be store bought, to comply with Pinellas County Health Department regulations and for the health and safety of those children with allergies.

LUNCH/SNACK

*** (all food must be cut into pieces smaller than 1/2 inch for toddlers, smaller than 1/4 inch for infants) ***

Healthy Ideas:

Fresh fruit (no fruit cups)
Sliced Avocado
Fresh cooked/ steamed vegetables (light salt/seasoning)
Cooked/steamed lean meats (chicken, beef, pork, fish)
Cheese slices
Peanut Butter & Jelly OR Grilled Cheese sandwiches
Quesadilla Wraps
Cheerios /Kix Cereal
Soft Cereal Bars (Nutrigrain)
Mini-Muffins (homemade, low sugar)
Animal Crackers
Fig Newton
Graham crackers
Water /Milk

NOT PERMITTED:

Any food of similar shape/size of the trachea/ windpipe
Dried Fruit or Nuts
Whole / round hot dogs
Popcorn, Chips, and Pretzel nuggets
Whole grapes
Whole Spoonful of Peanut butter
Cheese cubes
Candy/Cough Drops
Soda/ carbonated beverages/caffeinated beverages/ Sports Drinks

Cups Required by Classroom

(All Examples are recommended as best cups for orofacial development):

INFANTS (transitioning from bottles)

Spout Free Cups:

- Munchkin Miracle 360 <https://www.munchkin.com/feeding/cups/miracle-and-spoutless-cups.html>

Straw Cups:

- Pop up straw cups like Playtex Sipster <http://www.playtexbaby.com/products/playtex-straw-cup>

EC1:

Straw Cups (bottles not permitted)

- Think Baby Thinkster Straw Cup <https://gothink.com/collections/thinkbaby-straw-bottles>
- Thermos 12oz FUNtainer Water Bottle <https://www.target.com/p/thermos-12oz-funtainer-water-bottle-with-bail-handle/-/A-82818954?preselect=80420484#lnk=sametab>

- Philips Avent My Bendy Straw Cup <https://www.amazon.com/Philips-Avent-Bendy-SCF792-21/dp/B01M6CoKET>

EC2:

Straw Cups (only straw cups, no other sippy cups or baby bottles permitted):

- Thermos 12oz FUNtainer Water Bottle <https://www.target.com/p/thermos-12oz-funtainer-water-bottle-with-bail-handle/-/A-82818954?preselect=80420484#lnk=sametab>

Dress to Play

Children should be dressed in sturdy, washable clothing that will allow them to play freely and permit participation in all art and playground activities during a busy day at St. Paul’s Children’s Center. Children will go outside each day (weather permitting), so please dress them appropriately for each day’s weather. Children’s clothing should allow them to undress themselves easily for bathroom purposes. Overalls, leotards, and belts are difficult to unfasten and do not foster independence. Shorts and pants should have elastic waist bands; no buttons, snaps, or zippers. Girls wearing skirts or dresses must wear shorts underneath. **Tutu’s, Tulle Skirts and Costumes of any kind are not permitted.** No onesies, bibs or pacifiers in EC1 or EC2. Jewelry of any kind is not permitted to be worn at St. Paul’s Children’s Center, with the exception of stud earrings with screw backs, subject to director approval.

Shoe Policy

Shoes are to be worn at all times while at school for children who are ready to wear shoes which includes all EC2, all EC1, and any infants walking, or infants preparing to walk*(See “Infant Room Things to Know” for more info). **Children must wear closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes with laces that tie, with ankle socks.** Sneakers and socks to the ankle are required at all times. We do not permit “no show socks”. Also NOT Permitted: VELCRO, MOCCASINS, CROCS, BALLET SHOES, BOOTS, SANDALS, FLIP FLOPS, or SLIP-ONS. These all present a form of danger on the playground. Should your child continuously remove their shoes, we will require that you provide a different pair.

Spare Clothes

In the event of illness or accident, a minimum of three complete sets of seasonally appropriate clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, shorts and one extra pair of shoes) must be kept in your child’s cubby at all times. When the spare clothing is used, you will need to replace it for the next school day. Please put your child’s FIRST & LAST NAME on all clothing and belongings to help ensure their safe return. If your child does not have extra clothing, you will be called to bring clothes or pick up your child for the day.

Cot Sheets

Each child is required by licensing to have a fitted cot sheet. Cot Sheets may be purchased from Etsy <https://www.etsy.com/listing/997335839/fun-and-vibrant-printed-daycare-cot> or Amazon for approximately \$8-\$12. Please use a label or write your child’s name on the sheets. One year olds will need to purchase a “small” cot sheet (approximate dimensions 40 x 22) with elastic on all four sides. Two year olds will need to purchase a “large” cot sheet (Dimensions approximately 52 x 22) with elastic on all four sides. Please order to allow enough time for shipping and arrival in time for the beginning of the year. If a cot sheet breaks, is damaged, or becomes lost,

you will need to repair or replace it. Extra cot sheets are available for purchase from the director office.

*Children are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.
Psalm 127:3*

Rest Time

Rest time is a calm period in which your child is required to rest quietly on their cot without disturbing others. EC1/EC2 parents send in a rest time blanket for your child that will stay in their cubby all week (blankets are not permitted for infant cribs). EC1/EC2 blankets, cot sheets and Infant sheets will be sent home every Friday for weekend cleaning. Please return clean sheets/blankets every Monday. If your child does not bring their clean bedding to school on Monday, you will be called to bring it or pick up your child at rest time. Rest time loveys should be small, soft, contain no batteries, and make no noise/sounds. All loveys must be small enough to fit in your child's backpack/cubby. All rest time items (cot sheets, blankets, loveys, etc.) must be labeled with your child's First & Last name. St. Paul's Children's Center is not responsible for any lost or damaged items from home.

Treasures from Home

We provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys in every classroom at St. Paul's Children's Center. Unless otherwise requested for a special event from your teacher, children are not permitted to bring toys or other treasures from home to school as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Licensing requires age appropriate toys in each classroom. Toys brought from home often have parts that pose a choking hazard and become a safety concern.

Communication

The success of St. Paul's Children's Center relies upon great communication with parents, staff and administration. We strive to keep quality relationships with our families. Parent opinions and concerns are very important to us. We attempt to keep families informed in a variety of ways, including the following:

Phone/ Emails: Important communications are sent via email or as a phone call to parents. When parents have questions or concerns in regards to a classroom situation, the policy is to discuss the situation with the classroom teacher prior to contacting the director. Parents may contact their lead teacher via email (email addresses provided in your child's Welcome Packet and during Open House). Parents with additional questions or concerns may contact St. Paul's Children's Center via email or by leaving a voice message to schedule an appointment with the director. All phone messages and emails will be returned by the next business day.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences: Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with the classroom teacher to discuss individual concerns or questions. The director is also available to assist parents with concerns that have not been resolved with the teacher's help. Please contact the director or the parish office in the event of an emergency.

Daily Sheets/ Folders: Infants and One year olds will receive a "daily sheet" regarding your child's daily activities which are given to parents at pick up. EC1/EC2 are provided a classroom folder for their backpack which holds any completed activities or important notes from the teachers that should be checked and emptied by parents daily.

Monthly Newsletters: Center events, monthly curriculum themes/activities are provided from teachers, posted in classrooms, sent via email or in monthly classroom newsletters.

SPCC Website: Parent Handbook, annual calendar and other center information can be found on our website at www.stpaulschildrenscenter.com

Health/ Illnesses

Childhood illnesses/diseases, unfortunately, are part of growing up. Keeping children healthy is a job that needs everyone's assistance. Hand washing and proper hygiene is critical to good health.

Best practices we follow and recommend for preventing illness:

- Washing hands often, and for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your face
- Practicing social distancing by staying at least 6 feet away from other people when sick
- Covering coughs and sneezes with the sleeve of your shirt or coat
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects often

Below is a list of symptoms that parents must be vigilant in watching for daily, before bringing your child to school. Parents must have an alternative plan for care when your child is sick as children may not attend our center if any of the following conditions exist:

1. **Fever above the normal range within the last 36 hours***, at home or school
2. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or making a whooping sound, difficult or rapid breathing
3. Diarrhea or Vomiting at any time in the past 48 hours, at home or school
4. Stiff Neck, Body/Muscle Aches
5. Headache
6. Fatigue/Lethargy
7. Dizziness or nausea
8. Poor Appetite or Poor Feeding
9. Loss of Taste or Smell
10. Exposed, open skin lesions, or unexplained rashes
11. Thick, yellow, green, or bloody discharge from the nose, ears, or eyes, including pink eye.
12. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
13. Children with lice or nits (may not return until they have been treated/are nit free.)
14. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

Children who become ill during school will be separated in a comfortable and supervised area while parents are notified and arrangements are made for **immediate** pick up. If you are called to pick up your child due to illness, they may NOT return to school the following day, and may be required to stay home longer due to certain contagious illnesses. **Children must be symptom free and fever**

free without the use of over-the-counter medications for 36 hours before returning to school. A child placed on an antibiotic may NOT return to school until the child has been on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to their return.

Parents must notify the director in writing if your child is diagnosed (or has been exposed to) a contagious disease or illness. In some cases children who are out sick may be required to stay home longer than 2 days, additional testing may be required before they return, or a physician's note to return to school may be required before your child may return to the center.

- Any or all of the above symptoms, requirements for return or return dates will be defined at the discretion of the director.

Immunizations

The state of Florida requires that a current record of immunization be on file in the director office. A health exam by a physician, within one year prior to admission, is also required. Please schedule doctor appointments so that your child receives immunizations in the afternoon. Children occasionally get a fever and may not be in school with a fever. Parents are responsible for providing updated information to the director. **Children will be temporarily excluded from admission to the center if their immunizations are not current or if proper documentation is not on file in the director office prior to the first day of new classes or when the child's immunizations expire. There will be no grace period.**

Medication / Allergies

St. Paul's Children's Center does NOT dispense any regularly prescription medication, such as antibiotics except for prescribed diaper cream. This includes and is not limited to sunscreen or insect repellent; please apply these prior to arriving at school. All prescribed medications including Diaper Rash Cream require a completed "Medication Record and Parent Authorization" form, available from the director by request. Any medications which are approved to be given in our center (such as Diaper Cream or Epi-Pen) must have this completed Medication Record and Parent Authorization and the medicine must not be expired. Parents are responsible for checking expiration dates prior to providing the medication and staff will notify parents of any expired medicines.

Parents/ Guardians must provide written documentation from your child's pediatrician concerning any life-threatening allergies. It is important that we distinguish between sensitivities and allergies. Written documentation of known food allergies must be provided by your physician. Any child requiring a special diet must provide a copy of the physician's order, a copy of the diet, and a sample meal plan for the special diet as documentation in their student file. An allergy list is always posted in each classroom with the names of children and their known allergies.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency and/or accident, we will contact the parents of the child immediately. If we cannot reach the parents/guardians, and medical treatment is necessary, 911 will be called. 911 will be called for all extreme emergency care situations regardless of parental contact.

Parental permission for St. Paul's Children's Center to contact 911 and make any emergency medical decisions that may be deemed necessary is part of this agreement.

Accident / Incident Reports

As children grow and explore, falls and accidents do happen. According to Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Board Regulations, washing the affected area, applying a band aid, and / or using an ice pack are the only first aid procedures that St. Paul's Children's Center may administer. If an injury requires more attention, the child's parents will be notified immediately.

All notable accidents and incidents will be recorded on an Accident / Incident Report Form. The form must be signed by the attending staff member, and a parent/adult signature is required at pick up. One copy of the report will be kept on file at St. Paul's Children's Center and one copy will be given to the adult that picks up. Parents will be notified by the director of any injuries to the head.

Notification of Changes

Parents/ Guardians are required to notify St. Paul's Children's center in writing immediately of any changes in their home or employment phone numbers, new address, new place of work, etc. Emergency phone numbers are critically important. Two LOCAL emergency contacts must be listed on your Child Enrollment Record. They must be two separate people with two separate phone numbers and reside locally in our area. Only local addresses will be accepted.

We also ask that any changes in routines at home be communicated so that the staff will be prepared to assist each child with new emotions or behaviors that may result at school.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is the parent's responsibility and should begin in the home. We are happy to assist parents with the toilet training process in the classroom, when we observe the child showing developmental signs of readiness within the classroom setting. Official toilet training does not begin until EC₂, however, if a child turning two-years-old within an EC-1 classroom and signs of readiness occur within the classroom, EC-1 teachers will offer the use of the toilet when the child verbally requests the toilet. Pull-ups and underwear are not allowed in EC-1 unless a child turns two-years-old within the year of being in the EC-1 classroom and shows readiness signs for toilet training and meets the requirements for being fully toilet trained at home and accident free at home and school for two weeks. EC₂ has a Toilet Training Procedure that parents are expected to follow which will help support what your child is working on with you at home.

The following are the initial signs that your child is ready to begin the toilet training process that staff look for at the center to determine readiness for classroom toilet training:

- stays dry in between pull up changes
- Can verbalize to an adult when they are wet or have had a BM in their diaper/pull-up
- proactively verbally requests to use the toilet
- shows a consistent interest in the toileting process and is curious about the toilet

Parent / teacher communication is critical regarding toilet training. Please notify the EC2 teachers when you are beginning the toilet training process at home. EC-2 children that have begun the toilet training process at home will be offered and encouraged to use the toilet at least every two hours. Extra clothing, including underwear and shoes, should be kept in your child's cubby.

We reward children with stickers or other small treats for their toilet training progress at school. We encourage you to share what reward system you are using at home.

Children may not wear underwear to St. Paul's Children's Center until they are fully toilet trained at home and have been accident free at home and school for two weeks. "Pull-ups" provide a lightweight liner to maintain sanitary conditions in the classroom. If a child wearing underwear has an accident at St. Paul's Children's Center, they will be cleaned and put in a "pull-up". If a child wearing underwear has an accident two or more days in a row, they will be required to wear ONLY "pull-ups" to St. Paul's Children's Center for a designated time period. Children who are encouraged and allowed to toilet train when they show interest or are developmentally ready, ultimately complete the toilet training process with greater ease and are more successful. Pressure to toilet train before your child is ready, can have a negative effect on your child and may cause regression.

*Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever.
Psalm 118:1*

Placement and Transitions

The classroom placement of your child is based on the Pinellas County Licensing Requirements according to a child's age, emotional and physical development, and the availability of space in each classroom. Enrollment in St. Paul's Children's Center and classroom placement is for the "school year", August through the following July. As your child grows and matures; every effort will be made to move your child up, provided classroom space is available and they are developmentally ready.

Infants to One's

- Infants (2-12 months) will be placed in the infant room. Once a child turns one, they may transition to the one-year-old classroom provided all of the following criteria is met and a space in the One-Year-Old classroom is available:

1. They are 1 year of age
2. They are walking in shoes, are steady on their feet, and able to walk up and down the stairs with some assistance.
3. They have transitioned to 1 nap a day and are accustomed to the one-year-old room schedule.
4. They are drinking independently from a sippy cup. No bottles will be given after a child's first birthday in the infant room.

5. They are off baby food and able to feed themselves finger foods.
6. They can sleep on a cot.

One's to Two's

- EC2 is appropriate for mature two-year-olds and young three year olds who miss the September 1st cutoff date. One-year olds who turn 2 may transition to this classroom provided all the following criteria are met and space in the Two Year Old class is available:

1. They are ready to begin wearing pull ups. Only Velcro Pull-ups are worn in EC2.
2. They can drink from a straw cup (examples in Food/Nutrition Policy). Sippy Cups are not allowed.
3. They can independently feed themselves.
4. They demonstrate maturity to be in a larger classroom with more children.
5. They are ready for more structured learning activities.

Two's to EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School

- St. Paul Catholic School is a separate entity and will contact all families directly in regard to registering for the EC3 program.
- Registered and supporting parishioners and siblings receive priority.
- The child must turn three on or before September 1st to attend EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School.
- Must be toilet trained by June to attend EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School in August.
- Children will not be retained in the two's due to not being toilet trained. We will recommend parents seek out other schools that accept three-year-old children that are not toilet trained.

Discipline/ Expulsion Policy

St. Paul's Children's Center teaches life skills that will help your children manage and identify their emotions. While we must consistently enforce reasonable behavioral limitations, we are also sensitive to each child's ability to make positive behavior choices and to be responsible for their choices and actions.

St. Paul's Children's Center uses the "I Care Rules for Little Children" Philosophy:

1. We listen to each other.
2. Hands are for helping, not hurting.
3. We use "I care" language.
4. We care about each other's feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do

Licensing prohibits children from being subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Childcare personnel never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion.

Childcare personnel never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither threaten to withhold or withhold food as a form of discipline.

Reasons for expulsion, suspension, or dismissal:

Every effort will be made to prevent the expulsion or dismissal of children from our program. However, St. Paul Children's Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons, including, but not limited to:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees/tuition.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in our Parent Handbook.
- The parent/guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom and/or program. This includes but is not limited to: vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of child care licensing regulations.
- Failure of the child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time; the child may not be ready developmentally at this time.
- The child has needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- The child's behavior threatens the health & safety of him/herself, the other children or staff.
- Bullying or hurting other children or staff (pushing, kicking, punching, cursing, threatening others physically or with words etc.)
- Other – at the discretion of the Director

Steps taken prior to expulsion:

Positive Behavior intervention supports include:

- Screenings or Classroom/environment assessments
- Parents reaching out to inclusion specialists, specialized care teams, mental health consultants where available

Discipline/ Expulsion Policy (cont'd)

Proactive Actions that will be taken to prevent expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect the child from negative behavior
- Staff will teach the child appropriate skills to address challenging behaviors
- Staff will reassess the environment, activities, and supervisions
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will celebrate appropriate behaviors
- Staff will maintain strong connections with the child at all times
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- The Director will be consulted and may speak with the child
- Incident report is written and signed by parents/guardian
- Family will be notified of disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion
- Teachers will work with families to develop positive behavior support strategies for continuity between home and school.
- With parental consent, a specialized care team will be formed to address how to best support the child; through observations, accommodations, and, if necessary, outside agency referrals.

- If inappropriate behaviors persist the family may be called to pick up their child.
- If the behavior does not improve upon the child's return to the center, the child is suspended for a period up to 5 days with the possibility of termination

Communication: Fostering positive relationships with families

Our families...

- Partner with teachers; communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school.
- Understand and acknowledge that children are learning appropriate behavior skills and that we strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of all children.
- Know that to best serve children, parents may need to partner with local professionals to help give a child the best foundation for their social, emotional and academic success.

Transition to another provider

On the rare occasion it is agreed that our program can no longer meet the needs of a child, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Paul's Children's Center. The recommendation and decision of the Center is final. St. Paul's Children's Center is limited in its human capital resources and will make reasonable accommodations for learning differences when possible, however we cannot accommodate students who have extraordinary learning differences. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered reasonable, the student may need to be separated from St. Paul's Children's Center. This decision will be made for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting.

Biting Policy

St. Paul's Children's Center strives to maintain a safe environment for all children. On occasion, biting does happen. We understand that biting is developmentally appropriate for young children who are teething and/or do not yet have the verbal vocabulary to express their emotions. St. Paul's Children's Center maintains these guidelines when biting does occur:

1. Staff immediately addresses the child who bit and redirects the child to a safe place.
2. Staff addresses the needs of the child who was bitten. Wash affected area with soap and water and /or apply ice on injury.
3. Staff will discuss with both children that biting hurts and we use our teeth for food.
4. Allow each child to state their feelings. Discuss alternative behaviors rather than biting.
5. Staff will complete an incident /accident report for both the child who bit and for the child who was bitten.
6. If the skin of the child is broken, the parent will be notified by phone.

St. Paul's Children's Center believes parent /teacher communication and teamwork is best for your child. Staff will monitor all biting incidents for development of a pattern. When the following behaviors are noted, we will schedule a parent information conference to discuss alternative positive behavior reinforcement strategies.

1. When biting becomes a “first resort” behavior.
2. When a habit begins to form. (2 weeks of intermittent biting)
3. Biting more than once each day.

When a child uses biting behaviors more than once during a day, St. Paul’s Children’s Center will implement positive redirection strategies to help encourage positive choices. St. Paul’s Children’s Center staff will determine if it is in the child’s best interest to remain in their classroom. The child will visit the Director’s office. If a child uses biting behavior three times or more in one day, the parents will be notified for early pick up and the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. This is for the safety of the children in the classroom.

** Please communicate all major life changes and routine changes to St. Paul’s Children’s Center. Even the slightest change such as a parent being out of town for business, may affect your child’s behavior at school. **

*Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.
1Corinthians 10:31*

Volunteers

All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and are required to pass a background check, get fingerprinted, and complete Safe Environment, Blood Borne Pathogens and all required Pinellas County Licensing Board courses. Volunteers may not work more than 10 hours a month. Volunteers who are family members or friends of people who have children in the center are not allowed to volunteer in the same classroom with that child. It is up to the discretion of the director to place volunteers in classrooms based on the needs of the center. If you are interested or you would like additional information, please contact St. Paul’s Children’s Center at 727-822-3481, ext. 18.

Mandated Safe Environment Training

The US Council of Catholic Bishops met in Dallas in November of 2002, to deal directly with the topic of protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our communities. From this meeting, the Bishops issued The Charter for Protection of Children and Young People, which mandates training for individuals who come into contact with children and youth. This training helps individuals recognize, prevent, and report child abuse, including sexual abuse. Our Diocese has chosen to present the Girls and Boys Town Center for Adolescence and Family Spirituality program as a vehicle to deliver this training. Attendance at Safe Environment Training is mandated for anyone in ministry – priests, deacons, religious, educators, parents, volunteers, and church staff... anyone who will have a supervisory role with youth.

The Safe Environment curriculum at St. Paul's Children's Center is based on the standards and benchmarks of the programs in each classroom. In the Infants through EC2, classes are taught through developmentally appropriate whole-group lessons with the Director, and teachers.

Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Diocese of St. Petersburg policy, revised in light of the U.S. Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, is available on-line at www.dioceseofstpete.org

The Diocese of St. Petersburg Code of Conduct for those working with youth is also posted on-line for your reference. Copies may be obtained in St. Paul's Parish Office.

Child Abuse/ Department of Children and Families

The State of Florida requires all staff of any child care facility to be on the lookout for, and report any and all suspected cases of child abuse to the State of Florida. St. Paul's Children's Center staff members are mandated reporters and are obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse and / or neglect.

St. Paul's Children's Center will reasonably cooperate with regard to any investigation by the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") pertaining to allegations of child abuse. Since the school is on private property, DCF will be precluded from reasonable access to students at school unless consent of a parent or guardian is obtained. Absent such consent, the school will cooperate in allowing DCF to have access to students if DCF obtains, according to law, an appropriate court order or other legal authority, such as the presence of a police officer or deputy sheriff.

Safe Sleep Practices/ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy

All child care personnel, including substitutes and volunteers of St. Paul's Children's Center shall review the training regarding guidance on safe sleep practices, preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma, as well as take the DCF Safe Sleep Practices for Child Care course prior to working with any children in the center. Our goal is to maintain safer sleep environments and to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome/ AHT by taking proactive steps to reduce the risk of SIDS and prevent abuse in our infants and toddlers. To do so, St. Paul's Children's Center will implement the following guidelines:

Safe Sleep Practices

- Staff must follow all practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Only an individually-assigned safety-approved crib, with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used for infant napping or sleeping.
- Sitting devices such as car safety seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers, infant slings, and other sitting devices will not be used for sleep/rest time. Infants who fall asleep anywhere other than a crib, must be placed in the crib for the remainder of their sleep or rest time.

- Cribs must have tight fitted sheets/no excess bedding, including but not limited to bumper pads, mobiles, quilts, comforters, receiving blankets, pillows, & loveys/stuffed animals.
- Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep unless otherwise recommended by the infant's health care provider. Any child requiring alternate sleep position shall provide documentation/physician's authorization for alternate rest/sleep position and/or swaddling.
- Sleep sacks fit according to manufacturer's recommendations, do not restrict infant's arms, and will not slide up around the infant's face may be used for comfort of the sleeping infant.
- Cribs/ resting/sleeping bedding used must be placed a minimum of 18 inches away from window blinds, draperies or any other window treatment/cover for strangulation hazard.
- Sleeping infants shall have supervised rest/sleep period. Caregivers position to hear /see infants, and shall physically check on infants during rest or sleep and shall remain in close proximity to infants to hear/see them during rest/sleep or when they awaken.
- Lighting in room must allow caregiver to see each infant's face, to view the color of infant's skin, and to check on the infant's breathing and placement of the pacifier (if used).
- Music may be played softly for a quiet restful time; equipment such as sound machine, extremely loud music, or any items that may interfere with ability to see/hear a child who may be distressed, is prohibited.
- All staff should follow steps to keep infants from overheating by regulating room temperature, no excess bedding, and no over-dressing or over-wrapping infants. Infants should be dressed appropriately for the environment, no more than one (1) layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable. Caregivers will conduct physical checks to ensure infant is not overheated/ chilled.
- Room temperature will be kept no less than 68°F and no more than 85°F.
- Infants' heads and face will not be covered during sleep.
- To promote healthy development, infants who are awake will be given supervised "tummy time" for exercise and for play.

Safe Sleep Practices/ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy

Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma/ AHT)

Caregivers can prevent AHT by following these steps:

- Understand infants' crying is worse in first few months of life; will get better as child grows.
- Try calming a crying baby by rocking gently, offering a pacifier, singing/ talking softly, or taking a walk with a stroller.
- If infant won't stop crying, check for signs of illness, notify parents if child is sick.
- If you are getting upset, focus on calming yourself down. Put the baby in a safe place (with another caregiver or in the child's crib), walk away to calm down, checking on the baby every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Ask another caregiver to help support the child in need and remove yourself from the situation if necessary or take a break.
- Never leave a child or infant alone in a classroom or without supervision, and never leave a child or infant with a person who is easily irritated, has a temper, or a history of violence.

If you are an observer of another caregiver in distress follow these steps:

- Be aware of new caregivers or parents who may need your help or support.
- Let others know dealing with a crying baby can be frustrating, infant crying is normal and it will get better. Encourage parents and caregivers to take a calming break if needed.
- Be sensitive and supportive in situations when others are dealing with a crying baby.

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma/ AHT)

A child who has been shaken may have:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| -Lethargy | -Seizures |
| -Irritability | -Difficulty Breathing |
| -Vomiting | -Blue Color due to Lack of Oxygen |
| -Poor sucking or swallowing | -Altered Consciousness |
| -Decreased appetite | -Unequal Pupil Size |
| -Lack of smiling or vocalizing | -Inability to Lift Head |
| -Rigidity | -Inability to Focus Eyes/Track Movement |

Strategies for Coping with Crying, Fussing, or Distraught Children

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest or tummy
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller
- Turn on music or white noise
- All Caregivers are trained to call for help if they are ever feeling overly stressed in a situation with an infant or child
- Caregivers will also provide support to other caregivers and to parents/guardians who are trying to calm a crying child and encourage others to take a calming break

Safe Sleep Practices/ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy

Prohibited Behaviors

- Shaking or jerking a child
- Tossing a child into the air or into crib, chair or car seat
- Pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture
- Any use of corporal punishment/including, but not limited to:
 - Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing, or biting;
 - Demanding excessive physical exercise, excessive rest, or strenuous or bizarre postures
 - Compelling a child to eat or have in his/her mouth soap, food, spices, or foreign substances;
 - Exposing a child to extreme temperature
 - Rough or harsh handling of children including but not limited to:

- Lifting or jerking by one or both arms; pushing; forcing or restricting movement
- Lifting, moving by grasping clothing; covering a child's head
- Isolating a child in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area, or any other area where the child cannot be seen or supervised;
- Binding, tying or restricting movement, or taping the mouth
- Using or withholding food or beverages as punishment
- Toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
- Any form of emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, isolating or corrupting a child
- Any abuse or maltreatment of a child
- Abusive, profane, or sarcastic language or verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks in front of the child or about the child or child's family;
- Placing a child in a crib/portable crib for a time-out or for disciplinary reasons.

Reporting Child Abuse to Department of Children and Families

- The State of Florida requires all staff of any child care facility to be on the lookout for, and report any and all suspected cases of child abuse to the State of Florida (Including abuse such as Shaken Baby Syndrome/ AHT).
- St. Paul's Children's Center staff members are mandated reporters and are obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse and / or neglect to their Director or other designated supervisor immediately.

Universal Precautions

To comply with federal law attempting to control the spread of disease by exposure to blood and other bodily fluids, the staff, faculty, and students receive training on a yearly basis in the use of those health practices of good hygiene and protection that significantly reduce or eliminate the exposure to blood borne pathogens. These practices are called "universal precautions."

Emergency Procedures

St. Paul's Children's Center will work closely with St. Paul Catholic School and the Diocese of St. Petersburg to determine any emergency closing procedures and communicate any changes to parents/ guardians.

If St. Paul's Children's Center experiences extreme weather conditions or power failure, we will contact all parents via email or their cell phones immediately for early pick up. We cannot operate if conditions do not comply with Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations.

Pre-Hurricane Procedures

St. Paul Children's Center will follow the decision of the Diocese of St. Petersburg in regards to school closings in preparation for a hurricane.

Post-Hurricane Procedures

St. Paul Children's Center will assess our situation and make a decision by 3:00 p.m. for the following day.

Parents will be notified of any emergency closings of our center via email or by direct phone call or text from the director's personal cell phone.

Emergency Drills

St. Paul's Children's Center conducts monthly emergency drills with our staff and students using our written plan of Emergency Procedures. The specific drills practiced are:

Fire Drills:

Students are taught where and how to exit the building in case of fire. For fire drill or fire emergencies, the fire alarm will signal to evacuate the building. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

Inclement Weather/ Off-Site Emergency Drills:

For Inclement Weather Drills including Tornados/ Tropical Storms/ Hurricanes and other serious Inclement Weather OR Off-Site Emergency Drills such as Toxic Fumes, Bomb Threats, and Chemical Evacuations; Students are taught to exit the classrooms to the designated meeting spot. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

Lockdown / Lock-in (Shelter in Place) Drills:

Students are taught procedures for taking shelter in the building in the event of a potentially dangerous person, active shooter or weapon on campus. Students are taught the procedures for modified lockdown in the event of a dangerous situation or person in close proximity to the school. Teachers regularly instruct students and practice drills regarding specific procedures for what to do or where to go in the event that we would evacuate the building.

NOTE: St. Paul's Children's Center may not let anyone, including parents/ guardians, in or out of the building during a lockdown, lock-in drill OR any true emergency event.

***St. Paul's Children's Center's Universal Safety Precautions including all Emergency Planning and Response Manual is available for review in the Director office by request.**

Right to Amend

St. Paul's Children's reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via e-mail communication.

In Closing

The staff at St. Paul's Children's Center is looking forward to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where learning and fun go hand in hand!



Parent Handbook and Policies Acknowledgment Form

All parents/ guardians are required to review and return a signed copy of this form.

1. I/We agree that my child's health records are shared with St. Paul's Children's Center teachers and staff, as applicable to my child's involvement in the program.
2. I/We understand that the notarized Emergency Medical Release, which includes any allergies my child may have, would be shared with emergency medical personnel in the event of an accident or health concern related to my child and we give permission to consult child's physician/health resource in case of emergency if parent/guardian cannot be reached.
3. I/We understand that while we do not accept Religious Exemptions with regards to immunizations, an enrolled child may be under immunized if we have a doctor's note confirming their pending appointment.
4. I/We agree to provide all instructions from my child's medical professionals for any special health needs such as allergies, chronic illness (e.g. asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
5. I/We consent to visibly posting my child's food allergy information, his/her medical plan (steps the physician has outlined in the event of a reaction), to ensure that all staff are aware of his/her special needs.
6. I/We agree to notify the center in writing upon any change to the family's address, phone or email contacts.
7. I/We have read "The Flu, A Guide for Parents" brochure (included in Registration Forms and posted on our website).
8. I/We have received a copy of the center's Discipline/Expulsion Policy. (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
9. I/We have read and understand the center's Safe Sleep Practices /Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy. (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
10. I/We have read and understand the center's Harassment Policy. (Located in Parent Handbook posted on website).
11. I/We have received and read a copy of the center's Food and Nutrition Policy, which addresses food safety, food allergens, and appropriate nutritional guidelines for preschoolers with regards to lunch and snack requirements (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
12. I/ We understand that twice a year in September and April, we will receive a copy of & will be required to sign an acknowledgement form for the "Getting In/ Getting Out" Flyer developed by the Prevention Unit of the Office of Family and Community Services.

I/We have read the 2022-2023 Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines of the St. Paul's Children's Center Policies and Procedures as stated.

SIGNATURES REQUIRED – BOTH PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____