



OUR BLESSINGS EARLY LEARNING CENTER
A KINDERGARTEN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

EST . 2005

PROVERBS
22:6

PARENT HANDBOOK

295 EAST PALMER MILL ROAD
MONTICELLO, FL 32344
&
2007 APALACHEE PARKWAY
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301

PROGRAM FEATURES :

- ✓ Developmentally appropriate curriculum
- ✓ Play-based learning
- ✓ Outdoor play

CONTACT INFO

☎ 850-997-1110 / 850-402-3022

🌐 www.ourblessingselc.org



OUR BLESSINGS EARLY LEARNING CENTER





"A Kindergarten Preparatory School"



SHAMEKA GEATHERS

Shameka “Ms. Shekki” Geathers has been an integral part of Our Blessings Early Learning Center for “20 incredible years”. As the Director of our Monticello location, she is more than a leader—she is the heart of the community. Known for her warm smile and boundless energy, Ms. Shekki has touched the lives of countless children and families through her dedication, love, and expertise in early childhood education.

A phenomenal teacher at her core, she has a unique ability to connect with children, inspiring them to learn and grow while fostering an environment of joy, safety, and creativity. Over the years, Ms. Shekki has earned a reputation as a “**staple in the Monticello community**” known for her compassion, tireless work ethic, and genuine commitment to the success of every child in her care.

Her contributions to Our Blessings Early Learning Center are immeasurable, and we are blessed to have her as part of our family. Ms. Shekki, a shining example of what it means to lead with love and purpose! ❤️



Hi,
I'M CHRIS

ABOUT ME

CHRISTOPHER JACKSON IS A DEDICATED AND PASSIONATE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR, HAVING DEVOTED OVER A DECADE TO NURTURING YOUNG MINDS. HIS DYNAMIC AND ENGAGING APPROACH TO EDUCATION SHOWS HIS LOVE FOR TEACHING AND INSPIRING CHILDREN. CHRISTOPHER RECENTLY ACCOMPLISHED A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN HIS ACADEMIC JOURNEY, GRADUATING FROM FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY WITH A FOCUS IN RELIGION. THIS DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND ALLOWS HIM TO BRING A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE AND GLOBAL AWARENESS TO THE CLASSROOM.

EVER THE ENTHUSIAST FOR PERSONAL GROWTH, CHRISTOPHER IS PURSUING A DEGREE IN SPORTS MEDICINE, FURTHER EXPANDING HIS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL SET. THIS ENDEAVOR SHOWCASES HIS COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND HIS DESIRE TO INTEGRATE HEALTH AND WELLNESS INTO THE LIVES OF HIS STUDENTS.

ONE OF CHRISTOPHER'S MOST DISTINGUISHING QUALITIES IS THE YOUTH AND VITALITY HE BRINGS TO HIS CLASSROOM. HIS INFECTIOUS ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FOSTERS CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY, AND JOY. CHRISTOPHER'S ABILITY TO CONNECT WITH HIS STUDENTS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL ALLOWS HIM TO UNDERSTAND THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND PROVIDE TAILORED SUPPORT TO HELP THEM THRIVE ACADEMICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

THROUGH HIS UNWAVERING DEDICATION AND GENUINE PASSION, CHRISTOPHER JACKSON HAS MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS CHILDREN. AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR, HE STRIVES TO INSTILL A LOVE FOR LEARNING, INSPIRE YOUNG MINDS, AND PREPARE HIS STUDENTS FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE.

AMAYA JACKSON



"Opening books, unlocking worlds—
one page at a time."

ABOUT ME

Amaya Lindsey serves as the Center Manager and Parent Onboarding Specialist at Our Blessings Early Learning Center Too. Known for her warm and loving personality, she is not only a dedicated team member but also a proud parent with her child enrolled at the center. Amaya is passionate about introducing fun and engaging activities to the students, who love and enjoy her creative approach. In addition to her work, she is currently pursuing a degree in cybersecurity. Her favorite color is green, reflecting her bright and refreshing energy.

CONTACT ME



Info@ourblessingselc.org



850-402-3022

WHAT I LOVE



Reading



Travel



Tech

TIM JACKSON



STREAMER:
HE'S ALSO A TWITCH STREAMER
([HTTPS://TWITCH.TV/PYSTL](https://twitch.tv/pystl))
WITH A SPONSORSHIP FROM
"DUBBY."

MY FAVORITES

His hobbies include traveling and photography, showcasing his creativity and love for exploring new experiences.

ABOUT ME

Timothy Jackson is an incredible multi-talented individual. While his passion is technology—serving as the IT Specialist for all locations—he's also a fun and engaging educator!



PHONE:

850-402-3022

EMAIL

info@ourblessingelc.org

EST. 2005

HOURS

OF OPERATION

Monday - Thursday

7a-6p

Friday 7a-5p

**THE CUT-OFF TIME (WITHOUT A DR'S
NOTE) IS 9A**

WITH A DRS NOTE: 12 NOON

**NO CHILD WILL BE ADMITTED AFTER THE
SCHEDULED CUT OFF TIME UNLESS
ACCOMPANIED BY A PHYSICIAN'S NOTE**

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide love, education, and top-notch care to young children, offering them the essential groundwork to become successful and productive adults. We are dedicated not only to serving the children but also to supporting the families and communities we are a part of. Our primary objective is to educate the children through enjoyable, stimulating, and enriching activities while maintaining our partnership with the local health department to promote healthy children and, consequently, healthier communities.

We understand the significance of family engagement, and thus, we not only encourage it but also expect it! We firmly believe in supporting families' economic self-sufficiency, fostering a nurturing environment where everyone can thrive.



INCLUSION POLICY

At Our Blessings we are committed to ensuring that no child is left behind, we make every reasonable effort to enroll all students regardless of ability, additional support needs, finances, family structure, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference.

We are steadfast in our belief to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences that allow each child the ability to fully participate according to their capabilities.

At Our Blessings, we are not just an educational facility, but we consider ourselves to be an extension of the home; we are a team dedicated to making sure the needs of each child are met.

We pledge to make adjustments and alterations as necessary according to the needs of the students. We welcome therapists and other educational professionals appointed to assist in the care and education of the student. Although set schedules are essential for the development of the children, we realize that not one size fits all, and therefore, we will adjust the schedules to accommodate the visits of therapists and others aiding the child in their quest for developmental excellence.

At Our Blessings, we cherish the belief that our differences are what make each individual truly unique. As a result, we collaborate closely with families and other early care professionals involved in a child's development to provide the necessary support for every child to reach their level of excellence.

Our commitment to privacy is unwavering at Our Blessings.

Each educator has willingly signed a state-mandated confidentiality statement, affirming their dedication to maintaining confidentiality. According to this pledge, they are prohibited from discussing or disclosing any information regarding the care or condition of any child to unauthorized individuals. Failure to adhere to this signed agreement may lead to immediate termination. However, it is crucial to note that our dedication to the well-being of the child is paramount. If we have reason to suspect any form of abuse or neglect, we are obliged by the State of Florida to promptly report our concerns to the appropriate authorities.

PROGRAM

PHILOSOPHY



Our Blessings” is founded on the Word of God. We are here to work in conjunction with parents/guardians in fulfilling God’s ultimate purpose of preparing children to enter into His spiritual family and to respond to Him with respect and obedience. Here at “Our Blessings,” our little ones hold a significant position. It is imperative that our little ones feel comfortable and secure about going to school. That is why we strive to make learning “fun!” Our program offers a delightful learning experience for your (our) little one (s) in a safe, loving, and stimulating environment. The foundation of our program is coagulated by love and respect, for it is the core substance for which we are solidified.

Activities are designed to meet the spiritual, academic, and social needs of our little ones. Our staff is comprised of loving, experienced educators who are dedicated to caring for your child. It is our every intention to give your child (our little ones) the very most exceptional care imaginable, and it is our prayer that each day at our center is an enjoyable one.

Our Educational Philosophy is incorporated throughout the day in ways that include our daily class prayer, reciting our grace, using our manners, and most importantly, treating each other with respect. We are believers that everyone regardless of age or ability deserves respect.

Our program is designed to provide a delightful learning experience for your child. Playtime is a vital part of our program. We have opportunities for independent play as well as group and teacher-led play activities. Weather permitting; we will have daily outside activities as well, sometimes we move our entire classroom outdoors! Our little ones will realize that learning is so much fun!!

Our lesson plans are developmentally appropriate and designed with the individual needs of the student when necessary. Our environment is both stimulating and safe. It is no secret that the most significant growth comes when a child feels safe and secure. We use more than one curriculum because we understand that not one program will accommodate the needs of all students all the time. However, our curriculum is fun, and engaging but also challenges the students through an array of teacher and child-led activities.

Here at Our Blessings, we understand the importance and significance of play and how children are learning while engaged in what some perceive as just play. On any given day you will see students building bridges, others painting masterpieces, and some assuming the role of an archeologist, this is what fostering a child's development and learning looks like.

Play offers more than cherished memories of growing up; it allows children to develop creativity and imagination while developing physical, cognitive, and emotional strengths. Play protects children's emotional development; a loss of free time in combination with a hurried lifestyle can be a source of stress, and anxiety and may even contribute to depression for many children.

(Milteer, Ginsburg & Mulligan. 2012).

Here, our days are built around play and its importance. If you look around, you will see captions throughout the center detailing just what the student is learning in that particular area of play.

We are believers that to educate, WE must first be taught. Therefore, our teaching staff is guided by this philosophy and completes several hours of professional development yearly.

In our classrooms we harvest diversity, and embrace individualism knowing and teaching children that our differences are what makes us unique. What a lackluster world this would be if each of us looked and acted alike.

We understand that each child thinks and learns differently, each one (sometimes) marching to a beat all their own. With that in mind, our assessment tool is geared towards the individual child. Our documentation and student checkpoints are used to create individualized activities to help the child developmentally. It is elements such as these that hone in on our philosophy.

We believe that communication between educators, parents, caregivers, and other professionals with a vested interest in the child is essential to their development, so we strive to keep the doors of communication open. We are a team striving for the same goal: the best academic and developmental outcome the child can achieve. So, we not only encourage parent participation we require it. For the student to reach his/her best it will take the full and committed efforts of all entrusted individuals. (Suspended

Educational

Philosophy

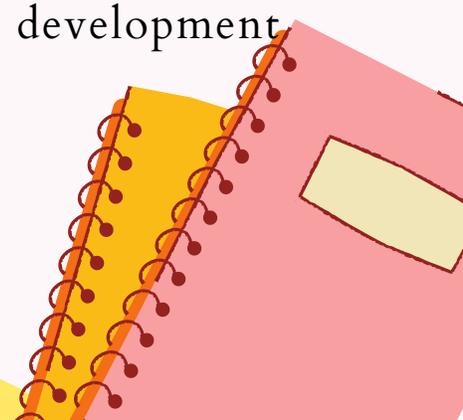


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Getting Started Right

Here at “Our Blessings,” our little ones hold a very important position. It is imperative that our little ones feel comfortable and secure about going to school. That is why we strive to make learning “fun!” Our program offers a delightful learning experience for your (our) little one (s) in a safe, loving, and stimulating environment. Activities are designed to meet the spiritual, academic, and social needs of our little ones. Our staff is comprised of loving, experienced educators who are dedicated to caring for your child. It is our every intention to give your child (our little ones) the very finest care imaginable and it is our prayer that each day at our center is an enjoyable one.



First Day of School

Everyone knows that the first day of school brings mixed emotions for both parents and children. Some children are so excited they can hardly wait for school to start. However, for others, there is some apprehension and anxiety. But the good news is that

most children will adjust rather quickly to the idea of “school.” Therefore, we ask that when you accompany your child to the classroom, you make your departure as quick as possible (especially if your child has difficulty separating from you). A big hug and a kiss and (cheerfully) telling them; “I’ll pick you up when school is over!” will be much easier for you and your child as opposed to the prolonged and tearful exit. But remember, you are welcome to call at any time to check on your child and put your mind at ease! **(Due to COVID we are not allowing parents or visitors inside)**

CLASS TIME



Our program is designed to provide a delightful learning experience for your child. Through learning and play activities we strive to meet the spiritual, educational, social, and emotional needs of our students. Playtime is a very important part of our program. We have opportunities for independent play as well as group play activities. Weather permitting; we will have daily outside activities as well. Our little ones will realize that learning is so much fun!!

Play, protects children's emotional development, a loss of free time in combination with a hurried lifestyle can be a source of stress, and anxiety and may even contribute to depression for many children.

(www.aap.org)



CURRICULUM

We will begin each part of our “educational time” with Bible time. Our little ones will learn the importance of

● Christian character and just how important it is to have a spiritual foundation. The Bible stories they learn will

help them in every aspect of their developmental process. This is where the Bible stories will “come to

life.” Aside from the Bible time, we will have daily activities in Arts and Crafts, Literature, Music, and

● Games. As well as alphabet recognition, learning numbers, counting, writing, and cutting skills are all

part of our curriculum.

Our little ones will learn to listen and follow directions,

as well as to share and play nicely with each other.



FINANCES\$

It is imperative that all payments are made on time. We recommend that you not send your payment via your child or in their bag. **All payments should be received in the office by the 1st day of each month.** A late payment fee of \$50.00 will be charged if payments are received after this date. A returned check charge will be assessed each time a check is returned for insufficient funds. The fee will be \$40.00. If the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday, then tuition is due the business day before. For your convenience, we accept cash, checks, money orders, credit cards, and online payments. Your tuition (or parent fee) is calculated “monthly.” If your child attends for 1 day, or the entire month, you are responsible for the entire monthly fee.

This is done to guarantee a spot for your child.

A \$10.00 per minute per child late fee will be assessed for each minute past the closing time for that day and for those exceeding their weekly hours.

This fee will need to be paid **PRIOR** to your child returning to school.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

"OUR BLESSINGS"
RETAINS THE RIGHT TO
MAKE CHANGES,
AMENDMENTS, AND
CORRECTIONS TO THE
RULES AND POLICIES OF
THE CENTER AT ANY
TIME, WITH OR
WITHOUT PRIOR
NOTICE.

FULL/PART TIME

Whether self-pay or receiving subsidized care, ALL families must adhere to the rules or be subject to late fees. Full-time care shall not exceed 40 hours per week and part-time care shall not exceed 25 hours per week.



SIGNING IN AND OUT



Upon enrollment, each parent will receive an email with a link to finish the enrollment process, you will use this to clock your child in and out using either your cellphone or by using a PIN. You will also have the ability to add and remove people you authorize to pick your child up.

If you choose to call the center with the name of the person picking your child(ren) up, please take note: that person will need to provide a legal form of identification, which **MUST** match the name given to us by the parent/guardian. Please note; that children will **NOT** be released to **ANY** individual who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired.





Reporting Abuse

The legislation, signed by Gov. Rick Scott in 2012, requires any individual who suspects that a child has been abused by any person, must report that to the Florida Abuse Hotline. As providers of children, we are mandated by the State of Florida to report any suspected abuse and or neglect.

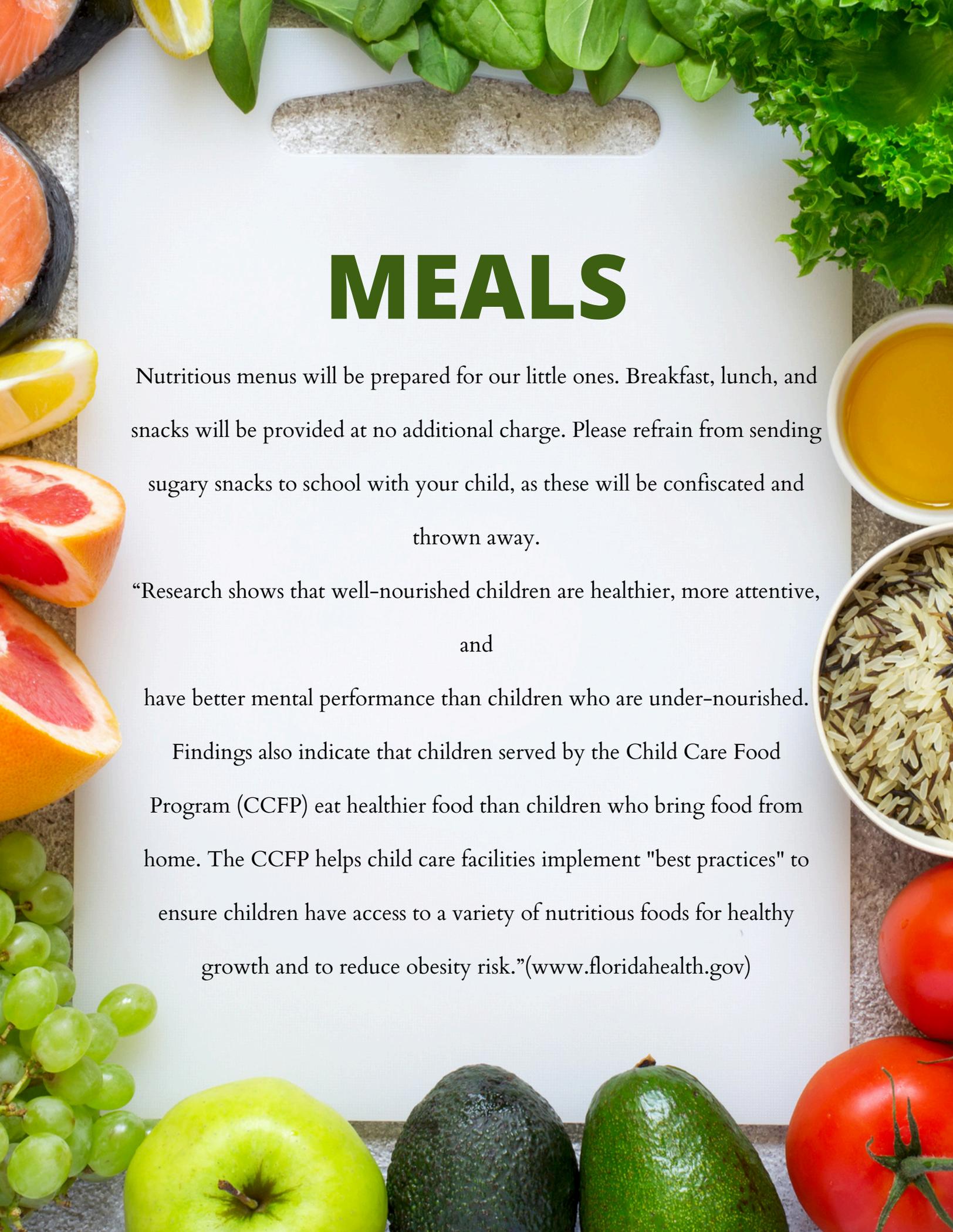




Non-Discrimination Policy

“Our Blessings” admits students of any race, color, disability, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally afforded or made available to students at the center.





MEALS

Nutritious menus will be prepared for our little ones. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks will be provided at no additional charge. Please refrain from sending sugary snacks to school with your child, as these will be confiscated and thrown away.

“Research shows that well-nourished children are healthier, more attentive, and have better mental performance than children who are under-nourished.

Findings also indicate that children served by the Child Care Food Program (CCFP) eat healthier food than children who bring food from home. The CCFP helps child care facilities implement "best practices" to ensure children have access to a variety of nutritious foods for healthy growth and to reduce obesity risk.”(www.floridahealth.gov)



Technology & Communication

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recognizes that high-quality interactive media can have educational benefits for children improving “social skills, language skills, and even school readiness”

(<http://www.childcareexchange.com/using-technology-appropriately-in-the-preschool-classroom/>)

Our children have access to different forms of technology, which include computers, iPad, and television; however, none of them occur on a regular or prolonged basis.



WE COMMUNICATE WITH OUR FAMILIES IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. WE HAVE A PARENT COMMUNICATION APP. WE ALSO SEND OUT EMAIL BLASTS SO PLEASE MAKE SURE WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS ON FILE. ALSO, MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS ARE SENT OUT. WE BELIEVE IN KEEPING YOU ABREAST OF ALL THAT IS GOING ON HERE AT THE SCHOOL.

DISCIPLINE & DISENROLLMENT



Our goal at “Our Blessings” is to help our little ones learn and obey school rules and their teachers/instructors with a right and respectful attitude and to show kindness and respect for and to others and their property. By doing this, we are first teaching them to obey God and to develop appropriate relationships with others. We want to teach the children to listen carefully, follow directions, work quietly without disturbing others, show kindness with words and actions, and to respect the property of others, and work and play safely. During the first few weeks of school, the teachers/instructors will spend time teaching good classroom habits and the importance of getting along with others. Consequences may include time out, missing a fun activity, losing rewards, a note or phone call to parents or being sent to the office or home. Children who repeatedly display actions of disrespect and those who deliberately and intentionally inflict pain on others will be suspended for a maximum of three (3) days. If the behavior continues, we will have no other option but to dis-enroll the student.

***Please note, State Law Prohibits children from being subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, toileting, spanking, or any other form of physical punishment. Active play, both indoor and outdoor, must not be completely withheld from children who misbehave.**

POLICY EXCEPTIONS

SCHOOL RECORDS/ PARENT INVOLVEMENT



POLICY EXCEPTIONS AND SCHOOL RECORDS

On very rare occasions, exceptions to a policy may be made when circumstances warrant it in the view of the administration. An exception made for one on any policy is not an exception for any other on that policy. All decisions regarding policies and changes are made by the Director and or COO and are final. All records for students are under the control of the Director. All student records are available for inspection by legal parent/guardian, State, or your funding agency. No student's records will be made available to any third party without the authorization of both the legal parent/guardian and the Director of "Our Blessings."

VISITORS, PARENT INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING

We ask that all parents visiting please limit the length of their visit so as not to disrupt the class routine. We do, however, encourage you to volunteer and be as active as you possibly can with our "family". ***UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE OF COVID-WE HAVE SUSPENDED VISITORS, VOLUNTEERING, AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT. WE WILL NOTIFY YOU ONCE IT HAS BEEN RE-INSTATED***



The most likely events that result in possible unscheduled school closings in our area are due to potentially dangerous weather conditions. Our first means of communication is via our Parent App, which is why it is imperative that you maintain a working phone. We will (if applicable) notify various media outlets in the Tallahassee area which make such announcements; however, we have no control over how long it may take them to publicly announce our closing. Announcements and communications will be made via our Parent App.





HEALTH & IMMUNIZATIONS

“Our Blessings” maintains a healthy environment. A teacher/instructor or administrative official who reasonably suspects that a student or employee has a communicable disease shall immediately notify the Director.

Any student or employee with a communicable disease for which immunization is required by law or is available shall be temporarily excluded from the center until completely treated. If the nature of the disease and circumstances warrant, “Our Blessings” may require an independent physician’s examination of the individual in question to verify the diagnosis of the communicable disease. “Our Blessings” reserves the right to make all final decisions necessary to control the spread of communicable diseases within the center. Children displaying symptoms of illness must immediately (As Soon As Possible) be picked up from school. Children **MUST** be symptom-free without the use of medications for a period of at least twenty-four (24) hours before s/he can return to school. To help put this in perspective, consider this: sick children attending class, will make other students sick, and the teachers. When the students return home, they pass the germs to their parents and siblings. Now the parents are sick, or the siblings are sick, either way, the parents must stay home from work to care for their child because of the inconsiderate behavior of the parent who intentionally sent their child to school sick. Unfortunately it is not enough to tell us your child is “teething.” This may very well be true, however, without a doctor’s note which clearly details the symptoms your child is displaying are directly caused by teething, s/he will **HAVE TO STAY HOME** until well.

HELPFUL INFO



State law requires that parents provide us with updated immunization and physical records. Although we try our best to remind you when the record on file is about to expire, it is **NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY**. Please keep up with when your child needs to return for his/her immunizations.



If your child is sent home with diarrhea, vomiting and/or fever, they must remain home for at minimum 48 hours and can only return if symptom free for 24 hours **WITHOUT** the use of medication



We will only administer prescription medications with the name of your child and directions of use clearly labeled.

Parties, Trips, Conferences & Attire

PARTIES

Here at "Our Blessings" we absolutely love parties. We will have parties for all different types of occasions including birthdays. You are welcome to come and encouraged to send treats on the birthday of your child. (Due to COVID, parents/visitors are not permitted to attend our in-school parties. We will notify you once this has been re-instated) We ask that if you are having a private party for your child and send invitations you send one to each child. Our little ones have very tender hearts, and they can easily be broken if s/he does not receive an invitation. Therefore, we will not distribute any invitations unless there are enough for all the children in the center.

TRIPS

Whenever we plan a trip, we encourage the parents to attend as it promises to be a learning and fun experience for all. We must have a signed permission form on file for every student who wishes to participate in the field trips. The "Permission for Participation and Release and Indemnity Agreement" form must be filled out and signed and on file before a student will be permitted to participate in any field trip. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS FOR THIS REQUIREMENT

CONFERENCES

If you choose to have a conference with either the Director or your child's teacher, please schedule your conference at least 24 hours prior to your visit.

ATTIRE

We are requesting that you send a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing to be kept at school for emergencies. Please label each item and enclose them in a large zip-lock bag. All clothing needs to be labeled (jackets, sweaters, hats, etc.). We cannot be responsible for lost clothing. Students need to be dressed comfortably and appropriately for outdoor playtime. Please do not send your child to school in fashionable or dressy (expensive) clothing that may restrict or hinder him/her from having an enjoyable outdoor play experience. Shoes/sandals must have straps on the back. Flip flops are a hazard and are NOT permissible in school.



Emergencies

Emergency Policies and Procedures:

Smoke alarms will be tested monthly and fire extinguishers will be available and checked accordingly by the Fire Department.

* * *

OUR PLEDGE:

We will keep a first aid kit on the premises.

We will adopt and practice a “buddy system” in the facility.

Ensure that all staff are knowledgeable in how to work the fire extinguishers, and shut off gas lines, (if applicable).

Ensure that staff is aware of the exit paths from the building to the designated meeting place.

Provide the address and location of the designated meeting place and make all parents aware of this location (via “Parent Handbook”).

All staff will know the location of the fire extinguishers.

All staff will know the method of evacuation for children who are physically incapable of walking out of the building.

Provide designated duties for each staff member.

Have a process identifying visitors. (Not applicable due to COVID)

Inform parents/guardians on how to obtain a copy of our Emergency Procedures which are notated in our Parent Handbook.



Emergencies

STAFF DUTIES:

- * A specific noise or signal to attract immediate attention.
- * Collecting and escorting children from the building to the designated meeting place.
- * Checking all restrooms, behind doors, or any place where a child might hide when frightened.
- * Conducting a headcount to determine whether all children and staff members are present.
- * Calling 911 from the nearest telephone.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

A list of emergency telephone numbers will be posted beside the main telephone including: The name, address, and phone number of our facility.

The name and telephone number of the emergency backup person to contact in case the Director/Supervisor is suddenly injured or incapacitated.

Poison Control

Local Police Department

The nearest hospital and “Life Flight”

Emergency #911

Emergencies

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide us with up-to-date emergency information and telephone numbers.

Update the list of authorized persons to collect your child regularly and in the case of an emergency.

Provide current and working telephone numbers (home, work, cell) of authorized persons

Relationship of the authorized person to the child
/parent/ guardian.



OPEN DOOR POLICY

At Our Blessings Early Learning Center, parents have access to their child both in person and by telephone during the normal business hours of the center, when their child is in our care.

Helping you reduce the risk of sleep-related death

"The safest place for an infant to sleep is alone in a crib, in the parents' room for the first year of life."
-American Academy of Pediatrics

Some parents believe sleeping with their baby will protect the baby from harm, but **sleeping with a baby is dangerous and actually raises the risk of infant death.**

Important Information

Consider these facts before you decide where your baby will sleep:

- Suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed is the leading cause of injury-related death for infants under one year of age in the state of Florida. The risk of sleeping-related infant death is 40 times higher for babies who sleep in adult beds compared to babies who sleep in their own cribs.



Keep your baby safe during sleep.

To lower the risk of sleep-related death and suffocation and keep your baby safe while they sleep, it is important to:

- Make sure baby's crib, bassinet, cradle, or portable crib is undamaged and meets current standards (www.cpsc.gov).
- Put baby's crib, cradle, or bassinet close to your bed for their first year of life.
- Place your baby face-up to sleep. Sleeping on the stomach or side increases the risk of suffocation.
- Tell everyone who takes care of your baby how to keep your baby safe during sleep.
- Make sure the baby's mattress is firm, flat (not inclined), and fits snugly in its frame. Use only the mattress that comes with the crib.
- Make sure the baby's sheet fits tightly around the mattress.
- Keep the baby's sleeping area away from all loose strings (e.g., blind cords, electrical cords, and clothing).
- Respond to your baby's cries during the night.
- Avoid exposing your baby to smoke, alcohol, or drugs.
- Offer your baby a pacifier (never a bottle) when placing your baby down to sleep. The pacifier should not be put back if it is spit out during sleep. If the baby does not want the pacifier, do not force it and never hold it in place. If breastfeeding, do not use a pacifier until the baby is one month old. To keep baby from overheating, make the temperature in baby's room comfortable enough for a lightly clothed adult. Always hold the bottle when feeding your baby, since propping a bottle can lead to choking or death. Hang the baby's mobile out of reach and remove it once they learn to sit up.
- Lower the baby's mattress when your baby learns to sit, and again when they learn to stand to prevent falling out of the crib.

Remember:

It is NOT safe

to put anything your baby's bed, such as sheepskins, stuffed animals, baby positioners, crib wedges, comforters, pillows, heavy blankets, or bumper pads.

It is NOT safe

to smoke around your baby or in a room where your baby spends time.

It is NOT safe

to let your baby sleep on an adult bed, air mattress, beanbag, reclining chair, sofa, waterbed, or on any furniture not made for babies.

Sleeping
with your
baby is
dangerous.

Even if your baby is breastfed and you don't smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs or other medications, **sleeping with your baby still increases your baby's risk of suffocation or strangulation** while sleeping.

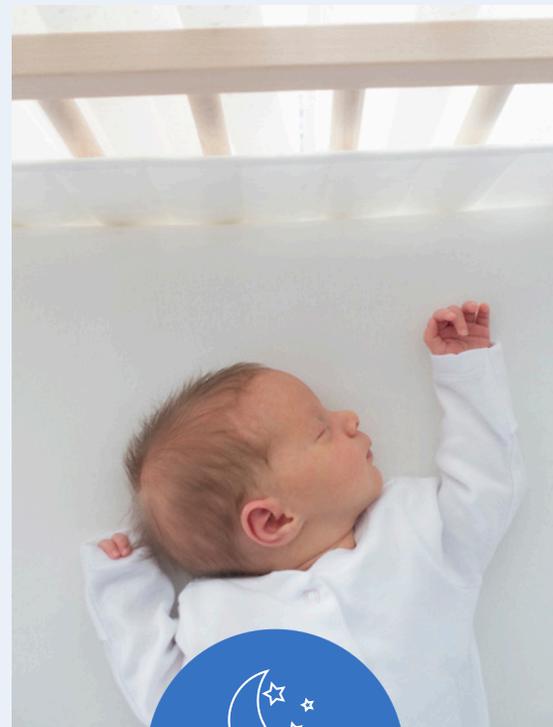
The only way to protect your baby from higher risk is to have your baby sleep in a crib.



For more information about safe sleep for babies, **visit PreventChildAbuseFL.org** or **scan the QR code.**



Fall 2022



SAFE SLEEP
FOR YOUR BABY

PreventChildAbuseFL.org

What is the influenza (flu) virus?

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

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

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



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

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

THE FLU

A Guide for Parents



What should I do if my child gets sick?

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

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

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

How can I protect my child from the flu?

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



What can I do to prevent the spread of germs?

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

To prevent the spread of germs:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Cover mouth/nose during coughs and



sneezes. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

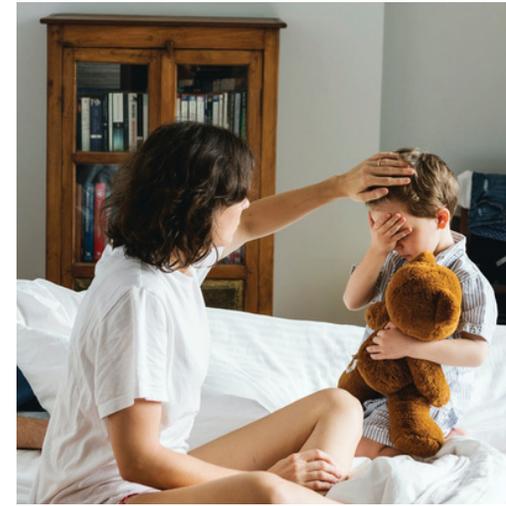
- Limit contact with people who show signs of illness.
- Keep hands away from the face. Germs are often

spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



When should my child stay home from child care?

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



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

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

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



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





Distraction Prevention Tips:

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

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



Facts About Heatstroke:



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



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



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



EVACUATION LOCATION

IN CASE OF FIRE, AND OR AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION OUR
DESIGNATED MEETING PLACE WILL BE:

ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE (Monticello) SCHOOL

&

IN FRONT OF HOLIDAY INN (Tallahassee) SCHOOL.



Thank You **For Choosing Us!**

We sincerely thank you for choosing Our Blessings Early Learning Center, a Kindergarten Preparatory School, to partner with you in your child's educational journey. Your trust and support mean the world to us, and we are honored to play a role in shaping your little one's future.

Together, we are building a foundation of love, learning, and growth that will last a lifetime. Thank you for being a part of our family—we couldn't do this without you! ❤️

With gratitude,

Tomica King-Jackson
TOMICA KING-JACKSON

Founder