



Parent Handbook

1010 Lake Miriam Dr.
Lakeland, Florida 33813
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Dear Families,

Welcome to Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool (PCH Preschool). We are so excited and honored that you have chosen us to care for your little one/s. We want to assure you that it is our mission to provide a quality, nurturing environment where young minds, bodies and spirits can grow to their fullest potential. PCH has great plans for the present and the future, and we pray that you choose to join us on our journey. Our center has been open since November 26, 2007 and serves children ages 6 weeks to 5 years of age with plans to add a school-age program during the summer. Enclosed in this packet you will find the necessary documents for enrollment. Please be sure to complete each form completely and return them along with your enrollment fee as soon as possible so we can reserve a spot for your child..

Julie Laursen, Director
Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool

Mission Statement

Precious Children in the Highlands is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands. We are here to serve the needs of the community by providing a high quality early childhood educational program. Our faith-based curriculum will provide spiritual, physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth opportunities for young children. Our professional educators are committed to nurturing each child with the love and attention modeled to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our passion is to collaborate with our community, families and staff in order to provide today's children with the educational environment they need to become successful citizens of tomorrow.

Purpose

Our purpose is to provide quality childcare to the surrounding community, meeting the needs of families with children who have varying abilities and backgrounds. We celebrate the diversity that each child and family brings to the program by incorporating multicultural education into the curriculum. Our teachers work diligently to provide an inclusion rich environment and offers indoor and outdoor learning spaces with special attention and accommodations for children with special needs. In addition, we foster this by working with specialists who provide speech therapy and early intervention practices for children ages 0 - 5 years. Qualified early childhood educators implement the Voluntary Pre Kindergarten Program (VPK) to prepare children for school readiness according to the Florida School Readiness Performance Standards. We are proud to serve the community of south Lakeland.

Program and Curriculum

Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool is supported and overseen by the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands and is licensed through the State of Florida's Department of Children and Families. We hold contracts with Arbor Early Learning for VPK and School Readiness.

Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool uses the *Wee Learn* Curriculum along with other research based and developmentally appropriate resources as a foundation for the program and daily lessons. *Wee Learn* is both Faith Based and approved by the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County.

Wee Learn is framed by theory and philosophy of life. Led by faith and grounded in evidence-based practices, programs using the *Wee Learn* philosophy and curriculum work to support children and families. Children's individual differences and learning styles are considered as they learn through play and interactions with supportive early childhood teachers to maximize each child's learning potential.

Open Door Policy

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit and observe the classroom at anytime. Please check in with the director or person in charge, and sign in the visitor's log before entering a classroom. Please be respectful of the children and teachers so class time is not disrupted.

Days and Hours of Operation

We are open Monday - Friday from 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Holiday Calendar

The Preschool will be closed on the following dates:

- Thanksgiving Nov. 27, 2008
- Day after Thanksgiving Nov. 28, 2008
- Christmas Week Dec. 24 - Jan. 1, 2009
- Martin Luther King Day Jan. 19, 2009
- Good Friday April 10, 2009
- Memorial Day May 25, 2009
- Independence Day - Week June 29 - July 3, 2009
- Labor Day Sept. 7, 2009
- Thanksgiving Nov. 26, 2009
- Day after Thanksgiving Nov. 27, 2009
- Christmas Week Dec. 24 - Jan. 1, 2010

***Regular weekly/monthly tuition rates apply during weeks with holidays. These are much needed days off so our teachers can spend time with their families and return refreshed to care for your children.**

****See VPK calendar for additional days off for VPK programs.**

Tuition Rates and Fees

Age-Group	Monthly	Weekly	Part-Time/ Per-Day
6 wks. - 12 mths.	\$645.00	\$155.00	\$35.00
1 year-olds	\$604.00	\$145.00	\$32.00
2 year-olds	\$562.00	\$135.00	\$30.00
3 year-olds	\$520.00	\$125.00	\$28.00
4 year-olds	\$520.00	\$125.00	\$28.00
VPK	No Charge - Funded by the State of Florida		
VPK Before/After		\$75.00	\$15.00

There is a \$75.00 non-refundable registration fee for the 2008/2009 school year.

The non-refundable registration fee and the first week or months tuition are due at the time of registration.

Due to the structure of our program and capacity/ratio regulations there are no credits or allowances for sick days, missed days or vacation. If you choose to pay monthly you will be paying the equivalent of 50 weeks per year. Fees will not be pro-rated during off weeks or holidays. These are much needed paid days off for our staff.

Weekly tuition is due the Friday prior to the week being paid for. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged if the payment is received after 6:00 p.m. on Monday of the week of care.

Monthly tuition is due on the 1st. of each month. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to each day thereafter. If tuition is not paid by the 5th of the month, your child will not be allowed to return until the full payment is made.

An additional fee of \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter will be added for late pick up.

A \$25.00 "non-sufficient" fund fee will be charged for a returned check.

All payments are non-refundable

A two-week notice is requested if you wish to withdraw your child from the program. If you wish to re-enroll at a later date, a new registration fee will be due at the time of re-registration

Arrival and Departure

Parents/Guardians, please accompany your child to their classroom in the morning and sign your name and the time of arrival in the appropriate sign-in book. We appreciate your communication of anything that may be helpful to the teachers for the day; such as, how your child slept the night before, any family news that may cause emotions for your child, etc.

Children must be signed out with the signature of the parent/guardian or authorized adult picking them up and the time of departure. Authorized adults are indicated on the enrollment application. To authorize additional individuals on a one time or emergency basis, you must provide a written and signed note. A photo ID will be required at the time of pick-up.

Security/Access Control

Our preschool building is kept locked at all times and secured by an access control system. The system is a safe and efficient way for our staff and families to enter the facility. The system includes a keypad and buzzer/intercom system for entry. Each family has an assigned PIN/code that allows access into the building during normal business hours. Visitors use the buzzer and intercom that is monitored by staff and are escorted through the facility according to the reason for their visit. Our staff is diligent about checking the ID of anyone whom they are unfamiliar with and appreciate your patience in this important safety procedure.

Food

Infants:

Each child must have enough bottles and food each day to sustain them. Each bottle, container and utensil must be non-breakable and labeled. If powdered formula is used, please bring the bottles filled with a pre-measured amount of water along with the powdered formula and directions for mixing. Bottles will be heated using warm water and never microwaved. Baby food and cereal will be fed to your child according to your instructions. Your child's teacher will work closely with you to adhere to your desired eating routines for your child.

Bottles will not be propped nor will infants be put to bed with a bottle.

Toddlers - Preschool:

A morning and afternoon snack will be provided. Parents are welcome to assist with donations of snack items. Please see the director for appropriate snack items. There is a snack menu posted in the hallway and each classroom.

Lunch is to be brought each day in a labeled, insulated container.

- All containers must be non-breakable and labeled with your child's name.
- Please pack a nutritious lunch and see your child's teacher or the director if you need some creative ideas for lunch items.
- Please pack a nutritious drink (no soda) and necessary utensils for your child to eat their meal.
- Please send in food that does not need to be warmed or refrigerated. You can purchase mini-coolers and ice packs to keep your child's food fresh. If you wish for your child to have warm food for lunch, please send preheated food in a thermal container.
- **Pizza along with a fruit or vegetable side item can be purchased on Friday's for \$3.00 for two's - preschool.**

Forgotten food items:

Occasionally parents forget to bring in a lunch or food items for their baby or preschooler. We strive to ensure that appropriate food items are available at our center so your child does not have to go without and if possible, the parents are not inconvenienced. In the case that we provide a lunch for your child, we will add a \$5.00 charge to your account unless other arrangements have been made with the director or your child's teacher.

Lunch Ideas for Toddlers

Ideas we have found the Toddlers really like:
(Cut all food into cubed size pieces)

Fresh or frozen veggies cooked till tender (cubed)

Broccoli	Green Beans
Cauliflower	Potatoes
Carrots	Sweet Potatoes
Peas	Avocado
Lima Beans & Corn	Mixed Veggies

Pasta

Grilled Cheese (cubed)

Pita

Tortilla

Crackers- goldfish, chez its, pretzels

Fruit fresh or Frozen (cubed)

Berries	Fruit Cocktail
Watermelon	Peaches
Cantaloupe	Pears
Pineapple	Prunes
Oranges	Apples

Cheeses (cubed)

Yogurt

Cottage Cheese

Soft meat (cubed)

Ham

Chicken

Peanut butter (thinly spread)

Tuna/fish

Turkey

Dress

Parents are encouraged to have their children wear clothes that are comfortable and washable. Our curriculum involves an outdoor program and "messy play." While our teachers attempt to protect their clothes during arts, crafts and fluid play, sometimes children have accidents. We must have a change of clothes or two for your child. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for laundering. Please remember to keep the change of clothing appropriate for the season.

Please have your child wear sturdy and comfortable shoes. Open-toed shoes are not recommended.

Toys/Items from Home

Please have your child keep their personal toys at home to avoid any lost or broken toys, or difficulty sharing of a beloved item. There will be special occasions for "show and tell."

If your child has a stuffed toy, blanket or other security item, s/he will be allowed to have it during rest time. The item will be stored in the child's "cubbie" during the rest of the day.

Rest Time

There will be a rest time scheduled after lunch for all children. Parents/Guardians need to furnish a mat and blanket for their child. The blankets will be sent home on Friday for laundering.

Discipline Policy

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

Custodial parents

We are committed to protecting all children in our care. If the child does not live with both natural parents, evidence of custody must be presented. A copy of the court ordered custody must be presented. A copy of the court ordered custody decree will be maintained in the child's file.

Incident Reports

In the event an incident of any significance occurs at school (social or medical), a written report will be filled out and will need to be signed by the parent/guardian. The incident report will contain specifics about what occurred and what actions were taken. It will be completed by the witnessing staff member and will need to be signed by the parent. A copy of the report will be kept on file in the preschool office.

Inclement Weather

Safety for the children and staff will be our first consideration when deciding on school closure. If the Polk County schools are closed, our school will also be closed.

Emergency Procedures

Monthly fire drills will be held according to licensing guidelines. See emergency/disaster plan for detailed information regarding other emergency situations.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

All childcare personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with section 39.201 of the Florida Statutes.

Health Requirements and Immunizations

By state law, all students must have a current certificate of immunization, DH form 680 (blue card) and a current student health examination form (yellow card). Both of these forms are available from your pediatrician, family doctor, or the local county health department. They are familiar with

these forms and are aware parents must provide them to their childcare provider.

Health and Safety

Every effort will be made to maintain a safe and healthy environment for your child. Strict diapering and hand-washing procedures will be followed.

Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep and no bottles, pillows or stuffed toys will be allowed in the cribs.

Please indicate any allergies your child may have on the enrollment application. Confidential allergy charts will be kept in the classrooms to notify staff of any allergy or medical conditions your child may have.

Illness

To minimize any spreading of disease between children and for the health of the children and staff, parents must keep their child home when s/he shows symptoms of infection or illness. Please use the following as a guide to whether your child should stay home:

- A fever of over 100 within the past 24 hours
- Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears, profuse colored nasal discharge
- A communicable disease

Children who show the above signs or symptoms or otherwise become ill while at school will be kept in the preschool office until the parent is contacted and comes to pick the child up. Parents will be expected to pick up their child immediately after being notified.

Parents must keep a current medical release form on file for their child. In case of an emergency, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest health care facility. Parents will assume financial responsibility for all medical transportation and treatment.

Children must be free of abnormal temperatures for a minimum of 24 hours and show no signs of illness when returning to school.

We will notify you if your child is exposed to a communicable or infectious disease while in school. We must be contacted when your child is exposed to a communicable or infectious disease outside of school.

Medication

We recommend that parents administer any needed medications to their child either before or after care. If medications are absolutely necessary, please discuss with the director. It is our policy to prohibit the administration of any medication unless specifically labeled as a prescription with doctor's name, child's name and dosage procedures. State licensing regulations require that parents must sign a medicine authorization from each day given.

Supplies Need for the Infant Room

Diapers (average 4-5 a day)

Wipes

Formula (powdered or liquid is ok)

Bottles (please pre fill with water(if powder is used) or breast milk if used to assure accurate measurements)

Small Blanket

2 Changes of Clothes

Plastic Feeder Bib

Crib Sheet

Baby Food

Spoon

Items Needed for Tot Room

Plastic feeder bib

Packed Lunch/ Drinks in sippy cups preferred

Mat for Naptime

2 changes of clothes

Diapers (average 4-5 a day)

Wipes

Small Blanket

Items Needed for Twos/Threes Room

Packed Lunch(we encourage children to drink from a open cup) Several

Changes of Clothes

Plastic Bib(optional)

Mat for Naptime

Small Blanket

2 Changes of clothes

Items Needed For Potty Training

Several changes of clothes and underwear

I have read and understand the Parent Handbook for Precious Children in the Highlands Preschool.

_____Date_____

Please sign and return to the preschool office for your child's file.

Thank You