

# Learning in the Shadow of the Steeple

## **WELCOME**

The Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church. Established in 1979 as an early education outreach to children with special need of support, PCPC Preschool still strives to serve every child with excellence.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool supports the learning, social, relational and spiritual needs of children in a Christian part day inclusive early childhood education program. Typically developing children play and learn with developmentally challenged children in a family mirroring the family of God. Employing the highest standards of quality and best practices, PCPC Preschool seeks to model a joyful and playful learning community for all enrolled children.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Monday through Friday 8:30am -12:30pm. Hours may be adjusted for safety during the pandemic.

## **ADMISSIONS AND TUITION**

Admissions begin in early 2021 for the next academic year. Offers are made to families by email. Please [click here](#) to view the 2020-2021 fees.

## **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool is a Reggio Emilia inspired school. We seek to model in our own cultural milieu the unique global contribution of the schools of Reggio Emilia Italy. What is the Reggio Emilia philosophy? Post World War II families and the community of Reggio Emilia, Italy emerged from destruction to reimagine a healthy community rooted in education. They imagined a school grounded in community support which challenged existing ideas of education and which especially supported critical thinking.

Some of the elements of the model which we incorporate are the following eight fundamentals of the Reggio Emilia way:

### **1. The Competence of the Child**

At Palma Ceia we assume competence as the children are active participants in their classroom and learning. Their creativity, confidence, intelligence and energy are celebrated, supported and scaffolded.

### **2. The Environment as the Third Teacher**

Classrooms, the atelier (our art studio), and the outside areas are designed to invite play and exploration. We have designed beautiful learning environments marked by the distinctive use of light, intentional and homelike furnishings, materials displayed for child usage, natural and organic toys, loose parts, light tables and art materials of all kinds. Children are encouraged to move throughout the space, exploring and constructing.

### **3. The Hundred Languages of Children**

One of the formative documents of the Reggio movement is the poem, The Hundred Languages of Children, by Loris Malaguzzi. Simply, the poem makes a case for understanding the many modalities of children's learning and expression. Words provide an essential way to understand the world, but expression takes many modes. The central role of art at PCPC is not to "make or reproduce" a model, but as one of the "hundred languages."

#### **4. The Role of the Teacher**

A teacher listens, observes, documents and supports children's learning. Teachers take on the disposition of researchers and co-learners with children. Teachers scaffold children's knowledge by noting their current level of knowledge and helping them to reach the next level by facilitating new skills, adding resources which they can utilize, facilitating social learning, and arranging new challenges. Teachers plan "invitations" and "provocations" using their expertise. They plan and invite children into explorations of different concepts and ideas. Thus, the teacher bridges the child's current understanding and available knowledge and skills with new learning.

#### **5. Documentation**

Teachers seek to "make learning visible" by documenting and displaying all phases of children's learning. Documentation serves as a way for families to be involved in children's learning, as well as allowing teachers and children to reflect and build on learning and growth. It shows respect for children's learning. Documentation is a research model that serves to provide a fuller and more complete picture of learning, unlike a test.

#### **6. Family Involvement**

Family involvement is critical to the successful support of children in school. Families are experts in their own areas, and a school's hospitality to them expands the possibilities for learning. They are their children's first and lifelong teachers.

#### **7. Emergent Curriculum**

Emergent curriculum stems from the observed interests and curiosities of the children as well as from the ideas of the teachers in their day to day experiences with the children. Children's learning is most vigorous when it is play based and of interest to them and when their teacher infuses academic content into the projects and explorations of the children. Projects can be in-depth study of concepts and ideas generated from the children's interests and can last as short as a few days or up to an entire year.

#### **8. Real Life Experiences**

To the extent possible, real life experiences and materials are provided for children, utilizing all of the senses. The development of the whole child is emphasized.

While our practices are derived from the Reggio Emilia model, we are blessed to have an abundance of curricular influences. We have an integrated school-wide curriculum that employs the Creative Curriculum Teaching Strategies and Teaching Strategies Gold. This curriculum is used as a resource and as an important tool for embedded, play-based assessment.

PCPC Preschool is an arts suffused preschool. We are blessed to have the Joseph P. McKell Arts Endowment, which provides a robust environment of music, movement, yoga, performance and visual arts. We have a teacher dedicated to the coordination of the arts offerings here. We have an atelier, or art studio, which is a space that allows for ongoing projects and experimentation with paint, clay, found materials, and loose parts. Movement, music, dance and yoga are incorporated in our classrooms and in our outdoor play. During this time of the pandemic, the arts teacher cannot move between classrooms, nor can children use the atelier, due to CDC guidelines.

We utilize a developmentally appropriate handwriting curriculum, Handwriting Without Tears, developed by Occupational Therapists. You can learn more about it by clicking [here](#).

Our spiritual development curriculum is called Godly Play. The Godly Play approach teaches classical Christian language in a way that enhances the child's authentic experience of God. You can learn more about Godly Play by clicking [here](#). During this time of the pandemic, children will not be able to travel to the dedicated Godly Play room.

We are a Positive Behavior Support school. Through our partnership with the University of South Florida, we utilize the Pyramid Model, school wide rules, and a teaching, rather than punishing, disciplinary model.

Please [click here](#) to see our school calendar.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

We welcome you to reach out to us for further information regarding our preschool.

Nancy Little, Director: [nancy@palmaceia.org](mailto:nancy@palmaceia.org)

Rev. Meghann Pabst, Assistant Director, Director Elect and Chaplain: [meg@palmaceia.org](mailto:meg@palmaceia.org)

For general questions, contact our administrative assistant either at [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org) or by phone at 813-251-6492.

## GENERAL POLICIES

The preschool staff and committee intend for our daily operations to reflect our care and concern for each child and family. Parents are encouraged to visit our classrooms at any time, by contacting an administrator for guidance. Typically, there are parent volunteer opportunities both formal and informal throughout the year, and the preschool enjoys a high level of parent involvement. **Many of these opportunities have been suspended due to COVID, and will be reimplemented as soon as we safely can.** You will have an opportunity to sign up for these opportunities, and if you have talents we may not know about, we would welcome an offer. Parent engagement greatly enriches our program. Two conference days are available for individual conferences, but others can be scheduled with very little notice, by asking the teacher or an administrator. Parent input throughout the year is encouraged.

Staff has been trained to follow our program policies, and we have found that adherence to them is critical to the health, safety, and effective administration of our program. Teaching staff do not have the authority to change policies due to family input, or to selectively adhere to policies.

At Palma Ceia Presbyterian, the partnership between families and the school is paramount. The accomplishment of our mission can only be based upon the positive and constructive cooperation of both parties. If a situation arises in which the Director concludes that actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive and constructive working relationship impossible, or that such a situation interferes with the needs of other students, administrators, teachers, or other parents, thus impeding the ability of PCPC to accomplish its mission, the school reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. Both parents will be asked to sign an agreement indicating support of these policies. Please have all alternate caregivers read as well. Any concerns may be relayed to the director verbally or in writing.

Continued enrollment at PCPC is contingent on the staff's agreement that enrollment is productive for both the child and the group as a whole. Staff may request, and parents must provide and release assessments and evaluations of their children as needed to ensure our ability to make this determination and to provide or refer to appropriate services. If enrollment in another community agency seems more appropriate, staff will assist families in transition.

A current preschool directory including names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be distributed electronically during the first week of school, and may not be reproduced or circulated for use outside of the purpose for which it is intended, which is to allow families to connect with one another.

While this handbook is intended to cover many of the circumstances surrounding the operation of the school, it must be understood that it cannot cover all possibilities or situations arising during the school's operations. **During this time of the pandemic, all policies and practices remain fluid.** Discretion regarding operation must finally rest on the staff, committee, and the church which have final responsibility for the school. There will be changing factors that

will determine whether practices are continued or altered, therefore, while everything in this book is assumed to be true and correct at the time of this writing, no guarantee and no promise is made as to its future application.

### **Closing of School**

If, by 7:00 AM, the director has determined that the preschool cannot be sufficiently staffed in accordance with Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing standards, the preschool will be closed for that day. Every attempt will be made to contact families via email to inform them of the school's closure. If you have other childcare arrangements for arrival and dismissal times, it is the families' responsibility to notify alternate caregivers of the school's closure.

### **Orientation Procedures**

Staff work with parents in a very individualized way to help children become acclimated to the program. Families may come on a tour, during which policies, philosophy, and daily program are discussed. Families with children on the waiting list should access the website and read the posted handbook before scheduling a tour. This will allow them to familiarize themselves with preschool policies. Ordinarily, families are requested to come on a tour before the admissions cycle begins in January. A preschool tour completes your waitlist application. During this period of the pandemic, in person group tours are suspended, and other arrangements will be made by emailing [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org). If a space is offered, families will then have the information needed to make a timely decision, and will have 48 hours to accept a position. Tours are generally scheduled on a monthly basis and dates are posted on the website. When group tours resume, to reserve a space on a tour, please check the website ([pcpcpreschool.org](http://pcpcpreschool.org)) for tour dates and email the preschool at [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org) for a tour reservation.

Family drop-in days are held for children and parents before school starts. During this time, drop in days will be handled by appointment so that the child, parent and teacher can have a relaxed time together.

Attachment is important, and a church preschool has a special responsibility to model holy attachment. Working with families, for example, we may decide on a shorter day for a child for a while, and a child may need to work up to a full day. We often call families on the first few days to give a status report, and they are welcome to call us. Children who are sad are comforted, and made to feel that their emotional needs are understood and accepted. Soon enough, we will find things in the classroom that interest them, and they will make friends. If any child is not making a good adjustment, you can be sure that you will be notified, so that we can discuss it, and make plans to support your child.

### **Communication With Parents**

The following are some of the ways staff and parents may communicate at PCPC:

- Maintenance of preschool website.
- Parent orientation by clergy and preschool administration, which this year will be virtual.
- Family interest survey.
- Request for and use of family pictures, including homes, pets etc.
- Regular school wide electronic newsletter.
- Parent handbook.
- Pre-conference issue surveys.
- Parent-teacher conferences scheduled twice a year.
- Conferences scheduled at the request of families or teachers.
- Teacher availability at drop-off and pick-up to briefly exchange information.
- Ongoing assessment of child progress.
- Communication on topics or changes related to preschool.
- Communication to families on topics related to child development.
- Daily communication boards outside of all classrooms.
- Opportunities for parents to offer feedback.
- Daily schedules posted.

- Administrator availability at arrival and dismissal.
- Articles in the church newsletter and speaking engagements at church and community events.
- Multiple parent involvement opportunities.
- Support for family and religious culture.
- Display of children's work.
- Parent informational events.
- Invited parent participation on the preschool committee, end of year party committees, and volunteer coordinator.
- Reports of accidental injuries.
- Email notes from administrators and staff.

Church policy requires that all physical space in the preschool, including bulletin boards, walls and countertops are to be used only for the bulletins and notices relative to activities of Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church and which have been cleared with the program staff. Examples of requests to post information that are not permitted include but are not limited to: advertisements for businesses, solicitation for participation or contributions for other organizations, schedules or invitations for various community programs, and advertisements for child care.

### **Church Governance**

The preschool is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church. Oversight of the preschool is by a sessional committee that governs its policy and direction. Decisions concerning its operation are at the discretion of the director. The preschool derives its support from the tuition paid by parents, estimated to cover about 1/3 of the costs, "in kind" support of the church, and generous gifts from donors. The committee hopes this outreach can continue to benefit both the children we serve and the community at large, serving as a model of a compassionate church school community.

## **DAILY PROCEDURES**

### **1. Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

According to law, children must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon dismissal by their teachers. Children and families should wear a mask during sign in, and the same person or persons should be the consistent person to drop off the child. Upon arrival and sign-in, parents must separate at a place specified in communication shortly before school starts. This means that the classroom teacher assumes responsibility for the child and parents depart at that time.

Arrival time for children will be designated by a communication shortly before school starts. Arrival times may be staggered. Because of the pandemic, arrival times must be honored exactly, and if children arrive at a different time must remain in their cars to see if a staff person can safely escort them to class. This may not always be possible, so parents should plan accordingly.

Parents should move on quickly to their cars and depart so that others can access the preschool.

### **Dismissal Procedures:**

Your child will be picked up from the place and at the time. specified shortly before the beginning of school. No child will be released to a person not authorized by their parent to pick the child up. Please notify the staff, preferably in writing, if your child is to be picked up by another person. If the person who comes for your child is not well known to us, we will ask for a driver's license. If identification is not conclusive, we will not release your child.

Occasionally, parents will ask us to deny the other parent access to a child. We can do this only if we have a court order to that effect. Otherwise, we cannot legally keep a child from a parent. **PCPC preschool will not serve as a custody exchange site for any enrolled child.**

**All children are to be picked up by the close of school.** School is over at that time and staff has other obligations. If an emergency keeps you from picking up your child on time, please call and explain provisions made for your child. At 12:30 PM, you will be called, as well as any emergency numbers you have given us. Late charges are as follows: \$20.00 for every 5 minutes over 12:35 PM. Please do not ask if late charges apply to you. If you are late, they do apply. If children are not picked up after a reasonable time, and staff must go, the Department of Children and Family Services or the police department will be called.

Arrival and dismissal are not times when parents and teachers can have a conference. The reason for this is that the teacher is still required to provide sight and sound supervision for all the children in her care. She cannot do that while paying extended attention to a verbal exchange. A **brief** exchange of information is appropriate, but please respect the teacher's need for ongoing supervision of the class. Problem solving is best left to a conference, which can be scheduled with very little notice, so that classroom coverage can be arranged.

If you hope to pick your child up at a time other than the designated pickup time, this may not be possible. Therefore please schedule appointments and lessons after school or keep your child at home. **After children have been dismissed from the classroom, they must remain under the sight and sound supervision of their parent. They are not allowed to be out of the sight of parents.**

Under the **most** extreme conditions, we may dismiss your child through the Fellowship Hall at the church.

Parking is limited, and dropping off children quickly will allow others to use the space. We know that parking is a challenge, but we have no way of changing the available parking and law enforcement may issue tickets to those parked illegally. Parking signs on the streets surrounding the church are enforced. Please read the signs to see the exact wording.

When we have the information in advance, we will try to warn you via email of upcoming events impacting parking. **Parents are responsible for the careful supervision of children while at the church. Please do not permit children to walk in the parking lot or street without holding hands.** Because we are right next to Plant High School, and because there are many church and community activities here during the day, there can be a lot of traffic. Not all drivers in the vicinity use appropriate speed or safety, and children can be difficult to see. The church and school continue to try a variety of strategies, but caution is merited.

We have fewer than fifty parking spaces, three of which are reserved for handicapped parking. This leaves about 35 spaces for the Preschool and Church staff which on an average day can total over 40. We must ask you not to park in areas that are not designated as parking spaces (i.e. next to the flowerbeds, in the entryways, etc) since this can further restrict flow and presents additional dangers for the children.

We will not allow anyone under 18 to drop off or pick up a child. Supervision must go from parent or other adult designate to the teacher.

## **2. Separation Issues**

Often a child cries and clings when a parent or caregiver says goodbye. This is normal, and your child is demonstrating the strong bond between the two of you. Crying at the moment of separation does not indicate poor adjustment or a dislike of school, and may come and go. If your child is unhappy at school, we will tell you, and work together to strategize how to help. At PCPC Preschool, concern for the emotional well being of our children is paramount. During adjustment, we will work with you on a plan to best support your child as he or she begins school. We may recommend shorter days to start with. After your child has adjusted, if he or she cries or balks at separation, the best thing you can do is to calmly express positive expectations, such as "you will find some fun things to do". Our

experienced teachers will take your child, acknowledge their feelings, direct their attention to something interesting, and then it will be time to say goodbye, tell your child when you will pick them up, i.e. “Mommy or Daddy will see you after snack”, and turn and leave. We will let your child know we see that they feel sad, we are sorry, but that Mommy or Daddy always comes back. We will acknowledge his or her feelings and comfort your child. A ritual is valuable, but prolonged or changing rituals can be hard on children. Most often, children will settle down and become engaged very quickly, but if not, you can be sure that we will let you know. You are always welcome to call us during the morning for an update.

During this period of enhanced health precautions, it is of paramount importance that you rehearse with your child what to do. Close contact with teachers, such as carrying, hugging, etc, is discouraged under the guidelines, so it is very important to let your child know that you will be parting at a certain point.

During arrival, teachers will do a cursory health check. Your child’s temperature will be taken. If your child has not slept well, if they have had a “boo-boo”, please tell the teacher briefly about it. A child who has a temperature of over 100.4, or has any symptoms such as cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms associated with COVID-19 will not be admitted. You will be asked to agree to certain questions on entry each day. Teachers are required to follow program policies concerning health and exclusion from preschool. ***Please do not attempt to bring a child who is ill, or to come to school if you are ill.*** If you need clarification, call before bringing the child to school and check. Health policies will be updated frequently in the fluid COVID-19 reopening plan addendum.

### **3. Confidentiality**

Children’s diagnoses and conditions are confidential. This includes your observations while at preschool. Please be sensitive about discussing these in front of the children and their parents. We are open with the children about things they notice, giving them sensitive words to use. We may say: “You’re right, that is harder for her”. Or, “He needs that wheelchair to get from place to place.” No confidential information will be released without a signed consent form, or under legally defined conditions.

Media images taken at our school and/or events, if they include children other than your own, should not be sent electronically or posted on any social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., without the permission of the parent. Please be considerate of other families when posting pictures or comments on social media. In order to protect the privacy of Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool, children, families and staff, parents and staff cannot share, distribute, or post images of others via telephone, email, online social networking or other websites without prior consent of the Preschool Director.

### **4. Clothing**

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes, which are free of complicated fastenings, and comfortable, **closed toed**, rubber soled shoes, which allow for running, jumping, climbing and all physical activities. Injuries and accidents such as stubbed toes and twisted ankles can occur if children wear sandals. If children come to school with open toed shoes, their outside activities will be limited to chalk or water play. Please do not send children to preschool dressed in distracting or inappropriate clothing or accessories. Examples include but are not limited to: cheerleader and football player uniforms, pajamas, any sort of costumes, tutus or dance costumes, capes, hats or caps, watches, jewelry, boots, umbrellas, sunglasses, shoes that light up, and unneeded hair accessories. Because according to CDC guidelines, children will be outside more time as a way to stay safer, and because it is so hot in Florida, there will constantly be water play (such as spray bottles, running water, etc.) available. Since close contact is not allowed, shoes that can get wet and dry off are paramount. The brands Natives or Crocs are those types of shoes, but others are available. Clothing that is cool and dries quickly would be a support to us as we have children outside and try to keep them cool in the Florida weather.

Messy activities are part of any good child development program, and clothes will at some point, probably become soiled. We will try to minimize this by using smocks, but you should know that it will sometimes occur. Getting dirty is

a sign that your child has been engaged in some sensory experiences, which are part of a high quality program. Please send your child to school in clothing that allows for experimentation with messy materials.

Children will need a complete change of clothing in a zip lock bag, labeled with their first and last names, to be left in the classroom in case of spills, and during toilet learning, many changes are needed. Please keep weather changes in mind and supply clothes appropriate for changing weather, as well as growing children and sizes. If you forget, we will have extras on hand. If your child comes home in “extra clothes”, please remember to wash and return them to school as soon as you can.

## 5. Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, but your concerns can always be addressed very quickly. Please do not call staff at home or if this is the only way to talk, please set a phone date in advance so that the teacher can arrange for her own family needs to be covered. Also, teachers email with parents using the school email address. To contact any staff member, you may email the preschool at [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org). Families should maintain an awareness of their requests for staff time. We encourage our teachers to maintain an appropriate professional distance with families.

## 6. Toys, Food and Other Items from Home

### Toys:

*Toys from home are not allowed. No items except a change of clothes are allowed.* Please do not allow the children to bring any object to arrival. They may **not** briefly show them to their friends or to their teacher. Please do not ask the teacher to “be the bad guy” and return a toy to the parent at arrival. This sets a negative tone for the day.

### Food:

Due to our diligence to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all of our students, ***no outside food is allowed into our building during school hours.*** This includes, but is not limited to, parents and siblings who may, when the safety guidelines are lifted, attend weekly chapel, volunteer in our classrooms, or engage with our students in other capacities (on the playground, in the courtyard, in the gym, etc.).

No backpacks are allowed.

## 7. Diapers

Diapers are sent by parents for their child. Please label with your child’s name. Please be sure to label everything with your child’s name. When you are ready to begin helping your child potty train, please contact the teacher **ahead of time** to set up a plan that will work for both child and classroom. The teacher should know **ahead of time** when children are going to start wearing “big girl” or “big boy” pants. As it is difficult for children to distinguish the difference between diapers and “pull-ups”, we ask that your child remain in diapers until potty training with underwear is initiated.

## 8. Birthdays and Other Holidays

Birthdays are a wonderful part of childhood culture. The preschool staff will plan a small celebration to make each child feel special, and to focus on how precious his or her life is to us, as we know it is to you. This celebration will include a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday and juice popsicles for the class on the day the birthday is celebrated. *No food, including cake, cookies or any food items, goodie bags, or decorations, may be brought from home.* The children may **not** distribute birthday or other invitations at school. We strongly suggest mailing birthday invitations. Children are very astute at recognizing them, and talk about them at school. If you are limiting the number of invitations, please handle the entire matter outside of school. Please consider the possibility that birthday parties may be an opportunity to participate in our preschool mission of reflecting God’s love for all children.

On the child's birthday, parents are invited, as part of the celebration, to purchase a favorite book to be placed in the preschool library in their child's name, and to read that book to the class. It wouldn't hurt to remind busy teachers the day before! *No goodie bags, favors, or other items from home are allowed for birthdays or other holidays.*

**Palma Ceia Presbyterian is committed to administering all educational programs and activities, and hiring, without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, or handicapping condition.**

## **Allergies, Health, Safety, and Nutrition**

At PCPC Preschool, we take seriously the health, safety and nutrition of our children and staff. The close contact of young children, especially of those who are not potty trained, can lead to the spread of bacteria and viruses from one to another.

Additional information will be found in the fluid COVID-19 reopening addendum.

At the preschool, we adhere to the following standards:

- The preschool is disinfected daily using an EPA registered disinfectant effective against the COVID-19 virus. Bathrooms and tables are cleaned with a CDC specified bleach solution, the above mentioned disinfectant, or Lysol spray, also on the EPA COVID-19 list, and cleaned after usage as well.
- For staff and children over two years of age masks are required, with the understanding that a learning curve for children requires loving support. Any updates and further information will be found in the fluid COVID-19 reopening addendum.
- Disposable paper products are used for snack, water, and drying hands.
- Disposable cups are used for water. No cups or water bottles are brought from home.
- Staff is trained in and follows protocol for safe and sanitary diaper changing and hand washing. Hand washing is the best way to ensure a healthy program. Ongoing supervision makes sure they follow standards set by licensing and best practice standards. Staff will wash their hands upon entering the building each morning.
- When any of our children (to our knowledge) have been exposed to any recommended reportable communicable disease, notices will be distributed to parents with information about what to expect, incubation, symptoms, and exclusion guidelines. Parents should report these to an administrator so that plans can be made for the safety and health of all children. More detailed information will be available in the fluid COVID-19 reopening addendum.
- Appropriate health records are maintained for staff and children.
- Toys are disinfected after use.
- Toys are constantly checked for small parts that may break off, such as eyes and noses on stuffed animals, buttons or shoes. Please help us keep on top of chokeable items.
- Staff has required training in First Aid, CPR and AED.  
Fire drills are held once a month and disaster and lockdown drills as required. \* Health records are checked once a month.
- One source of infectious agents in the preschool is germs from parents and children as they come in. Please wash your child's hands, and yours, before coming to help us keep the preschool healthy. In any event, they will be asked to wash their hands first thing in the classroom.
- Pest control is handled on a monthly basis, by a licensed pest control operator when the children are not here.
- Any hazardous materials are locked up or kept out of the reach of children.

- Classroom materials are laundered as needed.
- Child/staff ratios are maintained for the children’s health and safety. Smoking, including e-cigarettes and vaping, is prohibited on the premises of PCPC preschool.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY GUIDELINES		NAEYC GUIDELINES			PCPC PRESCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR 2020-2021		
Age of Children	Ratio	Age of Children	Group Size	Ratio	Age of Children	Group Size	Ratio
2 Years	1:11	21-36 Months	8	1:4	2 Years	6-8	1:3 or 1:4
3 Years	1:15		10	1:5	3 Years	8-11	1:4 or 1:5
4 Years	1:20		12	1:6	4 Years	8-9	1:4 or 1:5
5 Years and Older	1:25	30-48 Months	12	1:6			
			14	1:7			
			16	1:8			
			18	1:9			
		4-5 Years	16	1:8			
			18	1:9			
			20	1:10			

### 1. Health and Registration Forms

PCPC preschool requires, for all enrolled children, a current health examination form (DH 3040), and immunization certificate (DH 680), with proof of immunizations as specified by the American Academy of Pediatrics’ published guidelines and immunization schedules. Children with a religious exemption certificate in lieu of DH 680 will not be enrolled. The only exception to this are students who are *medically exempt* due to underlying health conditions and have documentation of this.

**Before August 1st**, all medical and registration forms, including both health forms must be **complete**, up to date and on file at the preschool. If, for reasons of insurance, you are unable to meet this deadline, please contact us. If forms are not received by August 1st, your child’s enrollment will be considered withdrawn. Parents should make a note of the date their child’s health card expires, and note that on their calendars so that they can make another appointment. These records must be on the specific Florida form available at most physicians’ offices and at the

county health department. Please be aware that we have our own legal requirements, and sometimes must expire a health form before your Doctor does, requiring another visit. As a courtesy, we will try to let you know the date of expiration and after that date by law, your child will no longer be allowed in school. **It is a parent's responsibility to notify PCPC Preschool in writing of any changes to this information**

Please advise the staff of any allergies, physical difficulties, or health related information which may be important to know in an emergency or may cause problems in your child's daily activities. Staff will work with you to develop a support plan for your child.

In case of an emergency, the parent/physician will be notified. Please be absolutely sure that we have your current contact information. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain this information in an up-to-date manner. Every year we attempt to reach parents who have new numbers and have not told us. This could be very dangerous so please remember to notify us when you have changes.

## **2. Medication**

Medication will not be dispensed, as this is a part day program, unless it is prescribed medicine necessary for a life threatening condition. If this is the case, such as an inhaler for asthma, or an EpiPen, the medication must be given directly to an administrator, not a teacher for storage or refrigeration. We will be able to dispense medicine under the following conditions:

- With EpiPens, we need two pens.
- Medication must be delivered to school in the container in which it was purchased. It must be prescribed by a Doctor. All medications will be located in the director's office, or in a safe location close to the child, or both.
- The label must indicate the child's name, the name of the medication, the physician's name, the dosage, and the frequency of dosage.
- A separate supply of medication must be kept at school. Medication cannot be transported back and forth daily.
- If medication requires equipment for administration, (measuring spoon, dropper) the parent is responsible for supplying them. Please mark with the child's name.
- The parent or caregiver must deliver the medicine. Under no circumstances may it be left in the child's backpack or bag.
- Parents must fill out a form from Hillsborough County Child Care licensing. These forms are available at the preschool.
- Medicine cannot be mixed with any food.
- No topical medication or treatment, such as diaper rash cream, disinfectant, sunscreen, or mosquito repellent can be applied by our staff or left at school or in the child's bag.

## **3. Minor Accidents**

Because of their age, size, and developing coordination, active children tumble about frequently. If your child receives a bump that leaves a mark, a scrape, scratch or bump, you will be notified in writing and you or your designated caregiver will be asked to sign an accident report. If the accident report is signed by anyone other than the parent, you will be contacted by phone or email. You must respond to Nancy Little ([nancy@palmaceia.org](mailto:nancy@palmaceia.org)) during that business day to let us know that you have received the message. If children are signed out sick, an incident form must be signed at the time of pickup.

If we observe any health related change in your child, we will discuss it with you. There may be an instance where a tumbling child who looks fine at the time may later bruise. Or, if a child does not cry, or tell the teacher, the teacher may be unaware that the child has been hurt. If you are at home and wondering, please feel free to call us at home.

We do not want you to worry. We will always tell you if we think a child has been hurt, but sometimes it is hard to tell if physical activity is fun or causes an unseen hurt.

If your child is hurt and we think it is not an emergency, but might be significant, as in a bumped tooth, a possible need for stitches, etc. we will get in touch with you so that you and your physician, if desired, can decide.

If you are concerned for your child, that he or she may have been hurt or need information regarding a serious concern, you may call Nancy Little at home, 251-0376. We ask that you reserve these calls for matters of a serious nature.

#### **4. Emergencies**

In case of more serious accidental injury or illness, we immediately try to contact you, and your emergency contacts. If necessary, we will also call your child's physician, 911, ambulance, or paramedics. Staff is not allowed to transport a child to the emergency room. Parents will be financially responsible for any decisions made before their arrival.

#### **5. Illness**

**All absences should be emailed to: [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org), or through the Brightwheel app and not to Nancy or the teachers.** If your child is not able to fully participate in school activities, or if staff is unable to provide any special care needed without compromising the classroom ratios and activities, children should be cared for at home. If staff feels this is the case, children will not be received, or will be sent home if symptoms of illness appear during the day.

As a teacher greets a child in the morning, she is also performing a daily health check. If your child has not slept well, has allergies, bites, injuries, is on medication, or has any other health issues, first thing in the morning is the time to make us aware of them. **To best serve your child, we must know about these.**

In her sole discretion, the director, or her designee, will decide if a symptomatic child may be received or may continue at school.

We understand that it may be an inconvenience for your child to miss school, but we are committed to running a healthy program. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Please notify the school if your child is ill and staying home. **More detailed information about periods of exclusion from school and when to return will be found in the fluid COVID-19 reopening addendum.**

If your child has been recently ill and you are not sure if he or she can return to school, you should call at 8:30 a.m. and check with an administrator before bringing the child.

There may be circumstances when a physician's note is required for re-entry into school, if, in the directors' judgment, such a note would be helpful.

#### **6. Nutrition/Allergies**

A daily snack is served at 10:30 AM. A menu of snacks is posted.

We do thank you for understanding our need to be in charge of food for the children in our program. We have done substantial research on the possible outcomes of a more flexible approach, and the consequences are frightening. Thank you for trusting us with these issues. If a food item from home is needed because of a life threatening condition, please talk with an administrator.

#### **7. Choking**

Children may choke during meals or playtime because they use their mouths to explore and experiment with unfamiliar objects.

Objects that are smaller than 1-1/4 in. in diameter should not be accessible to preschool children. This includes any food or object, such as coins or the removable eyes of stuffed animals. Please examine your child's backpack or lovey for small decorative items, which may pose a choking risk

## **8. Severe Weather Safety and Emergency Evacuation Plans**

We live in an area that experiences various forms of severe weather including severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. In order to protect children, we have a written emergency procedure to address each kind of weather emergency. Drills are held to test these procedures.

PCPC Preschool will be closed if the Hillsborough County schools are closed due to such a weather occurrence, or if some other circumstance precludes operation. If the public schools are open but we must close, we will post a sign on the front door of the preschool and use any other means of communications available to notify parents.

The National Weather Service usually gives us enough warning when a hurricane is approaching. However, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes can occur rather suddenly. A storm is classified as "severe" when one or more of the following conditions occur: winds 58 MPH or higher, hail 3/4 or more in diameter, or developing tornadoes. A severe thunderstorm or tornado "watch" means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado is possible. A severe thunderstorm or tornado "warning" means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar.

If the National Weather Service gives our area a hurricane or tornado watch, you will immediately need to pick up your child. If a warning is given, hurricane or tornado has been sighted, you should remain at home and we will take care of the children according to our procedures. Be assured that we will take all necessary precautions when dealing with this type of situation. We are prepared and trained for severe weather.

1. We have a battery operated weather band radio in the preschool administrative assistant's office to stay in touch with current weather conditions and emergency instructions. We also can access radar reports and alerts on our cell phones.
2. We have assembled a "survival" kit with first aid supplies, flashlights, extra clothing, and non-perishable foods, which can be used for sheltering in place.
3. We have identified and posted evacuation routes if full evacuation is ordered. The shelter will be identified at the time of the emergency. Our flood evacuation center is: PIERCE MIDDLE SCHOOL 5511 N. Hesperides (north of Hillsborough Ave.)
4. If we had to take the children to an alternate pick up point that would be: Bayshore Presbyterian Church, 2515 Bayshore Blvd. (Access is from Palm Dr.)
5. Attendance and nametags would be taken.
6. We would put into place the disaster plans on file for each emergency.

Local radio and television stations will have weather and evacuation information.

## **COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND THERAPIES**

During the pandemic, therapies are suspended.

All PCPC children may, at one time or another, participate in activities or be observed as part of therapies or other collaborations. Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool contracts with therapists to see our students. Only those therapists are allowed to practice here.

Referrals: A therapy referral form is completed by the director and forwarded to therapists to initiate the process. A permission slip must be signed.

The therapist(s) follow up on referrals by first talking with the parents and then classroom staff. With written parental permission, a screening is completed. If the child does not pass the screening, a comprehensive evaluation is completed with written parent permission. Based on the results of the evaluation, treatment may or may not be recommended. In some cases, monitoring with a reevaluation in 3-6 months is recommended. In others, initiation of therapy is recommended.

At PCPC Preschool, when the pandemic safety guidelines are lifted, therapy may be provided in a variety of places including the classroom, Godly Play room, or the playground, depending on what is determined to be the best location for meeting the child's therapy goals. In an attempt to integrate as much as possible, PCPC staff will sometimes attend sessions, and family members are welcome.

Families must sign a letter of permission for their children to be signed in and out of the classroom for therapy.

Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool and USF collaborate from time to time. Nancy Little, Preschool Director, and Dr. Lise Fox, Dean of the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences at USF are the principal collaborators. This collaboration benefits PCPC whenever evidence based strategies are used to support children both globally in excellent practice and to support children with challenging behavior.

***If your child is not attending school on a day when therapy is scheduled, please contact the therapist directly as soon as possible, so they do not make the trip here if not needed.***

## **ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

Application for admission may be made at any time by completing a wait list form, available in the church office, preschool office, or may be downloaded via the Internet from our website. A \$25 non-refundable application fee must accompany the submission of this form. A child is placed in the pool of applicants when the form and fee are received. The waiting list application is complete only after parents have attended a tour, when tours resume. Children are accepted for admission with considerations noted by the Admissions Committee for the following: (alphabetically listed) children of administrators, pastors, and staff, children of church members, children in special need of support, and siblings of PCPC students. The Director, together with the Admissions Committee, oversees and maintains sole authority for the admissions process. Classrooms are composed with discernment to ensure balance with respect to the following factors: gender, children in special need of support and typical children, optimal birth date ranges and other considerations, although the number of legacy children is also an influence. Application should be made with a waiting period in mind. Placement on the waiting list does not guarantee entry.

Families should be aware that first choice of days may not be available.

The preschool serves those who are 2 on or before September 1, through those who are 4 on or before September 1. Those children who are 5 by September 1 are not eligible for entrance in that year, except that exceptions may be made for the developmental placement of children in need of special support.

Children are placed in classrooms by the following table:

**Two-year-old class:** born on or before Sept. 1, 2018

**Three-year-old class:** born on or before Sept. 1, 2017

**Four-year-old class:** born on or before Sept. 1, 2016

The minimum number of days a child may be enrolled at PCPC is two days a week. Students are placed in a class according to the dates above. Families will be able to choose only a Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Tuesday/Thursday, or a five-day schedule. The four-year old classroom is a five-day per week schedule.

The staff at PCPC Preschool believes in a high degree of continuity, yet we must be flexible to meet the many demands of running such a specialized school. To this end, we must, in our sole discretion, decide the makeup of classes. **PCPC Preschool does not honor requests from parents for a teacher or classroom.**

For the 2-3-year-old classes, a non-refundable \$100.00 per child registration fee is due annually upon submission of the Enrollment Request Form. This fee is paid to guarantee a space for the next year. In addition, with the Enrollment Agreement each family must pay a non-refundable \$400.00 per child tuition deposit, which will be credited toward tuition in the final months of the school year for which the child is registering. If the child withdraws from the program at any time subsequent to submission of the Enrollment Agreement, the \$500.00 deposit will not be refunded.

For the 4-year-old class, a non-refundable \$100.00 per child registration fee is due annually upon submission of the Enrollment Request Form and a pre-paid non-refundable tuition amount of \$2,760 will be due. **The \$2,860 registration/prepaid tuition amount will be due at registration**, and will be credited toward tuition in the final months of the school year.

**Monthly payments of the tuition balance would be at the rate of \$708 per month, beginning in September 2020 and ending with the final tuition payment in January 2020.**

If the child withdraws from the program at any time subsequent to submission of the Enrollment Agreement, the \$500.00, or four-year-old deposit will not be refunded.

If parents determine a need to make a change in the enrollment agreement subsequent to the submission of the signed agreement, they may submit a request for an amended enrollment agreement. Forms for this purpose are available from the preschool administrative assistant and are accepted on or after September 1st. Submission of this form cannot provide any assurance or guarantee that your requested changes will be accommodated. A family may submit one request per child per enrollment year. A non-refundable administrative fee of \$25 per child must accompany this form. This fee is non-refundable regardless of whether or not the preschool is able to grant your request. Your request expires at the end of the current enrollment year. An administrator will notify you if your request is approved.

If a child is sick, the family is still required to pay for that day.

Children are enrolled for set days. The preschool cannot provide random additional days (drop-ins) for convenience. Our classes are fully enrolled each day of the week, and to allow drop-ins would compromise our high quality child/staff ratios.

Referral of a child in special need of support may be made by a parent, physician, therapist, community agency, or our school may determine that a child has need of special support. Placement and classification is at our sole discretion and is decided on the basis of what services most support the child. Families will be asked, and must provide, all diagnostic reports so that sound educational planning can take place.

Approved by PCPC Session 2/8/05

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Please refer to the [Preschool Website](#) for current tuition and fees.

### **Preschool Fee Structure**

Preschool tuition is calculated annually and then is divided into **9 equal payments**. It is due according to the monthly schedule below. Monthly tuition includes: tuition, snack fee, and arts and crafts fees.

Month	Due Date	\$15 Late Fee Added
-------	----------	---------------------

<u>September 2020</u>	<u>September 1</u>	<u>September 10</u>
<u>October 2020</u>	<u>October 1</u>	<u>October 10</u>
<u>November 2020</u>	<u>November 1</u>	<u>November 10</u>
<u>December 2020</u>	<u>December 1</u>	<u>December 10</u>
<u>January 2021</u>	<u>January 9</u>	<u>January 19</u>
<u>February 2021</u>	<u>February 1</u>	<u>February 10</u>
<u>March 2021</u>	<u>March 1</u>	<u>March 10</u>
<u>April 2021</u>	<u>April 1</u>	<u>April 10</u>
<u>May 2021</u>	<u>May 1</u>	<u>May 10</u>

\*All payments should be brought to the school or mailed to the church office.

No cash will be accepted by the preschool. We are not set up to accept credit cards, at this time.

The mailing address is: Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool  
3501 W. San Jose Street  
Tampa, FL 33629

**Tuition Assistance** may be provided by the preschool to those children with special need for support who are unable to afford our services otherwise. Parents may speak to the director and she will gladly discuss this. A completed application and tax returns from the previous year will be required. Offers of assistance are at the discretion and judgment of the director and preschool committee, and are based upon financial need. Parents must be willing to make their financial records available. Funds for these scholarships come from the Charles Greenwood Scholarship Fund and the Martha Clark Scholarship Fund, and gifts from those in the church and community who love children. Applications are available from an administrator.

Temporary assistance may be available for any child on an emergency basis through the Bea David Scholarship Fund.

The preschool has monthly requirements to meet; therefore, monthly charges are consistent, regardless of absences or illness. Parents should not expect a courtesy statement. The director has been instructed by the committee to notify parents of termination of services if tuition is not paid in a timely manner.

## **DISCIPLINE, CHILD GUIDANCE & SELF REGULATION**

Hillsborough County Ordinance 86-35, Section 2.6, "Child Discipline" requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary practices used by child care facilities. PCPC supports this law, and submits the following:

### **Positive Behavior Support**

One of the central developmental tasks of early childhood is to develop self regulation. This ability is one of the most important factors in later school success. At Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church Preschool, the emphasis is on building a kind and ethical school community which derives from Christian values; a beloved community. Discipline is taught in conjunction with respect for the child's developing sense of self. Guidelines are created using specific knowledge of child development, which informs our practices with appropriate expectations for each age.

Teaching strategies are used that have an evidence basis in teaching young children social and emotional competence.

In particular, we use a strategy called Positive Behavior Support, which allows us to understand why a child has challenging behavior, and to teach the child new skills to replace that behavior.

We abstain from corporal punishment or humiliating, frightening, or shame based disciplinary techniques. Food or beverages are never withheld as a disciplinary device. "Time out" is rarely used, although children may be separated for safety.

Staff uses only positive methods of guidance, including natural and logical consequences, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of cooperative behavior in place of competition, comparison, or criticism.

Consistent, school wide rules are developed within the school community and can be applied not only to the children's actions, but are a source to guide the actions of staff and parents.

**The following are our school wide rules:**

*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other. Ephesians 4:32.*

- **Gentle hands**
- **Listen and do as you are asked**
- **Use helping words**
- **Walking feet indoors**
- **Everybody plays**

**Safety Net Procedures Used In Our Program**

1. If a child is in danger of harming himself or others, we must first be concerned about safety.
2. We might hold a child or remove a child from the situation to keep children safe.
3. Safety net procedures should be planned for children who have a history of dangerous outbursts.
4. Safety net procedures are developed in collaboration with a team as part of the planning for behavior support.

The behaviors of concern would be those which are dangerous to self or others. Physical assistance may also be used to move children from place to place when they are not responsive to verbal or pictorial directions, and the teacher must move with the class to preserve ratios.

**First Response Strategies** (De-Escalation Procedures) are as follows:

**Verbal** – direction about what to do (e.g., "put the sand in the box"); direction about appropriate behavior (e.g., "ask for a turn"); direction to deescalate (take a deep breath); validate emotion ("it looks like you are very angry").

**Physical** – moving the child, blocking the child, interrupting aggressive action with physical guidance, guiding child to correct action.

**Environmental** – removing materials from area, removing children from proximity of the child having challenging behavior, putting a barrier between child and others.

**Distinction between physical interventions and physical control:**

Physical interventions that are effectively used are to prompt, redirect, temporarily restrict movement (e.g., hand on shoulder, block, or physically moving a child). Physical control describes holding or restraining.

**Effective options if de-escalation does not work immediately:**

1. Remove child
2. Block child
3. Remove demand
4. Move child to safe place to de-escalate

*Physical control is an intervention of last resort to prevent harm to the child or others, when there is dangerous or escalating behavior and first response strategies fail.*

**LEAD – A method of providing physical control.**

*Techniques are implemented calmly, with empathy and support.*

- **Label** (“You are feeling very angry, you wanted the train. You want to hurt Peter”).
- **Envelop** – “I need to help you be safe” (approach, stabilize, contain).
- **Assist** – “I’ll let you go when your body is quiet”. “I’ll know you are ready for me to let go when your hands are quiet. Use gentle hands and feet”.
- **Debrief and Direct** – Debrief and support the child back to the group “Let’s talk about what happened”. “What can you do if that happens again?”

We will complete an incident report with information pertinent to the incident, notify the family and meet to review the plan.

Staff will communicate and strategize with parents concerning behavioral issues and their possible cause, considering all of the factors that impact a child and family. If needed, functional behavioral assessment may be done. Working together, a plan will be developed to support the child’s needs for behavioral intervention. We will use community resources and collaborate with other experts to develop strategies for support. With encouragement and mutual problem solving, most behavioral and developmental issues can be resolved.

If further problems endanger the safety of the other children or staff, or the future of the program, a parent may be required to withdraw the child.