



# **St. Joseph's Child Care Center**

## **Parent Handbook**

3001 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Tampa, FL 33607  
(813) 870-4182

*Managed by TodayCare Children's Centers, LLC*

### **Our Mission**

To provide an innovative, safe and nurturing environment every day for the children in our care, while offering peace of mind to their parents and a tangible return on the investment to our clients.

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**ATTACHEMENTS**

**Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure**

**Influenza Virus Brochure**



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the St. Joseph's Child Care Center. We are serving St. Joseph's Hospital employees, their affiliates and members of the community. The St. Joseph's Child Care Center is operated by TodayCare Children's Centers; a company that specializes in the development and management of employer-sponsored child care programs.

We offer a program to meet your needs as working parents and the developmental needs of your children. We have developed a high quality child care program that is affordable and convenient to our working parents with the financial support of St. Joseph's Hospital.

The Parent Handbook is intended to provide helpful information about the philosophy and operational policies of the Center. Center management is available to answer any further questions you may have about the program.

Our goal is to provide children with a safe, nurturing environment in which they may grow and learn. Thank you for sharing your child with us.

Sincerely,

Yey Guzmán,  
Center Director

Judy E. Simpson  
President/COO  
TodayCare Children's Centers

## **Mission Statement & Philosophy**

You have just made one of the most important decisions regarding your child that you will make in the next few years. Early childhood experiences will have a long-term effect on your child's self-esteem, socialization and future academic abilities.

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

We believe in a family approach to child care. We recognize and respect parents as the most important influence in the lives of their children. It is our aim to work closely with parents as we assist in the care of their children. Parents have the right and responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and development. We know that supporting the family is critical to the effectiveness of our work.

TodayCare Children's Centers believes early childhood is the most significant period of children's lives for preparing them for future success. Our goal is to facilitate the development of children who are:

- Competent
- Curious
- Initiating
- Cooperative
- Self-Directed
- Resourceful
- Exploring
- Attentive
- Cheerful

Our program is planned to generate excitement in learning and nurture pro-social skills. TodayCare Children's Centers believes development of intellectual curiosity, self-discipline and internal motivation are fundamental to the learning process.

We further believe a vital part of the curriculum involves fostering feelings of security, self-confidence and independence. Central to Today Care's philosophy is the idea that parents and our program are partners in nurturing each child's development. Therefore, a critical part of the program is open communication and close working relationships with parents.

TodayCare's philosophy is based on the belief that learning is achieved when each child works on his/her individual level in a supportive and unpressured atmosphere. Our program encourages divergent thinking, creative problem-solving and communication skills. Emphasis is placed on the process children use in learning and experiencing their world, instead of a "Final Product." We believe that young children learn best through play and direct experiences with the real world. Children who are free to make discoveries, explore skills, initiate ideas, and experience successes

and failures within a supportive environment have a solid foundation in life for future success and happiness.

We believe that the center staff is one of the most important factors determining a quality experience for children and families so we employ only the best and brightest child development professionals. We value experience in group care of young children and formal child development training and education. Each staff member must be a caring, nurturing individual and must complete the mandatory child care training prior to their actual involvement with children in our programs. The staff is supervised daily and evaluated regularly. Nurturing and caring staff is very important in our environment. Staff members receive a great deal of support for the important work they do which keeps staff turnover very low.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The goals of the program are to provide an environment that allows children, at their own pace, to:

- Find success in activities of their own choosing and discover the challenge of new experiences.
- Grow in the feeling that they are unique and valued persons.
- Experience comfortable, secure relationships with peers and adults.
- Learn to define and express feelings.
- Build strength, muscular coordination and physical skills.
- Learn to manage routines and develop good health habits.
- Grow in understanding of the world in which they live, both natural and social environments.
- Develop concepts appropriate to age in solving problems and in broadening cognitive development.
- Experience creative expressions through art, music, literature and dramatic play.
- Broaden communication skills through language development.
- Try new foods and develop healthy, nutritional eating habits.
- Develop internal controls for their own behavior.

We achieve these goals by:

- Following the curriculum guidelines as outlined for each group.
- Providing a highly organized environment using learning centers with appropriate activities in each center.
- Setting a minimum of appropriate rules to define clear boundaries and expectations for activities and behavior.
- Limiting “whole group” activities and emphasizing individual and small-group experiences.
- Directing learning experiences.
- Using open-ended questioning techniques.

- Using teachers as “Facilitators.”
- Developing skill-based, weekly activity plans.
- Providing low staff/child ratios and small group sizes.
- Developing a curriculum based on the child’s realm of understanding, experience and awareness.
- Emphasizing multi-cultural and non-sexist language usage and activities.
- Using transition activities.
- Expecting teacher/child interactions which enhance the child’s self-esteem.

Everyone at TodayCare understands and accepts wholly that each child is an individual and must be valued, respected and nurtured.

## **NAEYC Accreditation**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits early childhood programs that meet specific criteria for high quality. These standards go beyond the state standards and fewer than 10% of the child care programs in the United States meet the criteria. For more information regarding NAEYC Accreditation, you can find it at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) and click on accreditation.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND ORIENTATION**

Enrollment is open to all eligible parents without discrimination in regard to sex, race, color, creed or political belief. Vacancies in the classes are filled by waiting list applications bearing the earliest date.

### **Eligibility**

- A **Team Member** family includes one parent employed by St. Joseph’s Hospital, St. Joseph’s Home Health, Diagnostic Center or Same Day Surgery.
- An **Affiliate** Family includes one parent employed by Healthpoint Management, South Florida Baptist Hospital, John Knox Village or other BayCare facilities. Affiliates include physicians with privileges at these facilities.
- A **Community** family does not have a parent employed by any of the agencies listed above. Community spaces are available Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Children with special needs will be accepted as long as we can fully meet the child’s needs and the needs of the group with reasonable accommodations. In all cases, they must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to themselves or other children. Nor shall any child be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in any program or activity.

During enrollment procedures, a special orientation process will be arranged in order to provide families with important information about our program philosophy and daily operating policies and procedures. This orientation session will also allow time for parents to become better acquainted with the teachers who will be working most closely with their children. Several forms will be provided prior to, or during, our orientation which must be completed on, or prior to, a child's first day in the program:

- Parental Enrollment Agreement
- Child Background Information
- Emergency Authorization
- Immunizations and Health Record (signed by physician). The form should be updated when it is expired. (HRS form #3040, #680 or #681)
- Permission Forms
- Release Authorization
- Payroll Deduction Form
- Additional forms as required

All children enrolled in the Center must present a physician's certificate of good health/physical and immunization form within 30 days of admittance.

### **Annual Registration Fee**

Each year during the month of October, you must re-register your child(ren), which includes paying a \$75 registration fee for each child and filing out a new enrollment packet if there are any changes.

### **Levels of Care**

Full-time care-up to 50 hours weekly.

Part-time care (two year olds and up only) - three 8 hour days or two 12 hours shifts

### **Payment Methods**

Payment will be made by payroll deduction, check or money order. Tuition is collected 52 weeks of the year. There are no reductions for vacations or absences. Payment is due weekly on Monday. A fee is charged for returned checks. Checks or money orders are to be made payable to TodayCare Children's Center. Payroll deduction is optional unless we receive two NSF checks.

### **Termination of Care**

Nonpayment of more than two weeks will result in your child being discharged from the center and his/her space being filled. Please provide at least a two weeks written notice for the withdrawal of your child from the center. If timely notification is not received, a fee equal to the rate for two weeks of care will be assessed.



## **ATTENDANCE**

- We encourage a child's arrival prior to 9:00 a.m. as daily planned activities begin no later than this time.
- If your child is to be absent or late, either in arriving or pickup, you must notify the center.
- Full tuition is charged for holiday closings for children enrolled for that day.
- If you plan to terminate your child's enrollment, you must provide two weeks' notice.

It is important for parents to stay within the hours they have scheduled as closely as possible because staffing is based on children's schedules. Early drop off or late pick up can jeopardize the classrooms' teacher/child ratio. The late pick up charge is \$1.00 per minute.

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

## **SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

We do everything possible to minimize accidents through various safety programs, facility inspections, routine maintenance and consistent policies and procedures. We will provide you with written documentation in the event your child is injured while in the Center's Care.

Emergency drills for evacuation and severe weather are conducted monthly and plans are posted in each classroom of the Center. In the event of a sudden storm or emergency that prevents you from getting to the Center, we are prepared to Care for the children for extended periods. In the unlikely event the Center is damaged and declared unsafe, you will be contacted immediately and evacuation plans will be put in place to enlist the appropriate professional authorities (fire, police, medical) and move the children to safety where they will await your immediate arrival.

### **Severe Weather/Hurricane**

If during the day, a tropical storm is upgraded in to a hurricane, the center's staff will contact all parents to come and pick up their child as quickly as possible.

Baycare employees need to contact their supervisors to see about the provisions that have been made for their employees working and their families.

### **Smoking**

St. Joseph's Hospital is a **Tobacco-Free Campus**. Smoking is prohibited on the hospital grounds at all times.

## Recommended Dress

Busy, creative, learning and play can be messy regardless of the age of the child. We use washable paints and smocks to cover clothing, but we cannot guarantee spills and stains will be avoided. Please dress your child in clothing that is washable, durable and labeled with first and last names.

- Clothes designed for comfort, play and durability are recommended.
- Shoes need to be closed toed and sturdy. Shoes are required for all children ages 1-5 years old. Thongs, sandals, clogs and jellies or smooth soled shoes are not permitted.
- Children are not permitted to wear any shirts, jackets or sweatshirts with drawstrings or jewelry that is around the neck. Drawstring clothing or jewelry presents a major choking hazard for children.
- Party clothes may be planned for special occasions, and parents will be given sufficient notification.
- Labeling of all clothes with first and last names is important.
- Infants through two-year olds should have two complete clothing changes at the Center.
- Preschoolers should have one complete change of clothes.
- Each child (except infants) may bring a special blanket that fits into their cubbie for nap time. It should be taken home on Fridays to be laundered.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are an important day for a young child. They will be celebrated during the regular snack time.

- Parents are invited to provide moderate **store bought** birthday treats for their child's class and to participate in the celebration. Our center is a **peanut and nut free environment**.
- Latex balloons cannot be brought to the Center because of the danger they present to children when broken.

## Eco-Healthy Practices

### Health and Safety Procedures to Reduce Staff and Children's Exposure to Environmental Hazards.

#### Air Quality

The HVAC system is properly maintained by St. Joseph's Hospital and meets legal requirements. The hospital changes the filters every 3 months.

No use of artificial air fresheners or products with fragrances.

No smoking, including e-cigarettes and/or vaping, on St. Joseph's Hospital Campus.

The center has adopted an Anti-idling policy that requires all parked vehicles at the center to be turned off and not left idling.

### **To Prevent Mold and Mildew**

Report any leaks to the administration for immediate repair and remove standing water.

Clean up food and drink spills right away. All spills are to be promptly cleaned.  
Keep trash in a closed container and take it out frequently.

Do not allow children to eat food other than in designated areas that can be cleaned up immediately after the meal/snack is over.

### **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**

IPM does not prohibit pesticide use but uses the strategy of 'least toxic methods first.'

St. Joseph's Hospital's pest management uses techniques that pose the least hazards to people, property, and environment.

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

### **Open Door Policy for all Parents**

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time and are encouraged to do so. Please discuss with your child's teacher the best time to visit your child's classroom.

### **Parent Volunteers**

Parent participation in the classroom is a special treat for the children and the teachers. You are invited to "help out" whenever your schedule permits.

You may wish to bring a special activity for the children or simply participate in the activities underway. Please coordinate these activities in advance with your child's teacher.

### **Parent Advisory Board**

The primary purpose of the Parent Advisory Board is to provide support and suggestions for the following:

- Enrichment activities
- Appreciation ideas for the staff
- Fund raising for the enrichment activities

- Center celebrations
- Risk management issues
- Parenting workshop topics

The PAB will typically be composed of 5 to 10 members. Members of the group will include Administration and parents who currently have children in the Center. All parents in the Center will be encouraged to become members. The PAB meets every third Friday of each month.

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION**

The supervision of your child's growth is our joint responsibility. We want to know and understand your child so feel free to discuss with us any accomplishments or problems your child may be experiencing. Communication between the Center Staff and parents is vitally important. Open lines of communication will enable us to provide you with the services you expect and value. Here's what you can expect from us:

- A Parent Bulletin Board for each classroom and the front hallway.
- Parents may call during rest time for discussions with the teachers. We request that you respect the children and teachers' interaction time.
- Daily communication through Lifecubby. Written daily/weekly communication sheets.
- Weekly lesson plans are posted in your child's classroom and on Lifecubby.
- Center news can be found on our website-[todaycare-stjosephshospital.com](http://todaycare-stjosephshospital.com), LifeCubby and Parents' Boards.

Please remember the following:

- Specific instructions concerning feeding, health, medicine, etc., must be in writing and signed by the parent.
- When you have questions or concerns, please address them first with your child's teacher. If the teacher's response is unsatisfactory, please contact a member of management. If you still need assistance, we can give the phone number to reach TodayCare Corporate Management.
- Parent surveys are distributed once a year in order for us to gather feedback.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

The curriculum and children's assessments are used as guidelines to meet both the individual needs of the children in the classroom as well as group needs. The guidelines help set goals for each classroom. These goals are incorporated into the Center's annual Strategic Plan. The child's individual assessment will be reviewed with the parents so that any questions can be discussed at the Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year. The purpose of the conference is to provide parents with an overview of their child's developmental progress and to receive parent input. It is also a time to answer any questions or concerns parents may have regarding their child's development at the Center.

## **Resolving Parent Concerns**

It is important for parents to clear up any questions or misunderstandings quickly. Most concerns are best addressed at the classroom level, but if parents and teachers are not able to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution, parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Center Director. Open communication between staff and parents is vital to the smooth operation of the Center. We are committed to the satisfactory resolution of parents' concerns. The President/COO of TodayCare Children's Centers is Judy Simpson. After you have talked with the Center Director and your concern has not been resolved, please contact Judy Simpson/COO. Her telephone number and email address are available at the Center and on the website.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW / PROGRAM POLICIES**

As defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, "The curriculum program standard is: The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive." Every contact we have with a child is an opportunity for learning. Though we have lesson plans and daily activities, curriculum cannot be just what is planned or taken from a book. We believe children learn from meaningful experiences that occur often and are relevant to their lives. NAEYC calls this a "developmentally appropriate curriculum".

We utilize Creative Curriculum by Diane Trister Dodge. Teachers are required to earn twenty hours of Early Childhood education training annually.

### **Programs for Infants**

Infancy is the time when trust, self-worth, and independence/dependence are established.

Our priority with each baby in our infant room is to provide a safe, nurturing environment. Each infant is assigned a primary teacher to promote bonding and foster communication with each parent. The teachers are chosen because they are warm, nurturing individuals with experience in caring for young babies. All teachers go through an extensive training program that includes principles of child development, policies and procedures, and proper techniques in caring for infants in a group setting. All children will be supervised using sight and sound at all times.

Although each child will have his/her individual schedule, we do have guidelines which help provide consistency and stability for the children in our program.

Upon arrival to the Center each morning, we ask that you sign your child in at the front lobby. Fill out the top of your daily report in the classroom. Place your infant's labelled bottles in the tray provided in the classroom refrigerator. Parents are asked to provide diapers and wipes in bulk. Our philosophy is that children learn through play. We believe interaction with the children is as important as being fed and changed. For this reason, we attempt to keep the children on the floor with other children and toys when they are not sleeping. This encourages the child to become

aware of his/her environment and the other children. The teachers are down on the floor interacting with the children.

All infants are supervised by both sight and sound. When children are sleeping, teachers will check on them every 15 minutes. All infants are easily seen if not in direct line of sight then by looking up or slightly adjusting the position by at least one member of the teaching staff.

All infants are placed on their backs to sleep unless otherwise ordered by a physician. The sleeping surface will be a firm mattress manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment and will meet the standards as approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission. The fitted bottom crib sheet will be provided by the center. No blankets, bumper pads, pillows or stuffed animals will be placed in the cribs. Only pacifiers will be kept in the cribs

For more information on the Back to Sleep Guidelines, please see <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/sids/cfm>.

## **Programs for Toddlers**

Toddlers are moving towards increased autonomy as new skills emerge. They enjoy constant movement as well as new activities and challenges. A consistent schedule, nurturing and patient teachers, and a safe environment rich in activities are keys to successful toddler programs. Promoting language development, learning self-help skills, developing inner controls and positive social skills are the goals for the toddler years.

The Toddler Curriculum (Creative Curriculum) is more structured with many more daily activities to satisfy their ever inquiring minds. We include art, music, finger plays, songs, creative movement, discovery, story time and circle time. These are all age appropriate activities. We use the guidelines defined in Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs (published by NAEYC)

Toddlers are very busy children! Older toddlers will oppose you with “no”, use word-gestures, climb, speak a vocabulary of 10 to 50 words or more, jump off the floor with both feet, dance to music, put simple puzzles together, and much, much more. The teachers are very creative and perceptive to meet each of the child’s needs.

The children in the Toddler rooms have graduated to one nap each day and drink out of sippy cups, then small regular cups. Diapers and wipes need to be provided in bulk by the parents. The teachers will help you and your child to make these transitions.

Toilet training will begin in the Older Toddler room when parents and the teachers feel the child is ready. A child should show signs of readiness before toilet learning can begin. Independence is the central issue in teaching a child to use the toilet. For the process to work, the child must have almost complete control over it. Parents and teachers should do little more than arrange the environment so that the child can use the toilet easily. A child will show readiness in two ways: physical readiness-the attainment of adequate bladder capacity and control; and mental readiness which occurs when the child understands what toilets are used for and he/she is curious to learn

more about them.

When both readiness signals have been observed, it will time to begin toilet training. During this phase, the child is primed for toilet learning skills and needs only support and encouragement from parents and teachers to be successful.

Toddlerhood is a wonderful stage in a child's life. Every minute of the day they are ready to absorb and remember something new. It is a challenging but rewarding time.

## **Program for Preschoolers**

Experiences for the older children (3-5 years old) are designed to enable them to learn about themselves and the world around them. Opportunities are provided for individual and group activities in a variety of ways.

Preschool children are classifying and manipulating small objects, building and acting out the life they are trying to understand. Language and new cognitive powers enable them to question and explore new worlds through books and interactions.

Throughout the day, children plan and make choices about which aspects of the learning environment to focus on. Learning centers include more complex materials and their choices reflect the child's changing interests and capabilities. An integral part of the daily routine includes opportunities to work at the various centers.

Preschoolers are independent, active and eager learners. Research clearly shows that preschoolers learn best by "doing," or through interactive play in an environment that is rich in experiences and exploratory opportunities. Our primary curriculum and training tool for the preschool classroom is the Creative Curriculum. This curriculum validates what current theory understands as appropriate practices in early childhood learning.

The daily schedule includes group times (circle time, story time, etc.) as well as center time or child choice time. Teachers are trained to look for the "teachable moments". They serve as facilitators, constantly interacting and encouraging children's interests and explorations. Teachers are supporting learning through language development, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought.

## **Positive Guidance and Discipline Policy**

Our approach to guidance and discipline is to promote a sense of independence, autonomy and positive self-esteem, while maintaining the control necessary for a safe and non-threatening environment. The basis of this control is achieved through a secure, orderly, developmentally appropriate, caring environment. This environment allows children to experiment and test their own behavior within clearly defined limits. Our policy also complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

We will not subject children in our care to discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening. We

will not use sarcasm or ridiculing or any form of coercion such as forcing a child to sit down, lie down or stay down except when restraint is necessary to prevent a child from hurting himself or others. Under no circumstances will we use any form of physical abuse such as shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling and pulling of arms, hair or ears. We will not associate discipline with food, rest or toileting. Staff will not use psychological abuse or coercion when disciplining a child. Some examples of these types of punishment are: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism or withholding affection or requiring a child to remain inactive for long periods of time.

When needed, staff will use a variety of methods to teach children self-control and how to express their feelings in acceptable ways. These methods include redirecting children to acceptable activities, using logical consequences to help children be responsible for their actions. The teachers will use appropriate words and tones to help children understand how someone feels and they will model acceptable ways to express negative feelings.

St. Joseph's Child Care Center feels strongly about how children are disciplined. Our positive guidance policy is also included in the Employee Handbook and training on alternate forms of guidance are completed by the staff annually. When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed, we will consult with the parents and ask their permission to get professional help. We will work with the parents and professionals to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior. If the IEP is not successful and we feel that the child and/or the other children in the classroom are not safe, we will help the parent to make other arrangements for their child's care.

## **Celebrating Holidays**

Holidays are special times to celebrate and opportunities to teach the children about different traditions and cultures. Although no specific religious instruction is offered, different holidays are discussed in order to help the children understand and gain an appreciation of various traditions and cultures. Parents are encouraged to share their family's customs and celebrations that are important to them. If a family does not celebrate certain holidays for religious reasons, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

## **Nap Time**

Licensing guidelines require a rest time for children. Children from the ages of 1-5 years old may bring a small blanket that fits into their cubbie. The blanket needs to be labelled with the child's name and taken home and laundered every Friday. The center provides cots and cot sheets.

## **Field Trips/Walks**

Field Trips/Walks are taken only on the hospital campus. Special precautions are taken to assure the safety of the children. You will be notified in advance of planned field trips like the Halloween Parade and the Christmas Caroling. Parents' permission is included in the enrollment forms. Parents are welcome to participate in field trips as their schedule permits.



## **Outdoor Play**

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

St. Joseph's Child Care Center has three playgrounds; one for the infants, young toddlers and for the older toddlers and preschool. There are a wide range of riding toys for the trike paths, sensory play, climbing structures, playhouses and sandboxes.

Children will go outside twice a day as weather permits. Children need to be wearing comfortable and appropriate clothing for active outdoor play. Due to staffing requirements, children are not able to stay inside while their class is on the playground.

## **Meals and Snacks**

- Breakfast will be served in the morning until 8:00 a.m. The lunch food comes from the hospital and the children eat around 11:30 a.m. Dinner is served after 6:00 p.m. to the children of Baycare employees. Morning and afternoon snack is also included daily. Times served will vary by age group.
- All food and drinks, both snacks and meal time foods, will be provided by the Center.
- If your child needs a special diet, please discuss the requirements with the Director. You will need to provide that diet from home. All children need to have lunch items from all four food groups for lunch.

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

### **Acceptable Foods**

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

### **Unacceptable Foods**

Soda  
Raw Carrots and peas  
Candy (gummy bears, hard Candy)  
Raisins (for toddlers)  
More than 4 oz of juice (infant)  
NUTS  
Whole grapes  
Hot dogs (children under 4 years)  
Popcorn  
Sugary cereals  
Pretzels and chips  
Peanut Butter  
Peanuts

## **St. Joseph's Child Care Center is a Peanut and nut free environment**

All foods must meet Florida licensing guidelines for childcare centers. The Center follows the food safety protocol for serving and preparing meals.

Leftover food which has been opened will be discarded.

No open cans or jars may be sent from home to the Center.

Formula must be provided for infants not using breast milk.

Expressed breast milk may be brought from home but must be frozen or kept cold during transit.

All bottles must be prepared with the child's first and last names on each bottle and lid.

DUE TO SEVERE ALLERGIES, NUT PRODUCTS ARE PROHIBITED FROM OUR CENTER (For example, no peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, peanut butter and crackers, certain cereals contain nut products, granola bars, Cracker Jacks, trail mix with nuts, cookies with nuts, etc.).

Children will be given the opportunity to brush their teeth at least once each day preferably after the lunch meal.

### **Infant Feeding**

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

### **Nursing Mothers**

Nursing mothers are welcomed and encouraged to come into the center to nurse their child. A quiet, private area will be provided.

### **Sleeping**

Cribs are provided by the Center for infants (12 months and younger) and cots are provided for toddlers and preschoolers. Infants are placed on their backs in their cribs. Children lay down anytime they feel the need to rest.

### **Should Parents Stay? It Depends ....**

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

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

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

## **Saying Goodbye the First Day**

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

For your child's protection, only persons authorized by the parent are permitted to take a child from the Center. Parents must list names of anyone who might pick up the child on the Enrollment Application, Release Authorization Form and the Child's Emergency Information. If the adult picking up your child is unfamiliar to staff, the adult will be required to show his/her photo ID for identification. Whenever an adult takes a child from the Center, he/she must sign out in the sign-in/out book in the lobby. It is extremely important that you maintain current information on all of your child's records and emergency information. Please be sure to notify the Center Director of any changes immediately. This includes a change of telephone numbers as well.

## **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

### **Hours of Operation**

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm for **Team Members and Affiliates**. For **Community**, the hours are from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

The center is closed on the following holidays:

- **New Year's Day**
- **Memorial Day**
- **Independence Day**
- **Labor Day**
- **Thanksgiving Day and the day after (Thursday and Friday)**
- **Christmas Day**

### **Risk Management**

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

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

## **Safe Arrival and Departure Procedures**

### **Arrival**

For your child's safety and to provide an opportunity for your child's teacher to talk with you, please escort your child to his/her classroom. The Center is a secured environment with a badge access entry at the front door and a coded key pad entry to the classrooms. Community parents will need to ring the doorbell for access to the front door. Parents must sign in and out in the attendance books located at the front desk.

### **Departure**

For your family's protection, only people authorized by the parents are permitted to remove a child for the Center. Parents must list names of anyone who is permitted to pick up their child from the center in the Enrollment Application under Authorization. The administration must be notified of any changes on the Authorization list. It is extremely important that the center has current information on all of the child.

If the adult picking up the child is unfamiliar to the staff, the adult will be required to show his/her driver's license or photo I.D. All children departing the Center must be signed out.

### **Parking**

Parents may park in front of the building for a brief period of time, in order to pick-up or drop-off. Parents are encouraged not to leave their cars idling in the pick-up, drop-off area. All long-term parking must be in the hospital's parking garage. The child must be escorted to his/her classroom.

### **Staffing**

The Center staff are trained and dedicated early childhood professionals. They exceed the education and experience requirements of the Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing Agency. The results are the positive development of your child and the increase in your ability to focus on your work and/or education.

## **Teacher / Child Ratio**

The following are the teacher/child ratios and group sizes which will be followed:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Teacher/Child Ratio</b>	<b>Group Size</b>	<b>Total spaces in each age group</b>
Infant	6 wks – 1 yr	1:4	8	16
Young Toddler	1 – 2 yrs	1:5	10	20
Older Toddler	2 – 3 yrs	1:8	16	16
Young Preschool	3 – 4 yrs	1:10	20	20
Older Preschool	4 – 5 yrs	1:9	18	18

## **Cooperating with Regulatory Agencies**

The Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing Department regulates the licensing of TodayCare Children’s Centers/St. Joseph’s Child Care Center. The Center meets and/or exceeds state standards. The license is clearly displayed in the front lobby of the center. All Center staff are mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

## **Child Custody**

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

## **Chronic Medical Conditions**

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

Parents may elect to not have their child immunized. In order for their child to attend St. Joseph’s Child Care Center, they will need to provide a Religious Exempt Certificate upon enrollment.

If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the center and potentially exposes the unimmunized children who are susceptible to that disease, the child will be immediately isolated until a parent can pick him or her up. The Emergency Response Plan letter will be given to the parents and the health department will be contacted to determine whether the child should be excluded for the duration of possible exposure. The Health Department will provide the guidelines for exclusion requirements.

## **Medications**

Often medicine can be prescribed for morning and evening doses, avoiding the need to administer medication at the Center. We prefer that you discuss this with your pediatrician and make arrangements accordingly if possible.

However, if necessary, management can administer medicine under the following guidelines:

- Medication will be administered one time per day per child only. Medicine will be given as your physician prescribes and will be administered by the Center Director and/or Assistant Director.
- Medication of any type must have a current written prescription on the original package and a signed Medication Authorization form to be completed by the parent. Forms are available in the office.
- Medication must be provided in the original container and labeled with the child's name, date, directions and physician's name. The Center will not administer medication after the expiration date nor will we administer medication that was prescribed for another child. All medication must be left with Center Management. Medication left at the center is kept in a locked container. If medication requires refrigeration, it is kept in a locked container in the kitchen refrigerator. If medication is not to stay at the center, it is the parent's responsibility to remember to take medications home with the child at pick up time. Medication which is required for extreme allergic reactions will be kept in the classroom in a locked container.
- Upon enrollment please discuss any allergies/medical conditions your child has with center management and note them in "allergy/medical conditions list" section of the enrollment form. It is the parents' responsibility to keep us informed of changes in their child's health. Any medications your child may need upon an allergic reaction will be stored in a labeled container in the child's classroom.
- The application of diaper rash ointment and sunscreen requires parent's signature in the enrollment packet.

## **Illness and Injury**

Parents will be notified immediately if their child becomes ill at the Center. Parents shall remove children from the Center within one hour after notification. Please be sure all emergency numbers are up to date at all times.

Children exhibiting signs of illness listed below should remain at home. The following are indications of illnesses that will necessitate removal:

- Unusual drowsiness or severe lethargy
- Extreme fussiness

- Persistent or excessive crying
- Severe wheezing
- Uncontrolled coughing
- Rapid or labored breathing
- Asthmatic with upper respiratory infection and coughing that are interfering with the child's ability to drink, talk or sleep
- Unable to play
- Complaining of severe pain
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Undiagnosed rash
- Fever above 101 degrees
- Vomiting with two or more episodes within one day
- Diarrhea of 3 abnormally loose stools within 24 hour period.
- Severe cold with coughing, sneezing, and/or thick nose drainage.

If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, an emergency contact person will be called. Your child will be taken to St. Joseph's Hospital for a severe illness or injury. In extreme emergencies, immediate treatment will be administered as determined by emergency medical personnel. You will be responsible for payment of any medical fees incurred.

Parents are required to inform the Center of reportable communicative diseases. We will notify public health authorities, as well as parents of other children who may have been exposed to your child. Your family's identity will be kept confidential.

## **Health Consultation**

All policies and procedures adopted by the Center are reviewed and approved Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing, St. Joseph's Hospital and the Health Department.

All children will have access to annual screenings for vision, hearing and a developmental screening that evaluates language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development.

## **Waiting List**

When the Center reaches maximum capacity for each age group, we will implement a waiting list. Applications for enrollment will be placed in the order that they were received. Priority will be given to St. Joseph's Team Member, then Affiliates and Community.

When a space becomes available, the administration will notify you, after which you will have 48 hours to complete enrollment. Completing the paperwork and paying the \$75 registration fee will secure your place.

If you cannot complete enrollment within 48 hours, you may opt to pay the appropriate weekly tuition rate to guarantee the space. If you decline an offer of enrollment, you will be moved to the end of the waiting list. If you decline a second time you will be removed from the list and

another enrollment application with a new inquiry date will be required if you are still interested in enrolling your child.

## **Sibling Discount**

Parents with more than one child enrolled in the Center will receive a sibling discount for each additional child enrolled based on the tuition for the oldest child. Only children enrolled in regularly scheduled care will receive the sibling discount.

## **Tax Statements**

Each year we provide a statement of the amount you paid the previous year for child care. This is a free service to our clients whose accounts are current. Any delinquent accounts will be gladly accommodated as soon as your account is current.

Our company name and tax identification number is printed on the top left side of your statement.

## **YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY**

### **What to Bring:**

There are a number of things you should bring with your child to the Center. Be sure to label everything with the first and last name of your child with a permanent marker.

Two complete changes of clothes preferably folded and sealed in a gallon sized zip-lock plastic bag. For children 1-5 years old a small blanket that fits into their cubbie. St. Joseph's Child Care Center is not responsible for any lost and/or stolen items.

Disposable diapers and wipes if appropriate. Pacifiers are only used in the cribs for infants.

Infant food and/or formula/breast milk already prepared in bottles. Bottles must be labeled with your child's name and the date it was prepared. We cannot serve baby food from an already opened container.

### **What Not to Bring:**

Please leave toys, food, gum, candy, pets, toy weapons, jewelry and money at home. All children share the learning materials at the Center as part of the learning experience. When children are not concerned about their toys becoming lost or broken, they are able to participate more fully in our educational environment. We are not responsible for any items lost or broken.

Thank you for choosing St. Joseph's Child Care Center. If you have any questions, please call the center at 813-870-4182.



## **Receipt & Acknowledgement of:**

### **St. Joseph's Child Care Parent Handbook**

**Please read the following handbook and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgement of your St. Joseph's Child Care Center Parent Handbook.**

I have received and read a copy of the "St. Joseph's Child Care Center Parent Handbook". I understand that the policies, rules and programs described in the handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of St. Joseph's Child Care Center's Administration at any time. I understand that this handbook replaces all previous handbooks.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of the "St. Joseph's Child Care Center's Parent Handbook". I understand that it is my responsibility to read and abide by the policies and programs described in this handbook.

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Parent/Guardian's Printed Name

Child's Printed Name

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Parent/Guardian's Signature