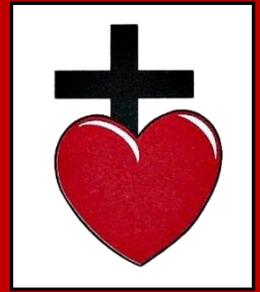


Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center



PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026 School Year



Dear Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center Parents:

Welcome to Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center! Congratulations on choosing a Catholic faith-based childcare center for your child. We are very blessed to have you and your child enrolled at our Center this year. We look forward to working closely with you as we realize parents are the primary educators of their young children. It is our hope that through open communication and ongoing dialogue between our Center, classroom teachers, and families, we can provide experiences that will nurture each child and foster their growth and love of learning.

Sacred Heart is a Catholic Early Childhood Center and is a Florida Catholic Conference Accredited Infant through 4 Year Old School and part of the Diocese of St. Petersburg Schools and Centers. Our purpose is to provide quality Christian education and childcare in an atmosphere that encourages respect, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth & development of the child as a whole. Sharing our Catholic faith with our children and families is our reason for existence. It is our hope that families are encouraged and supported in your own ongoing faith journey as you walk these steps with your young children.

We invite and welcome all our families to attend Sunday Masses at our Sacred Heart Parish Church. You may find the church Mass schedule on our website at www.sacredheartecc.com. Religious education classes are available for children 5 years old and up. RCIA is available for all adults who wish to join the Catholic Church or are interested in deepening their understanding of the faith.

Our Parent Handbook, along with additional communications from our Center, will give families an overview of our program and of our policies and procedures that are in place for the safety and well-being of all. Parents are asked to carefully read, review, and refer to the information enclosed during your time with us. We are here to support decisions related to your child and to assist families with transitions from home to here and program to program.

Parent involvement in our Center is appreciated, encouraged, and welcomed. There are many ways parents can be a part of our ECC Community throughout the year. Volunteer opportunities are outlined in the enclosed Parent Handbook, as well as additional opportunities that will be offered throughout the year. Family involvement is a vital part of SHECC, and you are encouraged to be part of your child's journey in a way that will best allow your child to find comfort and security in their new environment.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies and/or your child's transition into our Center, please feel free to meet with me.

Sincerely,

Lucinda O'Quinn, Director
Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center
April 14, 2025

License Number: C06PA0062



SACRED HEART EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Father Robert Romaine
Ms. Lucinda O'Quinn
Mrs. Tracey Roberts
Ms. Angela Walls

Parochial Administrator
Director
Business Manager
Office Manager

SACRED HEART ECC ADVISORY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Father Robert Romaine
Ms. Lucinda O'Quinn
Mrs. Tracey Roberts
Sister Roberta Bailey

Parochial Administrator
Director
Business Manager
Prioress of the Benedictine
Sisters at Holy Name Monastery
Grandparent/Parishioner
Grandparent
Parishioner
Parishioner
Grandparent/Parishioner
Parishioner
Grandparent/Parishioner
Grandparent/Parishioner

**Mr. Frank Gude
Mrs. Debbie Gude
Mrs. Laurie Wilson
Mr. Tony Coleman
**Mrs. Linda Blommel
Mrs. Margie Denney
Mr. Larry Plunkett
Judge Susan Barthle

**Founding committee members

32245 St. Joe Road, Dade City, Florida 33525
Tel (352)588-4060
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Website www.sacredheartecc.com
Director E-Mail director@sacredheartecc.com
Office Manager E-Mail office@sacredheartecc.com
Business Manager E-Mail business@sacredheartecc.com

LICENSE NUMBER: C06PA0062



MISSION STATEMENT

Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center, a Catholic community, provides a warm and accepting environment that fosters respect and dignity for all people by modeling Christian values of faithfulness, service and love while achieving academic excellence and as our children grow and learn.

CHILDREN ARE OUR MINISTRY

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION STATEMENT

It is the philosophy of SHECC that a Catholic Christian based early childhood program should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploring, and discovery through developmentally appropriate activities. Preschool children are creative and receptive; the staff strives to nurture Christian values of love, acceptance, community, and dignity in the children who attend. Academic excellence is achieved through hands-on experiences in literature, language, mathematics, science and social and civic concepts that can be related to the real world around them.

GOVERNANCE

SHECC, established in 1984, is a Catholic School/Center of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and a Ministry of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Our operation is governed by the Diocese of St. Petersburg and a volunteer Parish Council and Child Care Advisory & Finance Council. We are licensed and comply with this state's Department of Children and Families Services, Pasco County Health Department, Pasco County Fire Service, the Department of Environmental Regulations and Early Learning Coalition of Pasco Hernando. We adhere to the Diocese's Faith Formation and Safe Environment standards along with the Florida Department of Education Learning Standards for Children Birth through Kindergarten.

FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE ACCREDITATION

Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center is proud to announce our Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation standing as an *Accredited Infant through 4-Year Old School* as of March 2019. This marks Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center as the first ECC in the Diocese of St. Petersburg to receive this honor.

The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program is one of the oldest Catholic accrediting programs in the country. In the 1960's, the Florida bishops appointed a committee to explore accreditation. After studying various systems, they established a program unique to Catholic schools which would guarantee constant and continued improvement, accrediting the first schools in 1969. The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program is a charter member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

The FCC Accredits over 180 Catholic schools and centers located in Florida. Key facets of the program include... that faculty and professional support staff meet diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction. Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical, and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens. Focus on continued school improvement and accountability. The rubrics for the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools are the core of the program.

Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center opened its doors in October 1984. Since 1984, their purpose has been to provide quality Christian education and childcare in an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth & development of the child.

The faculty and staff are honored and excited to be part of the Florida Catholic Conference and are committed to maintaining the highest level of excellence through the review and adherence to the FCC Standards, continued Professional, Education Development and Faith Formation Opportunities. Sacred Heart Early Childhood Center prides itself on its ability to meet all their family's early childhood care and educational needs.

ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL PRESCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (APPLE)

APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment) Accreditation is a national early learning program accreditation that recognizes early learning centers for operating high quality programs. Research shows a direct link between a high-quality early learning experience and a child's future success. APPLE sets the standards that accelerate an early learning center's drive to achieve that level of care and education outcomes.

GOLD SEAL

In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the *Gold Seal Quality Care Program* to recognize childcare facilities and family day care homes that have gone above the required minimum licensing standards to become accredited by recognized agencies whose standards reflect quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children.

TEACHERS

All full-time teachers at SHECC have completed their Florida Child Care Professional Credential Certificate through the Child Care Apprenticeship program. Many of our part-time teachers have also completed and/or are working towards this Certification. All staff of SHECC complete continuing education courses annually to meet the requirements of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Co., to enhance their professionalism. We encourage our Teachers/Staff to continue their education, and work with them so that they can complete their degrees.

ADMISSION POLICIES

The Catholic Schools/Centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg restate their open admission policy, namely, that no person on the grounds of race, color, national or ethnic origin is discriminated against in admission or in receiving services in any school operated by them.

SHECC warmly welcomes new and returning families to our Center. Every opportunity is made to welcome visitors and enrolled families. Inquiring families may tour our facilities by appointment, meet our staff, ask questions, and receive brochures and additional pertinent materials to assist with the transition from home to school. It is imperative that parents be forthcoming and share all educational evaluation information, disabling conditions, prior specialized placements & familial issues which may require special educational programming. Should a parent not share appropriate information about the child's needs, the school may recommend withdrawal or transfer to a more suitable educational environment. We are a private program and being such may terminate service to a family if we feel we are unable to accommodate or meet the needs of the child and family.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Children's records are open only to the Director, an authorized staff member of the Center, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, or the child's parent or legal guardian.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

SHECC is open Monday through Friday. We are open at 6:30 a.m. for families that must have early care and close at 5:30 p.m. Extended care is NOT available. After 5:30 p.m., the late charge fee of \$5 per minute, per child, applies.

TARDINESS

Classroom Instruction time begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. Please make every effort to have your child arrive by 9:00 a.m. Children that have scheduled doctor appointments may arrive late with a doctor's note presented upon arrival. Habitual tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment. If you are not able to have your child in their classroom by 9:00 a.m., you may be asked to wait until after classroom nap time to bring them.

Due to state regulations concerning class size and teacher ratio, missed days may not be made up on non-scheduled days.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please make sure your Emergency Information including all telephone numbers and emergency contacts are up to date. In the event a child is sick, and we are unable to contact the parents, we will contact the person(s) listed as an emergency contact. If we are unable to reach any contact person provided, or if no emergency contact numbers are provided, we will contact the Sheriff. Please notify the center immediately of any changes of address, phone numbers, places of employment, medical information, legal guardianship, or any other pertinent information.

HARASSMENT POLICY

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish, Catholic School, or early childhood center establish and adopt a policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with religious education programs, schools and early childhood centers, and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish, school, or early childhood center-sponsored event.

CODE OF CONDUCT (Revised 06.2025)

This **Code of Conduct** is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community regarding Catholic schools and school-sponsored activities, meetings, and/or functions within and outside of school hours.

Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg

The Catholic school is a multifaceted organization comprising a diversity of populations that have distinctive relationships to one another. Relationships are at the very core of our Catholic Christian belief in our Triune (three persons in one) God. The Holy Trinity is God in relationship! This beautiful doctrine inspires all of us in Catholic Schools, to attempt to be a living Christian community in relationship with God and others. It is essential in such a community that all members recognize and respect not only their own rights and

responsibilities but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the community and those of the school itself. "All rights have to be balanced by responsibilities because we are in relationship" (Putney, 2005). The responsibility for promoting and upholding these core values of the school community must fall on all those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. Therefore, it is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors always model acceptable behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities, or when the school can be involved in any social or professional media. "It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; and in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Canon 796, Para. 2).

As a parent, celebrate that you play a foundational role in the development of your child's sense of justice, equity, and worth together with all members of the school community. You are one of the most instrumental role models within your child's life. "Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para. 3).

In living out the Gospel values, we strive to create a safe environment for all stakeholders developing:

- Christian attitude and behavior towards all people
- An ability to appreciate the situation of others
- Cooperation and ability to work civilly with others
- Open, positive, and honest communication
- A reverence for Creation
- Trusting relationships
- Responsible actions

Expectations for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors

As a member of our Catholic school community, we ask that you:

- Support the philosophy and mission of Catholic education in both words and actions.
- Partner with the school to promote the well-being and success of all students.
- Communicate respectfully and constructively with school staff, without disrupting school operations.
- Encourage and support your child's education through praise, engagement, and modeling a positive attitude.
- Promote healthy problem-solving and help your child understand the value of doing their best rather than comparing themselves to others.
- Listen to your child's perspective while remaining open to other interpretations of events.
- Foster a respectful and collaborative relationship with teachers; share concerns in a constructive manner.
- Support school policies as outlined in the handbook and website both in school and at home.
- Work cooperatively with staff if your child's behavior does not meet school standards, following proper communication protocols.
- Refrain from gossip, hearsay, and negative commentary, including on social media.
- Interact respectfully with staff, students, and other community members at all times.
- Uphold the reputation of the school, particularly when using social media.
- Do not smoke or use offensive language on school premises or at school events.

Your Rights as a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, or Visitor

You have the right to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy, and professionalism by staff, students, and other parents.
- Clear communication regarding your child's education and development.
- Have your confidentiality respected in sensitive matters.
- Receive a timely, appropriate response to concerns.

Guidelines for Conduct

- Advocate for the school and be mindful of how social media can impact others and the school's reputation.
- Never approach another student to discuss or discipline them. Refer concerns to staff.
- Respect faculty/staff and their professional time; schedule appointments for discussions.
- Use respectful communication, including in emails, online platforms, and social media.
- Follow the school's outlined procedures and chain of command for resolving concerns or conflicts.
- When volunteering or attending events, follow the direction of the supervising teacher or staff member.
- Participate respectfully in school liturgies and events, supporting the communal life of the school.

Communication Process for a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. If anyone has a **current complaint, criticism, or concern***, it is expected the following steps be followed:

1. Speak to the appropriate school person involved (e.g., class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Where/if possible, make an appointment with the relevant person.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to meet with an administrator or parish priest, following the specific school's established chain of command.
3. The Administrator should attempt to mediate and find a resolution in the presence of both parties.
4. If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, you may complete the Parent Concern Form found on the website of the Diocese of St. Petersburg - Office of Catholic Schools and Centers for further facilitation.

* If your concern relates to allegations of physical or sexual abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child, you should immediately contact the **Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mr. Chris Pastura, at ocsc@dosp.org and the Florida Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline 1-800-962-2873.**

By accepting enrollment at a Catholic School in the Diocese of Saint Petersburg, parents, guardians, and/or caregivers agree to abide by this Code of Conduct in full. Deliberate breaches and/or demonstrated inability to comply with these guidelines, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer, and/or visitor from a school, and/or disenrollment of their child/ren.

Excerpts of this policy have been used by permission of the Diocese of Townsville, AU.

RECORDS

Children must have the following forms on file before they may attend our Center. Forms are to be updated each year.

- Complete Registration Packet (signed tuition agreement)
- Record of current physical examination (date valid for 2 years) Form DH3040
- Certificate of immunization (current & updated) Form DH680
- Notarized copy of the Shared Parental responsibility of the Final Judgment of the Disillusion of Marriage (If Applicable)
- Copy of children's Birth Certificate

Parents are asked to inform the office of any changes in phone numbers, addresses, email addresses, emergency information, health conditions, etc.

We will notify the child's parents when immunizations are to be updated. However, it is the parent's responsibility to get the immunization forms updated before the expiration date. If forms are not updated before the expiration date, DCF will not allow the child to attend until all records are up to date.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Catholic Schools within the Diocese of St. Petersburg require enrolling students to submit a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunization and provided for in Florida Statute 1003.00 as a condition precedent to acceptance. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg do not recognize a religious objection to this immunization. This policy is effective as of the 2011/2012 school year.

VPK REQUIREMENTS

These additional forms are required for the VPK Program:

Certificate of Eligibility

SHECC VPK Agreement

Monthly Attendance Verification form (Signed each month)

ELC REQUIREMENTS

These additional forms are required for the ELC Program:

ELC Contractual Agreement

ELC Child Care Certificate

PROGRAMS OFFERED

INFANTS and TODDLERS

Parents of infants and toddlers are responsible for bottles, food, disposable diapers, and one container of wipes per month. If your child needs powders, diaper creams, and/or teething ointment, you must provide it and complete an "authorization for medication" form. *Medication may not be put into bottles or kept in your child's diaper bag.* Information such as type of formula and special dietary needs is important information. Please share this information with your baby's care giver. All bottles, food containers, and pacifiers must be labeled with first and last name. Please note that food or cereal may not be put in children's bottles.

Part-Time placement for Infants may be available on a limited basis. Two day minimum required. SHECC reserves the right, if needed, to withdraw the availability of Part-Time care to accommodate Full-Time placement.

PRESCHOOL I, II and VPK

SHECC incorporates "The Creative Curriculum" which includes developmentally appropriate sharing and conversation time; stories, songs, and finger plays; creative art activities; food preparation; science and nature activities; exposure to shapes, colors, numbers, and literary enrichment; and celebration of birthdays and holidays. The Creative Curriculum program correlates with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards.

The programs we use for Social/Emotional Development are taken from the Pyramid Model, Skillstreaming, and Character Kids. The curriculum is designed to increase social competency in children. Socially Competent children cooperate, show consideration for others, manage their feelings appropriately, and have success in solving problems.

The key objectives of our religious education program, Bright Beginnings and Discovering God's Child, are to help teachers lead young children through a variety of experiences and activities which will help them to Develop positive self-concepts, Discover and appreciate God's wonderful world,

Show Christian attitudes toward others, and Worship God in prayer and song. These objectives are also met by visits to church for song, bible story and prayer.

Our VPK program will almost always follow the public school calendar. A calendar will be provided to each family. For those parents wishing to have full day care, we offer an Extended Learning program to accommodate those needs. There is an additional fee for this service. If your child is enrolled in the full day Extended Learning program and attends on a scheduled VPK holiday, the parent will be responsible for additional tuition.

VPK INFORMATION:

The State of Florida will pay, in full, the tuition for your child to attend 540 hours per year, as long as your child does not exceed 20% in absences in any given month. Children are provided with 108 hours (36 VPK school days) of excused absences. Physician notes are not accepted for additional excused absences. Children with excessive absences will be terminated from the program.

POTTY TRAINING:

All children entering the Toddler Classroom are expected to begin potty training shortly after acclimating to the room and schedule. We are happy to help you and your child in the process to ensure a successful transition.

All children moving into the Preschool II and VPK classrooms are **required** to be fully potty trained. This means that children should be able to use the restroom independently for both urination and bowel movements including wiping and dressing.

If your child is not fully potty trained by the move up day, they may not move up to the next classroom. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the termination of services.

PART TIME PROGRAM

Children attending on a part time basis must attend on the same days each week unless a schedule change is approved through the office in advance. Two day minimum required.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

SHECC serves as a bus stop for San Antonio Elementary School. Pasco Middle School may provide transportation to SHECC. Parents of school age children must notify SHECC of any schedule changes for children arriving on the afternoon school bus. A \$5.00 fee will apply each time your child is not on the bus, and we have not been notified.



PLEASE CALL IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ON THE AFTERNOON SCHOOL BUS

SUMMER PROGRAM

Our summer program is available beginning the day after school finishes and ending the last weekday before school starts for children of elementary age that have completed kindergarten through the sixth grade. It is available from July 25 for all emerging kindergarteners who have completed VPK at SHECC. Children that have attended SHECC throughout the year receive priority placement.

First priority for placement in the Fall will be given to children with continuous attendance throughout the summer. If your child does not attend through the summer, there will be no guarantee of space when school begins. However, we will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

Parents must call to confirm that space is available. 24 hours notice is required.

DROP IN CARE

Drop-in care may be provided for registered children only, and only if space is available. The daily rate applies to ANY child not registered for a scheduled day.

FEES

All Fees may be paid with Cash, Check or electronically through the BRIGHTWHEEL APP.

REGISTRATION FEE

The Registration Fee is due annually on July 1st and is non-refundable. The current registration fee is \$150.00 per child or \$300.00 per family. ELC registration fee is \$75.00 per child or \$150.00 per family. The summer only registration fee is \$60.00 per summer.

WEEKLY PAYMENTS

Your payment is due each Monday for the week in advance. There is no grace period for weekly billing. Unpaid balances are subject to finance charges at a rate of 18% per annum.

MONTHLY PAYMENTS

The monthly payment will be due on the first of each month and no later than the seventh for the month in advance. If payment is not made by the seventh, you will be switched to weekly billing/payments. Unpaid balances are subject to finance charges at a rate of 18% per annum.

RETURNED CHECK

If a tuition check is returned for insufficient funds, stop payment, or the like, a fee of \$30.00 will be charged, after which, the Center can refuse any personal checks.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

If your tuition account is delinquent, your child may not attend until the account is current.

SCHOOL AGE

Middle school before and after care is available for those children that have attended our center throughout elementary school. Services provided are contingent upon Pasco County Schools Bus Transportation.

FAMILY & PARISH MEMBERS RATES

Family rates apply when two or more non-subsidized children attend the same hours. The highest rate pays the regular rate. A 5% discount is given for the second highest rate, and 10% discount for the third highest rate.

Non-subsidized, registered and supporting members of Sacred Heart Catholic Church may receive an additional tuition credit of 5%. If you wish to receive this discount, please ask us for the parish membership verification form to be signed by the Pastor and the Director every June.

Rates are calculated on an adult to child ratio, NOT necessarily the age of the child.

Full tuition payments are due throughout the year, regardless of absences including, but not limited to vacation, illness, holidays, or weather closings.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ARRIVING AND DEPARTING PROCEDURES USING BRIGHTWHEEL



ALL individuals that may be dropping off or picking up your child will need to have the BRIGHTWHEEL app. In order to facilitate this, we will need to send the individual an email invitation from BRIGHTWHEEL. Once they receive the email invitation, they will follow the link to the BRIGHTWHEEL platform and register. They will then receive their required 4-digit code.

ALL Children will be visually screened daily prior to being signed in at the main entrance. Any child that appears ill or presents with a fever of 100° or higher will not be allowed to enter the facility.

Due to Classroom instruction beginning at 9:00 am, ALL Children should be checked into their classroom no later than 9:00 a.m. If you are not able to have your child in their classroom by 9:00 a.m., you may be asked to wait to bring him/her until after classroom nap time at 2:00 pm.

Children arriving later than 9:00 am due to appointments must bring a doctor's note with them.

DROP OFF PROCEDURES

A parent or other authorized, responsible ADULT (Must be 18 years or older) must bring the child to the Main Entrance and Check children in using the BRIGHTWHEEL app. All adults that will be dropping off or picking up children must have the app and an individual 4-digit code to check children in or out. The 4-digit code is each adult's electronic signature.

CODES MAY NOT BE SHARED.

The adult will scan the posted QR code using their phone and then enter the individual 4-digit code to check each child in. A green check mark will appear when you have successfully checked your child in.

If you are having difficulty scanning the QR code, the adult may ask for assistance from the office personnel. Each adult will still need the 4-digit code assigned to them to use the kiosk.

Once your child has been screened and checked in, they will be escorted to their classroom by a designated staff member, if they are in the main building. If they are a VPK+EL or School Age Child, you must take them to the door of the VPK+EL or School Age Classroom located at the school age building. All VPK+EL and School Age Children will enter and exit from their classroom Front door.

If your child is having difficulty leaving you, give him a kiss and a hug and tell him you will be back soon to pick him up. Prolonged good-byes make it difficult for everyone. The teacher will be sure that your child feels comfortable. Call us later if you are concerned about your child's adjustment and we will let you know how things are going.

PICK UP PROCEDURES

Since we believe communication between parents and teachers is especially important even while limiting contact, parents will pick up at the back door of their child's classroom or at the front door of the VPK+EL/School Age building. We ask that you do not enter the classroom but rather pick your child up at the door. We feel this will allow you to speak to your child's teacher about their day and give you the opportunity to still see the classroom while maintaining social distancing.

When picking up your child at the main building for ages One through Pre-school II and VPK Only please use the afternoon gate entrance to access the sidewalks around the building to your child's classroom back door. Infants may be picked up at the front entrance baby room door.

Pick-up Procedure

1. Knock LOUDLY on door.
2. The teacher will acknowledge that you were seen by tapping on the door window.
3. Check your child out while the teacher gets your child ready to go home.

To Check your child out in the afternoon you will need to Scan the posted QR Code at the backdoor area of the classroom. Enter the individual 4-digit code. A green check mark will appear when your child is successfully checked out.

Please do not check out multiple children at once unless they are in the same class. Please wait until you are at each child's individual classroom to check them out.

4. The teacher will open the door and help your child out. Please maintain social distancing.
5. Communication concerning your child is important to us. Due to proper supervision needs in the classroom, your teacher will not be able to have an extended conversation at pickup. Please feel free to call during the day to speak with the teacher or make an appointment to meet in person.

Thank you for your cooperation!

A child will only be released to the parent or guardian unless we are given permission to release the child to a person cited on the "child's identification record" form.

The Adult that picks up the child must acknowledge this by Checking out the child using the BRIGHTWHEEL app and must provide a valid photo id.

All individuals with the responsibility of picking up and/or dropping off a child must present themselves in a mature, non-threatening manner. Appropriate dress and language are a must. Profanity on clothing or spoken verbally will not be tolerated. Individuals must not be observed to be under the influence of substances during the child's pick up.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Items which are appropriate to the monthly theme are always welcomed as are books and CD's your child may wish to share with their class. Money, gum, candy, soda toys, electronics and/or phones are prohibited in the classroom. SHECC will not be held responsible for **lost or broken** items. Car seats may NOT be left at the center.

Please label EVERYTHING that is sent to the center. This includes, but is not limited to, all clothing items, shoes, lunchboxes, jackets, blankets, mat covers, etc.

No Media Release

Due to maintaining all children's privacy, NO photo, video or audio recording devices from home are allowed. This includes cell phones, watches, digital recorders, game systems, etc. Please do not send these devices to the center. This includes Summer Camp Children. All items of this nature will be placed in the main office for parent pickup if brought the center.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the philosophy of SHECC to train the child in self-discipline by taking a positive approach. Children will be encouraged by the teacher to behave appropriately through the use of clear limits about acceptable social behavior and positive reinforcement techniques such as verbal praise and redirection.

For the safety of all the children, a child may be removed from the group to a quiet area to calm down if they become aggressive or disobedient. If a behavior problem persists, the parents will be notified and expected to work together with the teacher. It may be suggested that the child be involved in a behavior modification program, with the parent having the option of being involved in the process as well. Situations may arise where we ask for your approval to have an outside observation and assessment done.

Research suggests that biting may be a normal developmental phase for infants and toddlers. Parents of a child who is biting will be asked to meet with staff to discuss a plan to deter this behavior. Parents will be required to immediately pick up any child that bites more than once in a day.

Parents and children are expected to abide by the policies of the center. The purposes of these policies are to protect the rights of the children, parents, and the staff of our center. The safety of the children in our care is our priority. Parents may be asked to pick up their child or remove a child from the program if:

- The child poses a threat to self, staff, or other children in the program.
- The child behaves in a manner that is difficult to manage in a large group.
- The Director judges that the child can no longer function effectively in the program and/or the program cannot meet the child's needs.
- Habitual biting.

NAP MATS

All children aged one year through VPK are required to have a nap mat for daily nap/rest time. Mats must be at least 1 to 1 ½ inch and covered with an impermeable surface. The blue/red Kindermats are preferred. Please do not send 3-inch mats as they do not fit into the storage area and are not

DCF approved. Cloth covered mats are not permitted. A removable, separate Nap Mat cover such as an extra-large pillowcase must be provided to cover the mat during use and a separate child sized blanket for them to use. Oversized blankets are not permitted as they do not fit into the storage area.

If a mat becomes torn it must be replaced immediately. We reserve the right to replace the mat after two notices to the parent and the cost of the mat will be added to the child's account.

DRESS

All children (yes, even babies) will play outdoors every day (weather permitting), as we believe the playground is an extension of the classroom. Accordingly, please dress your child in weather appropriate clothes and rubber soled tennis shoes.

NOTICE: Slick bottom cowboy boots, sandals and flip-flops are not permitted. These types of shoes are not safe for climbing or peddling bikes. "Ball" gowns, costumes and pajamas should be reserved for special dress up days. The nature of the material these items are made from is not safe to wear on the playground as they rip easily, and gowns may become entangled in the bike wheels.

In our ongoing efforts to curtail the spread of germs, all children will provide a pair of slip on, yet secure, pair of indoor shoes that can be sanitized such as crocs. A jacket is required for outdoor play on cold or damp days. Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. All children will need to have on hand **two** labeled changes of clothing for emergencies. The child's first and last name should be placed on all clothing and other belongings (diaper bags, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc.) to help ensure the return of possessions and clothes.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

SHECC usually follows the public and Catholic School's emergency closing procedures. If school is closed or dismissed early because of weather conditions, SHECC may close at the same time. Listen to the local radio or television station for early closing information. We will advise by Remind instant alert. Please make sure all your information is up to date. We require all family members responsible for drop off and pick up to be connected via BRIGHTWHEEL.

HEALTH INFORMATION

For the safety and health of your child, children who are ill may not be brought to the Center. The Florida Department of Health requires that any child who is suspected of having a communicable disease or who develops a fever or other symptoms which include, *but are not limited to, any of the following:* Diarrhea, vomiting, Wheezing Cough, Rash, Pink Eye or Skin Infection shall be removed from the facility *immediately. This prevents the other children from exposure.* If you are unable to pick-up your child within the hour, we must have an alternate contact number.

Such children shall not return to the childcare facility until the signs and symptoms are no longer present for a minimum of 24 hours (or longer if the doctor advises)

If a child is sent home with lice, they cannot return to SHECC until they are properly treated, and ALL the nits have been removed. In addition, DCF requires proof of treatment such as the label or box lid from the treatment product.

MEDICATION POLICY

Administering medication is a **very serious responsibility** and best left to the parents at home. **Whenever possible, please ask your physician to prescribe medication that can be administered before they arrive and after they leave our center.**

ALL medication must be consistently administered by a designated staff member. ONLY current prescription medication will be administered. It must be in the original container with the name of the physician, child's name and medication directions written on the label. An "Authorization for Medication" form signed by the parent must accompany each prescribed medication.

Medication along with the Authorization for Medication form should be given to your child's teacher or to the front office. Medication should be picked up in the front office at the end of the day. No medication (including Tylenol, etc.) may be left in diaper bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc. If your child is prone to allergic reactions, please provide the necessary medication and authorization form.

Sun block and chap stick are considered medication. If you wish for your child to have sun block and/or chap stick applied during the summer months, please provide their teacher with a completed Authorization for Medication form, as well as the product to be applied. Parents should apply the product in the morning and the teachers will reapply the product in the afternoon before outdoor play times. Product must be labeled with first and last name of child.

SNACKS/LUNCH

We strive to serve snacks that enhance your child's meals. We ask all parents to provide one snack per month for their child's class. Please do not send candy, Hawaiian punch, Kool aid, etc. (except on special occasions). In addition, some of these classes provide a cooking experience/food preparation activity. Items for these activities are also requested. Our center is peanut and tree nut free, and lunches and snacks should be provided keeping this in mind. One staff member has a severe allergy to watermelon. If you send this for snack, please inform our staff immediately so this teacher does not go into that classroom.

Cut Up Food Guidelines

From DCF Handbook Pg 32

Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children under 4 years of age, such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes/sticks and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe. Food for infants must be cut into pieces $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or smaller, food for toddlers must be cut into pieces $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or smaller to prevent choking. This applies to all food, even food provided by parents/guardians.

CUPS

Please do not send Reusable Cups to school with your child (Toddlers through Summer Camp). We use disposable 5 oz. cups in the classrooms to teach children to drink from an open cup. Part of the self-help skills we teach children include pouring water from a pitcher to a cup for themselves. School Age Children that are participating in our Summer Camp May bring a labeled (with first and last name) disposable water bottle for the day. Water is available for all children throughout the day.

Snack suggestions are:

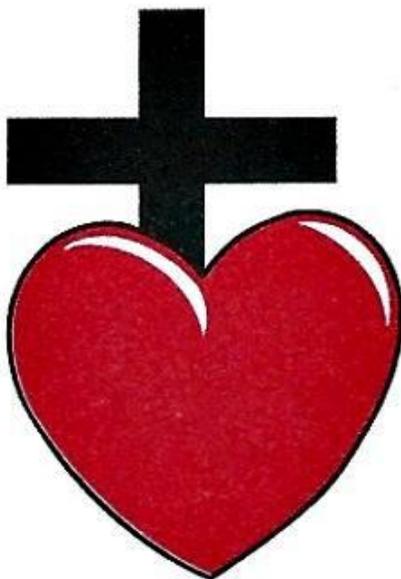
Graham crackers, Gold Fish, Pretzels, Fresh fruit, Saltines, Sun Butter, Celery, Bread, Animal Crackers, Muffins, Cheerios or other non-sugary, dye free cereals, Popcorn, Cheese Crackers, Raw vegetables, Raisins (age 3 & up), Applesauce, Cheese, 100% fruit juice, milk, etc....

Breakfast is an important meal, so please provide this for your child at home. We do not have facilities or available staff to serve breakfast. Please DO NOT send breakfast food with your child in the morning. We will provide a morning & afternoon snack as well as a beverage (milk, juice or water) with their lunch, morning snack and afternoon snack.

All children will need to bring a lunch if staying all day. Please have all lunches ready to eat. We cannot leave the other children to heat or prepare lunch for any child. The small thermos containers work well for hot or cold foods. Please make sure that lunches include a protein, fresh fruit and/or vegetables and offer a variety of taste, textures, and colors. You may find additional nutrition information and meal suggestions at www.myplate.gov and www.feedinglittles.com .

Squeeze Pouches & Yogurt Yogurt Tubes

Beginning at about 8 months, children are encouraged to feed themselves age-appropriate pick-up foods. As children progress in self-feeding skills, they begin to learn how to feed themselves using utensils (spoons and forks). We encourage this development as part of children's self-help skills. As a result, food packaged in squeeze-type pouches and tubes will be served in a cup to be eaten with a spoon.



Why It's Important to Give Children Hard-to-Chew Foods

Developing softer food has been a human quest since we first started cooking our food. While no one wants to go back to the days when our ancestors spent half their waking hours chewing, we might argue that the modern era of processed foods has given us so many soft foods that we miss out on important benefits of chewing. This is especially true for children who need to chew to develop their teeth and jaws.

Prevention is more than regular dental checkups, brushing, and flossing—it starts with a good diet. A diet that includes hard-to-chew foods can do wonders for your child's development and health.

Practice Makes Perfect

First, we want to stress that you always want to scale the "hard-to-chew" foods to your child's age and experience. You don't want to use raw carrots to help wean a one-year-old. This isn't just too hard for them, it can be a choking hazard, which you should also avoid.

However, perhaps parboiled firm starts to become a better choice than mushy once they start chewing. Giving your child more challenging foods in a variety of textures over time helps them to develop better chewing techniques. Becoming better chewers as children helps kids eat a healthy, varied diet when they're older.

It's important to remember that learning to chew isn't just for babies. Children continue to learn new habits of chewing as long as their teeth are developing, gaining more and better control over the years. They don't transition to mature chewing behaviors until they reach the age of 10-14.

Improved Speech

Speech is a very complicated act, using numerous muscles, nerves, and other structures of the mouth. The more practice your child gets using these structures, the better they will get at controlling them. This makes it easier for them to control their speech sounds. The better they develop their chewing patterns, the more control they have for speaking.

It's not just control that helps speech, either. Chewing encourages development of the jaws, teeth, and tongue, which gives your child the equipment they need to produce all the important sounds of language.

Facial Development

Much of our facial structure depends on the size and shape of our jaw and jaw muscles. Chewing food, especially hard foods, directly affects the size, shape, and density of the jaw bones.

Every time your child chews, they put pressure on the bones of the jaw and skull. This pressure causes bone cells to release proteins that stimulate the production of more bone. This increases the size and strength of the jaw bones. Strong chewing helps children develop a strong jaw and chin, rather than a smaller, recessed chin. More chewing also leads to better cheekbone definition.

Although chewing alone can't take the place of orthodontics, more chewing now can make it less likely that a child will need orthodontics like Invisalign, or reduce the severity of correction required.

Brain Development

So far, everything we've talked about probably seems straightforward, but the positive effects of chewing hard food go beyond the mouth and teeth. In fact, chewing can stimulate the development of your child's brain. It improves the flow of blood to the brain. Better task focus and impulse control, as well as stress reduction comes with chewing, too. The result can be beneficial brain development for children. On the other hand, chewing soft foods can affect the brain in different ways, reducing jaw control.

While we're on the subject, this isn't just important for children. More chewing might be able to postpone dementia in older adults. Studies show that dental implants might help people retain more brain function as they get older because it's easier to chew with implants than with dentures.

Dental Health

Chewing hard foods is good for your dental health. Hard foods take more chewing, which stimulates the production of more saliva. Saliva has many benefits for your teeth. It kills harmful oral bacteria, neutralizes harmful acid, and supplies minerals that help teeth stay strong.

Many hard foods are also good meal-fininishers that can clean your teeth when you eat them. Of course, sugar-free gum is a good choice after eating, because it cleans your teeth, removing food debris and bacteria. Carrots, celery, and apples can have a similar effect. Ending a meal with these types of foods can be almost as effective as brushing your teeth after eating, and in some ways it's better for you.

You might not be able to get your child to brush their teeth after lunch, but ending lunch with a tooth-cleaning food might be more reasonable.

Overall Health

More chewing of hard foods can also improve your child's overall health. First, it can reduce their risk of obesity. Spending more time chewing hard foods gives the brain time to catch up on how full the stomach is. This, combined with the low calorie density of the foods, helps children avoid overeating.

Chewing gives your stomach more time to digest. Plus the more time your child spends chewing, the more the food will be digested before they swallow it, which can reduce the risk of indigestion.

Saliva also contains powerful antioxidants, so the more time chewing, the more they can neutralize oxidants that contribute to cancer risk.

Oral Health Begins at Home

If you want to maintain good oral health for you and your family, it begins at home. Developing healthy diet habits and oral hygiene from a young age can help your children grow up healthy and happy.

Dr. Robert W. Fornalczyk, DDS

WAITING LIST POLICY

To be placed on our waiting list for enrollment, a completed pre-registration form and non-refundable registration fee must be received (\$150.00 per child or \$300.00 per family). This will be applicable until a space is available for your child. No verbal requests will be accepted for placement on the waiting list. Priority is given to staff and current families of SHECC. Pre-registration forms may be completed through our website at www.sacredheartecc.com.

WITHDRAWAL

If a child is withdrawn from SHECC, a *minimum of two weeks* written notice is required so that the vacancy can be filled by another child. All tuition fees are due up to that date.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

This booklet has been supplied to answer many of your questions. Please contact your child's regular teacher or the director if you have questions or concerns.

Parents are informed of the activities of SHECC through unit summaries, notices and signs posted throughout the Center. SHECC also uses the BRIGHTWHEEL APP. Each adult that may be dropping off or picking up your child MUST be registered with the BRIGHTWHEEL app.

From time to time, we will be offering informative programs for parents and children, programs put on by the children, family picnics, special luncheons, and a covered dish dinner. It is requested that parents make a special effort to attend as many of these functions as possible. Your attendance gives your child the extra support they need. During December, we have our Parent Appreciation Night and provide free childcare for one evening so parents can shop for Christmas or just relax.

Please do not ask teachers to talk with you during class time. They will be happy to schedule a conference to discuss any concerns regarding your child. Close cooperation and understanding between parents and our staff is essential to providing a safe and wholesome experience for all of our children.

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

Our fundraising activities help provide a necessary source of extra funds for the center. These extra funds help keep the tuition as low as possible. We ask that each family please commit to support the center by volunteering or supporting our fundraising events or by raising \$100 through fundraising activities. Events that are held annually are: A Spring and Fall photo session; Cookie-Dough Fundraiser, Kumquat Festival, and "Lenten Fish Fry's." Others may be scheduled throughout the year. Many of these not only raise funds for the childcare center, but they also allow us to reach out into our parish community and the surrounding community. Developing a spirit of community is an especially important aspect of our mission. Your support is especially important to us.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

An important part of SHECC's curriculum is exposing the children to many and varied experiences within the community. Therefore, several special activities are built into the preschool year. Parents will be informed of special activities in advance through Brightwheel, yearly calendar, unit summaries, newsletters, flyers and/or permission forms sent home for each activity. We encourage parents to join us for our special activities (State and local regulations permitting). If you do not want your child to attend a special activity, you may need to make other arrangements for the care of your child for this day.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE



*If children live with criticism,
They learn to condemn.*

*If children live with hostility,
They learn to fight.*

*If children live with ridicule,
They learn to be shy.*

*If children live with shame,
They learn to feel guilty.*

*If children live with tolerance,
They learn to be patient.*

*If children live with encouragement,
They learn confidence.*

*If children live with praise,
They learn to appreciate.*

*If children live with fairness,
They learn justice.*

*If children live with security,
They learn to have faith.*

*If children live with approval,
They learn to like themselves.*

*If children live with acceptance and friendship,
They learn to find love in the world.*