



Mary, Mother of the Light Academy

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc.
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State of Florida License 50-51-1581135

Dear Preschool Family,

Our warmest welcome is extended to you and your child. An early childhood experience transitions the child from the warm, loving world of their family and home to surroundings that reflect that same feeling. We are truly grateful that you have chosen Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. for that very important early childhood transition.

Please, take the time to look over this handbook. Our policies are designed and revised to comply with all the rules and regulations set forth by the State of Florida. We are obligated to adhere to these policies and be accountable through inspections and training sessions. We are an extension of Mary, Mother of the Light Church and follow their educational ministry policy. We are committed to keeping your child safe and loved in a clean, obstacle free, age appropriate and Christian environment.

If at any time you are uncertain about a policy, please feel free to phone or email the Academy office for prompt and complete answers.

Once again, welcome to Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc.

With God's Blessings,

Judy Harris

Judy Harris
Director

Jennifer Dunn

Jennifer Dunn
Assistant Director

Rev. Gary George

Rev. Gary George
Executive Administrator/Owner

**If we allowed children to show us what they can do,
Rather than merely accepting what they usually do,
I feel certain we would be in for some grand surprises.**

Mem Fox

Staff Introductions

Leadership Team

Judy Harris	Director
Jennifer Dunn	Assistant Director
Rev. Gary George	Executive Administrator/Owner

Creative Centers

Susan Fiebiger	Music
Wandi Santiago	Art
Wandi Santiago	Spanish
Judy Harris	Bible Enrichment
Crystal Farris	Creative Movement

Early Discovery (2½ year olds)

Joyce Broom	Teacher
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Little Learners (3 year olds)

Kayla Neeld	Teacher
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VPK (4 year olds)

Melissa Mesteller	Lead Teacher
Cindy Metzger	Teacher
Kathy Collier	Teacher

Aides

Susan Fiebiger	Aide
Crystal Farris	Aide
Alicia Azzi	Aide
Jessical Haskell	Aide
Lana Prince	Aide

Kids Club

Cindy Metzger	Teacher (a.m.)
Kathy Collier	Teacher (p.m.)

Mission Statement:

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. (MMOLA) provides each child with a positive, fun, and safe environment to grow in a well-balanced curriculum according to his or her age. We offer an environment to build self-confidence and self-esteem, while encouraging children to be harmonious in the world and with each other and provide them with a deeper understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Purpose:

MMOLA is an extension of Mary, Mother of the Light Church; therefore, operating in a Christian environment. Our Preschool seeks to challenge, motivate and enrich each student.

Philosophy:

MMOLA believes that children learn through hands-on discovery and play in a loving, nurturing and safe environment. We are sensitive to the child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. We will provide developmentally appropriate curriculum that will help each child develop at his or her own developmental level. We encourage learning and the love of knowledge.



We believe in providing a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child friendly. Classrooms are arranged for optimal learning and provide choices at a range of developmental levels. Learning centers allow children the opportunity to explore, to experience, and most importantly to succeed.

The strength of our program is the experienced and dedicated staff. We support the teachers with training, resources, and the freedom to create a unique learning environment. We provide opportunities for the staff to share ideas and grow professionally. Our teachers create a caring and nurturing atmosphere that sparks each child's creativity and positive self-image.

We believe in positive methods of discipline. We establish consistent and appropriate limits to help children co-exist in their world. Our programs are designed to develop in children a sense of independence and responsibility, while instilling a respect for others.

Parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between parents and teachers. This will benefit the child. We encourage daily communication between parents and preschool staff. Our doors are always open to parents at all times.

Our preschool values people: the children in our care, their parents and family, and our employees. We continually work and pray to earn the trust that has been placed in us. We strive each day to provide the best Christian early childhood education possible.

History:

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy was established in 2015 with a total enrollment of 37 children. Our first school year was an adventurous one filled with many blessings, including wonderful families. As we enter our ninth year, we are now incorporated and we have 50 students enrolled! Our mission to serve the community continues to grow with God's blessing. Mary, Mother of the Light Catholic Church began its journey in North Palm Beach and moved here to Tequesta in 2013.

Program Objectives and Goals:

MMOLA's objective is to treat every child as an individual, always recognizing that they are all on a different level of development.

- We are responsible for the safety, positive enjoyment and the infusion of a love of lifelong learning.
- We commit to pray for each child every day.
- We understand the importance of encouraging new friendships and the simple pleasure of each child relaxing and staying focused.
- It is our job to provide positive discipline techniques and help children develop and use their problem-solving skills.
- We contribute to the development of physical growth, creativity, self-concept, social awareness and intellectual curiosity.

Communication:

We will speak with you on the telephone or one on one for PERSONAL information you need to know. When general announcements are made, we use our MMOLA PRIVATE Facebook page or your EMAIL. We ask all parents to sign into our private Facebook page to keep up with daily activities and announcements. It's also a fun way to see your child's picture. Again, only MMOLA current year families are on this Facebook page. The daily white boards at our sign-in entrances will keep you updated with weekly events, any changes to our calendar and announcements. When a general email is sent out, special signs go up on this board so you know to check your email. Your child's teacher will give you monthly calendars and notices in your child's cubby.

Classroom Cameras:

The cameras in each of the classrooms are for the use of the parents/legal guardians and teachers ONLY. The User names and Passwords ARE NOT to be given out to other members of your family or friends. This is a strict conflict of the confidentiality laws. If we discover there is a violation of sharing, MMOLA has the right to disconnect the camera from your viewing. By signing the Classroom Security Camera form, you agree to these terms. Your child's safety comes first and we thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

The system is called Alibi Witness. The best way to set it up is on your cell phone. There is an Alibi Witness App you can download onto your phone then please follow the directions we give you on the handout with your password.

MMOLA Facebook Family Page:

MMOLA has a PRIVATE family Facebook page. You will receive an email to be invited onto our Facebook page. This is where you can see pictures of your child in their class, doing special activities and having fun with their classmates. Again, this is for your immediate family only. For the security of your child, we will not allow anyone else to view this Facebook page. It is by invitation only by the MMOLA Director.

Policies of Operation

Eligibility for School Enrollment:

- Child is at least 2½ years of age
- 3 years old by March 1st of the following year
- Fully Potty trained (pull-ups not permitted; underwear required)
- Can communicate verbally their needs and wants



Admission:

Parents are required to complete all forms and information necessary for each child's file. The following items must be in a child's confidential file in order to begin school:

1. A student admission application properly filled out, signed and submitted.
2. All fees related to registration must be paid before student starts the first day of school.
3. A student health exam and certificate of immunization (or Religious Exemption from Immunizations) provided by the Palm Beach County Health Department or a Licensed Florida Doctor.
4. Official form entitled "Child Care Application for Enrollment".
5. 'Permission to Participate in School Activities & Receive Emergency Care' form.
6. 'Getting to Know Your Child' form.
7. 'Photo Release' form.
8. 'Classroom Security Cameras/Withdrawal/Facebook Signature' form.
9. Release of Liability form.

Application, Registration & Supply, and Tuition Policy Payment Schedule:

Application Fee: \$150.00 This is a one-time, non-refundable, payment for each school year which is due upon completing and presenting application for enrollment.

Registration and Supply fee: \$500.00 for general students and for VPK extended day students. This is a one-time, non-refundable, payment for each school year. Payment is due when parent/guardian has been notified of acceptance into the Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. program. A student may not begin school until the registration and supply fee is paid in full.

Tuition: Based on the 180 days per year a child will attend Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc., the annual tuition amount has been paced evenly among the months of August through May.

Please note preferred methods of payment are with a check, cash or debit card.

Payment Schedule: Tuition is due by the first of each month. Other arrangements can be made with the Director.

Late Fees

- A late tuition fee of **\$25** will be added each month a tuition payment is not paid by the 10th of same month.
- If parents are unable to pay tuition due to economic reasons, or temporary unforeseen circumstances, they may apply for a financial payment plan.
 - Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis. Parent(s) will meet with the Preschool Leadership Team to discuss a financial arrangement.
 - Good faith payments are expected as we continue to meet our expenses of payroll, utilities and supplies.
- If your account becomes delinquent over 30 days, a credit card number must be supplied to the Preschool office to bring your account current.
- If your account is delinquent over 90 days, it will be turned over to a collection agency and you may be asked to withdraw your child from school.

Withdrawal from MMOLA

If, at any time during the school year, you decide to withdraw your child from Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc., a two-week written notice must be presented to the Director. The person(s) financially responsible for the child's enrollment will be committed to pay tuition up to the end of the two-week notice. If advance payments beyond this notice have been made, MMOLA will reimburse any tuition and pizza money.

Arrival and Dismissal of Students:

- Arrival: All children will be brought to the gate of the playground by their parent(s) or designated adult at 8:30 a.m., hugs and kisses given, and then a staff member will take your child into the building.
- Parents or designated adult shall sign child in with the Directors by initialing the class roster that is provided.
- Doors will only remain open for 15 minutes with Administration monitoring and then door and gate are locked again. After 8:45 a.m., all children will gain entrance through the front door.
- *We want to emphasize how important it is for your child to arrive by 8:45, this allows them free play time with their classmates and ease into their day. Please arrive on time.*
- Children will be picked up from their classroom by their Parent or designated adult after signing them out at the front entry door.
- If you will be late, PLEASE call the office as a courtesy. We will keep your child in class up to 10 minutes, after 10 minutes your child will be placed in Kids Clubs (after care program) and charged.
- If someone other than a parent or designated person will be picking up your child at the end of the day, you must notify the school in writing or call the office and the person picking up your child must show legal identification before the child will be released into their custody.
- If a custody agreement is in place and there is a court order prohibiting a person from picking up a child, we must have the agreement on file at all times.
- Children staying for Kids Club will be dropped off or dismissed through the front door.



Kids Club:

- Morning or After-care program is called Kids Club. The cost is \$12.00 per hour.
- Morning: 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. free play. You can send in a light breakfast for your child if you run out of time at home. (Remember we do not have a kitchen to heat up food.)
- Afternoon: 2:00-4:30. This is a lightly structured afternoon that gives children more outdoor time, arts and crafts, stories, and games. Please provide a snack.
- Kids Club can be used on an "as needed" basis or every day. Notify us at drop off or call the preschool office. Charges can be paid the day used or we can bill your account.
- If you pick up your child 10+ minutes after the hour, you will be charged the next hour's fee.

Fun Friday Pizza Lunch:

MMOLA offers Fun Friday Pizza Lunch each week. The cost is \$5.00 per week which will give your child 2 slices of pizza. As his/her parent, you agree to provide the remainder of your child's nutritious lunch. The cost will be charged to your preschool account monthly according to the number of Friday's we are in school that month. This is an optional program and you can cancel this special any time. The pizza is bought from a local pizza restaurant in Jupiter/Tequesta. Sign up with the office.

Lunch & Learn Hour (VPK 11:30 students):

Get an extra hour of fun and academic education for just \$15/day, or \$200/month if attending daily. Your child will enjoy eating lunch with their classmates, learning social skills and added literacy and math skills. Monday-Thursday your child will bring in their lunch. On Fridays your child can join our Fun Friday Pizza Lunch for \$5.00/Friday! The cost can be charged to your preschool account.

Super Fun Fridays:

MMOLA holds Super Fun Fridays the last Friday of each month. You can sign your child up for an ice cream treat for \$2.00 per month. This is served after their lunch. The cost can be charged to your preschool account. This program is a small Fundraiser and we ask for families to sign up to donate the ice cream each month.

Safety:

Our parking area can be a busy place at certain times of the day. Please help us in providing a safe environment. We offer the following tips and ask for your cooperation.

- Park in a designated parking spot.
- Upon arrival, please turn off your car. **Do not leave valuables or children in the car. Tequesta Police have a no tolerance policy with leaving children in the car. If we know a child is in a car alone, we have been told to call them. They will be here to check.**
- **Always lock your vehicle.**
- Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot.
- Please make sure your child **doesn't run** ahead or behind you upon arrival and pick up.
- **Please, remember to drive slowly at all times in our parking lot.**
- ***When talking with other parents outside, please keep an eye on your children at all times. They are not permitted to run on concrete, run through the plants and destroy the plant life on the church grounds. Please make sure you can see them at all times.***
- ***The State of Florida, specifically the Office of Family and Community Services, has developed flyers called "Getting In; Getting Out...". They are required to be included in this Handbook. You can find them at the end, please review them carefully and follow all the procedures. We will follow this no tolerance policy.***
- For families with a court-ordered protective child in their homes, please read the Rilya Wilson Act at the end of this Handbook. Children are required to attend school every scheduled day.

Personal Hygiene of Students:

1. Each child must wash hands with soap for 20 seconds then rinse with running water when entering the school in the morning, before snacks, lunch and after using the toilet.
2. Each child will be provided a disposable towel to dry hands.
3. Hand sanitizer and baby wipes will be used in-between handwashing.
4. All toilet articles, such as combs/hairbrushes must be labeled with the child's name and shall not be shared with others.
5. **Parents must supply a change of clothes for their child in a closeable plastic bag with your child's name on it.** If change of clothes gets used, be sure another set of clothes is brought in the next school day.
6. **As stated in School Requirements, children must be fully potty trained outside the home to attend school. They must be able to ask the teacher to go to the bathroom, pull their pants off and on and wipe themselves. If a child has an accident, the parent will be called to change their child if the child cannot change himself or herself.** We are not licensed to change a child. Soiled clothing will be put in a Ziploc bag and placed in child's cubby for parent to take home and wash. Again, extra set of clean clothes must be provided the next school day.

COVID Special Guidelines and Measures:

If your child displays symptoms for Covid or tests positive for Covid, please keep them home for 5 days or after their symptoms have gone (after the 5 days).

Children with Special Needs:

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. -

- does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.
- is dedicated to supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- If a child requires special accommodations for participation, we will do our best to find ways and resources to serve that child and their family.

Health Concerns:

In a perfect world, children are all healthy, get enough rest and never come to school where another child is sick. This is not reality and it is for this reason we adhere to our policies when they are sick.

1. Consistent and reasonable bedtimes really help keep children happy and well. Give your child the gift of a routine in the evenings. Some suggestions for peaceful bedtimes are, gentle quiet stretches, relaxing bath time, reading calmly and softly, soft music, back rubs and parent/child prayer time. Evenings should reflect a calm, serene, and quiet atmosphere. Please keep your children away from violent and graphic movies, TV and computer games. Studies have proven that NO electronics 1 hour before bedtime relaxes the brain.
2. Encourage children to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. This proven prevention works well to keep those colds, flu, and other communicable diseases at a minimum.
3. A healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains and lots of water will be a great blessing to your child. Keep sugary treats at a minimum.
4. If you observe the following symptoms, keep your child home and make an appointment with their doctor:
Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
Headache or body aches
Temperature of 100 degrees or more – stay home for 24 hours after fever free
Eyes that are pink, burning or itching or producing discharge (may be pink eye)
Persistent cough or bronchial distress or sore throat
Complaints of ear pain or drainage from ear
Rashes, skin lesions and sores that are undiagnosed by a physician
Vomiting – stay home for 24 hours after symptoms stop
Diarrhea – stay home for 24 hours after symptoms stop
5. If you have a child with allergies and, therefore a runny nose, we are requiring a doctor's note stating that your child has allergies causing this side effect. As the Covid viruses have the same symptoms of upper respiratory infection we would like this note in our files.
6. Read the brochure "**The Flu: A Guide for Parents**", at the end of this Handbook.

We are a preschool for "healthy" children. A child who is not well does not benefit from our program and can adversely affect the health of our other children. If you have any doubts about your child's health, please keep your child home and contact your family doctor.

In the event your child becomes sick while at preschool, you will be promptly notified. We expect that you will come to the preschool as quickly as possible to take your child home.

Medications:

The following requirements are necessary for a child to be dispensed medication:

1. Medication must be in its original prescription container and labeled with the child's name, the medication name, recommended dosage and doctor's name and license number.
2. All medications must be accompanied by a doctor's note on physician's stationery with directions, dates, student's name, name of medicine and physician's signature.
3. A Director will dispense medication at appropriate time and log the time in the medication log book.
4. Over-the-Counter medication will not be dispensed by an administrator unless prescribed by a doctor and written request signed by the doctor and parents.

**Communicable Diseases:**

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to the following:

Illness:	Child may return to school when:
Chicken pox	24 hours after lesions have crusted*
Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye	24 hours after start of treatment
Hepatitis A	At least 7 days after onset of jaundice*
Measles	At least 4 days after onset of rash*
Mumps	14 days after swelling begins*
Bacterial Meningitis	When Health Dept gives Okay*
Strep throat	24 hours after start of treatment*
Fever	24 hours after temperature is normal
Croup	After illness has subsided*
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment*
Pin Worms	After treatment is complete*
Vomiting	24 hours after last incident
Diarrhea	24 hours after last incident
Covid Viruses	5 days after testing positive or systems gone*

*Source: US Dept of Health and Human Services or CDC

Communicable Diseases Procedure:

1. If a child shows signs of severe or communicable disease, parents will be called immediately. Child will be separated from the class.
2. The Director will contact the Palm Beach County Health Department for consultation regarding treatment.
3. The child will be made comfortable until parent arrives.
4. The Director will notify staff members, Palm Beach County Health Department, and all parents of participating children.
5. The child's confidentiality will be maintained at all costs.
6. Children with an Immunization Exemption on file will not be permitted to attend school if an outbreak of a communicable disease is in our area or in our school.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

If a child has been injured at school or gets ill during the day –

- We will make every effort to contact the parent,
- or someone on the emergency pick-up information list that has been provided for us.
- Each staff member has been certified to administer first aid and CPR.
- Emergency phone numbers, including poison control, and other non-emergency numbers are posted by every phone on campus.
- Teachers are equipped with walkie-talkies to keep in contact with administration and each other.
- We will inform parents of all injuries, large and small through the use of an Accident/Incident Report. Parents will receive a copy and one will be kept in the child's permanent file at MMOLA.

Minor Injuries:



Most preschool injuries are easily handled with the First Aid kit provided in each classroom and out on the playground. First Aid will be applied for minor injuries.

1. No matter how minor, parents will be informed.
2. All injuries require documentation through an Accident/Incident Report.

If a child is bitten by a bug and is not allergic (indicated on medical records), we will wash the skin for 5 minutes with soap and water, then apply ice. We are not permitted to administer topical ointments or over-the-counter medications to the child. Parent must come to school to apply over-the-counter medications.

Life threatening Injuries:

If a child requires emergency care, is unresponsive, or has been hurt severely:

- We will call 911 first.
- Parents will be notified second (or at the same time by another staff member).
- We will continue with first aid until the paramedics arrive.
- If a child needs to be taken to the hospital, they will travel by ambulance; MMOLA Staff are not authorized to remove children from campus at any time.
- We will stay in contact with the parents or emergency contact at all times until you meet up with your child.
- An Accident/Incident Report will be filled out on all injuries.

Lice:

Unfortunately, we do experience outbreaks of lice that are brought in from outside sources.

- When we do find a child with lice, we isolate the child and notify the parents immediately.
- We inspect the remaining children in that classroom.
- If necessary, we inspect other classrooms if they were in contact with another class.
- Notification is sent via our private Facebook page. The class immediately affected will receive a notice in their cubby with helpful suggestions on how to eliminate and prevent further infestations.
- Classroom and all items in it are sanitized that evening.
- Child may return the next day after they have been treated and all signs of lice are gone.

Fire/Tornado Drills:

Each month our academy is required by the Palm Beach County Health Department to practice a fire or tornado drill with the students. The students are informed on what to do when they hear the alarms inside the building. Practice makes perfect. The children are told that it is only practice on what to do **IF** there was a real fire or tornado.

Lockdown Procedures:

Unfortunately, we now live in an era where we need to take precautions from the outside world. In the event we get a call from the Tequesta Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, or we see suspicious activity on our property and need to lock the children and staff in the building, the following steps will be taken (by instructions from the Tequesta Police Department):

- If the children are outside, we quickly and calmly bring them inside.
- If we see suspicious activity, the Director will call the Tequesta Police Department.
- All children will be taken to an area of the building/campus that is safe.
- Lights are turned off, windows covered, doors checked to be locked.
- Children are kept away from windows, kept quiet with quiet activities, snacks and water provided if necessary.
- Parents WILL NOT be allowed on Church/Academy campus until safety has been restored, as determined by the police.
- Parents can communicate with the Police Department as we will not be able to answer our phones or use our radios during lockdown.
- As soon as safety has been restored the Director, Assistant Director, and Teachers will start calling parents to notify you of the situation and give you the opportunity to pick up your child.
- PLEASE REMEMBER, SHOULD WE BE PLACED IN THIS SITUATION **DO NOT COME TO THE ACADEMY OR CALL US.** PLEASE CALL THE POLICE DEPT FOR UPDATE INFORMATION.

Hurricanes and other dangerous situations:

We take hurricane warnings and watches extremely seriously. If there is a hurricane warning that has been announced while children are at school,

- We will inform every parent as soon as possible.
- We will ask parents to pick up their children immediately.
- We will follow the Palm Beach County School District actions.
- All communications for preschool closings will be posted via our Facebook page, television, radio or telephone chains set up by the Teachers.
- **KEEP ALL EMERGENCY NUMBERS, CONTACTS AND OTHER INFORMATION PERTINENT TO YOUR CHILD CURRENT WITH THE ACADEMY OFFICE.** TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO CONTACT YOU. WHEN A CELL PHONE IS NOT ON OR NUMBERS ARE DISCONNECTED, WE ARE REQUIRED TO CONTACT THE POLICE FOR ASSISTANCE.

Discipline and Challenging Behavior Policy:

Discipline

Discipline is viewed as a process of learning self-control, respect for others and personal responsibility. This discipline approach recognizes and values children as human beings and children of God. Children who are encouraged to make decisions learn that their choices count. They can make mistakes and learn from them. To help children learn this process, the following guidelines are in place:

- Children will be a part of the decision-making process for setting clear, concise rules and establishing limits;
- Teachers will attempt to anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors;
- Teachers will remind children of expectations, rules, and limits;
- Teachers will encourage children to respect other people and their property;
- Teachers will help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts, and express their needs and desires;
- Teachers will help children to work through frustrations and develop the skills necessary for entering into social groups, developing friendships, and helping and playing cooperatively with others;

- Teachers will guide and assist children in the conflict resolution process;
- Teachers may remove a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors continue and help the child find an appropriate activity in which to participate;
- If a child physically or verbally hurts another child, he/she will be separated from the other child and comfort will be given to the injured child. The child who was aggressive will then help comfort the child who was hurt and the parents will be informed. An Accident/Incident Report Form will be filled out for each child, signed by witness, Director and parent. Two copies of each report will be made, one copy sent home with each child and one copy given to the office for the child's file.
- MMOLA staff will hold a conference with parents if serious or reoccurring inappropriate behaviors continue.

Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff at MMOLA is trained to be respectful and purposeful in their interactions with children. The teachers take steps to prevent potentially challenging behavior by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children;
- Evaluating and changing their responses based on the child's individual needs;
- Modeling turn taking, sharing, empathy, compassion, and other caring behaviors;
- Helping children negotiate communication, materials, and supplies with others;
- Helping children develop self-control through varied opportunities to learn the skills needed to regulate their emotions, behavior, and attention; and
- Helping each child feel he/she is an important part of the preschool community and God's world.

Aggressive physical behavior toward anyone is unacceptable. Foul and inappropriate language will not be tolerated in our school. The teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child displays physical or verbal aggression to another person. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, Director and parents will work as a team to develop and implement a plan that supports the child's continuing inclusion and success at MMOLA.

The following types of discipline and guidance is not condoned by MMOLA and therefore not practiced by our staff:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a student
- Hitting a student with a hand or instrument
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a student
- Subjecting a student to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a student in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a student to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the student's age

Biting and Kicking/Pushing

MMOLA takes biting and intentional kicking and pushing very seriously. Not only is the behavior detrimental, it also is a gateway for the transmission of any disease/illness that transmits by contact. Students who have been bitten will have the area cleaned with soap and water and that student's parents will be notified. Children who have been kicked or pushed will have ice applied to wounded area. MMOLA will not release any confidential information such as the child's name, medical, personal or otherwise, to any involved parties, regarding the aggressor or the victim.

The following steps will be taken to control the biting and/or kicking and pushing:

2 ½ yr olds

First offense	Family will be notified. *
Second offense	Family will be notified and student taken to Director's office. *
Third offense	Family will be asked to pick-up student immediately for the day.

3 & 4 yr olds

First offense	Family will be notified and student taken to Director's office. *
Second offense	Family will be asked to pick-up student immediately for the day.

*If skin is broken, family will be asked to pick up child for the day.

If the biting or kicking behavior continues, the family will be asked to confer with the Teacher and Director to determine a further plan of action.

Guidelines for Disciplinary Procedures

Informing the Family

Occasionally situations arise in the life of a student in a preschool setting that merit intervention. If a student's family, teacher or Director observes a situation that is felt to be outside of the normal developmental arena of the student, the following actions will be taken:

- An observation and/or behavioral report will be taken.
- A meeting will be scheduled with the student's family, his/her teacher and the Director to develop an action plan to resolve the problem. At the meeting the nature of the situation will be clarified with particular sensitivity and attention given to the current developmental stage of the student in question.

Dismissal or Suspension

The Director, in partnership with the Executive Administrator, reserves the right to dismiss a student from Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. Before dismissal, all attempts will be made to work with the student. The Director will personally meet with the teacher(s) and parent/guardian to resolve the problem. When a situation gets to this point a teacher may not meet alone with the parent/guardian; the Director must be involved. MMOLA and the parents/guardians may, at their own expense, invite any professional(s) to a meeting who might aid in resolving the problem.

If the problem persists up to 3 scheduled classes, another meeting with parents/guardians will be scheduled. If the problem still continues after 2 scheduled classes, the student will be dismissed from the academy.

Prior to the meeting between the MMOLA staff and the parents/guardians, the Director may immediately suspend a child if the Director and the Executive Administrator determine it is in the best interest of the child or the remainder of the students in the class. If at the meeting, a resolution cannot be made to assure the safety of the student or the well being or safety of the children in the class, the student will be immediately dismissed from Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc.

Discipline Policy:

Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. has specifically designed our program to provide materials that are age appropriate and ways of communicating that make for a cooperative classroom and kind hearts all around. We have also designed our class sizes to accommodate 11 children with a teacher and an assistant (6 in Early Discovery class).

In Early Childhood, children do not have all the skills or understanding to have the control of an adult mind. As they mature, they will have the skills to understand cause and effect. Our staff will take the time and model behaviors that reflect safety, good manners and kindness in the classroom and playground areas. We will do this through music, stories, pictures, and live interactions.

We provide children with safe areas where a staff member is close by to comfort the child and help the child to calm himself/herself if that is what is necessary. We will go through various ways to reflect back on the behavior that may have hurt or made a child feel unsafe. We work with the children through positive reinforcement.

If necessary, these are the steps taken to redirect negative behavior:

- Undesired situation is stopped.
- Incident is explained to the child.
- Child is asked if he/she could have made a better choice.
- If need be, child is placed in the designated "Safe Place" for the number of minutes equivalent to their age. (i.e., 3 yrs old = 3 minutes) or until the child wants to return to class activities.
- If required, child apologizes.
- Child must tell teacher what he/she did wrong and how he/she will handle situation next time.
- Child returns to class activity.
- 2nd offense the parent is spoken to at pick up.
- 3rd offense the child is taken to the Director's office and the Director talks to him/her. The redirection time is spent in the Director's office rather than the classroom. When the Director feels the child is ready to return to class, she walks the child back. An apology is made. The child returns to class activity and the parent is notified at pick up.
- A "Safe Place" has been created in each classroom for a child to go to if he/she feels mad, sad or needs to be alone.

We make a commitment to constantly communicate with the child's family about the happenings in the class. Teachers will communicate with the parent and if needed, the Director and Assistant Director will help to use a partnership with a particular area of behavior management.

Our policy is designed to keep children and their teachers thinking good thoughts and be respectful to themselves and the people in their lives.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO WATCH HOW YOU BEHAVE AND WHAT YOU SAY. YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILDREN. THEY COPY EVERYTHING YOU DO AND SAY!

Dress Code:

- Children are required to wear play clothes and **closed toe shoes**. Tennis shoes with socks are the best. Daily activities include busy and messy play. We believe children should relax and have a great time participating. They should be comfortable and safe. It is hard for children to use outdoor equipment when they are wearing their Sunday best and are afraid to get dirty.
- **Open toed shoes, crocs, dress shoes, and open toe sandals are not permitted for playground time.**

Extra Clothes: *Very, very important!* ☺

In Preschool, we do expect that children may get clothes wet due to spilling liquid on themselves or having a potty accident. They might need a change of clothes occasionally.

- Please put a full change of clothes in a zip-closed bag (shirt, shorts, socks, underwear).
- Label each article of clothing in permanent marker and label the bag with child's name on it.
- If you gave us a change of clothes in August and have not had to use them, check with the teacher to make sure the clothes still fit.

- If and when we need to use these changes of clothes, please bring in another set the next school day. Please make sure we ALWAYS HAVE UNDERWEAR.

Lost and Found:

Items left at school without a label of possession will be placed on the sign-in/out cart. If clothes are left for more than the school year, we will make a last-ditch effort at the end of the year to find the owner before it gets donated.

Please have your child leave their personal toys and "treasures" at home.

Remember to label everything with your child's name!

Our Program and Curriculum:

Each day, our very qualified staff combines constructive play with the High Scope methods and Pocket of Preschool which uses active learning to promote all facets of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative skills. Social interaction and shared imaginings often emerge in the context of constructive play, adding values over and above the benefits of reaching academic standards. These extra benefits include creativity, imagination, problem solving, eagerness to learn, ability to cooperate and stay on task, and learning how to self-regulate and be more responsible overall for one's own learning and development in general. The teachers have access to many resources which they can incorporate into their everyday teachings.

High/Scope encourages both the teacher and the child to initiate learning experiences; therefore, daily activities are not just created by the teacher, but also from the child's own interest and ideas. The curriculum's "plan-do-review" process helps children develop the ability to make decisions, become problem solvers and work together cooperatively.

The children will also have several creative centers they will enjoy each week. Their week will start with 'making a joyful noise unto the Lord!' with Music class, learning an array of fun songs. They love Creative Media, art projects galore - what imagination they have! They also use their gross and fine motor skills with Creative Movement, enjoying games of all kinds. And they also learn basic Spanish to expand their cultural growth. Our students will have Bible Enrichment classes, discovering the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ, exploring the Bible and all the stories it has to offer as well as experiencing occasional visits to the Church with our Priest.

We join Father Gary occasionally in Church for Christian instruction, prayer and singing songs. We sing or say grace before each meal. The children memorize a Bible verse each month and the 4-year olds memorize the Lord's Prayer for graduation.

VPK (Voluntary Pre-K):

This program is a Florida state funded program offered to 4-year-olds who are residents of Florida. Each student receives 540 hours (180 days) of free education preparing them for kindergarten. At MMOLA we offer this program from 8:30-11:30 a.m. each school day. It is a requirement for children in this program to attend school every scheduled day unless they are ill or have a family emergency. Please understand that the program is free to you, not to us. The state pays MMOLA for your child's attendance. When your child is absent, we do not get paid. Please schedule your family days off and vacations around our school calendar. We will ask for a donation to the school for preplanned long absences. Thank you.

Our Daily Routine:

Each day follows a similar schedule of events, providing consistency for both children and the adults that work together. We will provide every child with large and small group experiences, with time for snacks and lunch, outdoor play, enrichments such as art, and structured centers to provide each child with lots of interaction and learning.

Snacks, Lunch and Celebrations:

MMOLA does not have a cooking kitchen. Therefore, our parents need to provide:

- one (1) healthy snack with a drink (juice or water, soda is not permitted) and
- one (1) well-balanced lunch with a drink (juice or water)
- If your child is staying in our after-care program (Kids Club), they will need one (1) extra snack if staying past 3 p.m.
- Please provide a refillable thermos of WATER each day as we do not let children use the drinking fountains to avoid passing germs. Thank you!
- Children are not permitted to share their food with one another.
- If a parent forgets to provide a lunch for their child, we will call you to bring a lunch for them.
- We are not able to refrigerate or heat foods, so include a cold pack or thermos in their lunch box. Don't forget to include a napkin, spoon and/or fork!

BIRTHDAYS: Children are permitted to bring in a special treat for their class for their birthdays.

- **Store bought snacks allowed only.** Unfortunately, the Health Department of Palm Beach County will not permit us to bring in home baked goods.
- Check with your child's teacher on ingredients in case other classmates have food allergies.
- The key to success is to keep it simple and small. (Large cupcakes and cakes are not permitted.)
- If providing "goodie bags", please keep candy containing sugar and dyes to a minimum.
- We will celebrate during the regularly scheduled snack time or lunch time.
- Children will have a birthday crown provided by the classroom teacher.
- Party invitations may be left in class cubbies only if the entire class is being invited, this way no one feels left out. Please, we are not responsible for lost or misplaced invitations left in cubbies.
- If you would like to give out individual party invitations that do not include your child's entire class, please ask parents for their addresses so you can mail the invitations.
- **Balloons are NOT PERMITTED.** They are considered a hazard and danger to the children in an enclosed environment.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

- MMOLA will be responsible for scheduling both formal and informal conferences as deemed necessary.
- If a parent or teacher has a particular concern and they feel input from a Director would help, the teacher is to set up a time which is convenient to all parties involved.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to provide childcare during the meeting time if it is after the child's class time or the child may attend Kid's Club until 4:30 p.m. at no charge.
- Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All information discussed will be respected with the utmost privacy.

Formal parent/teacher conferences will be held annually in March for Early Discovery and Little Learner classes and in April for VPK classes. (Dates subject to change). Watch your calendars and newsletters for reminders. In addition, VPK students receive a formal assessment of their skills in September, February and April. As part of the VPK program, these reports are shared with the parents to show their child's increased achievements throughout the year.

Volunteering:

All events of the school year will be presented so you can determine where you would like to volunteer. Some of these are:

- PTO – A group of parents designated to oversee all the events at MMOLA this year. We would like 1 or 2 parents from each class and plan to meet on a regular basis.
- Occasional Volunteer Day*: Occasionally, when needed, we will announce a date asking for your assistance. We will have tables set up in the Hall with all kinds of projects that our teachers need done, such as cutting out, sorting, stuffing, assembling, etc. This is a great opportunity for you to socialize with other parents. Check our white board easel at the front entrance or watch our private Facebook page for the dates!
- Helping at Special Events*: If donating your time once or twice a year to assist us with an event is your thing, we would love to have you! Book fairs, Easter Eggs, Restaurant Kick Back Nights, etc.
- Shopping: Love to shop? We could always use an errand runner. When you know you are going to be at a grocery store, Walmart, Home Depot or Costco, please let us know...we always have a list. We can send you with cash or reimburse you.

Cubbies:

Each child is assigned a special cubby for them to put all their belongings they need for the day at school. This is their special spot. The teacher uses the cubbies to put important information for the parents to read and all special art work or homework is placed in your child's cubby. Items from the cubbies will be sent home with your child at dismissal.

Fund Raising:

We strive to have fundraisers where our families might normally spend their money and we always encourage our Church members to participate, as well as the community when it is suitable. All events are subject to change. Some of our planned fund-raising activities for this school year are:

- **Blazing Banner Sponsor** (Year-Round)

Become a School Sponsor with a donation of \$250.00 or more. A banner will be posted on our school fence, on our MMOLA Family and MMOLA Friends Facebook pages, and on our Website advertising your business name or family name thanking you for your support. This is a wonderful way to advertise your company if you own a business.

- **School Sponsors** (Year-Round)

There are 3 levels of school supporters which correspond to different monetary contributions. A certificate acknowledging your support will be hung on the wall in the entryway to the school building and posted on our MMOLA Family Facebook page.

Razzle Dazzle Red	\$25 - \$49
Bravo Blue	\$50 - \$99
Yahoo Yellow	\$100 or greater

- **Scholastic Book Fair and Book Fair Family Fun Night*** (Fall & Spring)

Each Fall and Spring MMOLA hosts a book fair. We always encourage parents to read to their children. Volunteers are needed to help set up and take down the fair. In the Fall we have a Family Fun Night wearing our Pajamas! We look forward to having our parents be a part of this exciting event.

- **Student Photos*** – (Fall & Spring)
Professional pictures are taken in November and again in April of your child for your purchase. Fall pictures may be used for holiday gifts and the Spring pictures include class pictures and Graduation photos for our 4-year-olds.
- **Book Orders** (all year)
Most months you will receive a flyer from Scholastic Book Clubs. Take a look at the flyer and if you see a book that you want to purchase for your child, fill out the order form on the back of the flyer. Please make the checks payable to **Scholastic Book Club** and hand in your order and check to the office by the due date that is stamped on the flyer. You can also order online with a credit card. Every dollar that a family spends benefits our school with stories for the classrooms and curriculum for the teachers. Reading to your child is a beneficial and rewarding experience.
- **Kick Back Dinners**
Join us at selected restaurants or fun family places where you can meet up with other school families, enjoy a meal out and the school profits from all the sales!
- **March Gladness of Baskets** (date in March to be announced)
Each classroom will sponsor a themed basket to be raffled off by our school. A highly competitive event!

Missions

Each year we like to donate to the BOX OF JOY campaign. This mission is perfect for our children as it can involve giving to children their own age. We will receive shoe box size boxes. We ask that you take your child to a 'dollar store' or a Walmart or Target and fill the boxes with items on the list provided. Enclose cash or a check for the shipping, about \$10 and return the box to school. The boxes are distributed to children who recently experienced a disaster such as hurricanes, tornadoes, mud slides, war, etc. This mission starts in October.

We also like to collect your unwanted Halloween candy. We send that to soldiers overseas as a treat for them. But they also give it out to children they come in contact with.

Announcements/Calendars:

- Each month you shall receive from your child's teacher a calendar filled with activities that are scheduled for the month. This is a very important way that the teachers let you know what is happening in the classroom.
- Every month the Director will keep you posted of all monthly activities through Facebook postings, notices placed in your child's cubby, emails and the white board easel at the front door.
- Please take time to read all the information that goes home with your child to stay on top of the activities.

Smoking and Alcoholic Beverages:

- Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc. and Mary, Mother of the Light Church is a smoke-free campus. There is never an appropriate time to smoke anything around a young child.
- The use of alcohol and drugs is prohibited on campus grounds.



Each day is a gift from *GOD*. We are grateful that you have chosen *Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc.* for your child. We plan to have fun with your child while teaching them that they are a daily blessing to each one of us. Every student will be accepted just as they are with their unique backgrounds, values, manners and vocabulary.

We are creating new memories for these children. Their hearts and souls are new and fresh, straight from *God*. We will pray with them, smile with them, communicate with them, hug and laugh with them, and never forget to wish them well each day.

And a huge **THANKS** from *Ms. Judy, Ms. Jennifer, Father Gary* and the Staff. You, the parent, are an integral part of the ministry and it means so much to us that you are here and willingly give us a part of your everyday lives. You are truly a blessing.

See the following pages for required Florida Department of Health documents. Please feel free to print part(s) or this entire Handbook for your reference.



Parent's Role

A parent's role in quality child care is vital:

- Inquire about the qualifications and experience of child care staff, as well as staff turnover.
- Know the facility's policies and procedures.
- Communicate directly with caregivers.
- Visit and observe the facility.
- Participate in special activities, meetings, and conferences.
- Talk to your child about their daily experiences in child care.
- Arrange alternate care for your child when they are sick.
- Familiarize yourself with the child care standards used to license the child care facility.

Quality Child Care

Quality child care offers healthy, social, and educational experiences under qualified supervision in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Children in these settings participate in daily, age-appropriate activities that help develop essential skills, build independence and instill self-respect. When evaluating the quality of a child care setting, you should consider the facility's quality indicators related to activities, caregivers, and environment.

Quality Activities

- Activities are children initiated and teacher facilitated.
- Activities include social exchanges with all children.

Quality Caregivers

- Caregivers are friendly and eager to care for children.
- Caregivers accept family cultural and ethnic differences.

Quality Environments

- Environments are clean, safe, inviting, comfortable, and child-friendly.
- Environments provide easy access to age-appropriate toys.



KNOW YOUR CHILD CARE FACILITY

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

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

www.myflfamilies.com/childcare

Know Your Child Care Facility - General Requirements

Every licensed child care facility must meet the minimum state child care licensing standards pursuant to s. 402.305, F.S., and ch. 65C-22, F.A.C., which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Valid license posted for parents to see.
- All staff appropriately screened.
- Maintain appropriate transportation practices (if transportation is provided).
- Provide parents with written disciplinary and expulsion practices used by the facility.
- Provide access to the facility during normal hours of operation.
- Maintain minimum staff-to-child ratios.

Health Related Requirements

Emergency procedures that include:

- Posting Florida Abuse Hotline number along with other emergency numbers.
- Staff trained in first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the premises at all times.
- Fully stocked first aid kit.
- A working fire extinguisher and documented monthly fire drills with children and staff.
- Medication and hazardous materials are inaccessible and out of children's reach.

Ratios



Age of Child	Child: Teacher Ratio
Infant	4:1
1 year old	6:1
2 year old	11:1
3 year old	15:1
4 year old	20:1
5 year old and up	25:1

Training Requirements

- 40-hour introductory child care training.
- 10-hour in-service training annually.
- 0.5 continuing education unit of approved training or 5 clock hours of training in early literacy and language development.
- Director Credential for all facility directors.

Food and Nutrition

Post a meal and snack menu that provides daily nutritional needs of the children (if meals are provided).

Record Keeping

Maintain accurate records that include:

- Children's health exam/immunization record.
- Medication records.
- Enrollment information.
- Personnel records.
- Daily attendance.
- Accidents and incidents.
- Parental permission for field trips and administration of medications.

Physical Environment

- Maintain sufficient usable indoor floor space for playing, working, and napping.
- Provide space that is clean and free of litter and other hazards.
- Provide sufficient outdoor play area.
- Maintain sufficient lighting and inside temperatures.
- Equipped with age and developmentally appropriate toys.
- Provide appropriate bathroom facilities and other furnishings.
- Provide isolation area for children who become ill.
- Practice proper hand washing, toileting, and diapering activities.



To report suspected or actual cases of child abuse or neglect, call the Florida Abuse Hotline
1.800.962.2873

What is the influenza (flu) virus?

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



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

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



"The Flu" A Guide for Parents



For additional information, please visit
myflorida.com/childcare or contact your
local licensing office below:

CF/PI 175-70, June 2009

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

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

My signature below verifies receipt of the brochure on Influenza Virus, The Flu, A Guide to Parents:

Name: _____
Child's Name: _____
Date Received: _____
Signature: _____

Please complete and return this portion of the brochure to your child care provider, in order for them to maintain it in their records.



What should I do if my child gets sick?

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

CALL OR TAKE YOUR CHILD TO A DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY IF YOUR CHILD:

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



How can I protect my child from the flu?

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

What can I do to prevent the spread of germs?

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

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Cover mouth/nose during coughs and sneezes. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Limit contact with people who show signs of illness.
- Keep hands away from the face. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



When should my child stay home from child care?

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

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



The Flu:

A Guide for Parents



Influenza (also known as flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Flu is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and thousands or tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu can be very dangerous for children. CDC estimates that between 6,000 and 26,000 children younger than 5 years have been hospitalized each year in the United States because of influenza. The flu vaccine is safe and helps protect children from flu.

What parents should know

How serious is flu?

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of flu. Children younger than 5 years and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at high risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that are known to make children more vulnerable to flu include asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system.

How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. A person also can get flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

What are flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.



Protect your child

How can I protect my child from flu?

The first and best way to protect against flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older every year. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination.
- It's especially important that young children and children with certain long-term health problems get vaccinated.
- Caregivers of children at high risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. (Babies younger than 6 months are at high risk for serious flu complications, but too young to get a flu vaccine.)
- Pregnant women should get a flu vaccine to protect themselves and their baby from flu. Research shows that flu vaccination protects the baby from flu for several months after birth.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing and so flu vaccines are updated often to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season.

Is flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination. Different types of flu vaccines are licensed for different ages. Each person should get one that is appropriate for their age. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend an annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months and older.

What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- A flu vaccine can keep you and your child from getting sick. When vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are matched, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce the risk of getting sick with flu by about half.
- Flu vaccines can keep your child from being hospitalized from flu. One recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74%.

- Flu vaccine can prevent your child from dying from flu. A study using data from recent flu seasons found that flu vaccine reduced the risk of flu-associated death by half among children with high risk medical conditions and by nearly two-thirds among children without medical conditions.
- Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.
- Getting yourself and your child vaccinated also can protect others who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain long-term health problems.

What are some other ways I can protect my child against flu?

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, you and your child should take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs.

Stay away from people who are sick as much as possible to keep from getting sick yourself. If you or your child are sick, avoid others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, remember to regularly cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses. These everyday actions can help reduce your chances of getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others if you are sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu illness.

If your child is sick

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is 5 years or older and does not have a long-term health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years – and children with certain long-term health problems (including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system), are at high risk of serious flu complications. Call your doctor or take your child to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even healthy children can get very sick from flu. If your child is experiencing the following emergency warning signs, you should go to the emergency room:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color

- Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with rash



Is there a medicine to treat flu?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your illness and make it milder, and they can prevent serious complications that could result in a hospital stay. Antivirals work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or people who are at high risk of serious flu complications who get flu symptoms. Antivirals can be given to children and pregnant women.

How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People with flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

Can my child go to school, day care, or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid spreading flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

For more information, visit
www.cdc.gov/flu
 or call 800-CDC-INFO



U.S. Department of
 Health and Human Services
 Centers for Disease
 Control and Prevention

2023 Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old

VACCINE	Birth	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	4 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	15 MONTHS	18 MONTHS	19-23 MONTHS	2-3 YEARS	4-6 YEARS
HepB Hepatitis B	HepB	HepB				HepB					
RV* Rotavirus		RV	RV	RV	RV*						
DTaP Diphtheria, Pertussis, & Tetanus		DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP		DTaP	
Hib* <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b		Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib*	Hib	Hib				
PCV13, PCV15 Pneumococcal disease		PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV				
IPV Polio		IPV	IPV	IPV	IPV	IPV	IPV	IPV		IPV	
COVID-19** Coronavirus disease 2019								COVID-19**			
Flu* Influenza									Flu (One or Two Doses Yearly)*		
MMR Measles, Mumps, & Rubella						MMR	MMR			MMR	
Varicella Chickenpox						Varicella	Varicella			Varicella	
HepA* Hepatitis A						HepA*		HepA*	HepA*		

FOOTNOTES

RV* **Hib*** Administering a third dose at age 6 months depends on the brand of Hib or rotavirus vaccine used for previous dose.

COVID-19** Number of doses recommended depends on your child's age and type of COVID-19 vaccine used.

Flu* Two doses given at least 4 weeks apart are recommended for children age 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting an influenza (flu) vaccine for the first time and for some other children in this age group.

HepA* Two doses of Hep A vaccine are needed for lasting protection. The 2 doses should be given between age 12 and 23 months. Both doses should be separated by at least 6 months. Children 2 years and older who have not received 2 doses of Hep A should complete the series.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. If your child misses a shot recommended for their age, talk to your child's doctor as soon as possible to see when the missed shot can be given.

2. If your child has any medical conditions that put them at risk for infection (e.g., sickle cell, HIV infection, cochlear implants) or is traveling outside the United States, talk to your child's doctor about additional vaccines that they may need.

Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions about any shot recommended for your child.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call toll-free: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
Or visit: cdc.gov/vaccines/parents



American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Diseases and the Vaccines that Prevent Them

BIRTH–6 YEARS OLD

DISEASE	VACCINE	DISEASE SPREAD BY	DISEASE SYMPTOMS	DISEASE COMPLICATIONS
Hepatitis B	HepB vaccine protects against hepatitis B.	Contact with blood or body fluids	May be no symptoms, fever, headache, weakness, vomiting, jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes), joint pain	Chronic liver infection, liver failure, liver cancer, death
Rotavirus	RV vaccine protects against rotavirus.	Through the mouth	Diarrhea, fever, vomiting	Severe diarrhea, dehydration, death
Diphtheria	DTap* vaccine protects against diphtheria.	Air, direct contact	Sore throat, mild fever, weakness, swollen glands in neck	Swelling of the heart muscle, heart failure, coma, paralysis, death
Pertussis (whooping cough)	DTap* vaccine protects against pertussis (whooping cough).	Air, direct contact	Severe cough, runny nose, apnea (a pause in breathing in infants)	Pneumonia (infection in the lungs), death
Tetanus	DTap* vaccine protects against tetanus.	Exposure through cuts in skin	Stiffness in neck and abdominal muscles, difficulty swallowing, muscle spasms, fever	Broken bones, breathing difficulty, death
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Hib vaccine protects against Haemophilus influenzae type b.	Air, direct contact	May be no symptoms unless bacteria enter the blood	Meningitis (infection of the covering around the brain and spinal cord), intellectual disability, epiglottitis (life-threatening infection that can block the windpipe and lead to serious breathing problems), pneumonia (infection in the lungs), death
Pneumococcal disease (PCV13, PCV15)	PCV vaccine protects against pneumococcal disease.	Air, direct contact	May be no symptoms, pneumonia (infection in the lungs)	Bacteremia (blood infection), meningitis (infection of the covering around the brain and spinal cord), death
Polio	IPV vaccine protects against polio.	Air, direct contact, through the mouth	May be no symptoms, sore throat, fever, nausea, headache	Paralysis, death
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)	COVID-19 vaccine protects against severe complications from coronavirus disease 2019.	Air, direct contact	May be no symptoms, fever, muscle aches, sore throat, cough, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, new loss of taste or smell	Pneumonia (infection in the lungs), respiratory failure, blood clots, bleeding disorder, injury to liver, heart or kidney, multi-system inflammatory syndrome, post-COVID syndrome, death
Influenza (Flu)	Flu vaccine protects against influenza.	Air, direct contact	Fever, muscle pain, sore throat, cough, extreme fatigue	Pneumonia (infection in the lungs), bronchitis, sinus infections, ear infections, death
Measles	MMR** vaccine protects against measles.	Air, direct contact	Rash, fever, cough, runny nose, pink eye	Encephalitis (brain swelling), pneumonia (infection in the lungs), death
Mumps	MMR** vaccine protects against mumps.	Air, direct contact	Swollen salivary glands (under the jaw), fever, headache, tiredness, muscle pain	Meningitis (infection of the covering around the brain and spinal cord), encephalitis (brain swelling), inflammation of testicles or ovaries, deafness, death
Rubella	MMR** vaccine protects against rubella.	Air, direct contact	Sometimes rash, fever, swollen lymph nodes	Very serious in pregnant women—can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, birth defects
Chickenpox	Varicella vaccine protects against chickenpox.	Air, direct contact	Rash, tiredness, headache, fever	Infected blisters, bleeding disorders, encephalitis (brain swelling), pneumonia (infection in the lungs), death
Hepatitis A	HepA vaccine protects against hepatitis A.	Direct contact, contaminated food or water	May be no symptoms, fever, stomach pain, loss of appetite, fatigue, vomiting, jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes), dark urine	Liver failure, arthritis (joint pain), kidney, pancreatic and blood disorders, death

DTap* DTaP combines protection against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis.

MMR** MMR combines protection against measles, mumps, and rubella.

Last updated December 2022 • CS322257-A

Getting In; Getting Out...



In: Check Behind The Car



- **BEFORE GETTING IN THE CAR AND STARTING THE ENGINE,** walk around the car and **CHECK FOR KIDS, TOYS, AND PETS!**
- Make sure there is **NOTHING UNDER OR BEHIND YOUR CAR** that could attract a young child.
- **PICK UP TOYS, BIKES, CHALK OR ANY TYPE OF EQUIPMENT** around the driveway so that these items don't entice kids to play.

Developed by:
PREVENTION UNIT
Office of Family and
Community Services

Getting In; Getting Out...



Out: Check the Back Seat



- In just **10 MINUTES**, a car's temperature can increase by **19°**
- Before getting out of your car, check the back seat ... **DON'T FORGET YOUR CHILD!**
- **NEVER** leave your child alone in a car and **CALL 911** IF YOU SEE ANY CHILD LOCKED IN A CAR!
- Place something in the back seat that you will need at work, school, or home (your laptop; your lunch).

Developed by:
PREVENTION UNIT
Office of Family and
Community Services

Rilya Wilson Act

Pursuant to s. 39.604, Florida Statutes, a child from birth to the age of school entry, who is under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home care and is enrolled in an early education or child care program must attend the program 5 days a week unless the court grants an exemption. A child enrolled in an early education or child care program who meets the requirements of this act may not be withdrawn from the program without prior written approval of the Department or community-based care lead agency. If a child covered by this act is absent, the program shall report any unexcused absence or seven excused absences to the Department or the community-based care lead agency by the end of the business day following the unexcused absence or seventh consecutive excused absence.

Educational stability and transition are key components of this act to minimize disruptions, secure attachments and maintain stable relationships with supportive caregivers of children from birth to school age. Successful partnerships are imperative to ensure that these attachments are not disrupted due to placement in out-of-home care or subsequent changes in out-of-home placement. A child must be allowed to remain in the child care or early education setting that he/she attended before entry into out-of-home care, unless the program is not in the best interest of the child. If a child from birth to school-age leaves a child care or early education program, a transition plan needs to be developed that involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and associated psychological needs, and allows for a gradual transition from one setting to another.

This law provides priority for child care services for specified children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. These children are also known as Protective Services children.

Rilya Wilson Act Requirements:

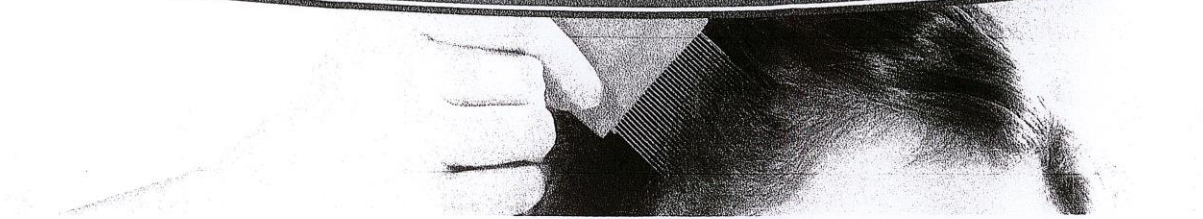
- ✓ Protective services children **MUST** be enrolled to participate 5 days per week.
- ✓ Protective services children **MAY NOT** be withdrawn without prior written approval from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Community Based Care (CBC).
- ✓ If a Protective Services child has 7 consecutive excused or any unexcused absence, the child care provider **MUST** notify the appropriate community based care staff.
- ✓ The Department and child care providers **MUST** follow local protocols set up by the CBC to ensure continuity.
- ✓ If it is not in the best interest of the child to remain at the child care or early education program, the caregiver **MUST** work with the Case Manager, Guardian Ad Litem, child care and educational staff, and educational surrogate, if one has been appointed, to determine the best setting for the child.

Community-Based Care Lead Agencies Contact Information:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/leadagencycontacts.pdf>

**** If you have concerns regarding any child that you may care for, please contact the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE****

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HEAD LICE



WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

Head lice are tiny wingless insects that live on the scalp. They do not carry any diseases so are not a public health risk. Anyone can get head lice.

NITS

- Nits are eggs that are laid by a female louse and are firmly attached to the hair shaft.
- They are about the size of a pinhead and are often found along the forehead, back of the head and behind the ears and are within 1 cm of the scalp.
- The nits are grayish-white, tan or yellow. Some can be the same colour as hair, making them difficult to see.
- Nits hatch in 6-10 days.



ADULT LICE

- Lice are the size of a sesame seed and are tan to grayish-white in colour. They may look darker in people with dark hair.
- They need blood to survive and can live up to 30 days on the head but will die within 1-2 days if they fall off the head.



HOW IS HEAD LICE SPREAD?

- Head lice are spread mainly through direct head-to-head contact. When heads are close together lice crawl very quickly from one head to another. Lice cannot fly or jump.
- They may also be spread by sharing items such as combs and hats but this is less common.
- Head lice do not live on animals.



WHAT DO I LOOK FOR?

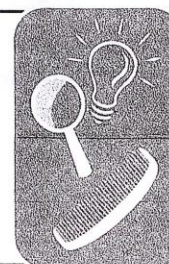
WATCH FOR

- Frequent itching and sores on the scalp from scratching.

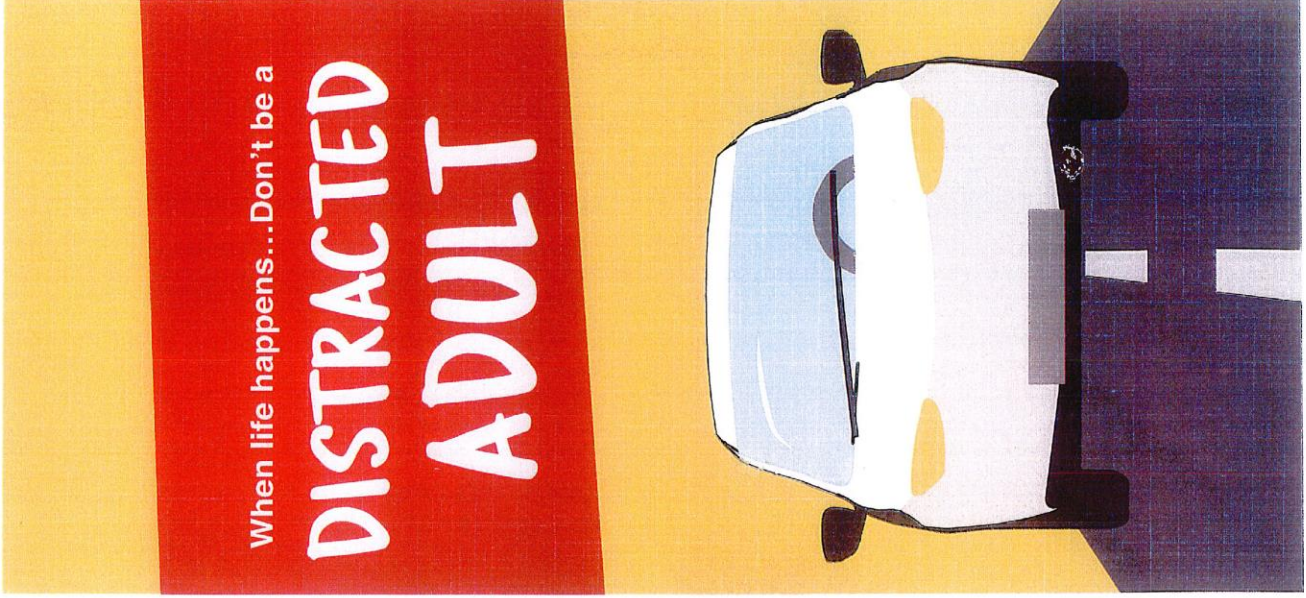


There may be no symptoms. Check all family members for lice by:

- Using good lighting. Daylight is best, so try sitting by a window.
- Looking throughout the hair for lice. They can be difficult to see because they are small, hide within the hair and move very quickly.
- Using a magnifying glass and fine toothed comb can help.
- Looking for nits firmly attached to the hair shaft and within 1cm of the scalp. Part the hair into small sections and move from one side of the head to the other. Nits can be confused with dandruff or hair spray droplets-they will not fall off if touched.
- Nits will only come off if they are pulled off with your finger nails or nit comb.



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



Developed by:
The Office of Child Care Regulation
www.myflfamilies.com/childcare
CF/PI 175-12, May 2019

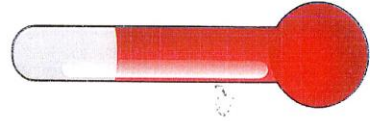


FACTS ABOUT HEATSTROKE:

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

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

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



⚠️ PREVENTION TIPS:

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

During the 2018 legislative session,

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



My signature below verifies receipt of the Distracted Adult brochure

Parent/Guardian: _____

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____



Please complete and return this portion of the brochure to your child care provider, to maintain the receipt in their records.

Please print this page, sign and return it to the Academy Office. Thank you.



**Parent Acknowledgment of
MMOLA Parent Handbook**

Containing

Rules and Regulations of Operations,

"Know your Child Care Facility" brochure,

"The Flu: A Guide for Parents" flyer,

"Getting In; Getting Out" and the "Rilya Wilson Act" flyers,

"Distracted Adult" brochure.

Student Name _____

I have read and understand the policies and information outlined in the Mary, Mother of the Light Academy, Inc., Parent Handbook 2023-2024 which contains the brochure "Know your Child Care Facility", "The Flu: A Guide for Parents", "Getting In; Getting Out", the "Rilya Wilson Act", and the "Distracted Adult" flyers. I hereby agree to abide by the policies in this Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Print Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian(s) Date

Please sign this acknowledgement form and return it to the Academy Office the next school day. We need it in your child's folder for the Health Inspector. Thank you!