



Palcare



Family Handbook

Revised June 2023

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Contact Information

Main Office – Front Desk 650-340-1289 x 0 For general information or to speak to the Administrator on Duty

Young Infant:	Tidepools	x 328 & 330	Tidepools@palcare.org
Older Infant:	Jellyfish	x 323	Jellyfish@palcare.org
	Sea Stars	x 322	SeaStars@palcare.org
Toddler:	Sea Lions	x 324	SeaLions@palcare.org
	Sea Horses	x 325	SeaHorses@palcare.org
Preschool:	Dolphins	x 306	Dolphins@palcare.org
	Sea Turtles	x 301	SeaTurtles@palcare.org
	Sunfish	x 302	Sunfish@palcare.org
Pre-K:	Stingrays	x 321	Stingrays@palcare.org
	Blue Whales	x 319	BlueWhales@palcare.org
	Billing questions - Jasmine	x 309	Jasmine@palcare.org
	Schedule questions - Tina	X 304	Tina@palcare.org

Locations:

Tidepools

1001 California Dr.

All other classrooms

945 California Dr. (mailing address)

Burlingame, CA 94010

Fax 650-401-3502

Tax ID: 94-3048383

Emergency Numbers: Front Desk cell phone 650-541-7125
Tidepools cell phone 650-477-7979

These numbers can be used in the case of an extreme emergency. If an emergency occurs and Palcare needs to evacuate the buildings, Palcare staff will try to contact families by phone, text or email using the Parent Communication app if the regular phones are not available or operable.

Emergency evacuation drills are done often to prepare the children for such situations. Evacuation drills are done both announced and unannounced. Should you come to the Center and a drill is taking place, please do not drive into the parking lots or leave. We expect all persons who are in the building during these drills to participate in them. If you are dropping off or picking up during one of these drills, parents are expected to stay until the complete drill is over and the children are released to go back to the classrooms. At that time, you can sign the child(ren) in or out.

Please make sure to always sign your child in or out on the facility iPads. This is how we take rollcall during emergencies and drills.

Do not share your iPad PIN with anyone else, as it serves as your legal signature and chain of custody of your child. Each person checking a child in or out must have a unique PIN.

Welcome to Palcare

The Board of Directors, staff, children and their families would like to welcome you to Palcare! This organization is unique and innovative in its combination of extended hours, flexible scheduling and providing high quality care and education. Palcare was developed with the support of community partners to meet the critical need for quality care in San Mateo County, especially for those families with changing or extended work schedules. You as a parent are the first and most important teacher in your child's life. We hope to develop a strong partnership with you in meeting the individual and unique needs of your child. Open, on-going communication is crucial in meeting your family's needs. Please let us know if you have any question or concerns. We look forward to working with you and your child!

Visiting Palcare – Open Door Policy

We welcome you to visit the Center at any time. It is our pleasure and your right to enter whenever you wish. Teachers may not always have the time to meet with you if they are involved with the children but are happy to schedule a meeting time. If you have the time to participate on a regular basis, there are many ways you can get involved!

Palcare Mission

Palcare's mission is to provide quality childcare and education and to advocate for the changing needs of children and families. Palcare is committed to providing services to families and to providing employment opportunities to individuals regardless of race, sex, color, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or medical condition.

Palcare Vision

Our vision is to fill the critical need for high quality education and childcare for families with changing, unusual, or demanding and extended work schedules. We provide high quality, flexible education and care for children of all socio-economic levels who are aged 3 months to 5 years. To actualize this vision and to achieve our mission, we endeavor to:

- » Sustain and build quality partnerships with SFO airport and other employers with traditional and non-traditional work schedules.
- » Provide extended and flexible childcare to serve families with non-traditional schedules.
- » Support Palcare staff – by providing a competitive education, training and benefit package in order to recruit, hire and retain the best teachers.
- » Maintain a balance of quality, compensation and affordability.
- » The safety of children, parents, Palcare employees, representatives and visitors is our highest priority.

Palcare Philosophy of Education and Care

Palcare's philosophy comes from our image of the child and the family. A child is a unique, creative, competent, intensely curious being who is constantly discovering how the world works through investigation, imagination and experimentation. We believe a young child cannot thrive and learn unless he or she feels safe, loved and respected by the adults who care for him/her.

We believe our job as early childhood educators and caregivers is to create a warm and complex environment of people and experiences within which children can become philosophers, scientists and poets in the making and can thrive in the fullest possible way while in our care.

We believe the family is the source of security and meaning for a child. We want the Palcare Center to be a resource to support families through convenient hours, excellent care and on-going communication. At Palcare we follow a holistic approach by looking at the needs and development of the whole child. By partnering with families, Palcare strives to build a bridge between home and the classroom to support a child in all areas.

Religious instruction and/or worship is prohibited at Palcare. Religious holidays are not celebrated nor observed in Palcare's curriculum.

Staff Qualifications

Working with children can be a tremendously rewarding career and it takes a very special person to do it well. The staff at Palcare exceed all recommended requirements for the childcare and early education field. Because of this, we feel we are able to provide extra special care and education. All of the staff members at Palcare participate in continuing education through college classes in Early Childhood Education (ECE), working toward or meeting all State of CA guidelines, including obtaining a California State teaching permit. In addition, each staff member is trained in CPR and First Aid, and all participate in staff meetings and trainings at the Center. The classroom staff is supported by an administrative team that is not only well educated but also quite experienced, having managed many different types of childcare programs serving children from infancy through school age. If you have any questions about childcare and development, please feel free to ask your child's classroom Lead Teacher.

Employment of Staff by Private Arrangement

It is the policy of Palcare that Palcare staff are not to arrange or accept employment privately with families using Palcare's services; this includes childcare, education and/or transportation of children to or from Palcare. Although such arrangements between Palcare families and Palcare staff may seem like a natural "fit", this policy against such private employment is required by Palcare's insurers.

Our Goals for Children

That each child will...

- » Form a warm, satisfying connection with one or more teachers and lasting friendships with one or more children, at the Center.
- » Develop a love of learning, a belief that he or she has good ideas and an ability to focus on a project until it is completed.
- » Use language and the visual arts to communicate freely and flexibly his or her thoughts and feelings.
- » Achieve a strong foundation for reading and writing.
- » Acquire a foundation in the key cognitive skills, which lead to mathematical and logical thought: Representation, number, classification, seriation, time and spatial relations.
- » Begin to learn the arts of listening, empathy, cooperative play, conflict resolution and negotiation.
- » Master the gross motor, fine motor and self-help skills needed for success in Kindergarten, and for physical, social and intellectual health and well-being.
- » Develop a positive sense of cultural identity and respect for the cultures and traditions of others.

Daily Parent Communication via App

One of Palcare's priorities is to provide parents with easy access to their child's daily information. Palcare uses a Parent Communication app. The Enrollment Director will tell you the app's website address upon your child's enrollment. Create a log-in for the app on your chosen device. The email address used to create the app account must be the same one Palcare has for you. It is always free and gives parents the ability to enjoy some photos and the occasional video taken by staff, plus review your child's daily report, which is sent 15 minutes after check-out. Parents can also use the app to send messages to their child's classroom teachers. Parents should also use the app to tell Palcare that their child will be absent due to vacation, sickness (mention the illness symptoms) or other reason (include a brief description). Talk with the Front Desk staff if you need help getting started.



The Infant Program

The Infant Program is guided by our understanding that the first three years of life are critical for the healthy, full development of a child's brain and his or her physical and psychological capabilities. At the heart of our approach are respect, nurturing and individual attention for babies and toddlers and a warm and respectful partnership with families.

The Environment

The Infant Program has two groups: The Younger Babies group is children three months old up to the time they are walking or beginning to walk. The Older Infants group is early walking babies up to 24 months old. The Younger Babies classrooms provide a gently stimulating environment with equipment and educational play materials that encourage babies to safely explore the physical world and what their bodies can do. You will not find restrictive equipment such as walkers, bouncers or playpens in the classrooms. They are not safe or healthy for young children in group care. The Older Infants classrooms offer more challenging equipment and introduces children to art materials, manipulative, puzzles, blocks, outdoor play and more.

All Infant play environments feature lots of books, pictures and mobiles. Each is divided into smaller play areas so that children will interact in small groups, as is appropriate for their age. Each classroom has a separate sleeping room(s). Younger Babies are provided with sleeping mats and Older Infants use sleeping cots.

Note! Most weeks the Older Infants Group has Music and Movement Enrichment Classes once a week in addition to their classroom daily activities.

The Staff

To provide respectful, individualized care that promotes each child's development, the ratio of infants to caregivers and the group size needs to be low. Just as important are the particular personal qualities of infant teachers, such as receptivity, caring, serenity, emotional maturity, commitment to and interest in, infant development. Palcare is fortunate to have a group of wonderful Infant Caregivers/Teachers, as well as several wonderful substitute caregivers. They have specific training in infant/toddler development and receive ongoing in-service training to enhance their skills and professionalism. The ratio for the Infants Program is one caregiver for every four children.

Primary Caregiving

To offer a sense of security and continuity to babies and their parents, Palcare assigns one caregiver to be the primary person for each child and their family. This person will help the baby adjust to the Center, perform the baby's caregiving routines and be the primary communicator with the baby's family. The Infant staff also work as a team, so that in the event that the child's caregiver is not present, the other team members are well known to the child and family as well.

We follow a similar style of communication and caregiving. For example, caregivers speak to children in a normal voice, gently and clearly, getting down to their eye level whenever possible. They let a child know what to expect before it happens. For example, a caregiver will catch a child's attention, say "I'm going to pick you up now" then show the child her outstretched arms, before picking the child up. Caregivers spend time playing with and talking to babies during and in between caregiving routines. We urge parents to share their thoughts, appreciation and concerns with their primary caregiver, Lead Teacher or other members of the caregiving team. It's a partnership!

Schedules

Younger babies are on their own schedules for eating and sleeping. When you first enroll, we will ask you to write about or verbally tell us your child's present routine as a starting point for us. As your child develops and becomes comfortable at the Center, his or her schedule will probably change. Older babies tend to move into similar patterns, i.e. lunch about 11:30 am and then an afternoon nap. Daily communication and use of the Parent Communication app will help us keep attuned to your child's needs.

Our Influences

Our Infant Program is primarily guided by the accreditation standards for high quality early childhood programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Additionally, our approach is influenced by two nationally recognized curriculum models; The West Ed "Program for Infant/ Toddler Care (PITC)" and "Resources for Infant Educators (RIE)."

The Toddler Program

The third year of life, from 25 to 36 months, is another critical period for healthy brain development. It is the time when children gain greater control over their bodies, begin to develop a vocabulary and first begin to suspect that they are not the very center of the universe! As with the Infant Program, we believe two-year-olds need respect, nurturing care and individual attention. They also need additional challenges in their environment with plenty of opportunities to learn through experience. They need specific encouragement and support to communicate their feelings and needs to the other children with whom they want to play. They may need encouragement and reassurance when things do not go their way.

The Environment

The Toddler classrooms have several separate play and caregiving areas to allow children to be in small groups as is appropriate for their age. The rooms and the outdoor play yard provide an opportunity for exploring, imaginative play, dressing up, reading, using small manipulatives, and of course, art and sensory activities so beloved by toddlers. The children sleep on small cots after stories and back rubs. etc. The toileting area of each classroom has a changing table, small toilet and low sink.

The Staff

Personal qualities critical to the education of toddlers are patience, a highly developed sense of humor, a commitment to children's healthy development and a respect for the children's desire to "do it themselves." The Toddler staff has these special qualities and together they have a formidable knowledge and experience of toddler development. They use a team approach, planning children's experiences together. Each child has a Home Base Teacher to help them adjust to the Toddler Program. All teachers in the class are available to turn to during the day for special support, laughs and hugs. The Home Base teacher will be the person for communicating about daily experiences, routines and concerns.

We use a consistent approach that feels safe and familiar to the children. For example, teachers speak to the children in a normal adult voice, gently and clearly, getting down to children's eye level. They let a child know what to expect before it happens. For example, a teacher may say "It's almost time to clean up before snack" giving the two-year old a chance to mentally disengage from what they are doing. Later they will say "Now it is time to clean up" and engage the child's cooperation. The Toddler teachers provide overall guidance and planning for the program.

Activities

Toddlers have many emerging abilities: Language, greater control of the body to run, jump and climb, greater fine motor skills, sensory discrimination and social skills. These are nurtured through Activity Centers, projects and special materials. Children have choices of what to do, but not so many as to be overwhelming. Activities are offered in such a way as to put most emphasis on "doing," with three to eight children working in an area at a time. Projects are often open-ended, without a specific final product in mind. Some examples: Finger-painting with two colors, pouring and measuring at the water table, singing and acting out a nursery song, making a fruit salad and talking about animals we know personally. During Circle Time the children learn songs, finger play and group games together. Toilet learning is a part of the curriculum of the Toddler Program. The staff approaches it in a relaxed, easy-going fashion, with lots of communication with each family about readiness. This process is a partnership between teachers and parents.

Every week the children have Enrichment Classes in music and movement education in addition to their classroom daily activities.

Our Influences

The Toddler Program is guided by the accreditation standards for high quality early childhood programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our approach is influenced by the "Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC)" and "Resources for Infant Educators (RIE)."

The Preschool Program

Around the time a child turns three years of age, he or she begins learning in new ways. A child needs a bigger world with greater intellectual, social and physical challenges. He or she develops greater mastery of language and begins to think symbolically and logically. The Preschool classrooms introduce new activities, learning materials and experiences that test children's emerging abilities in a stimulating way. Our approach emphasizes language and literacy, early math, social relations and problem solving, science, art and music – all in the context of a warm classroom community.

The Environment

The Preschool classroom is organized into learning areas so that children can find the materials they wish to use. The learning centers include the library, dramatic play, art and construction blocks, manipulatives and puzzles, science, math, natural history, language and music. Most materials are available to the children on open shelves. Teaching teams transform the environment periodically to provide new opportunities. Each classroom contains several small spaces to encourage small group play and to provide a bit of privacy that children need. Parents are strongly encouraged to help us to develop the environment by bringing in more props for a learning center or something of beauty or curiosity from the natural world for the children to explore.

Our play yard has a current design of climbing structures, which is challenging, yet safe. The yard also features playhouses, a trike run, sand box, balance toys, sensory tables, art easels, balls and more. The yard meets the latest playground safety regulations and is still lots of fun!

The Staff

The Preschool classrooms are staffed by a group of educators with many years of combined experience and education in Child Development and Early Childhood Education. Each room has a Lead Teacher and Teacher. Larger classes may also have an Assistant Teacher(s). We are fortunate that many members of the Preschool team have many years of experience here at Palcare. The faculty is committed to the idea that young children learn best when they feel strongly connected to their teachers and their classroom community.

Daily Routine

Children experience several special periods during their day, no matter what their schedule. At Circle Time, the children come together in a small group to hear what is planned for the day, share stories, read a story, sing songs, create music or dance. One of the most important periods is Free Choice Time, when the various learning centers around the classroom are available to the children to work alone or in small groups. Teachers station themselves around the room to help children find the materials they need to accomplish their goals, to help them negotiate with other children during play and to stimulate the children's thinking with ideas they may not have considered. Another important element is Small Group Time, when teachers invite a small group of children to work together on a small project or discovery for 30 to 45 minutes. For example, you might find a group of children and their teacher measuring the heights of the bean seedlings planted several weeks before, making collages of objects found on a walk, or writing and acting out a fairy tale. The care, handling and feeding of small animals and plants in the Palcare Menagerie are part of daily life. The children have Outside Play several times during the day for Gross Motor play. Every week the children have Enrichment Classes in music and movement education in addition to their classroom daily activities.

Our Influences

The Preschool Program is guided by the accreditation standards for high quality early childhood programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, California Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations and Preschool Curriculum Framework.

The Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Program

Our Pre-Kindergarten Program is designed to prepare children to be successful and comfortable in Kindergarten, whether they go to Kindergarten in the Fall of the current year or spend two years in our program and head to Kindergarten the following Fall. The public school requirement for Kindergarten is that children must be five years old by September 1.

We believe that learning and development is not a race but a complex, rich process. Everything we plan and do with the children is intended to help them have a strong, solid foundation. Our approach includes daily experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, natural science, music and art. Our classroom group size of about 20 children with credentialed, experienced Pre-Kindergarten teachers ensures that the children will receive individual attention and support for their learning.

Every week the children have enrichment classes in music and movement education in addition to their classroom daily activities. Each child may also participate in the "Raising A Reader" book bag program, a wonderful literacy building experience!

The Crucial Curriculum for Kindergarten Readiness!

Develop children's self-confidence by:

- » Offering appropriately challenging activities, materials and experiences
- » Encouraging children to construct curriculum with teachers
- » Providing time for repetition and practice, giving each child personal attention

Enhance children's ability to communicate by presenting many occasions for:

- » Talking about meaningful experiences
- » Representing ideas through drawing, construction, dictation, writing and play
- » Reading and discussing books and their own stories

Teach respect for oneself, peers, elders, materials and our environment:

- » Set up and guide children in activities that require cooperation, turn taking and teamwork such as projects, experiments and group games
- » Encourage and facilitate children's creativity, imagination and problem-solving abilities through projects, art materials, music, literature, etc.

Help children learn to follow multi-step directions and handle transitions by:

- » Having realistic, consistent expectations
- » Using humor
- » Offering many opportunities to "try again"
- » Develop children's ability to choose, focus on and complete tasks

Play and Fundamentals

We are a play-based program. We believe that in Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, it is important that children learn primarily through structured but independent investigation. Our curriculum is based on constructivist learning theories, in which children discover and create their own knowledge in a supportive environment full of open-ended materials. Our classrooms are divided into interest areas based on content laid out in the California Department of Education's California Preschool Learning Foundations and California Preschool Curriculum Framework. Teachers design child-centered activities that are carried out individually or in small groups. New materials are introduced based on children's emergent interests.

Our teaching practices are guided by industry best practices and research sponsored by the California Department of Education and our field's professional organization, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The NAEYC's framework of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, based on current thinking in developmental psychology and neuroscience about cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, physical and cultural practice for children at each successive level of development, underpins our curriculum and our interactions with young children.

Social and Emotional Skills

Essential to becoming independent and capable learners is developing emotional self-regulation and the skills to work in groups with other children. We incorporate self-help skills into our curriculum by giving children appropriate materials that they can use and master. We eat our meals and snacks family-style at child-sized tables, with small serving vessels and utensils that children can use to serve themselves. We keep educational materials accessible to children on low open shelves, with both pictorial and written labels so they can easily put materials away again. At the Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten level, we have multiples of most toys, but we do encourage sharing and turn-taking as children develop the ability to play and learn cooperatively.

Emergent Curriculum

At Palcare the Pre-Kindergarten curriculum is negotiated between teachers and children. The children contribute their spontaneous day-to-day discoveries, interests and questions. Their teachers contribute their knowledge of child development and their specific learning goals for the children. The curriculum plans emerge from both! The teachers harness the energy of the children's natural curiosity by adopting the children's ideas and planning activities based on themes that incorporate as many learning goals as possible. This approach is a creative, rich process for both children and teachers. It has the added benefit of enhancing children's self-esteem and self-confidence because they see themselves as the initiators! Because of our approach, we will be reporting to you what we are or have been working on in the classroom, rather than on what we plan to do next month, in our monthly newsletter.

Project Work

Our emergent curriculum approach eventually leads to PROJECTS! These are extended, in-depth investigations of a topic, suggested by the children's interest. Projects involve children conducting research on phenomena and events worth learning about in their own environments. In the process, they will pose questions, generate theories and predictions, interview experts and conduct experiments. The project is usually finished with some kind of culminating event or creation that will symbolize all that the children have learned and give them a way to share this with you. We will ask parents to help us by contributing materials or expertise related to our project topic or helping us to plan the culminating activity. For more detailed information, ask for Palcare's Pre-Kindergarten Competencies, classroom Daily Schedule and Pre-K Newsletter.

Transition from One Program to the Next

When it is time for your child to move from the Younger Infant Program to the Older Infant Program, Toddlers to Preschool, or Preschool to Pre-K, you will receive a Transition Arrangement email telling you the transition date, classroom name, Lead Teacher and contact info to reach the Lead Teacher. If a parent wants to visit the new classroom, they should contact the Lead Teacher of the new classroom and schedule a visit. This visit will be short - 15 minutes or less. If a longer conference is desired, clarify and schedule that with the Lead Teacher as well. The child's current and new Lead Teachers will set a date for your child to begin "visiting" the new classroom, when possible.

Infants typically move to the Toddler Program during their 24th month of age.

Toddlers move to Preschool around their third birthday or as space becomes available.

Preschoolers move to Pre-K usually during the late Spring-Summer months if they turn four years old on or before September 1st of that year.

If you have any concerns about your child moving to another classroom, be sure to talk them over with your child's Teacher and Lead Teacher. Transitions are timed with a consideration of enrollment in the classroom a child is to enter and with many families' schedules.

What t



Please bring your child's extra clothing in a boldly labeled bag that will be stored at Palcare. Labeling is critical!!!! Please use a permanent marker to label ALL your child's belongings!

For Infants and Toddlers, Bring:

- » Disposable diapers, at least enough for one full day (quantity 6-8) to one full week, side tab style (not pull-ons)
- » Desitin or other anti-chafing product – see General Permission Form
- » Two to three changes of clothing, including socks
- » Three underpants, if learning to use the toilet
- » Jacket or other type of outerwear
- » Hat for sun protection
- » Sunscreen
- » Comfort object, such as a doll or stuffed animal, if this is important for your child

For Preschoolers and Pre-K Students, Bring:

- » One to two changes of clothing, including socks
- » One to two underpants
- » Jacket or other type of outerwear
- » Hat for sun protection
- » Sunscreen
- » A comfort object if your child uses one

If your child's clothing becomes wet during the day, you will find their wet clothes in a plastic bag in their cubby. Be sure to replace them with dry clothes for the next day.

Please Dress Your Child in Clothes for Active Play

We plan and carry out many activities that encourage active, messy play! Please send your child in play clothes that are comfortable to wear and easy to wash at home. Shoes should be safe for climbing and running. Tennis shoes or sandals, which have a heel, strap and a covered toe, are best. Flip-flop and crocs sandals are not safe for a childcare setting.

A suggestion for parents with children who are learning to use the toilet: Pants with elastic tops that children can pull down themselves are best as they promote a child's sense of independence.

Lost and Found: Each classroom has a place for lost items. **LABEL LABEL LABEL!** Please check regularly for missing items. If unlabeled items remain unclaimed for a long period, they will be cleaned and donated to an agency that will distribute the items to the needy.

Toys from Home

We welcome any comfort toys, blankets, etc. Please do not bring other toys from home as they are difficult to share and are easily lost or broken.

Food – Palcare is a Nut-Free and Fish/Seafood-Free Center

For Younger and Older Infants: The Center does not provide snacks or meals, as they are typically at different points in the introduction of solid food. Parents must send snacks and lunch each day for their baby. Warm food should be sent in a thermos or other insulated container, as no heating of food is available. For children whose schedules extend into the evening hours or Saturdays, parents must provide dinner for their child as well. As they are developmentally able, babies are encouraged to learn to feed themselves and drink from open cups. For Older Infants, parents are asked to send some "finger foods." This will help promote independence and self-esteem. If you are having a hard time figuring out what to send, ask your Lead Teacher for suggestions. Whichever foods you choose, send small quantities of several different foods, so that your child has several healthy choices.

For Toddlers, Preschoolers and Pre-Kindergarteners: Palcare provides morning and afternoon snacks for Toddlers, Preschoolers and Pre-K students. A hot lunch is provided on weekdays. Each month's menu will be posted in each classroom, emailed to parents, and available for viewing at www.Palcare.org. Paper copies are available at the lobby shelves area.

Palcare's philosophy is to think of meal times as part of our curriculum. Palcare intentionally chooses food vendor(s) that provide healthy, child friendly, well-rounded snacks and lunches. Food is served family style so that children can participate in getting their own servings. Teachers are often sitting down with children at lunch time, having meaningful conversations and helping children to serve and feed themselves.

For Children with Evening and/or Saturday Schedules: Parents must bring all snacks and meals for their child. A lunch bag/box clearly labeled with the child's name is the best container. Please bring foods that are ready to eat. Warm food should be sent in a thermos or other insulated container, as no heating of food is available. Sugary sweet foods are not allowed. Whichever foods you choose, send small quantities of several different foods, so that your child has several healthy choices.

For Children with Special Food Circumstances: As part of the philosophy for serving food, we want all children to be able to participate, but Palcare understands that there may be circumstances that prevent children from joining in, such as allergies or other medical reasons, food intolerances, religion or lifestyle. Palcare will endeavor to provide foods that take this circumstance into account. Parents can request that our food vendor(s) provide vegetarian or gluten-free meals for their child, for example. If a parent chooses to send a replacement food for a portion of a particular snack or lunch because the child cannot eat the provided item, it should be an equivalent type of food, such as a protein replacing a protein. Keep in mind that Palcare is a nut-free and fish/seafood-free center. The food brought in needs to be ready to eat, as no warming is available. Warm food can be sent in a thermos or other insulated container.

If your child has an allergy or a medical reason that prevents them from being consuming the food Palcare provides, there will be additional medical forms needed for the child's doctor to sign. Parents must tell Palcare what foods their child cannot eat and/or any medical precautions to take in case a medical reaction occurs. Palcare's state childcare license requires Palcare to be prepared to respond to an accidental exposure, ingestion or allergy/medical reaction.

Birthday Celebrations: To promote healthy eating and switch the focus from food to the individual child, we ask families not to bring treats or goodie bags from home. At Palcare each child on or near their birthday will choose a new hard cover book from the Birthday Basket that is theirs to keep. They can share it in the classroom and then take it home to share with their family. Each classroom will also recognize each child in the classroom on their special day. Please ask the Lead Teacher to see how birthdays will be celebrated in your child's classroom.

When You Arrive

Parking

Please enter the front parent drop-off lot from California Drive and exit on to Sanchez St. Parking in the front lot is for up to 20 minutes only. The larger parking lot on the south side of Palcare can also be used for drop-off or pick-up parking. If you are coming for a visit and plan to stay more than 20 minutes, please use the south parking lot or a street parking space. Please be alert as you approach and enter Palcare parking lots to look for other parents and young children. The Handicap spaces are reserved for persons with disabilities only. All other drivers must use the regular marked spaces.

- » **Help Palcare be a good neighbor in our community. Please do not block the driveway or the sidewalk while waiting for a parking spot or block traffic on California Drive.**
- » **Do not block neighbors' driveways or take two spots if street parking in the neighborhood.**
- » **Do not leave children unattended in the car or leave the engine running. It's dangerous and illegal!**

Dropping Off and Picking Up

Check your child in and out each day on the provided iPad, using your personal, unique PIN and then touching your child's picture. This is the legal equivalent of your signature. The law requires that only adults aged 18 or older may check a child in or out. Minors cannot check a child in or out.

We will release your child only to persons authorized by each parent on your child's emergency card, or to those for whom you have requested temporary authorization. They must have a photo ID available to show so we can verify that they are the person on the emergency card.

Connect with Classroom Staff

At Palcare, children are arriving and departing at many different times during the day and evening. To ensure that they are safely delivered and picked up, staff and parents must share the responsibility of acknowledging the transfer with a greeting or short conversation. If you are not certain a staff member has acknowledged you, please speak to them again until contact is confirmed.

Time for that Last Diaper Change...

If your child is in diapers, plan to spend an extra few minutes in the classroom each day when you arrive to change their diaper (if needed), then wash their hands and face. This will ensure that each child will enter our environment as germ free as possible, ready to go out and explore the world. It will also give you a few extra one-on-one moments with your child to reassure them and give them the confidence they need. We understand that sometimes, because of traffic delays etc., you may not have the time to do this. In that event, please alert a staff member to assist you.

Saying Goodbye

Separations are sometimes difficult, especially in the first week or two. Routines reassure children and make them feel secure, so it may help to develop a separation routine to follow each day. For example, find a favorite teacher to say "good morning" to, or a favorite activity your child likes to begin the day with, then share a warm hug goodbye. Talk with your child before you arrive about where he is going and the teachers and children who will be there. Although leaving abruptly is not a good idea, children are usually reassured most when parents are confident, warm and fairly brief about goodbyes. Let teachers help you by taking your child in their arms if this will help. Don't hesitate to call your classroom later to see how your child is doing.

Picking Up

Be sure to check your child out on the iPad provided. Look in the classroom parent file mailbox for messages and artwork. The staff wants very much to share information with you. Pick up your child's food bag (if applicable) and outerwear. Jackets and sweaters seem to inevitably disappear into crevices and corners, but nearly always turn up again. Check the classroom Lost and Found box if you are missing something.

Sometimes the end of the day is a little too busy for extensive discussion with the teacher. Information about your child's day, naps, meals, diapers, etc. will be posted on your child's Parent Communication app report that is sent out to you 15 minutes after your child is checked out. If you have questions or concerns that require lengthier discussion, please schedule a conference with the Lead Teacher or stop by the Front Desk and ask for the Director on Duty.

Doing Business Together

Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Palcare is committed to providing services to families and providing employment opportunities to individuals regardless of race, sex, color, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, or medical condition. Palcare is committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. If you believe you have been unlawfully discriminated against or unlawfully harassed, talk to the Administrator on Duty or the Executive Director. You should provide a written account of the complaint in your own words as soon as possible after the incident. Palcare will investigate all serious complaints and take appropriate and lawful actions to remedy the situation.

Respectful interactions are required throughout the Palcare program. Any person who makes threats against, harasses, or endangers the safety or life of any child, parent, teacher, Palcare staff member, representative or visitor will immediately be terminated from the program. Palcare reserves the right to terminate families and/or discontinue services to anyone who does not follow the program guidelines as mandated by the California Department of Education and the Palcare Board of Directors.

Parent's Responsibilities - Parents have a responsibility to:

- » Drop-off and pickup their child(ren) within the times contracted
- » Follow program policies
- » Respect and comply with the rules of the classrooms and Center when volunteering
- » Respect the culture, identity, language, customs, values and personality of each child, staff and others who they encounter in the Center
- » Maintain a safe and secure environment at the Center for all children, families, staff and visitors

Respect the rights of other families and staff by not sharing confidential information Parent's Rights – Parents have a right to:

- » Give their input and concerns regarding their child, staff or the facility to the appropriate staff, at an appropriate time, in a respectful manner
- » Request a meeting with any staff when they become concerned regarding their child, staff, or facility
- » Expect to be talked to and treated in a respectful manner by everyone who enters the facility
- » Place their child in a safe and secure environment where they can grow and learn

Staff Rights – All staff have the right to:

- » Be talked to and treated respectfully and professionally by other staff, parents and children
- » Be listened to with respect and heard by staff and parents
- » Feel safe and work in a non-threatening environment

Selection and Enrollment Process

Families will be enrolled from the Wait List on a space available basis. First priority will be given to siblings of children currently enrolled and Palcare's corporate partners. Currently, the San Francisco Airport Commission and all related vendors are Palcare's primary partner. We also have a priority enrollment agreement for employees of The County of San Mateo.

Children who are physically or emotionally challenged will be accepted if it is determined that the Center is able to meet their individual needs and those of the other children in the classroom setting.

Each child admitted must be determined to be ready for and able to benefit from the type of group experiences the Center has to offer. During the first 60 days, staff and parents will decide whether or not the classroom and Center are well suited for the child. The Program Director and Lead Teacher will keep in close contact with the parent if there are any concerns. If your child has special services and/or has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), please make sure to share that information with the Enrollment Director. The information will help to properly place your child into the best classroom fit for your child.

Two ASQ child developmental questionnaires will be included in the enrollment paperwork. They are to be completed and returned with your enrollment packet. They are required by Palcare's state license and form a baseline that indicates if there are any areas that your child needs extra support from the classroom staff.

Child Care Schedules

Palcare's mission is to provide quality childcare and early education and to advocate for the changing needs of children and families. Parents will set up a schedule contract with the Director of Enrollment based on their needs and the available full-time and part-time space in the classroom. There are a minimum and maximum number of: 1) Hours per day, 2) Number of days per week, and 3) Total hours per week required for an acceptable schedule. Monthly tuition is based on these variables.

Palcare's staffing plans are based upon student contract times. Please plan your child's schedule to allow ample time for travel to and from work or home.

No credit will be offered for any missed hours or days due to sickness, holidays, vacation, or any other reason. Parents cannot substitute another day for a missed day or have their child attend outside of the contracted schedule times without prior Palcare approval.

Custom Designed Fixed Schedules

Families with traditional and/or non-traditional work hours whose schedule does not change will be able to set up a Custom Designed Fixed Schedule based on their needs and the hours Palcare is open.

A family that repeatedly has late pick-ups or early drop-offs beyond their contracted schedule will have their schedule reviewed by the Enrollment Director. It may be necessary to change the contracted schedule to a longer day, and tuition will be adjusted to reflect the increased hours of care.

Flexible Schedules

For parents employed by our partner, San Francisco International Airport (SFO), we allow creation of child care schedules which are entirely determined by their work schedules. The need for a Flexible Schedule must be verified by the SFO Airport employer. The Enrollment Director will inform you of the specifics of using a Flexible Scheduling plan.

Early Drop-Off or Late Pick-Up

If a child is dropped-off earlier than the contracted arrival time or picked-up later than the contracted departure time, their account will be charged a penalty fee of \$2.00 for each additional minute (per child) beyond the scheduled time. The staff reviews arrival and departure times on a daily basis. Penalty fees will be added to the family ledger account and are due when tuition is due.

Palcare reserves the right to make changes to your contract hours for excessive early drop-off and/or tardy pick-up. Tuition may be adjusted accordingly.

Temporary and On-Going Schedule Changes

Custom Designed Fixed Schedules are matched with other families' schedules and may not be changed on a temporary basis, except via the Additional Care Request process described below. Each schedule is for specific days and times. If a family's on-going needs change, they may submit a Request for Schedule Change to the Enrollment Director. It will be approved if classroom space and staff are available. Upon approval, a \$50 processing fee will be added to your account if the Schedule Change is for fewer hours on any day, the same number of hours on any day, or fewer days per week. There will be no processing fee for increasing hours per day or the number of days per week.

New schedules will start on the first day of the month following the request. A Request for Schedule Change must be submitted at least 30 days in advance.

Additional Care Requests ("Adds")

Parents may wish to extend their scheduled hours for a particular date or add extra day(s) of childcare. The process is to fill out and submit an Additional Care Request form to the Front Desk for approval. The deadline to submit a request for additional weekday or Saturday childcare may vary. Ask the Front Desk for the current policy. Every effort will be made to accommodate the parent's request; however, "Adds" can only be approved when the staffing ratios and occupancy levels allow.

There is an additional cost for an approved Additional Care Request, based on the number of hours approved, and it will be added to the family ledger account. Once approved, an "Add" cannot be canceled by a parent for any reason. Even if the child is not present at Palcare during the requested childcare extension, the full charge will still be added to the family ledger. No credit is issued for time not used.

Tuition and Other Fees

At Palcare, we understand that childcare expenses are often one of the top three expenses in a family's budget. It is important for the functioning of our program that parents pay their tuition and other fees due according to our policy. Our goal is to support families. Enrollment is on a month-to-month basis. Registration and tuition fees are non-refundable.

- » An annual registration fee of \$300.00 is due on the yearly anniversary of each child's start date.
- » Tuition is due on the 20th of the month preceding care. For example, tuition for August is due July 20th.
- » Tuition is considered past due if not paid in full by the 1st day of the month of care.

- » A \$50 late fee is added to accounts that are not fully paid by the 1st day of the month of care.
- » Payments are applied to the oldest balance first.

Not following Palcare's policy for payment of tuition may be cause for termination of childcare services.

Account statements are sent to parents by email on about the 20th of each month, showing the current amount due. Please save the statements as an account and payment record for your tax receipts. Employer forms for a Flexible Spending Account or Health Savings Account that require a Palcare signature can be submitted at the Front Desk. **Palcare's tax ID number is 94-3048383.**

Financial Aid

Palcare has limited California State subsidized enrollment for low-income families. Eligible families pay part of the childcare tuition based on their gross family income and family size. Families may apply for the California State subsidy by providing documentation of their income, need, and family size to the Enrollment Director.

California State funding for low-income families is provided by Palcare's contracts with the Child Development Division of the Department of Education, Child State Preschool Program, and the California Department of Social Services. Enrollment in these programs is based on the greatest need.

Parents who are employees of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) or its vendors may qualify for tuition assistance. Families may apply for the SFO Tuition Assistants Program by filling up the application and providing an image of their SFO badge (front and back) and documentation of their income. They may contact the Enrollment Director for more details.

Methods to Pay Tuition and Other Fees

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT): (Preferred method of payment with no extra charges.) Funds will be transferred from a checking or savings account. This option allows the latest payment date available (the transaction is done on the 1st of each month of childcare). Submit the EFT Authorization Form and a blank voided check to the Office Manager to use this method.

Debit/Credit Card: Palcare does not store credit card numbers and does not accept verbal phone call payments. Parents can use the online/mobile portal **MyProcure.com** and follow the prompts. Parents enter their information and manage their card payments. There is a 2.7% convenience fee on all debit and credit card transactions, including FSA and HSA cards.

Check: Checks are accepted by placing the filled-out check in the lobby mailbox, front porch black mailbox, mailing it to Palcare, or setting up automatic checks mailed by your bank.

Cash: Each payment should be placed in an envelope and labeled with the child's name and amount enclosed. Palcare does not keep cash on hand for change, so excess payment will be applied to the next month's tuition. Place the envelope in the front porch. If brought during business hours, a receipt can be provided by the Front Desk staff.

If you have questions, please contact Palcare's Office Manager.

Late Payment Policy

Payment in full is due on the 20th of the month prior to the month of childcare and considered late if not paid by the 1st day of the month of care. A late fee of \$50 will be charged to accounts that are not fully paid by that date. Palcare considers a child's parents jointly and severally liable for all payments due, including in joint custody arrangements. Our goal is to work with each family, preserve our relationship and continue to provide care.

If a family has not paid their tuition by the 10th day of the month of care, a notice will be sent to the family stating that childcare services will be terminated within 10 days if the account is not paid in full by the 20th of the month of childcare (which is 30 days past due). Families with payment plans will also be subject to this 30 days past due consequence. Past due accounts may be sent to an Accounts Receivable Management Company for collection.

This collection policy does not preclude parents from establishing an alternative payment plan with Palcare. However, any such arrangements must be made in writing prior to the payment deadline discussed above. In no event will a family be allowed to be more than 30 days in arrears.

Notice to Withdraw from Palcare

Palcare requires written notice 30 days in advance of when a family will no longer be using the program. Please turn in the notice at the Front Desk or send an email to the Enrollment Director. There will be no refund of paid tuition upon withdrawal from the program unless a 30-day written notice is received. Tuition for all 30 days of the regular schedule will be due, even if the notice indicates that the child(ren) will stop attending Palcare before the 30th day is reached.

Reasons for Termination

- » Failure to pay tuition and other fees according to Palcare's policy.
- » Not keeping within the contracted schedule hours (excessive number of early drop-offs and/or late pick-ups).
- » Inappropriate behavior of the child that may be at risk of violating the safety of himself/herself or the safety of others.
- » Inappropriate behavior of the parent that may violate the personal rights of the staff, children, parents or visitors. This includes but is not limited to not respecting the staff, children, parents or visitors in the program. Also included is making false accusations of staff, children, parents or visitors with the purpose to harm them emotionally or physically.

Some programs or group settings may not be a good fit for some families/children. In an event Palcare's program is not an appropriate fit for your child, or your child constitutes a safety or legal hazard to himself/herself, other children, staff, parents, visitors or the program, we reserve the right to terminate services.

Safety and Security of Children

The safety of children, parents, Palcare employees, representatives and visitors is our highest priority.

The Emergency Card

It is the parent's responsibility to keep information on your child's emergency card current! This card tells us how to reach you in case of an emergency and who is authorized to pick-up your child in your absence or if we cannot reach you. You can make updates by requesting your child's emergency card at the Front Desk and making changes. We will make sure the changes are also made on the classroom emergency card and computer software.

If your child sustains minor injuries, they will be cared for at the Center and you will be notified via the Parent Communication app and at pick-up. In the event of a serious injury or medical situation, you will be notified at once. In a medical emergency, we will call 911 and contact you immediately.

Illness Policy

The goal of the illness policy is to prevent the spread of contagious illness at Palcare. It is important to have the cooperation of parents to reduce the incidence and severity of sickness. **If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, you should call Palcare's Front Desk as soon as possible at 650-340-1289 ext. 0. Leave a detailed message if no one answers.**

Please observe your child for signs of illness before bringing him/her to Palcare. Children should be kept at home when illness prevents them from 100% participating in daily activities or routines. Refer to the section "We ask Parents to Follow These Health Guidelines" for specifics. Call the Front Desk at 650-340-1289 ext. 0 if you have any questions or concerns.

When a child will be absent, parents should use the Parent Communication app each day to notify Palcare of the reason. If due to illness, please choose "sick" and enter brief description of the child's symptoms. If "other" is chosen, enter a brief explanation. "Vacation" needs no other information entered. Instead of using the Parent Communication app, parents may also call the Front Desk and provide the information or leave a detailed voicemail if no one answers.

If a child becomes ill while at Palcare, his/her parents will be called immediately. A parent or their designee (someone on the authorized pick-up list) must come promptly to remove the child from group care and address the child's needs.

On-Going Health Conditions

Parents must notify Palcare, at the time of enrollment or promptly afterward if diagnosed after enrollment, if their child has an on-going health condition such as asthma, history of seizures or develops an allergy. Palcare must be prepared to respond to a medical episode. Therefore, parents are required to provide written instructions from the child's doctor on the proper response actions that staff should perform. If medication should be administered, parents must provide a supply of it in the original packaging with the prescription attached. Prescribed over-the-counter medication must also be in the original packaging. All medication must be not expired, and parents will be notified to provide a fresh supply when it does expire. There are additional forms for the parents to sign as well, please talk to the Front Desk staff to receive them.

Health and Safety Guidelines

Palcare's guidelines are taken directly from the American Academy of Pediatrics publication, *Caring for Our Children*. Palcare staff will do the following:

- » Monitor all children for signs of illness or injury when they arrive at Palcare and continuously throughout the day.
- » See that all children wash their hands after toileting and before eating.
- » See that all children spend some time playing outside during the course of the day, weather permitting.
- » Follow "Universal Precautions" when changing diapers and handling injuries. This includes the use of gloves and a strict disinfecting process.
- » Disinfect all areas of a diaper changing station after each use.
- » Disinfect all eating areas before each use.
- » Disinfect all mouthing toys, sleeping cots/mats and bed linens daily, or more often if necessary.

We Ask Parents to Follow These Health Guidelines

These guidelines are taken directly from the American Academy of Pediatrics publication, *Caring for Our Children*. Children with mild to moderate colds that are not accompanied by fever, cough, sore throat, diarrhea or vomiting will not be excluded from childcare unless they are unable to comfortably participate in the group care setting. Children diagnosed with an ear infection and taking antibiotics, who are generally feeling well, may attend.

We understand that having a sick child puts a lot of pressure on a family. Many of Palcare's staff have young ones at home and often face the same dilemma. It is our hope that through strict adherence to these health and safety policies, We will decrease the number of times that you must deal with these challenges by maintaining a healthy environment.

Keep children at home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- » **COVID-19 -LIKE SYMPTOMS** – Fever of 100.4°F or higher, cough or sore throat. While a child is running a fever, they are the most contagious and pose the most risk to others. A negative home COVID test, PCR COVID test or note from the child's doctor stating when the child may return to group care is required.
- » **RSV -LIKE SYMPTOMS** - Reduced appetite and runny nose, followed typically one to three days later by fever, cough, sore throat and sneezing. Wheezing may also occur. See exposure notice for more details.
- » **FEVER** - Any temperature of 100.4° F or greater.
- » **COUGH** - A frequent, persistent or harsh cough.
- » **SORE THROAT** – Difficulty or pain when swallowing a liquid or food, lasting discomfort or ache.
- » **WHEEZING** – Noisy, raspy and/or frequent shallow breaths indicating difficulty breathing.
- » **DIARRHEA** - Recurring two or more times in 24 hours, containing loose, watery, mucus filled stools, or presence of blood in the stool.
- » **VOMITING** - Recurring two or more times in 24 hours.
- » **SIGNS OF SEVERE ILLNESS** - Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, loss of appetite, or complaint of pain. The child's doctor should determine when the child is cleared to return to group care. The parent will need to provide Palcare with a written letter from the child's doctor that has that information.

- » **RASH OR SKIN INFECTION** – Rash, raw skin, wet or draining lesions, with or without fever. The child's doctor should determine if the condition does not indicate a communicable disease. The parent will need to provide Palcare with a written letter from the child's doctor with that information.

A child **must be free of all illness symptoms, including but not limited to: Fever, cough, sore throat, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours prior to return** to Palcare **without the use of medication**. This means that if a parent takes a child home with any illness symptoms in the mid-morning or later, the child may not return to Palcare the next morning. While a child is running a fever, he/she is the most contagious and poses the most risk to others. If a child has seen a doctor for the symptoms, Palcare may ask for a written letter from that doctor stating the date the child may return to group care.

Keep a child home if they have any of the following communicable diseases:

If Palcare requests, please provide negative test result or a note from the child's doctor verifying that the child is no longer contagious and the date when he/she may return to group care.

- » **CHICKEN POX** - Child may return six days after rash appears or when all of the sores are dry and crusted over.
- » **CONJUNCTIVITIS / "Pink eye"** - Child may return 24 hours after beginning treatment and eyes are no longer red and with no discharge.
- » **COVID-19** – Child may return with a negative home COVID-19 test or after a minimum of five days of isolation. COVID-19 is a new and evolving virus. If and when current guidelines change, Palcare will notify families.
- » **HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH, "Coxsackievirus"** - Child may return when the sores on the hand(s) and mouth have healed, approximately three to five days.
- » **HEPATITIS A** - Child may return after beginning treatment.
- » **IMPETIGO** - Child may return 24 hours after treatment is begun.
- » **LICE** – Child must be free of lice and nits, and treatment completed.
- » **MEASLES** - Child may return six days after onset of rash.
- » **MOUTH SORES WITH DROOLING** - Child may return when a medical evaluation determines the child is ready to return.
- » **MUMPS** - Child may return nine days after onset of swelling.
- » **PERTUSSIS** - Child may return five days after starting treatment with antibiotics.
- » **RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)** - Child may return when the child's doctor provides a letter for the parents to submit to Palcare stating when the child can return to group care.
- » **RINGWORM, SCABIES**, or other infestation - Child may return 24 hours after beginning treatment.
- » **RUBELLA / GERMAN MEASLES**- Child may return six days after onset of rash.
- » **STREPTOCOCCAL** - Child may return 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment is initiated.
- » **THRUSH** - Child may return no sooner than 24 hours after first dose of medication, when infection is in the mouth. If in diapering area, no exclusion is necessary.
- » **TUBERCULOSIS** - Child may return only after San Mateo County Health Department or child's physician verifies that the child is under treatment and is no longer contagious.

Medication Policy

Center staff may administer medication under these circumstances only:

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the child's name, prescription label and instructions clearly visible. It must be a current prescription authorized by the child's physician. It must not be expired.

Non-prescription medication must be in the original container and not expired. We must have written instructions from the child's physician that indicates proper dosage for your child and the conditions under which it is to be used. These precautions are necessary because over-the-counter medications typically do not indicate dosage levels for children under age six and can be quite dangerous.

A medication release form must be filled out by the parent for each occasion and each medication. Sunscreen and diaper rash medicine do not require a medication release. We will ask you to approve use of these upon enrollment.

Please do not add medicine to bottles or cups, this is not permitted nor safe.

If you would like us to administer a medication, please bring this to the attention of your child's primary caregiver or Lead Teacher. You will be given the proper permission form to complete, sign and return to the Lead Teacher. The medication is kept in a central location out of the reach of children. Please do not leave any medication in your child's lunch box or backpack, as this could endanger other children at the program. We cannot administer Tylenol as a prophylactic to avoid fever while your child is at Palcare.

Immunizations

No child may be enrolled without documentation of a Physician's Report (LIC701) including a current immunization record that shows the child has received appropriate and timely shots in compliance with the State of CA requirements for their age at the time of enrollment. Parents are required to provide Palcare with an updated record after each immunization while their child is enrolled. We must follow the requirements of the State of California Department of Public Health concerning the number, timing and type of immunizations required for children at various ages.

Who Can Pick Up Your Child From Palcare?

Only a child's parents, legal guardians and adults (18 years or older) specifically named by the parent on a child's Emergency Card are authorized to pick up the child. If the person is not known to us, either the Front Desk or classroom staff will ask to see a picture ID and verify authorization before releasing the child. If a person comes who is not on a child's Emergency Card, we will attempt to contact parents to secure authorization. If we cannot reach a parent, we will ask the person to leave. Please help us keep children safe by thinking carefully about who to list on the Emergency Card and if changes occur, notify the Front Desk staff promptly in person.

Child Custody and Palcare's Obligation

Palcare recognizes that families have developed many different custody arrangements for dependent children. We are obliged to honor the legal arrangements that each family has made through a court of law. If your family has a special court order, please share it with the Enrollment Director at the time of enrollment or whenever it becomes effective, and we will attempt to follow its intentions. If custody issues arise, we encourage parents to settle their differences away from the Center. We want the Center to be a safe haven for all children. Sometimes during difficult times at home, the Center can provide an emotional safety net for your child.

Unless there is a court order specifying that a parent is not allowed to take a child from the Center, we will always let any parent take their child. When a parent is restricted by court order from taking a child, we will attempt to dissuade that person from taking the child. However, under no circumstances will we provoke a person to the point of violence or open hostility. If the parent insists on taking the child, we will first ensure the safety and supervision of all children in our care. Second, we will call 911 emergency services and identify the parent who took the child as well as the vehicle in which they left. We will then notify the custodial parent.

In a situation where a parent is sharing child-rearing with a non-parental guardian, domestic partner, or family member, we will follow the parent's wishes exclusively. Please let us know the nature of your relationships so that we can best meet the needs of your family. We want to honor the importance of each person in your family, but we recognize that the parent must have ultimate responsibility for their child's welfare.

In the case of shared custody, either parent can list additional authorized persons on the Emergency Card for picking up the child. Only the parent who listed an additional authorized person can remove that contact from the Emergency Card.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

It is the responsibility of every Palcare staff member to see that children are only released to adults who are capable of the care and supervision of young children. If a staff member feels that a parent or additional person listed on the Emergency Card is intoxicated or unable to care for a child, they will immediately inform the Site Supervisor on duty. At that time the Supervisor will assess the situation and may recommend that the parent arrange for a ride-share service, taxi or friend to drive them home. If a parent insists on leaving with their child, we will not physically stop them. However, we will note the license plate number of the vehicle if possible and call 911. Please remember, the safety of the children is our ultimate concern.

What Parents Need to Know:

You play a critical role in ensuring the safety of your child in the event of an emergency. The comprehensive plans developed by Palcare staff depend on the cooperation of parents. Please read the following carefully and keep relevant information with you.

Each Parent's Responsibility:

We must know how and where to reach you at all times. Please provide us with:

- » Up-to-date cell, work and home phone numbers for both parents.
- » On the Emergency Card, the names and phone numbers of at least two people authorized to pick up your child in your absence.

In the Event of a Major Disaster:

- » We will attempt to contact parents by phone call or text
- » We will send out an email using the Parent Communication app, if possible
- » **If you are asked to pick up your child, please do so IMMEDIATELY!**
- » If we are required to evacuate, we will post notification on the building stating details of where we are.

Disaster Preparation

Palcare is well prepared for emergencies. There is a designated Site Supervisor and back-up replacement at all times. All staff members have taken additional training in pediatric first aid, CPR, safety and emergency procedures to form a Center-wide Emergency Response Team. In addition, Palcare has:

- » Frequent evacuation drills, earthquake drills and alarm testing
- » At least an eight-hour supply of food, water, diapers and medical supplies on site.

Keeping Your Child Healthy - Universal Precautions

To protect the health of children and staff, Palcare staff will follow the following precautions when working with any accidents involving blood or excrement and when changing diapers. Blood spills are always treated as potentially infectious. Gloves will be used to handle any injury involving blood. When such an injury occurs, a staff member wearing gloves will immediately take over the care of the injured child, so the first staff member is able to wash carefully with soap and water.

- » If blood is splashed into the mucous membranes of the eyes of a staff member or child, the eye will be immediately flushed with running water.
- » Surfaces on which blood has spilled will be cleaned with a disinfectant prepared daily by the housekeeping staff. Surfaces will air dry before reuse. Personnel who clean such surfaces will wear gloves and take care to avoid exposing open sores to blood or body fluids.
- » Personnel will not rinse bloody clothing. Such clothing will be bagged, tied closed and given to the child's parents or alternate authorized pick-up person. Personnel wear smocks or keep a change of clothing for themselves in the event they are splashed with blood. Gloves will be worn during all diaper changes. The diaper-changing station area will be thoroughly disinfected after each use.

Discipline Policy

The goal of Palcare's discipline policy is the development of children's moral autonomy. Autonomy means being governed by oneself and considers the feelings and views of others in determining the best course of action. This understanding takes many years to achieve. Infants, toddlers, Preschoolers and Pre-K children are taking important first steps toward this goal.

We believe young children learn empathy when the adults in their world consistently treat them with gentleness and respect. They learn to be cooperative when their feelings and ideas are acknowledged. Our guidance methods help children discover that cooperative behavior is necessary to achieve satisfying relationships. Our staff is skilled at using children's conflicts as opportunities to teach social skills and the democratic process. They help children learn the language of negotiation so that they can begin to solve disputes with words and productive action rather than aggression.

Palcare staff provide clear, age-appropriate expectations for children's social behavior. We give positive direction, support and encouragement to help children learn life-affirming behavior. We also communicate clear limits when children's behavior is unacceptable. We refrain from using punishment and rewards to control children's behavior. Corporal punishment is never used and is against the law. Instead, we use respectful sanctions and consequences, which are directly related to the anti-social behavior. Examples of typical sanctions are:

- » **Temporary exclusion from the group.** The child is given a choice of behaving appropriately or leaving the group to spend time playing alone or sitting with a teacher. The child is allowed to determine the point when he or she is ready to show the teacher that he/she is ready to rejoin the group. This is an opportunity to "cool off." Children are given real support for succeeding when they return to the group. We do not use an indiscriminate "Time Out" routine.
- » **Calling attention to the direct and logical consequences of the child's actions.** For example, "If you throw all your crackers on the floor, you won't have any more to eat."
- » **Depriving the child of the thing he has misused.** For example, "I'm going to put this shovel away until you are ready to play with it safely."
- » It is essential that sanctions be presented to children in an atmosphere of mutual respect and affection so that the child will feel positive motivation to choose more acceptable behavior in the future. Only the child who feels respected for the way he feels is likely to respect the way others feel.
- » Punishment and humiliation sometimes achieve immediate results in controlling children's behavior, but in the long run leads to revolt, calculation of risks, dishonesty, fear and low self-esteem. We do not use punishment and humiliation in our discipline techniques.

Occasionally a child continues to behave in ways that are frequently damaging to self or others, in spite of consistent limits and consequences. When this occurs, the Associate Executive Director will request a conference with the child's parents and the Lead Teacher. Together, staff and parents will develop a plan for resolving the problem. This may include a series of regular conferences and family counseling. We may also request assessments by qualified professionals during the time that your child is at Palcare. Most difficulties can be solved within a short time when parents and staff work together. Should a family be unable to commit the necessary time and effort to this process, the Associate Executive Director may give them a two-week enrollment termination notice.

In the event that, despite the sincere efforts of staff and parents, a child continues to be unable to function as a member of a group during age-appropriate activities and requires constant attention from a teacher to prevent him or her from hurting other children, endangering him/herself, destroying materials, or disrupting the activities of other children, it may be concluded that Palcare is not able to provide the conditions necessary for the child's success. When this situation occurs, a family may be given a two-week termination notice.

Special Situations (Accidents, Bad Language etc.)

Accidents:

Whenever children are at play it is inevitable that accidents will happen. In a childcare program, accidents range from minor bumps and scratches, which require a Band-Aid and lots of TLC, to more serious injuries.

If your child is mildly injured, we will clean them up, apply an ice pack if appropriate, and administer hugs. We will notify you with an Accident Report at the end of the day.

If your child is moderately injured, we will call you immediately and ask for your advice or the care that you desire. We may recommend that you pick up the child or that you seek medical attention. In the end, the decision will be yours. We will also have an Accident Report for you when you arrive.

For any head injury, we will call promptly to notify you of what has happened.

In the event of any major injury, we will notify you and call the emergency medical team through the 911 system. You will be given a formal report.

Bad Language:

Sometimes children's first experience with swearing happens in group care. In the event that a child uses unacceptable language or "bad words" we explain that certain words are not okay to use at Palcare because they are unkind. Then we try to encourage them to express themselves with more appropriate language. Often, we find that, after we have done that, the "bad words" are no longer fun, and they tend to disappear when dealt with calmly and firmly in this way.

Playing Doctor:

Another behavior that your child may observe or participate in is pretend play or "playing Doctor." For Preschool children this pretend play is a normal expression of their curiosity about the world around them and how its people work. The specific behaviors may have been seen on TV or around their homes and are a natural extension of cuddling, hugging and caring for their friends. The play may happen with two or more children of any gender and our response to it is gentle yet firm. Our first approach is to gently say that those are the things parents do in their homes. They are not the things that friends do at school. They are then redirected to an appropriate group activity such as singing, dancing, or playing.

Biting:

It is quite common for young children to experiment with biting at some point in their early years, particularly before they have full mastery of language. This way of acting out frustration or aggression is particularly disturbing to parents and staff, even though it is a common behavior. Each incident of biting is a serious and painful event. We take this very seriously and we treat biting just like any other injury with the following precautions:

- » The Palcare staff member's first response when dealing with each biting incident is to maintain a safe environment for all children in the area.

Sometimes this means separating the child who has bitten from the group for a moment so a staff member can assess the bite and comfort the child who has been bitten. At no time would we "punish" a child, rather we will help them to understand the consequences of their behavior.

- » Next, Palcare staff will wash the area of skin bitten with disinfectant soap.

Often, the child who has bitten can be reunited with the group so that they can participate in comforting the child who has been bitten. It is sometimes through learning that the consequences of a bite are very painful that a young child stops the behavior. Remember, young children between 18 months and 3 years are just beginning to have an awareness of cause and effect. Of course, if this is uncomfortable for the child who has been bitten, we would respect those feelings and maintain a safe distance while we talk to the other child about how scary and hurtful it is to be bitten.

- » If the bite was hard enough to cause swelling, ice will be applied for as long as the child will tolerate it. Often children do not want ice as this makes them more uncomfortable. If the bite was hard enough to break the skin, we are particularly attentive to seeing that the wound is washed thoroughly with disinfectant soap and covered to keep it clean.
- » Staff will then fill out an Accident Report and see that the parent who picks up the child who has been bitten is fully informed about the nature of the incident. Staff will then fill out an Incident Report for the parents of the biter and see they are also fully informed about the nature of the incident.

In the interests of confidentiality, staff is not allowed to divulge the name of the child who hurts to the parent of the child who has been hurt. This is the case for biting as well as any other hurtful behavior. We feel that it is important to note that ALL children are potential biters and each family and child needs the security that we will work on these sensitive issues with delicacy and concern for the needs of all involved. Often the assurance of confidentiality allows us to work in greater depth with families and children.

- » Staff will look at the medical histories provided by the parents and consult with the parents of both children.

Under the law, families do not have to reveal all types of contagious diseases, including AIDS and AIDS-related conditions. We encourage all parents to be as forthright about their child's health as possible so that Palcare staff can look after the needs of all the children in our care. We particularly want to stress our policy of confidentiality so that parents will feel free to share this sensitive information with us.

- » If a child bites on a continued basis, the Associate Executive Director will consider the events leading up to biting incidents and assess what type of environmental or programmatic changes could help the staff reduce the

likelihood of further bites. We will enlist the help of the biter's parents in a process of trying to understand the root of the behavior.

We may make suggestions that could help ease the difficulty of a particular transition, or we may request that a family seek therapeutic assessment and intervention. Working together we can usually find successful strategies. If your child bites other children more than three times in one day, we may ask you to pick him/her up for the day. We do not view this as a disciplinary action, rather, we feel the child is expressing that the group setting does not feel comfortable to them.

Parent Participation

If You Have Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to talk to your child's Lead Teacher, the Site Supervisor on duty, or any of the Directors. We work as a leadership team committed to making Palcare a special place for families. We want to know your concerns! They will help us provide the best care for your child.

Visiting Palcare – Open Door Policy

We welcome you to visit Palcare at any time. It is our pleasure and your right to enter whenever you wish at any time. Teachers may not always have the time to meet with you if they are involved with the children but are happy to schedule a meeting time. If you have the time to participate on a regular basis, there are many ways you can get involved!

Daily Parent Communication via App

One of Palcare's priorities is to provide parents with easy access to their child's daily information. Palcare uses a Parent Communication app. The Enrollment Director will tell you the app's website address upon your child's enrollment. Create a log-in for the app on your chosen device. The email address used to create the app account must be the same one Palcare has for you. It is always free and gives parents the ability to enjoy some photos and the occasional video taken by staff, plus review your child's daily report, which is sent 15 minutes after check-out. Parents can also use the app to send messages to their child's classroom teachers. Parents should also use the app to tell Palcare that their child will be absent due to vacation, sickness (mention the illness symptoms) or other reason (include a brief description). Talk with the Front Desk staff if you need help getting started.

Parent/Staff Meetings

Parent/Staff meetings are held in each of the programs: Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Pre-K. We encourage you to attend these meetings. These are times when staff members or presenters share topics or their observations and plans. These meetings help staff and parents to know and understand each other well - which is essential to our ability to provide excellent care and education for your child.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

We hold conferences for parents of all children in the program twice per year. You may ask for additional time with your child's Teacher or Lead Teacher whenever you wish. Conferences help us get to know each other and focus on your child and his or her unique development and special qualities. You know your child best and can offer such valuable insights to us.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) provides opportunity for ALL parents to be involved in Palcare. Throughout the year, the PAC meets to discuss parent-related topics, plans community builders and on occasion arranges for educational speakers and problem-solving meetings. The PAC may also plan fundraising activities each year that are often fun as well as income generating!

The PAC is led by a group of Parent Volunteer Officers. Meetings usually occur once a month and may be offered by Zoom or in a hybrid in-person/Zoom format.

Ways to Volunteer or be Involved

All enrolled families are welcome to participate in Palcare activities that improve the quality of care and education at Palcare. The Parent Participation Program is designed to offer parents many options for becoming involved.

Fundraising

Parent tuition payments do not cover the full cost of the high-quality services that we provide at Palcare. In fact, tuition covers 70% of the cost of care. The remaining 30% is made up from Corporate and Community fundraising, grants and donations. Fundraising must fill in the gap in order to provide educational materials, special projects funds and equipment needed each year. Palcare actively seeks donations and grant funds from Corporations and Foundations. Sometimes parent assistance is critical to securing a contribution from a parent's employer. The PAC may also plan fundraising activities each year that are often fun as well as income generating!

We hope you will support these efforts.

Charitable Giving

One way that you can support the efforts of the Palcare community is through the gift of real money. Any gift is 100% tax deductible and Palcare will provide a receipt for your tax records. Palcare is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

If you donate to the United Way through your place of employment, your donation can come directly to Palcare under the "donor option" section.

Does your employer have a "Matching Funds" program? Every dollar given to Palcare is worth \$2 when taking advantage of a matched funds program.

Bequests

When planning your estate, consider leaving a bequest in the name of Palcare, Inc. Money allocated in this way may help defray the tax liability for your surviving family. As with any tax-deductible donation, it is important to consult with your tax preparer or accountant for advice.

Advocacy

Anyone who works with children in education and/or childcare knows that fundraising and parent tuition continue to put the financial burden of raising children on families. This philosophy denies the heavy financial drain on families in this increasingly difficult economy. In order to make real changes in programs that serve young children, the total community will need to reassess their spending and focus on early intervention, including childcare and education.

Kids Don't Vote!

We must be their voice. It's our responsibility to see that legislators enact legislation that supports families and children, progressive taxation, parks, schools, childcare, health care and other things that enhance the quality of the lives of children. You can make a difference. We have information that can help make you an educated voter. We can be partners in advocating for children.

The Licensing Agency

Palcare is licensed and regulated by the State of California's Community Care Licensing Division. They can be contacted at:

**851 Traeger Ave. Ste. 360, MS 29-24
San Bruno, CA 94066
650-266-8800**

**Licenses: Young infants: 414004670
 Older infants: 410518635
 Toddlers thru Pre-K: 410518636**

It is the responsibility of Community Care Licensing and Child Protective Services to investigate any complaint of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of a child. Palcare staff are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or mistreatment, which means we are required by law to report any incidents we witness or strongly suspect to Child Protective Services (CPS) and Community Care Licensing (CCL). In the course of investigating suspected abuse or mistreatment, CPS and CCL staff have the right to interview children in a childcare setting without their parent's prior permission.

If you have specific questions or concerns about this, please talk to a Director or call Community Care Licensing.

Uniform Complaint Procedures

For California State-Funded Tuition Program Only

It is the intent of Palcare to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding Palcare, alleging violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Education Code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 1135) in any program or activity funded directly by the State or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the State of California Department of Education.

**Child Development Division
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N. Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/ her choosing in this event.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violation of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.