

## *A Summer Salute to Pinellas Child Care Providers!*

As I find myself approaching the one year mark with the Pinellas County License Board, I am pleased to report that it has been all that I expected and then some! I was aware that Pinellas has some of the finest child care providers in the State and I knew that Pinellas cared enough to establish additional regulations to help ensure high quality child care that also helped ensure child safety.

Having had numerous opportunities to meet with providers and to work alongside of them on special projects, I can share that I am very impressed with the level of professionalism and dedication to children's well being that I have seen, and I am proud to be a partner in promoting high quality child care in Pinellas. The work that we do together is so very important for the children.

We are continuing our plan of communicating with our licensed providers on a periodic basis. For Family Child Care Home providers, there have been some significant changes in regulations and we have outlined them below. As always, we appreciate your hard work and we are always willing to lend support. Please feel free to contact us whenever you need information or assistance and also when you have suggestions. Your input is important to us.

Thank you for all that you do for the children,

*Patsy Buker*

### **New Regulations**

The Pinellas County License Board met on June 27, 2011, and adopted the following new definitions:

1. **Family Child Care Home:** means an occupied residence in which child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated households with or without compensation. A family child care home shall be allowed to provide care for one of the following groups of children, which shall include household preschool aged children whether present or not, and household school aged children under 13 years of age when on the premises of the family child care home or on a field trip with children enrolled in care.
  - A) A maximum of 6 children, if no more than 3 are under 18 months of age
  - B) A maximum of 6 preschool aged children, if no more than three are under 18 months of age, and all are older than 12 months of age
  - C) A maximum of 10 children total, of which, a maximum of 8 children are in Child Care status. Of the 10 total children, no more than five are preschool age and of those five no more than three are under 18 months of age, and of those three, no more than two are under 12 months of age.

**2. Large Family Child Care Home** – A large family child care home for the purposes of this regulation means a home that is licensed under section 402.3131, F.S. A large family child care home means an occupied residence in which child care is regularly provided for children with or without compensation from at least two (2) unrelated households and which has at least two (2) full-time child care personnel on the premises during the hours of operation. One (1) of the two (2) full-time child care personnel must be the operator or the operator’s substitute. A large family child care home must first have operated as a licensed family child care home for two (2) consecutive years, with an operator who has had a child development associate credential or its equivalent for one (1) year, before seeking licensure as a large family child care home. The two consecutive years of operation as a licensed family child care home must have been in the state of Florida and within five years of the date of application to operate a large family child care home. A large family child care home shall be allowed to provide care for one of the following groups of children, which shall include household preschool aged children whether present or not, and household school aged children under 13 years of age when on the premises of the large family child care home or on a field trip with children enrolled in care:

A) A maximum of 8 children from birth to 24 months of age

B) A maximum of 12 children, with no more than 4 children under 24 months of age

Large family child care homes must meet and comply with all standards of this regulation at all times unless there are insufficient numbers of children in care to meet the definition of a large family child care home in which case an additional employee is not required.

---

## **What does this mean to me?**

### **Large Family Child Care Home**

The capacity changes have a minimal affect on Large Family Child Care Homes.

**1)** You can choose to lower your capacity to the new Family Child Care definition, and no longer need an employee. You would just need to submit a “Change of License Form”. No inspection would be needed as you are in effect decreasing your capacity and already have the square footage and equipment needed.

**2)** You can wait until renewal to apply for a regular Family Child Care Home, and just pay the normal \$25 application fee and \$25 license fee for a regular Family Child Care Home.

**3)** You can keep your Large Family Child Care Home License and not have an additional employee present when the number of children in your home falls to the levels of a Family Child Care Home. Please note, that if you chose to do this on a normal basis, you would still need to have an annual fire inspection, an approved substitute, AND an approved employee on file with the Child Care Licensing Program, even if you do not use them. No new license is required. The capacity change goes in

to effect on JULY 1, 2011, and you can start using the new definition on that date to allow an employee to be released.

### **Family Child Care Home Capacities**

(Note: All of these options include preschool household children, whether present or not, and school aged household children when present)

**Option (A) Allows for a maximum of 6 children, if no more than 3 are under 18 months of age**

#### **What does this mean?**

This means that you can have 6 children total, but no more than 3 of the children can be under 18 months of age. This option **does allow** for 3 of the children in care to be under 1 year of age.

**Option (B) Allows for a maximum of 6 preschool aged children, if no more than three are under 18 months of age, and all are older than 12 months of age.**

#### **What does this mean?**

The State (F.S. 402) requires this option. If even one child is under 1 year of age, then you would need to use option A. This means if you want to care for 6 children who are preschool age, you can, even if none of them are under 1 year of age. As of their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, they are acceptable in this grouping.

**Option (C) allows for a maximum of 10 children total, of which, a maximum of 8 children are in Child Care status. Of the 10 total children, no more than five are preschool age and of those five no more than three are under 18 months of age, and of those three, no more than two are under 12 months of age.**

#### **What does this mean?**

This means that if you have household children, you need to count your preschool children in the child care children capacity of 8, if they are present or not; and count your household children from kindergarten to 13 years old (only when present) in the maximum of 10 total.

If you want to care for 8 child care children, the maximum number of preschool children you can have is 5. If you want 6 preschool children, you need to use option A or B, and then you are limited to having only 6 children at any given time.

If you want to care for 8 child care children, not only are you limited to 5 preschool children, but 2 need to be over 18 months of age and only 2 can be under 1 year of age.

You can have as many school age child care children as you want up to the limit of 8 and then 2 of your own school age children present, as well.

### **Do I need to pick one option only?**

No! If you have the square footage, inside and out, enough napping and sleeping areas, and enough toys etc., you can get a license that allows you to care for any of the above groups of children at any time. This means if you want all preschoolers until school is over for the day, you would be using option B, and then can move to option C after the school ages are done with school for the day. There is no limit to mixing you months, weeks, or days with only one option from above.

### **Can I start this right now?**

No, you must have a brief inspection to make sure that you have all the needed space, toys, beds, cots, etc.

You also may want to call your local fire department to see if you are required to have a fire inspection. The State of Florida does not require it, but says that you need to follow all local building, fire and health requirements. Check your local phone book for the number!

### **Is everyone going to be able to care for more children?**

No, although most providers will be able to have the highest capacities, some will not. There are still requirements that need to be met:

- The home needs to have 35 square feet of indoor play space for each child.
- The home needs to have 50 square feet of fenced outdoor play space for each child.
- There must be enough napping spaces, toys, books, equipment for child development.
- You must be in compliance with all the PCLB regulations and have completed any corrective action.

### **How do I get this new capacity on my license?**

The application for change in capacity is on our website at [www.pclb.org](http://www.pclb.org). Please follow the yellow highlighted link on that site to get your application, and required information that you must send in with your application. You can also request that we e-mail it to you or mail you a paper version. We are now accepting applications.

We will schedule inspections as quickly as possible and print licenses as quickly as we can. However, please note that with any PCLB application, they are valid for 60 days. This means you will have time to correct anything needed and it gives us time to inspect your home and process the paperwork.

We are anticipating that most license changes will not take the whole 60 days. That is just the longest amount of time that it could take to process an application. We expect that many applications will be submitted in early July and that will increase our already established work load of processing new applications for Temporary Permits and processing regular renewals on time. By contract standards we are required to process renewals on time, so that will remain a top priority for us.

### **What does required paperwork mean?**

Since children will be added, we need to make sure that all can be evacuated safely and that it is reflected in your evacuation plan. On our website with the application to change, there will be a shortened Plan of Evacuation called "Addendum to Plan of Evacuation".

You will also have to make a drawing of your home and measure the areas that are for the children's use. Please note, according to the regulations this cannot include space in kitchens, hallways, laundry rooms, bedrooms used for napping, or other areas not used for children to play and learn.

**What is involved in the whole process?**

Once you have submitted the application, required paperwork, and paid the \$25.00 application fee, your name will be passed on to your specialist or another available specialist. They will call you and set up a time to come to your home to measure and check for equipment.

After the inspection is completed, and any necessary corrective action is completed, the supervisor will approve your application, and a license will be printed and mailed to you.

**Will this change my current license number?**

No! You will still have your same license number. Even if you change your name, go from a Temporary Permit to a regular License, or go from a regular to a large. The only time your license number would change is if you need to apply for a new license after closing.

**Will this change my license renewal date?**

No! Your license renewal date will remain the same, even if you request this change just before or right after you renew.

**What if I have more questions?**

- 1) Keep checking out website at [www.pclb.org](http://www.pclb.org) for updates.
- 2) Keep a list of questions ready to ask the Licensing Specialist during your change inspection.
- 3) For more information, please call your Licensing Specialist, or ask for the Specialist of the Day at: (727) 507-4857.

---

## *Helpful Hints and Reminders*

**Hurricane Season is Here!**

Just a friendly reminder that hurricane season has begun. Please remember to go over your emergency plans, emergency regulations, and run a hurricane drill! This will ensure that your plan is a good one to keep your family and child care children safe.

Don't forget that within 24 hours after a STATE OF EMERGENCY, you are mandated to call and report the condition of your home or center to 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

**Dial 211 to report your availability.**

If you need any assistance with a plan or have any questions about the emergency regulations, please call our offices at 727-507-4857 and ask for your specialist or the specialist of the day!

## **Heat Precautions**

Summer in Florida is extremely hot. While children should have outside time every day, there are certain precautions that need to be taken by providers to ensure that children do not overheat or become dehydrated:

- Provide sanitary drinking water for children and ensure that they drink liquids throughout the time they are in your care.
- Instead of going outside for one long period each day, go outside multiple times for shorter amounts of time.
- Make sure that there is a shaded area in your outdoor play space, where children can escape from direct sunlight.
- If parents provide hats, make sure that children put them on before going outside.

## **Influenza Virus**

Annually, during the months of August and September, parents or legal guardians of children in your care must receive information detailing the causes, symptoms and transmission of the influenza virus.

To assist providers, DCF developed a brochure, CF/PI 175.70, June 2009, which may be obtained at their website, [www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare). There is a tear off page, which the parent or guardian signs, that should be retained as proof that they received the information. A signed parental/guardian statement of receipt, dated in August or September is acceptable as well. Even if the child was in care last fall, and the parent/guardian received the information, they need to receive it again this year, and you need to be able to show proof to your specialist.

## **Background Screening**

Background screening requirements have been in effect since August 1, 2010. They require that complete level 2 screening results be back before child care personnel can begin working with children. Level 2 screening includes: a Local Background Check, a Livescan fingerprint final result from DCF Background Screening, a 2 year employment history check, a notarized and correctly signed Affidavit of Good Moral Character and an Acknowledgement Form. To maintain compliance, no employment start date should precede the dates on each of these items.

## **Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and Abandonment**

Acknowledgement Forms must be signed annually. There is a required form, FC0071) that is available for download at our website, [www.pclb.org](http://www.pclb.org) under Center Forms. This is the only acceptable form as it includes information not on forms used in other counties. Please make sure that there is no gap in time from the expiration of the form signed last year, and this year's form. Also, please make sure that the date of signature is clearly written, and that all areas that require signature are signed.