

FAMILY CHILD CARE CENTERS

Be Prepared for Severe Weather

By Julie Oliver, Homes Supervisor

Greetings to our Licensed Family Child Care Providers! I don't know about you, but it seems to us that this year is already flying by. We had a mild but also cool winter and now we are reminded that summer is right around the corner. We are including some information on severe weather. It is important that we make sure that we are all prepared to safely survive in our business that are our homes.

One of the most dangerous hazards is a tornado. Tornadoes are spawned by a thunderstorm or because of severe weather associated with hurricanes. Wind speeds in an intense tornado are likely to rise above 200 miles per hour. These violent winds are what make tornadoes so deadly. They can uproot and snap trees, down power lines, move or pick up cars and trucks, and destroy homes.

Tornadoes are not usually associated with the Sunshine State, but Florida ranks 5th nationally in the annual average number of tornadoes and ties for 6th in tornado fatalities with an annual average of 4 fatalities per year.

Please be sure you are practicing your emergency drills for tornadoes and lockdowns. Although regulations state that one of each is practiced in your licensing year, it is ok to practice more than once, especially when children in your care change. Remember that fire drills are practiced monthly at varying times of the day.

Safety Tips: How can you be prepared for Thunderstorms and Tornadoes?

- Learn your local severe weather/tornado warning system.

Alert Pinellas is an emergency notification system that is used by Pinellas County public officials, municipalities, and the Sheriff's Office and to notify citizens within Pinellas County. You can sign up for free to receive emergency notifications via phone, text, or email. Sign up here: [Pinellas County, Florida -Alert Pinellas](#)

- Know the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning.

- Tornado Watch:** Issued by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in your area. You should remain alert for approaching storms.

- Tornado Warning:** Indicates that a tornado has been sighted in your area or is indicated on weather radar. You should proceed to safe shelter immediately.

- Know the signs of a tornado

- Discuss thunderstorm and tornado safety with all members of your household and create an emergency plan.

- Pick a safe place in your home for household members and or the children in care to gather during a thunderstorm/tornado warning. This should be away from windows, skylights and glass doors that could be broken by strong winds or hail

- If you are under a thunderstorm warning, go inside when you



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hear thunder and move from outdoors into a building or car with a roof.

- Create an emergency preparedness kit.

More information about thunderstorm and tornado hazards and what you can do to protect yourself and others can be found at [NWS - Thunderstorms](#), [NWS - Tornadoes](#), [NOAA - Tornadoes](#), [FDEM - Tornadoes](#), and [FDEM - Thunderstorms](#).

Information provider by **Nick Morrow-Planner II- Office of Public Preparedness**

Julie



**Faith Barnoff, M.Ed.
Executive Director**



We at PCLB hope that you have no incidents to report for the remainder of 2023. But if you do, please remember to always report it verbally to a staff member. You may do this by calling our office direct at 727-507-4857. Should the incident occur after hours, there will be a message at our number letting you know how to reach a member of our staff. Please do not leave incident information on a staff member's voice mail or in email. These message may not be received right away due to field activities and staff leave. We appreciate you partnering with us to ensure all incidents are handled in the most effective way possible. Thank you for all you do for the children of Pinellas County every day!

Faith

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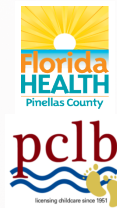


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QUARTERLY NEWS!

Child Care Licensing Program
Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County

Centers
Spring



NEWS FROM EPIDEMIOLOGY Increase in Chickenpox Cases—2023

Varicella (chickenpox) is a viral infection that causes an itchy blister-like rash. After initial infection, the virus can stay in the body and reappear later in life as Shingles. Chickenpox can cause serious infection and complications in babies and others with weakened immune systems including pregnant women.

Chickenpox spreads through the air but may also occur by direct contact with blister fluid. Chickenpox is highly contagious, infecting between 61-90% of those who are susceptible. Those with chickenpox are considered contagious until all lesions have crusted over, typically five days, and should be excluded from care during this time. The best way to prevent chickenpox infection is through vaccination. The vaccine is given in a two-dose series with the first dose given between age 12-15 months and the second at 4-6 years.¹ Vaccines are available through the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) on a walk-in basis.

Chickenpox typically follows a seasonal pattern with highest occurrence in winter and early spring.² In January 2023, DOH-Pinellas identified an increase in chickenpox cases compared to the same time last year (see graph below). Similarly, chickenpox cases increased statewide with 47 cases reported in January 2023, while 23 were reported in 2022.

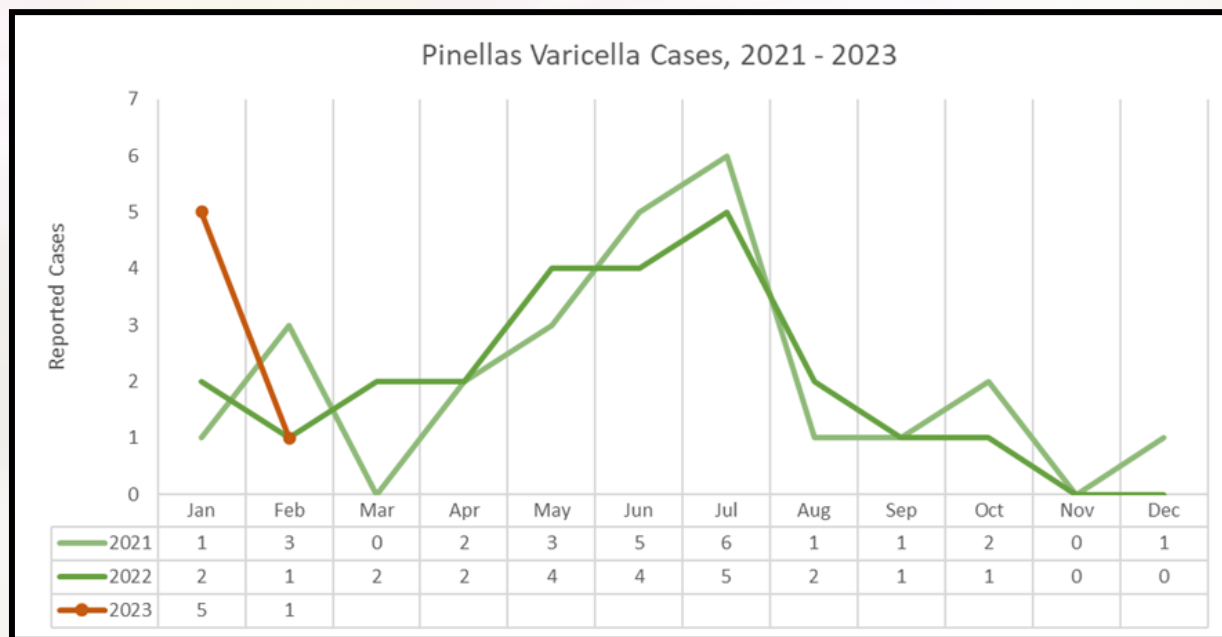
Chickenpox cases are reportable in Florida and should be reported by the diagnosing provider.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/about/index.html>

²<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/varicella.html>

Questions related to Chickenpox outbreaks can be directed to
Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County,
Epidemiology Program at :

727-824-6932

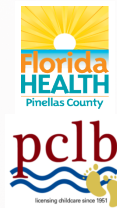


Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County
205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N.,
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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UPCOMING TRAININGS

RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN'S CENTERS

Is a four and a half (4 1/2) hour training comprised of an overview of regulations regarding record keeping including personnel, children, and facility records. Participants will receive a training packet that includes required and optional forms and learn practical ideas for setting up and maintaining files in order to be in compliance with regulations. This training is appropriate for prospective or new owners/directors and as an update for current child care personnel with record keeping responsibilities. A certificate documenting four and a half (4.5) hours of annual in-service training will be issued.

Registration Fee: \$40 prepaid prior to training, non-refundable
Class Time: 8:30am—1:00pm



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PINELLAS DIRECTOR'S BASICS

Is a three (3) hour training required for new directors who have not been directors previously in Pinellas County or have not been a director in Pinellas County in the last 12 months. This course is designed to foster success by covering regulations unique to Pinellas County, our website as a resource and best management practices. A certificate documenting three (3) hours of annual in-service training will be issued.

Registration Fee: \$25 pre-paid prior to training, non-refundable
Time: 9:00am—12:00pm



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DIRECTOR'S ORIENTATION FOR INFANT CARE

Is a three (3) hour training comprised of regulations pertaining specifically to infant care and best practices in caring for children from birth to 2 years of age. Participants will receive a training packet that includes a copy of the Infant Standards, required and sample forms, and brochures. This training is required for directors who plan to start an infant program. A certificate documenting three (3) hours of annual in-service training will be issued.

Registration Fee: \$25 pre-paid prior to training, non-refundable
Class time: 9:00am—1:00pm



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All classes are held at 8751 Ulmerton Road, Largo 33774

These classes are subject to cancellation based on restrictions and requirements in the state at that time.

Call the CCLP office prior to class if you need to reschedule in order to avoid repaying the registration fee.

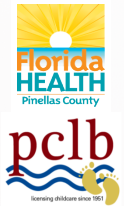
Any persons with a disability requiring reasonable accommodations should call the CCLP office no later than two (2) weeks prior to the training.

Please call 727-507-4857 to register for a class.

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Fisher Price recalled their **Rock n' Play Sleeper** due to infant fatalities when infants rolled from their back to their stomach or side while unrestrained, or under other circumstances.

Contact Mattel at:
https://service.mattel.com/us/recall/default.asp?recall_id=52466
or call 866-812-6518

Children's Robes, imported by **SGMWVB Brand**, have been recalled due to violation of Federal Flammability Standards and Burn Hazard. They were sold exclusively on **Amazon.com**

Email traceyames@126.com for more information.



Target recalled **Children's Pillowfort Weighted Blankets** due to an asphyxiation hazard.

Consumer contact: <http://www.target.com>
Phone: 800-440-0680



Crate And Barrel Thornhill Baby Cribs due to the mattress support pins becoming loose or not fitting properly causing the mattress to fall, posing a fall hazard.

Consumer Contact Information: <http://www.crateandbarrel.com/customer-service/product-recalls>



NewCosply Children's Sleepwear recalled due to Violation of Federal Flammability Standards and Burn Hazards, imported by **Shanghai Jinhui Gardening Center**, sold exclusively on **Amazon.com**

Consumer Contact information:
<http://www.newcosplay.net/pages/product-recalls>
email: ttdd024@163.com

HABA USA recalled their **Discovery Cubes Animal Hide and Seek Activity Toys** due to choking and ingestion hazards

Consumer contact: <http://www.habausa.com/pages/discovery-cubes-animal-hide-seek-recall>
email: recall@habausa.com
Phone: 888-430-0060



CPSC Consumer Information Hotline

Contact this toll-free number if you have questions about a recall:

800-638-2772 (TTY 301-595-7054) Times: 8 am – 5:30 pm ET. Messages can be left anytime.

Call to get product safety and other agency information and to report unsafe products.

<https://www.cpsc.gov/>

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Creative Corner

Fun, educational activities kids LOVE!

Here is a fun and cute spring craft from
'Glued to My Crafts'

Q-Tip Painted Handprint Cherry Blossom Tree



Craft Supplies Needed:

1. Unused Q-Tips
2. White Craft Paint
3. Various Shades of Pink Craft Paint
4. Light-Blue and Brown Cardstock Paper
5. Small paper plate
6. Basic craft scissors
7. Pencil or Pen
8. Glue Stick

Directions:

- Trace the child's handprint/arm onto the brown cardstock and cut it out. (this will be used for the trunk of the tree)
- Glue the hand/arm to the light-blue cardstock
- Put puddles of different color pinks and the white paint on the paper plate
- Have the child dip the Q-Tip into the paint and then dab onto the branches of their "handprint tree" until the tree is nice and full
- Let dry completely before displaying proudly!



If you would like your home or center to appear in a future Creative Corner, please email
karen.kirouac@flhealth.gov
or call 727-507-4857





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Board Spotlight



Jennifer Mekler Pinellas County School Board Representative



In Spring of 2022, Jennifer Mekler joined the Pinellas County Licensing Board as the representative from Pinellas County Schools. Jennifer began her career in education as a teacher in Pinellas County. Of the thirteen years she spent in the classroom, eleven years were spent teaching kindergarten. After teaching, she left the

classroom to serve the district as a building administrator for ten years in both the assistant principal and principal roles. During her time as a building administrator, she worked to build a cohesive program to support a growing population of English Language Learners. She also developed a family involvement program that focused on keeping students engaged in learning outside the school day by working with local businesses and families.

Her work with teachers continuously focused on professional collaboration around teaching and learning and creating cohesive teams increasing the rigor of student work.



Literacy Week 2023—ELC Guest



Mekler (far left) at the PCS Showcase

Mrs. Mekler is now the Director of Early Childhood Education. In this role, she has enjoyed getting involved with different community organizations and events. She leads an amazing team of educators that are committed to early childhood education for each child, every day.

Jennifer and her husband Kevin are both graduates of Pinellas County Schools and have raised two children in the area. Both of their children graduated from Palm Harbor University High School and are attending college. Their son, Mackenzie is in his second year at University of Florida studying Microbiology and their daughter, Madeline, is in her first year at Auburn University studying Animal Science.



Mekler (2nd from right) at the Colvard Green Festival 2023



The Mekler Family

Child Care Licensing Program

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas, 8751 Ulmerton Road, Suite 2000, Largo, Florida 33771

727-507-4857 pclb.org

Vision

Every child has access to quality child care and education in an environment that values diversity.

Values

Commitment
Integrity
Quality

Mission

To protect and promote the health, safety, and mental development of children cared for in children's centers and family child care homes in Pinellas County.