

## **PARISH CHILD CARE PROGRAMS**

*Approved by the Bishops, September 1997*

*Addendum approved by the Bishops, September 2014*

*“Let the Little Children Come unto me . . .”*

*Matthew 19:14*

Parents and children involved in child care programs that meet or operate on church properties must be assured of their proper safety and care.

All parish day care centers and pre-school or early childhood care program (not integral to a Catholic school) must be licensed by the Department of Children & Family Services or other appropriate local licensing authority. All other parish child care programs, including pre-nursery or nursery school programs, before and after school programs (not part of an extended day program in a Catholic school), latch-key children programs, cooperative care programs, Saturday Vigil or Sunday Mass nursery programs and other programs providing care of children will meet pertinent county guidelines related to health, safety and sanitation. All employees and volunteers serving in these child care programs must comply with province and diocesan policies on background checks and screening.

Each diocese will annually determine the nature and extent of programs and operations and facilitate contact with appropriate local authorities. The assigned diocesan department will be responsible for insuring that all parishes are aware of this policy and issuing annual reminders about requirements for licensure and meeting pertinent county guidelines.

This policy becomes effective May 1, 1998.

### **Addendum (September 2014)**

All early childhood education and child care centers or programs, whether parish-based or on school property, fall under the auspices of their Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. This includes any centers currently under the administrative oversight of Catholic Charities. Furthermore, each center is required to become a member of the Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program (FCCAP) and participate in the program's accreditation process. If a center holds a current national accreditation, the diocese will determine the next steps for that center.

The timeframe for participating in the FCCAP's accreditation cycle shall be determined by the program, school or center in consultation with their Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and Florida Catholic Conference staff. A given center can retain oversight from Catholic Charities in conjunction with the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, if deemed appropriate by the key parties involved.