Emergency Numbers

Land lines (regular, not cell, telephones) are good to have in an emergency, as 911 emergency calls can be traced to the specific address in the event that the student or scholar or family member were unable to effectively give an operator the address. We recommend this type of service if anyone in the home is not a native speaker of English. Please fill in the numbers for your own doctors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>911</td>
<td>Medical emergency, Police or Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-222-1222</td>
<td>Poison Control Center (toll-free number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your doctor’s number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your pediatrician’s number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>878-6080</td>
<td>American Red Cross (Hurricane shelter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-342-3557</td>
<td>Florida Emergency Information Line (during hurricanes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>644-INFO</td>
<td>FSU Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
venom from the sting can cause a pustule to form where the ant bit you. This can cause a burning sensation (hence, the term fire ant) and severe itching. A good home remedy is a solution of 50% water and 50% bleach. You can also use plain liquid dishwashing soap. Just lather it on and do not rinse. Leave it on the affected area for about 10 to 15 minutes. If you or your child has a severe allergic reaction and you have trouble breathing, call 911!

Spiders
It is a good idea to tell your children to stay away from spiders. Three venomous types common to the area are the black widow spider, the brown widow spider (see red violin-shaped marking on the underside of its abdomen), and the brown recluse.

If you or your children are bitten by a spider, try to identify the spider (coloration and markings) or, if at all possible, bring the spider with you (dead or alive), and give first aid as follows:

- wash the area with soap and water;
- to protect against infection, particularly in children, apply an antibiotic lotion or cream;
- give acetaminophen for pain;
- apply ice pack for the pain and swelling; and
- seek medical attention immediately.

The black or brown widow bite will lead to muscular cramps, abdominal pain, increased blood pressure and nausea, and difficulty breathing. The brown recluse bite is painful and deep and can cause a severe lesion to form that, without medical attention, can enlarge and cause surrounding tissue to die off.

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**Table of Contents**

- The Purpose of this Guide............................................................. 5
- Getting Started .............................................................................. 5
- Who are Dependents? ................................................................. 5
- Transportation ............................................................................... 6
  - Driver Licenses and the Florida Identification Card ................. 6
    - Florida identification card 6
    - Florida driver license 6
  - Driving Lessons ................................................................. 7
  - Carpooling and Vanpooling .................................................... 8
  - Private Vans.............................................................................. 8
  - Taxi Service .............................................................................. 9
  - Bus Transportation............................................................... 9
  - Car Seats for Children .......................................................... 11
  - Walking and Bicycling............................................................ 12
- Air Travel..................................................................................... 12
- Education..................................................................................... 12
  - Enrolling your children in school ............................................. 12
  - Details about immunizations ................................................... 13
  - Child Care, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten .......................... 14
    - Child care and preschool 14
    - Pre-kindergarten 14
  - Kindergarten through High School (K-12).............................. 15
    - Elementary schools 15
    - Middle and high schools 16
  - Transferring to Leon County Schools .................................... 16
    - Which School? ........................................................................ 16
    - What about English classes for students who do not speak
      English as a native language? 17
    - Private schools 17
  - School Hours .......................................................................... 17
  - After School Care ...................................................................... 18
  - School Lunches ........................................................................ 18
  - Riding the School Bus............................................................. 18
    - Getting involved at your child’s school 19
Poison ivy
This plant, found all over the US, can cause a rash that can be severely itchy. The plant usually has leaves of three and is generally a vine. Tell your children to remember, “Leaves of three, let them be.”

If you or your child comes into contact with poison ivy, give first aid in the following order:

- wash the exposed area with alcohol,
- then wash with warm water only,
- then wash with warm water and soap,
- wash any items (shoes, tools, toys) that came into contact with the poison ivy with water and alcohol.

Source: http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/conditions/a/poison_ivy.htm

Poison sumac and poison oak have similar symptoms and first aid.

Source: http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/conditions/a/poison_ivy.htm

Fire ants
In Florida, whether in your yard or on the playground, at the soccer field or in town, you need to watch where you walk so that you do not step into a fire ant mound. If you do, you will probably get a number of stings on your feet. These ants actually bite you to latch on but then sting you. The
• **Deductible**—the initial portion of a covered expense that must be paid by the insured person before the insurance policy pays its part of the expense.

• **Exclusion**—any condition or expense for which no coverage is provided and no payment will be made.

• **Fee for service**—the doctor, clinic, or other medical professional expects the charge to be paid at the time that service is provided.

• **Insurance or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) identification card**—a card provided by the insurance company or HMO, showing the name of the insured individual, the policy or identification number, and the address and telephone number for claims and questions. The card must be presented when treatment is requested.

• **Insurance policy**—a written contract defining the insurance plan, its coverage, exclusions, eligibility requirements, and all benefits and conditions that apply to individuals insured under the plan.

• **Insurance premium**—the amount of money required for coverage under a specific insurance policy for a given period of time. Depending on the policy agreement, the premium may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.

• **Lapse in coverage**—a break in continuous insurance coverage, usually resulting from nonpayment of premium.

• **Pre-existing condition**—a medical condition that existed before an insurance policy was purchased. Depending on the policy, a pre-existing condition may be defined based on why it originated, when symptoms first appeared, or when treatment was first sought.

• **Preventive care**—measures taken in advance of symptoms to prevent illness or injury.

• **Renewal**—paying a premium in order to continue coverage after the initial policy period has expired.

**Other Health Matters**

A large part of staying healthy is preventing accidents. You and your children should be careful about the usual things that cause injuries. Children are usually out and about in yards and playgrounds. Some things to avoid are described here.

**The Purpose of this Guide**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information that is useful for students and scholars with families as they get settled in Tallahassee. This guide provides information not only on housing, utilities, phones, transportation, and banks but also on schools, sports, and recreational activities. It also provides other useful tips and references to resources available in the community.

**Getting Started**

For more information on FSU, Tallahassee, getting settled, events, and maps, you may want to visit the following sites:

- [www.fsu.edu](http://www.fsu.edu)
- [www.fsu.edu/~facinfo/](http://www.fsu.edu/~facinfo/)
- [www.talgov.com/res.cfm](http://www.talgov.com/res.cfm)
- [www.seetallahassee.com](http://www.seetallahassee.com) (a visitors’ guide)
- [Living Here Magazine](http://www.livinghere.com)
- [http://tallahassee.bestredyp.com/](http://tallahassee.bestredyp.com/)
- [www.tallahassee.com](http://www.tallahassee.com) (the local newspaper’s site)
- [Tallahassee’s weather history](http://tallahassee.weather.com)
- [www.netcrc.org](http://www.netcrc.org) (Tallahassee’s Cultural Resources Commission)

For event information, visit:

- [www.fsu.edu/~calendar/](http://www.fsu.edu/~calendar/)
- [www.marquee.fsu.edu](http://www.marquee.fsu.edu)
- [www.morethanyouthought.com](http://www.morethanyouthought.com)
- Florida State Parks events
- Georgia State Parks events
- Leon County Public Library events
- Tallahassee Leon County Civic Center events

**Who are Dependents?**

When we refer to an F-2 or J-2 dependent, we mean the spouse or child, under 21 years of age, of an F-1 or J-1 student or J-1 scholar, unless the spouse or child is a US citizen.
Transportation

Driver Licenses and the Florida Identification Card

Florida identification card
If you will not drive during your stay in the US, you may apply for a Florida identification card. You may use it for local identification purposes, instead of your passport. You can obtain it in the same location as a Florida driver license. You will need to you're your immigration documentation to obtain the card.

Florida driver license
If you are in the US in any status other than “tourist” for more than 30 days and wish to drive during your stay, you are required to obtain a Florida driver License, even if you do have an international driver license.

You do not need a Social Security number to obtain a Florida driver License or Florida identification card. To apply, you will need to show all your immigration documentation, including the passport, visa, I-94, and I-20 or DS-2019 form. You may be required to take both a written examination and a driving examination, depending upon your country of origin. You must bring an automobile to drive when you take the driving test. For information on Florida driving regulations and laws, which you must know to pass the tests, please visit www.hsmv.state.fl.us/handbooks.

CT scan and review of scan to rule out aneurism or other issues: $2,500
Total medical bill: $5,200
The insurance company determines that $3,000 is “usual and customary.” You are responsible for the remaining $2,200, plus a $100 deductible, plus 20% of the remaining $3,000.
Total billed to you: $2,900.

If it seems worthwhile to go with a plan that provides less comprehensive coverage but lower premiums, keep in mind what you might actually pay in the end should you need care.

Claim procedures
Be sure that you understand what is required in order to file a claim. Will the healthcare provider present a bill to the insurer? Are you responsible for the entire bill in the beginning and required to request reimbursement at a later date? How long does reimbursement take? When must bills be submitted? Many plans require that bills be submitted within 30 days of the injury or illness, but many doctors and healthcare providers do not provide a bill that quickly. In that case, you will have to make calls to get the bill more quickly, or the claim will likely not be paid.

Healthcare in the US is different than what you would expect at home. The process can seem confusing, disjointed, and ineffective. The Thagard Student Health Center and the International Center do their best to provide you assistance along the way. Please feel free to ask questions and seek advice.

Glossary of key words regarding health insurance
- Claim—a written request by the insured individual for payment by the insurance company of medical expenses that are covered under the insurance policy.
- Co-payment—the portion of a covered expense, after the deductible is paid, that must be paid by the insured individual. The co-payment may be a specific dollar amount, or may be expressed as a percentage of the covered amount.
- Cost Containment—actions or practices designed to minimize costs to both the insured individual and the insurance company. Cost containment helps to maintain reasonable insurance premiums and slows the rate of inflation of medical expenses.
- Covered expense—any expense for which complete or partial payment is provided under the insurance policy.
of the insurance policy, regardless whether a person was treated for the condition. So, if a doctor determines that you may have had untreated diabetes for a year before the you began your insurance coverage, all treatment for that condition will be the your responsibility for at least the first six months of the insurance policy, if not more. Be sure to read carefully and understand all language regarding pre-existing conditions, and if you have a condition which will require continuing care during your stay, avoid switching insurance plans.

Other exclusions
Be sure to understand all exclusions. If you are involved in amateur sports or other types of hobbies like scuba diving, climbing, or motor biking, you should be sure that injuries resulting from these activities are covered, or that you have purchased an additional "rider" or extra coverage which will provide for treatment of such injuries. Some plans exclude children’s ear infections, pregnancy and pre-natal care, leukemia, and mental health issues. Be aware of these exclusions and make the best decision based upon your and your family’s needs.

Provider network
If you chose an on-line plan, be sure that you look at the provider network used by the plan. This is the list of doctors, hospitals, specialists, and laboratories that have contracted (at some point) to provide service for the insurer. Make sure that there are available providers in Tallahassee and that these listed providers are still accepting your insurance plan or are still part of that provider network. Many doctors move, do not renew the contract, or contract with other agencies which disallow their participation in any other network. So, it is always best to check. If you prefer a certain doctor, be sure that your doctor is in the network. Out-of-network care often involves a higher deductible and co-payment.

Costs
Be sure that you understand what costs you will incur if you must be treated. Here is an example. A healthy 30-year-old male is outside in the hot Tallahassee sun walking and falls and loses consciousness due to dehydration. An ambulance is called before he awakes. He is placed in the ambulance, taken to the hospital, and treated at the hospital because he acts confused upon waking up. The costs are:

- Ambulance: $700
- Doctor’s evaluation: $500
- X-rays and review of the x-rays by an x-ray specialist: $1,500

To apply for either a Florida identification card or a Florida driver License, go to 504 Capital Circle SE, telephone 488-4735. To make an appointment, call 487-1983. (Note: The office is at the far end of Capital Circle Commerce Center).

Requirements, procedures, and fee information are at www.hsmv.state.fl.us/ddl/geninfo.html. It is now possible to have your driver license be valid through the grace period after the end date on your immigration form I-20 or your DS-2019 form (60 days for F-1 and F-2 students and 30 days for those in J-1 or J-2 visa status). A memo detailing this is available at the International Center should you have difficulty having that grace period included on your driver license. Please take the memo with you to your driver license appointment.

Driving Lessons
Most driving classes offered through listings in the phone book or on line do not involve actually driving a car. These are classroom courses offered to improve driving skills for drivers who have violated a traffic law. The nonprofit organization, Partners for Highway Safety, telephone 681-0800, www.TrafficSafety.net, offers beginner’s driving lessons. A typical course consists of 6 one-hour driving sessions. The cost is approximately $325. The learner must provide the car. Although the website emphasizes teen driving, the organization provides the lessons for adults as well.
Carpooling and Vanpooling

You may be interested in riding to campus with others in your area who are driving to specific locations at the same time of day. This is called carpooling. You do not need to own a car to participate in a carpool. You may instead contribute toward a driver gas and parking expenses. Commuter Services of North Florida offers a free carpool matching service. If you are interested, you can sign up online and receive a list of other drivers and/or riders in your area who are traveling at the same time. You can then contact these people to arrange to be included in their carpool, if there is available space. To sign up for this service, go to www.commuterservices.org.

You may also be interested in signing up for this service to ride with others going to English classes or other routine activities, or to arrange a vanpool. In a vanpool, several riders each pay a small fee for a private van to transport them to certain functions or activities or even to the grocery. Commuter Services also helps arrange vanpools.

An additional service is the guaranteed ride home program for those who participate in a Commuter Services carpool arrangement. Commuter Services provides up to two free taxi rides a month for carpoolers who have an emergency for which they need to return home or whose driver needed to leave early or stay late, or in any other instance where riders are unable to ride home with the carpool driver.

Private Vans

There are a few private companies which provide transportation for a fee. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comsis Mobility Services, Inc</td>
<td>2704 Apalachee Pkwy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Provider for Leon County</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL 32301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Kelly, Coordinator</td>
<td>Phone 850-671-4207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fax 850-671-4283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dial-A-Ride</td>
<td>Phone 850-891-5199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessaly Rose Transit</td>
<td>1209 Clay St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon County Transportation Disadvantaged</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL 32304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Phone 850-222-8232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Assistance Provider</td>
<td>Fax 850-222-6654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilbert Stanley, Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to federal immigration regulations, J visa holders must have health insurance coverage for themselves and their dependents. The International Center recommends that you and your children have health insurance coverage during your stay in the U.S.

Thagard Student Health Center does provide insurance coverage which meets the federal requirements for those in J status. Other plans which may provide appropriate coverage for dependents alone (separate insurance plan from the J-1 or F-1 spouse or parent) are at:

- [www.gatewayplans.com](http://www.gatewayplans.com)
- [www.specialtyrisk.com](http://www.specialtyrisk.com)
- [www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com) (Separate evacuation and repatriation insurance is also required if Blue Cross-Blue Shield is chosen. Thagard offers evacuation and repatriation insurance for $20/annually per person).

The above sites are for informational purposes only; the International Center cannot endorse or recommend any particular insurance plan, as this is not our area of expertise. You must make a determination as to which plan is most appropriate for your particular circumstances. To do so, you should consider the following:

Eligibility

Eligibility refers to the applicant’s particular immigration status covered by this plan. Does the plan require the applicant to be enrolled or registered at a university? If so, the plan is intended for students, so you should seek an alternate plan which covers dependents. Although insurers will accept applications and premiums without checking on enrollment, they may reject later claims for reimbursement or payment for treatment without documentation of the person’s enrollment status.

Renewal options

Check to see if the plan can be continuously renewed. Some plans do not allow renewal. So, each time the policy is re-purchased a period of non-coverage of pre-existing conditions begins again. This means that if s spouse becomes pregnant at the end of one period of paid coverage, the continuing care, the birth, and the pre-natal care will not be covered under the new period of coverage. The condition will be considered pre-existing. Try to choose plans that allow for renewal, and be sure to renew within the specific period outlined in the insurance plan details.

Exclusions for pre-existing conditions

Every insurance plan, other than some employer-based group plans, exclude pre-existing conditions. These are generally defined as any condition which has manifested itself prior to the beginning...
Farmers markets are known for their fresh fruit, vegetables, and friendly interaction with the growers and other shoppers. Increasingly, the local markets delight visitors with art, jewelry, flowers, plants, and music. Three of the local farmers' markets are:

- **Downtown MarketPlace**, downtown in the Ponce de Leon Park on Saturdays, [tallahasseedowntown.com](http://tallahasseedowntown.com);
- **Growers’ Market**, at Lake Ella (organic produce) Saturday mornings and Wednesday and Friday afternoons, rain or shine;
- **Farmers’ Market** in Killearn at Market Square on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; and
- **Southwood Farmers’ Market**, in Southwood (organic produce) at the Southwood Town Center.

For more details, visit downtownmarket.com and florida-agriculture.com/consumers/markets/tallahassee_market.htm.

Discount “superstores” such as Walmart and Target offer groceries and dry goods (clothing, school and office supplies, gardening supplies and equipment, sporting goods, auto supplies, etc.) Other discount stores, such as Dollar General, Dollar Tree or Big Lots, sell a wide variety of items. We have office and computer supplies stores such as CompUSA, Staples, and Office Depot, as well as big electronics stores such as Best Buy and Circuit City.

Tallahassee has two big malls: Tallahassee Mall on the corner of North Monroe and Allen Road, and the bigger Governor Square Mall on Apalachee Parkway. Both malls house restaurants, clothing, jewelry and other specialty retail stores as well as movie theatres.

### Health Matters

#### Health Insurance

Health insurance covering you in the US is required of everyone in J-2 status. Insurance is required at all times of your J program, beginning at the time of arrival. The minimum requirements for insurance are also listed on page 2 of the DS-2019 form. This federal law on health insurance coverage does not apply to F-2 dependents; however, because health care costs are so high, we strongly encourage F-2 dependents to acquire health insurance. Health insurance requirements are listed on page 2 of the DS-2019 form.

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#### Taxi Service

You can call for taxi service any time of day. Here are some companies in town:

- City Taxi 850-562-4222
- Red Cab 850-425-4606
- Yellow Cab 850-580-8080

#### Bus Transportation

Transportation on campus routes circle only the FSU and FAMU. The campus routes are Routes 40 to 49 only. Be certain to wait for these buses only at designated campus route signs—these are larger signs that indicate the specific route name, i.e. “Garnet” or “Gold.”

City buses going to all other locations in the city require a fare. The individual fare is $1.25 in one direction only and should be paid with exact change on the bus. A machine on the bus accepts the money. Change for larger bills is not given. No tickets for individual rides may be purchased elsewhere, though weekly or monthly passes may be purchased at the downtown station. No ticket is given after the fare is paid on the bus; the bus driver monitors fare payment. If you would like to transfer to another route headed in the same outgoing direction, you may ask the bus driver for a transfer ticket when you initially pay your fare (riders should not wait to ask for the transfer later). The transfer is a little ticket that the rider gives to the next bus driver. It is free—there is no charge for transfers. Transfers may not be used for return travel and must be used for the next available bus, not later in the day. A round-trip bus ride costs $2.50. Dependents generally may not ride city buses free; only students may use their FSU card to ride free.
For more information on bus routes, timetables, fees, and how to ride the bus, visit www.talgov.com/starmetro/index.cfm. Spouses receive a Ride Guide (bus routes and timetables) when they check in at the International Center. You may also obtain bus guides on the bus, at the downtown station, or at other information racks around the city. The guides are free of charge and riders can take as many as they need (for example, for family members).

"Outbound" on the timetables at the above site means a bus is going away from the downtown station. "Inbound" means the bus is going to the downtown station.

The times and stops listed are only "timepoints" along the way. These are not the only stops on this route. Any stop marked with a blue and white bus sign is a place where you can get on any bus which travels along that route, unless the stop is marked only for specific routes (which is rare). Be sure you stand on the correct side of the street to travel either "inbound" or "outbound," but keep in mind that, if you make a mistake, you will eventually get to the downtown station anyway. All city buses go in a circular pattern and converge at the downtown station. So, if you are lost, simply stay on the bus until you arrive downtown again. Then, ask for more information or directions at the downtown information booth.

Keep in mind that bus routes change in the evenings and weekends. For instance, bus 20 becomes bus 31 in the evening and on Sundays. These night and weekend routes offer later hours, but shorter routes. So be sure that the night route on which you are returning home will actually make it close enough to your home that you are not walking a very long distance or in a dangerous area at night. All bus routes and schedules are on-line at www.talgov.com/starmetro.

Bus transportation may be drastically different than in your home country. Typically, buses run less frequently than you may be used to and are not as direct to the places you may want to visit. The bus lines also do not cover all areas of the city. Note that you must wait for buses at only designated stops. The buses do not stop if waved down.

You may speak to the bus driver, ask for advice, or tell him or her where you will need to stop, if you are unfamiliar with where the stop is. This is permitted and encouraged. You should signal that you need to get off the bus by pushing the yellow strip next to their seat or pull the line or cord above the driver head, at least a block or two before the point where you need to stop. The bus driver needs sufficient time to plan for the stop. It is not necessary to signal at major stops, like shopping centers or malls or the downtown station.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) operates and maintains greenways and trails that offer inline skating, biking, mountain biking, hiking and walking trails, equestrian trails, as well as water sports such as canoeing and kayaking. There are six of these sites in the Tallahassee area alone: Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park Trails; Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park–The Red Bug Trail; Leon Sinks Geological Area; Miccosukee Canopy Road Greenway; Munson Hills Off-Road Bicycle Trail; and the Tallahassee-St. Marks State Trail. For more information, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/.

The Florida DEP also runs state parks that have earned the National Recreation and Parks Association Gold Medal, honoring Florida as the "Nation's Best State Park Service." The state parks have won the award for two years—the only state in the nation with such a distinction. Each parks offers a variety of services that may include: cabins or other lodging, camping, boating facilities, fishing, canoeing or kayaking, horse trails, hiking, nature trails, interpretive exhibits and picnic areas, visitor centers, swimming, scuba, snorkeling, and more. Some parks offer activities such as guided tours, programs on local history, or folk festivals. Most parks charge a low entrance fee of generally $2-$5 per vehicle. For more information on individual parks, hours, services, and activities or attractions, visit www.floridastateparks.org/ParkInfo.cfm.

Shopping Information

Various supermarkets have free memberships that entitle you to discounts. All you need to do is sign up. Some stores that have memberships are Albertsons, Winn Dixie, and CVS. Others, such asPublix, send you coupons via mail. Publix has clubs for families and one for parents with children who are still in preschool. To learn more and subscribe go to www.publix.com/clubs/ClubsAndPrograms.do.

Fortunately, Tallahassee has quite a few international grocery stores which carry ingredients and spices you might want. Whole and organic foods, bulk spices and teas, and specialty items are usually available at health food stores as well. For starters, try New Leaf Market Co-op, newleafcoop.com, in the shopping center at Magnolia Dr and Apalachee Pkwy, and International House of Food at 2013 N Monroe St Check out locallyownedtallahassee.com for information on the many locally owned shops and other businesses of interest.

Flea markets are open air markets where you can find new and used items (clothing, household goods, etc.), often at discounted prices. Tallahassee’s biggest flea market is open on weekends only and is located on Capital Circle SE.
The FSU Center for Participant Education (CPE) sponsors extracurricular classes, films, workshops, and speakers dealing with progressive and alternative views on education, the arts, and politics. It offers free and low-fee courses. To view their calendar, visit their website at www.fsu.edu/~sga/cpe. You can also reach them by email at sgacpe@admin.fsu.edu or by calling (850) 644-6577.

Movies
There are several movie theatre complexes in town:

- AMC Theatres at the Tallahassee Mall on the corner of N Monroe St and John Knox Rd.
- Movies 8—a great bargain in the Sugar Creek Plaza at N Monroe St and Sharer Rd (just north of the Tallahassee Mall). You can see popular movies for $1.00 on the weekend and $.50 on some weekdays.
- Governor Square Mall theatres on Governor Square Mall Blvd near the Governor Square Mall.
- Miracle 5 Theatre on Thomasville Rd, just south of Betton Rd. This theater shows regular, alternative, independently-produced, and international films.

Sports and Recreation
Run by the City of Tallahassee, the “Parks and Rec” Department boasts of a number of venues for sports as well as organized sports camps and activities. They have several community centers, parks, and golf courses that offer individual sports such as aquatics (swimming and swimming lessons, lifeguard training, water aerobics), gymnastics, tennis, and golf. They also offer organized group sports for both adults and youth in basketball, softball, soccer, flag football, volleyball, baseball, and track. Most of these are available at a very modest fee. In addition, they host free special events such as Celebrate America (Independence Day celebration on July 4th), the Tallahassee Springtime Festival, and the Winter Festival. For more information, visit www.talgov.com/residents/recleis.cfm.

If you talk about sports in Tallahassee, you have to talk about football. FSU has a nationally renowned football team nicknamed the Seminoles. For more information about the football schedule and tickets, go to seminoles.cstv.com.

There are other sports groups and activities in town. Information is at www.seetallahassee.com.

The main downtown bus station is at 111 W. Tennessee St. The hours it is open are:
- Monday-Friday: 5:40 am to 10:00 pm
- Saturday: 6:00 am to 10:00 pm
- Sunday: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Car Seats for Children
Federal and state laws require children to wear safety belts while in a vehicle. Infants must be secured in an infant car seat that faces the rear of the car until they weigh about 20 lbs. Toddlers—20 to 40 lbs in general—must be secured in a child safety seat. Older children can use a booster seat. Not only is it safer for the children, but you can face fines of up to $250 if caught by law enforcement. This will add points to your driving record which will, in turn, raise your automobile insurance rates.

Walking and Bicycling

There are many walking and bicycling trails and bicycle lanes on most roadways (usually marked by a white solid line next to the curb and with an icon of a person on a bike). It is important to wear a bike helmet for your protection. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with traffic laws as they pertain to biking. Visit www.bigring.com/Florida_Law.html. For more information on bike trails in Florida, go to www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guideregions/panhandle_east.htm.

You should also avoid dangerous areas of town. These include neighborhoods north of Alumni Village, neighborhoods north of Tennessee St and east of Woodward Ave, and some neighborhoods on South Monroe St. If you are unfamiliar with an area of town, you should ask a friend, neighbor, the police non-emergency services, or the International Center if the area is safe.

You and your family should be very careful walking in Tallahassee. The weather becomes very hot and there are many gradual hills. You could become easily overheated while walking or biking around town. You should be sure to bring sufficient drinking water and to stop often for breaks. It is also advisable to have safety lights or reflectors on your bike or person when walking or biking in low-light conditions such as early morning, at dusk, or in the evening.

Air Travel

You may purchase airline tickets through the various travel agencies in town or through the Internet from sources such as Expedia, Travelocity, or Orbitz. Be sure to read the terms and conditions before finalizing your purchase. Note that some charges may apply if you make changes to your reservation. Remember to plan your trip early, tickets are cheaper if purchased more than 2 weeks in advance of your departure date.

Education

Enrolling your children in school

When you enroll your children in public child care, preschool, pre-kindergarten, or kindergarten through high school, a school employee will ask you to complete forms that show your name, subscribe to the Center for Civic Education email list, or for more information, please visit www.fsu.edu/~service/opp/index.htm.

Arts and Recreation

Arts and Crafts

Florida’s capital city offers a variety of recreational activities for spouses and children, from arts to sports.

The City of Tallahassee Lafayette Park Arts and Crafts Center offers a variety of classes such as drawing, jewelry making, cake decorating, and more. To find updated information on classes and fees, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (850) 891-3945. Their website is www.talgov.com/parks.

The FSU Art Center in the Oglesby Student Union offers classes such as Wheel Throwing, Photography, Mosaic Tile Art, and many more. To view the class schedule and fees, visit their website www.union.fsu.edu/artcenter or call (850) 644-4737.

Tallahassee abounds in museums and art galleries. The Cultural Resources Commission website (www.netcrc.org/index.html) lists various places and activities around town. The Commission also sponsors the First Friday Gallery Hop:

Join us on the first Friday of every month when museums and galleries stay open from 6 p.m. until at least 9 p.m. with no admission charge, often featuring openings, receptions, and special events for the public. …Don’t want to drive from place to place? Take the trolley! With its on-board tour guides, the CRC First Friday Gallery Hop Trolley is a great way to sample a variety of local art and hear about what’s going on around town at the same time. Every First Friday, trolleys depart from Chez Pierre Restaurant (1215 Thomasville Rd) at 6:00 pm for a three-hour tour of many of the participating First Friday galleries and museums. Trolley tickets are only $5 per person and will go on sale at 5:00 pm the day of the event outside Chez Pierre. Trolley riders are encouraged to park in the TMH parking lot across 6th Ave from Chez Pierre.

Source: Cultural Resources Commission, First Friday Gallery Hop page www.netcrc.org/friday.html#fsuint

The International Center Art Gallery is part of the First Friday Gallery Hop. The International Center Art Gallery provides an exhibition space for international artists from the FSU and Tallahassee communities. Our mission is to present fine arts from different countries and cultures and lead diverse global audiences in discovering the unique material, aesthetic, and intellectual achievements in international art and culture.
Leon County Schools Adult and Community Education offers various levels of formal English instruction free of charge at three different locations. Enrollment is required and involves a placement examination. The placement exam is also free of charge and offered at three locations. More information is at www.ace-leon.org.

The First Baptist Church, at 108 West College Avenue, in downtown Tallahassee, also offers various levels of formal English instruction free of charge to anyone. The English classes are non-religious. They also offer free childcare for pre-schoolers during lessons and free transportation from Alumni Village. For more information, call 222-5470 or visit www.fbctlh.org.

Formal intensive English instruction is also offered at the Center for Intensive English Studies on FSU’s campus. Tuition is charged for these classes, but anyone may apply for admission to enroll. More information is at www.cies.fsu.edu.

At the International Center
Take advantage of all the opportunities you can to meet your needs and goals. Through programs at the International Center, such as the Global Ambassadors Program, Global Gatherings, and the International Friends Program, you have informal opportunities to interact with US citizens. You may also join the English Conversation Club, which meets weekly in a relaxed atmosphere for informal practice of conversation skills and vocabulary building. The Club is for all levels of speakers of English as a second language. Experienced tutors or teachers of English as a second language lead the groups. Everyone is welcome!

If you are interested in signing up for the English Conversation Club, please complete the sign-up form on our website www.ic.fsu.edu. The direct link is below or you can call us at (850) 645-4793. www.ic.fsu.edu/culturedprograms/englishconversionclub.cfm

Cultural and Volunteer Activities
The International Center offers many opportunities for students, scholars, and their families to experience the Tallahassee community, meet new friends, and learn more about what FSU and the surrounding community has to offer. To receive updates on cultural programs the International Center offers, you may subscribe to the email list for programs at www.ic.fsu.edu/culturedprograms/mailinglist.cfm.

Families may also be interested in meeting new people through volunteering. The International Center has a variety of opportunities for volunteering. In addition, the Center for Civic Education at FSU regularly publishes a list of opportunities in the community. To

address, phone number, emergency contact information, and any health problems your child may have. The school keeps these records confidential (private) and uses them only to contact you when necessary. Access to these records is limited to a very few authorized people at the school site and the records are never shared with the public.

Take the following information to school for enrollment:
- proof of residence (such as a utility bill or rental contract);
- proof of a recent physical exam;
- birth certificate, passport, or other evidence of the child’s age; and
- proof that the student has received all the required immunizations.

Details about immunizations
To begin class on the first day of school, the school must already have from the parents documentation showing they have had the following immunizations:
- DPT 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (5th dose between 4 and 6 years of age);
- Polio 1, 2, 3, and 4 (4th dose between 4 and 6 years of age);
- Measles Vaccine (MMR) 1 and 2 or 1 MMR and 1 measles (2nd dose at least 4 weeks after 1st dose);
- Hepatitis B Vaccine 1, 2, and 3;
- (for students entering PreK through 3rd grade only) Varicella Vaccine 1 if they have not had chicken pox;
- (for students entering or attending 7th grade) Tetanus-Diptheria booster (TD);
- (for students entering or attending 7th grade) a 2nd measles vaccine (preferably 2nd MMR).

Immunizations (shots) can be from the Leon County public health department or a private doctor, but they must be current. The health care provider will give you a blue form to show the school that all shots are up to date. If you are not sure that you have all the documents you need to bring, call the school first to ask what you need to bring as evidence.

Note: If you do not yet have proof of a recent physical exam or the immunizations, some schools will allow you to enroll your child in school and submit the medical documents a few days later. Contact the specific school for information.
For school physicals and immunizations, contact a private physician or make an appointment at:

Leon County Health Department
2965 Municipal Way (near Tallahassee Community College) or
1515 Old Bainbridge Rd
Call 487-3155 for appointments.

OR

Bond Community Health Center
710 W Orange Ave
Telephone 576-4073

The cost of the immunizations and school physical exam is based on your income. The health offices on Municipal Way and Old Bainbridge Road do not provide physicals required for your children to participate in sports. For these, see a private physician or go to the Bond Community Health Center. For a useful chart showing all the immunizations and children must receive them, go to www.immunize.org/catg.d/when1.pdf.

Child Care, Preschool, and Pre–Kindergarten

For ANY questions about ANY child care, preschool, or pre–kindergarten resources, call the toll-free number 866-973-9030. Trained counselors are available to answer your questions. This calling center is part of the Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten services. Read the detailed information in this Guide about immunizations to be sure you are prepared to enroll your children in child care, preschool, or pre–kindergarten.

Child care and preschool

There are many daycare facilities available for infants as young as 2 months to preschool aged children (4 to 5 years old). There are also different kinds of daycare: private home care, babysitters, church-based daycare, and other privately run care facilities. Daycare rates range from $300 to $700 a month, depending on the facility and type of care provider (in-home, religious affiliation, private school, etc.).

FSU has several child care facilities available to students: Alumni Village Child Development Center, the Educational Research Center for Child Development, the Infant and Toddler Center, and the Starlight Child Development Center. Space is limited so apply early. More information is at www.childcare.fsu.edu/.

Pre–kindergarten

County Schools Transportation Department at 488-2636.

Getting involved at your child’s school

Parent-Teacher conferences are one way to get involved in your child’s education. But there are a number of other ways in which you can volunteer at your child’s school. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) at your child’s school is a good place to start. Ask your school for your PTO officers’ contact information.

Library and media center

Each school has a Media Center—also usually known as the library. Your children can borrow books from the school library and even use the computers for email or to surf the Internet. Schools generally schedule family nights when the whole family can use the Media Center.

Leon County also has a wonderful public library system that is a rich source of knowledge, learning, and entertainment. You can borrow books, audiotapes, books on CD, music CDs, DVDs, and VHS tapes of movies, documentaries, and other learning material. Most libraries also have activities for small children and families such as storytelling or mini-shows. The library offers online books and online homework help for students. You can use meeting rooms and computers. There are courses on email and the Internet, computer basics, file management, web design, genealogy and basic word processing. To find out about these opportunities, call 850-606-2665, visit the media desk at the library in person, or email the library at weblib@leoncountyfl.gov. To find out about library locations, hours, and other services, visit www.co.leon.fl.us/library/.

English Language Classes

In the community

The International Center offers usually twice a week English Conversation Club meetings, which offers students and scholars and their families information and practice in using English idioms and slang in a friendly and supportive environment. These meetings do not provide assistance with grammar or writing. There is no charge for attending these meetings; they are free and open to everyone.
After School Care
Most schools offer before- and after-school care as a convenience to working parents. You can sign up for before school care or after-school care or both. You can choose the number of days per week the your child will attend. Check with the Extended Day Enrichment program or the after-school program at your child’s school for more information. Note that there is generally no extended day care during holidays, Christmas break, and Spring break.
Summer camps are available all summer except for the week after the school year ends and the week before the next school year starts. The camp program is usually run by the extended day care staff. Call or visit the school for more information.

School Lunches
Students may bring their own lunch to school. Public schools do provide lunch to students who choose to eat at school. Lunch costs about $1.75 each day and typically includes a choice of meat, a salad or vegetable, reduced fat milk, and fruit. Your child will be assigned a lunch account and will have a Personal identification Number (PIN) to use to buy lunch. You can fund this lunch account by sending a check to the school (call the school to ask how to do this) or by paying online. The online site also allows you to monitor your child’s lunch account.
Reduced-cost lunches are also available if your child is eligible. All students receive a form to determine whether they are eligible and to apply for the reduced prices. Reduced-price meals usually cost about $0.30 for breakfast and $0.40 for lunch.

Riding the School Bus
Transportation is provided for students free of charge via school buses. The local newspaper, Tallahassee Democrat, publishes the school bus routes in its Back-to-School edition about 10 days before the beginning of each new school year. The school district will send you a postcard in the mail that tells you the bus route and/or bus number your child is assigned to. Check your child’s assignment against the bus routes nearest your place of residence. If you believe there has been an error in the bus assignment (e.g., the bus stop assigned to you is not the one nearest to your residence), call the Leon

Pre-Kindergarten programs can be found at most of the elementary schools in the district as well as through selected private providers. A child must be 4 years of age before September 1 and reside in Florida to participate in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK) program. Young children with special physical, emotional, or educational needs may be eligible for Pre-K programs at a reduced cost. Contact the Pre-K Program office at 850-656-8736 for more information or visit www.vpkflorida.org.
A good source of information on daycare and schools is Family Forum magazine which is available from most libraries, schools, and doctors’ offices. It can also be found at www.familyforumonline.com.
Another resource is the Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend, www.kidsincorporated.org/, a nonprofit organization that will provide a listing of schools based on criteria you provide. For example, you can ask for a listing of facilities or schools either close to your home or the campus.
Note that schools generally follow either the FSU calendar (for FSU daycare) or the Leon County Public School calendar. http://www.leon.k12.fl.us/

Kindergarten through High School (K–12)
(adapted from the Leon County Schools website: www.leon.k12.fl.us)
The US system of education starts from kindergarten (hence, K), advancing to elementary school (1st through 5th grades), middle school (6th through 8th grades) and then on to high school (9th through 12th grades).
You are generally expected to send your children to the school your residence is zoned for; however, there are exceptions, such as for charter or magnet schools. Information on schools is available at www.leon.k12.fl.us. A useful Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page is available at: www.leon.k12.fl.us/public/news/FAQ.html and also covers lunches, immunizations (shots), registration, school supplies, parent-teacher conferences, etc.
Elementary schools
To enter kindergarten, children must be 5 years old by September 1 of the year they are being enrolled. To enter first grade, children must be 6 years old by September 1 of the year they are being enrolled. Enrolling at the school where the student is scheduled to attend is easy and takes just a short time. Children enrolling for the first time in Leon County Schools need to show proof of residence, proof of a recent medical exam (physical), and a record of current immunizations. Read the detailed information in this Guide about immunizations to be sure you are prepared to enroll your children in elementary school.

Middle and high schools
Middle and high school students enrolling for the first time in Leon County Schools need to show proof of residence, proof of a recent medical exam (physical), and a record of current immunizations. A social security number is not necessary, although the school might ask for one. It is okay to tell the school that your child does not have a social security number. Read the detailed information in this Guide about immunizations to be sure you are prepared to enroll your children in middle or high school.

Transferring to Leon County Schools
If you are moving to Tallahassee from another state or school district in Florida, or another country, it is good to bring a copy of the most recent report card or other proof of academic achievement in addition to the other required documents. This allows the school to accurately and quickly place each student. Each school’s principal is responsible for determining the placement of students at the school.

Which School?
The school district assigns students to their school based on their actual residential address (which is in an “attendance zone”) at the time of school registration. You can find the attendance zone boundaries the district website. Leon County also offers a variety of school choice options for students and their families. These options include magnet schools and programs, and other special programs to better serve students’ academic needs. Contact the School Choice Office at 850-487-7235 for more information about attendance zones and choice options, or see www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/school_choice/schoolchoice.htm.

What about English classes for students who do not speak English as a native language?
Leon County schools serve over 300 students whose home language is not English. When English is not the first language of students, they may be eligible to participate in a plan for students with limited English proficiency (LEP), also known as an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) plan. The plan will outline the special services that the students will receive to help them learn to read, write, understand, and speak English proficiently.

After ESOL students enroll in school, the school ESOL specialist conducts an assessment (like a small test) to evaluate their level of English proficiency. This is not a graded test and children cannot fail it. It is only to help the school employees know what kind of, and how much, help the student needs with English. If your children are in this situation, please tell them not to be nervous.

The schools that have ESOL programs are Pineview Elementary, Gilchrest Elementary, Bellevue Middle, and Godby High.

For more information, contact the Department of Curriculum Services at 850-488-0093 and ask for the ESOL Developer.

Private schools
If you are interested in private school options, you can contact the following schools. Other schools may be available; you can look for them in the telephone book yellow pages under the heading “schools.” You may also refer to www.familyforumonline.com for school information.
- Betton Hills Preparatory School
- Cornerstone Learning Community
- Covenant Community School
- Grassroots School
- Maclay School (preschool through high school)
- Magnolia School
- North Florida Christian School
- Pope John Paul II Catholic School
- Trinity Catholic School

School Hours
Starting times vary, but most schools are open from about 7:00 am until about 4:00 pm. Please check the Leon County School District website http://www.leon.k12.fl.us/newLCSHomeFiles/resourcesParents.html for that information and for links to individual school websites.