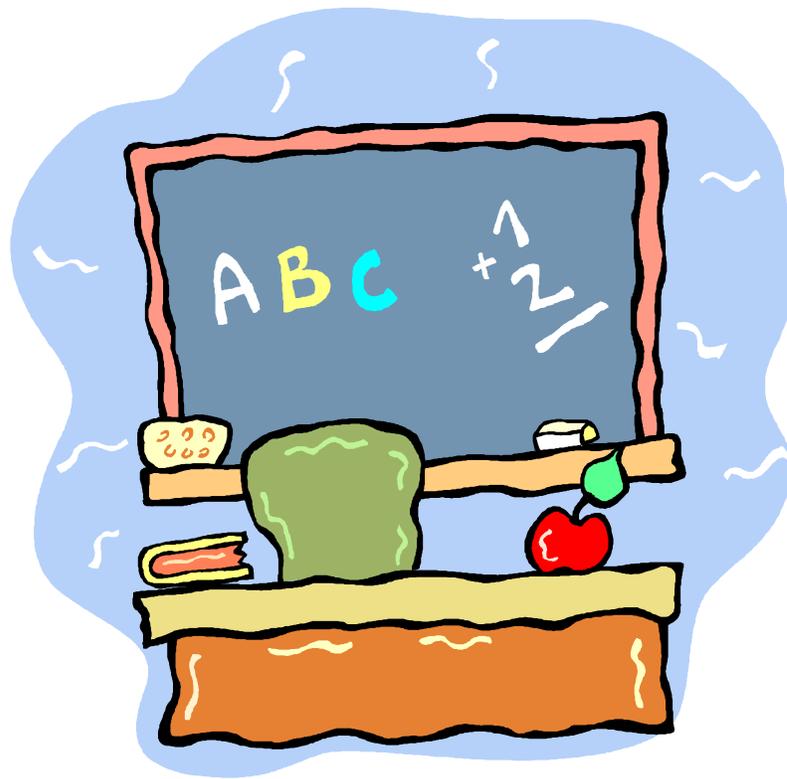




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PARENT HANDBOOK



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1. **Background Information**

Temple Beth Sholom has been providing outstanding, developmentally appropriate secular and Judaic programming for over 30 years.

We are staffed by certified teachers and are licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

2. **Philosophy and Curriculum**

Philosophy

The Temple Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center provides a warm, safe and nurturing atmosphere in which children can grow emotionally, socially and intellectually. We stimulate each child's sense of wonder to discover the joy of learning. Through the celebration of Shabbat, the Jewish holidays and of Israel, our children experience the beauty and joy of their heritage.

Creativity, individualization, intellectual stimulation, incorporating appropriate readiness skills, group activity and interpersonal relations are elements of our program. We give each child the opportunity to explore new ideas and new places and to feel the satisfaction of achievement through his/her own efforts. Content related to Jewish living through identification with culture and tradition is incorporated.

We do not discriminate by race, gender or religion.

Curriculum

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We take pride in teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool, but all throughout their lives. We allow them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them.

The curriculum we use is an integrated one – Judaic and general experiences are intertwined. Social, emotional, physical and cognitive development all combine together when providing experiences for young children. Our specific curricular goals include:

Development of Jewish Awareness

- Familiarizing the child with the joy of Jewish ritual observances surrounding Shabbat, holidays, and kashrut
- Becoming acquainted with synagogue practices and encouraging an interest in attending services
- Learning songs with holiday themes
- Learning short Hebrew prayers and blessings
- Developing a bond with Israel
- Learning Jewish values through the practice of mitzvot

Social and Emotional Development

- Achieving a comfortable separation from home
- Enjoying the school experience
- Developing a positive self image
- Feeling confident as a learner
- Relating to teachers and children
- Participating in play with another child or in small groups
- Being able to join in larger group activities
- Sharing and expressing feelings comfortably

Intellectual Development

- Encouraging expression of the child's own interests
- Valuing and expanding upon the child's own knowledge
- Enhancing natural interest in the surrounding world
- Encouraging a love of learning
- Developing creative thinking and problem solving skills
- Enjoying creative expression in art, music, and language
- Teaching readiness skills in preparation for Kindergarten

Awareness of Ourselves, Others, and the Surrounding World

- Providing an inclusive classroom environment
- Providing experiences implementing awareness of ourselves and the surrounding world

3. General Information

a. School Hours

2's 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

3's 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

4's 9:15 AM – 2:15 PM

Please bring your child on time. It is important for your child to feel he/she is part of the group, and this is difficult for the child who comes late. Children are dismissed promptly. Parents or others calling for children **must** be on time. After care is available Monday-Thursday until 6:00 PM and Fridays until 3:00 PM. Early care is available Monday -Friday by appointment only beginning at 8:00 AM.

We understand emergencies do arise and suggest parents make prior arrangements with a friend or another parent to pick up their child in emergencies. Any change in how or with whom your child is to go home with **MUST** be put in writing and given to your child's teacher. Changes by phone are acceptable only when absolutely unavoidable. We will not allow any child to go home with another person unless the above procedure is used. Photo ID must be shown to the office and child's teacher if someone new is picking up your child.

Emergency phone numbers and addresses (of parents, neighbors, friends, and relatives) must be kept up to date. Please notify the ECC office of any changes as soon as possible.

b. After School Enrichment Programs

After school enrichment programs are offered to our 3 & 4 year old children Monday through Friday and for our toddlers beginning in January. These optional after school programs are 45 minutes long for the 3 & 4 year olds and a half hour for the toddlers. Some offerings for this extension have been: Pee Wee Sports, Twisters, Mad Science, Abrakadoodle, Taekwon Do, Imagination Station, Soccer and Hockey.

Many of our families take advantage of this opportunity to extend their child's day at school.

c. Payment of Fees

A deposit must be made at time of registration to hold a place for your child. Half of the deposit is refundable before March 1st.

First tuition payment due June 1st. Registration is not considered complete until payment is made.

Second tuition payment due August 1st. Child will not be admitted to school without payment.

Third tuition payment due October 1st.

May we please have your cooperation in making payments when due.

Checks, credit cards or cash can be given to the school office or the synagogue office.

d. Parking

Please park in a parking spot if you are coming into the building.

If you want to drop off your child, please pull up along the side of the school and wait for a teacher's assistant to come get your child.

Toddler parents must bring their children into school each morning.

DO NOT under any circumstances park in a handicapped spot.

DO NOT leave child unattended in your car.

e. Playground/Playroom

- a. While school is in session, the playground is for the exclusive use of the Early Childhood Center.
- b. Parents/caretakers are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children when they are dismissed at the end of the school day.

4. Health Procedures

a. Regulations

A medical form MUST be on file for your child to attend school. This is a mandate of the New York State Department of Health and no exceptions will be made.

If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, such as strep throat or pink eye, please notify the school. Parents will then be informed and can seek advice from their physicians.

The health and safety of your child is our first priority. We ask for your cooperation with us in order to protect the well-being of all children and staff to minimize absences for health reasons. To this end, we request that when your child has symptoms such as a red throat, earache, fever, or other indications that he/she is not well enough for group or outdoor activities, such as a bad cold, the child is kept at home. The school has no provisions for care of children who are ill. Your full cooperation in keeping your child at home when not well will minimize such inconveniences to you, as having your child refused admittance to school, or having to be called to pick up your child.

It is the school's policy that children who have had fever, diarrhea or vomited should not attend school until they are symptom free for a 24 hour period. Children who are taking an antibiotic for strep throat must be taking medication for 24 hours before returning to school. A child who is not feeling well will do better with an extra day of rest at home. The Early Childhood Center staff is not permitted to administer medication of any kind to your child.

b. Policy on Illness

DO NOT

send your child to school if he/she has:

1. Nasal drainage which is not clear
2. Fever in the past 24 hours
3. Thrown up in the past 24 hours
4. Diarrhea
5. Constant Cough
6. Eye Inflammation
7. Headache
8. Skin Rash

DO:

1. Teach your child to cough into his/her elbow thereby reducing the spread of germs
2. Come promptly, or send alternate, if called to pick up your sick child
3. Inform us of any medication your child is receiving at home
4. Call to let us know what is wrong with your child

If children are sent to class with any of the above conditions, the teacher has the authority to ask parents to take their children home. **IF THE CONDITION IS NOT DETECTED UNTIL AFTER PARENTS LEAVE, THE TEACHER WILL CALL THE PARENTS TO PICK UP THE CHILD.** If a parent cannot be reached, one of the names on the emergency list will be called.

c. Reporting Child Abuse

New York State law states that all staff working in a school are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.

d. Policy on Toilet Training

Toddlers are not expected to be toilet trained. We will change dirty or very wet diapers. Although it is not necessary for a three year old to be toilet trained, we would certainly welcome it. We have tried and true suggestions to make this an easier process for you.

5. Children's Work

Children work hard at their projects and achieve a sense of accomplishment. Our focus is on the act of doing: the process is stressed, not the finished product. Please be aware of this in relation to your child's work.

6. Materials and Supplies

We appreciate donations of "like new" toys, that can be used in the classrooms, playroom or playground. We are always in need of tissues.

7. Appropriate Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that he/she can manage him/herself. Bring a **complete** set of clothing, **each piece labeled**, that can be left in school, in a small shoebox. Jackets, sweaters and coats should have loops for hanging and should be labeled. Boots need to be labeled as well.

Because of our extensive creative endeavors that sometimes turn out to be very messy, we ask you to send your child in washable play clothes in case the smocks do not catch everything. Children will enjoy school more if they can move easily and are not worried about getting dirty.

We will be going outdoors whenever possible, so be sure to dress your child according to the weather. Please be sure your child's boots are large enough to put on easily.

8. Photographs

The Early Childhood Center has the children's pictures (both portrait and group) taken by a professional photographer, usually in the spring. There is no obligation to purchase these pictures. See the school calendar for the dates the photographer will be at school. Pictures and videos taken by the classroom teachers during the day will be posted on Remini (remini.me). Remini can be accessed by parents via an app as well as through the computer. Remini is private and secure and this is where all of our written communication will be posted.

9. Shabbat

Shabbat is very special time in our school. We encourage your participation for the 3's and 4's by joining us on your assigned day and for the 2's as a group. You and your child will be honored on that day. The 3's and 4's meet the Rabbi in the sanctuary every Friday. The toddlers celebrate Shabbat with the Assistant Rabbi in their classrooms. The children sing special songs and learn some simple Hebrew words. They light Shabbat candles and say the blessings over the candles, "wine" and challah in Hebrew. They read special stories and enjoy special music and dancing.

As part of our curriculum, we encourage the children to be charitable toward others by putting out a tzedakah box each Friday. Each class collects tzedakah. The children are taught the meaning of the word and are involved in deciding how the money should be distributed. We usually donate the money collected to a charity that helps children. Most important – a feeling is communicated that Friday, in school, is different from the rest of the week. It is a festive day.

11. Home/School Relationships

Since the life of a young child cannot be divided into two separate parts – “life at home” and “life at school” – we think it is important that there be a close working relationship between home and school for one continuous plan of healthy, happy living. The staff believes that parents will want to know what happens at school and likewise, the staff wants to know about your child’s experiences at home. Some of the ways we hope to be in touch include:

- a. Contact with staff which will facilitate sharing of information and/or any concerns, i.e. Parent concerns need to be discussed first with the classroom teacher at a mutually convenient and private time. If an issue is not resolved, the Director should be consulted. We are here to assist in providing a comfortable environment for you and your children.
- b. Individual conferences are scheduled twice a year, fall and spring. Please feel free to contact the school at any time to discuss a problem, ask a question or arrange a conference.
- c. We encourage a close relationship between home and school and ask that you notify us if there is any situation that might precipitate any change in your child’s behavior. A phone call or note about such things as unusual variations in sleep or appetite, special irritability or unusual situations at home, will prepare teachers to be of special help at school.
- d. Family changes such as a death in the family, a new family member, an impending move, etc., should be reported to the staff so that we can help your child cope.
- e. Weekly newsletters posted on Remini maintain the communicative link that is vital between school and home.
- f. We do understand that sometimes children are reassured by bringing a favorite doll or object to school. Please be sure to put your child’s name somewhere on that item, just in case it is misplaced. We recommend that children do not bring fragile items from home. Their favorite item will be left in their cubby to "visit" if necessary.

12. Food

PLEASE NOTE - We are a **NUT FREE** school. DO NOT send peanut butter or any food containing nut products to school for lunch, snack or dessert. Please make your child's teacher aware of any food allergies your child may have.

a. Snacks

We offer a variety of nutritious snacks: fresh fruit, vegetables, challah, juices and food items. If you would like to send in a special snack for the whole class to share just check with your child's teacher and please make sure the snack is **KOSHER** and **NUT FREE**.



b. Lunch

We offer a lunch program five times a week at an additional cost. If you wish to purchase it for your child, you have the opportunity to do so. If not, you need to provide a kosher, dairy lunch.

13. Birthdays

We welcome celebrations in school. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher. The children enjoy cookies, ice cream or cupcakes. This treat must be kosher. Some suggestions for purchase are: Entenmanns, Dutch Maid, Taystee or Drakes products. We cannot accept any homemade treats.

We will be happy to distribute party invitations but can only do so if you invite the entire class. It is our recommendation that you do not schedule a party on Shabbat.

Thank you for helping us to adhere to a policy that will meet the needs of all the children enrolled in our Early Childhood Center.

14. Separation

Adjustment to school and separation can often be a difficult experience for children as well as parents. We are prepared to handle such situations with understanding and wisdom.

Our experienced staff is very capable of nurturing and reassuring the children. It is our hope that when children see they are in a safe place and can trust their teachers, they will be able to adjust and feel comfortable and secure.

The staff will be available to talk to parents to discuss how things are progressing. You can help your child ease the separation process by:

- o. Always saying goodbye to your child. Explain beforehand what the routine will be (where you are going, when you will return, what your child might be doing, etc.)
- p. Keeping your goodbyes short.
- q. Arriving a minute or two early to help your child adjust to the group and get involved.
- r. Giving your child a picture or special object that is associated with you to keep in his/her pocket to refer to if separation is difficult.

15. Discipline

In the event a behavior problem occurs, each situation is handled individually, utilizing the good judgment of the teacher and the help of the director. The following is our procedure:

- s. The teacher and child discuss the problem. The necessary steps are taken to help the child resolve the problem.
- t. If necessary, the director intervenes with the child and/or offers suggestions to the teacher.
- u. When indicated, the teacher and/or director have a conference with the parent to try to resolve a classroom and/or behavioral issue. A number of possible options will be explored to address these situations. In the case of continual disruptive behavior by a child that impacts negatively on other children's school experiences the teachers, and director may recommend various options including but not limited to a special schedule that allows for the child's day to be shorter; encouragement of an evaluation for the child which might result in outside services being provided in the classroom; the hiring of a shadow at the parent's cost; or the child being withdrawn from the Early Childhood Center.

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We trust this handbook will familiarize you with our goals and procedures to provide your child with a successful and enriching school experience.