

2023-24/5784-85

PARENT

HANDBOOK



The Early Childhood Center of Congregation Beth El

8000 Main Street
Voorhees, NJ 08043
856.675.1166
www.bethelsnj.org

Ayelet Mittelman, ECC Director
Summer Lander, ECC Administrative Assistant



Like us on Facebook and Instagram!

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Dear Congregation Beth El Early Childhood Center Families,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our new and returning students and families! “Back to School” is such an exciting time of year for all of us. The 2023-2024 school year promises to be the most incredible year yet! It’s going to be a year full of fun, friendships, learning and lots of adventures. We can’t wait to see what this year has in store for us. We thank you for choosing Congregation Beth El Early Childhood Center, where all are welcome and everyone is family.

Please make sure to download the Remini App to learn all about your child’s day! Also, please make sure to read our weekly ECC memo, where you can find information on upcoming ECC events, spirit days, and important updates throughout the school year.

Having parents as partners is the key to a successful program. There are many ways to become even more involved with your child’s education. Please consider volunteering for our Parent Teacher Group (PTG) who work diligently to provide events throughout the school year. Also join us Friday mornings for our shabbat party and on first Fridays for Prayers & Pajamas.

Congregation Beth El ECC is the best program for young learners and their families due to the quality and flexibility of the teachers, staff, and programs. Please help share your love of our ECC by spreading the word with neighbors and friends. Please also make sure to fill out the Gift Membership Interest form, to take advantage of all Beth El has to offer!

We look forward to an enriching year together! If we can ever be of assistance, please stop in or contact us. Please feel free to bring all forms and school supplies to the Meet-N-Greet on Thursday, August 31st at noon!

B’shalom,

Ayelet Mittelman, ECC Director
Summer Lander, ECC Administrative Assistant

Established in 1921 in the Parkside section of Camden, New Jersey, Beth El moved to Cherry Hill in 1969. As one of the largest Conservative synagogues in South Jersey, Beth El is dedicated to preserving Jewish traditions and values. With an awareness of present as well as future needs, Beth El provides an outstanding and complete array of services and programs for its members and the community.

In 1998, Beth El opened its Katz-Silver Educational Center on the Appel Family Campus in Voorhees housing the Early Childhood Center and the Religious School. In April 2009 the synagogue joined us when it moved into its beautiful new edifice. For questions about synagogue membership please contact Roberta S. Clark, Development & Membership Director, at rclark@bethelsnj.org

ABOUT OUR STAFF

צוות המורות - מורים

Our teachers are professionals whose life's work is education. They are passionate about their work and delve into the learning alongside children and families. They view themselves as partners in your child's development and your family's growth. We are committed to excellence. Our faculty members engage in continuing education through our Professional Development program and must earn a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education annually to be eligible to receive a contract the following school year.



The Early Childhood Center of Congregation Beth El is committed to the task of providing a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment where the youngest members of the Jewish community can begin to grow and develop their physical, social, emotional, and educational abilities within the framework of Jewish values and traditions. We strive to create an atmosphere of growth, which empowers each individual to foster their Jewish Identity through creativity and curiosity. Our vision is to provide a quality, developmentally appropriate program, which actively engages and excites young children, while reaching beyond its modern facility to involve the home, the family, the synagogue, and the community. Our learning environment values and promotes kindness, inclusivity, and respect; to inspire the next generation of.....

OUR COMMITMENT

המחויבות שלנו

At the ECC we are committed to providing our children and families with the best practices in early childhood education and believe that:

- We are all created *B'Tzelem Elokim* – in the image of Gd – every person is valuable and worthy of respect.
- As the Jewish people we have a covenant with Gd to uphold the teachings of the Torah. As an early childhood center, we commit to helping each family deepen their connection to Judaism.
- Children have an inborn sense of wonder. Our early childhood educators honor the children's curiosity by facilitating and enriching their journey of discovery and learning.
- We support the collaboration of children, families, and educators. Together we recognize how we can contribute to the broader community and world.
- Learning and growing together, celebrating the holidays, and sharing life events, we nourish the bonds of our ECC family.

“Do not separate yourself from the community” (Pirke Avot 2:5)



About Us!

עלינו

We look forward to greeting each child personally at the start of each school day. Students are welcome any time after **6:45 AM**. Core Program begins at **8:45 AM**. Please be sure the teacher is in the room before giving that “goodbye” hug as a child may never be left unattended. **Students must be picked up by 6:00 PM.**

“When I drop our three year old twins off at the ECC, they can’t wait to push me out the door and get their day started.” ECC Dad

New School Year/Enrollment Paperwork

ההרשמה

At the start of the new school year or for families starting mid-year, an enrollment packet must be completed. It must be filled out completely with the most up to date information. Per NJ Childcare Licensing, each child must have a signed Emergency Contact & Medical Information form, a signed Receipt of Information, and a Universal Health Record with immunizations.

Arrival and Dismissal

הגעה ואיסוף

For arrival, families may drop their children off in their classroom until 9:15am. Any children arriving after 9:15am will be walked back to their class by ECC staff. Children who are picked up at the half day mark or need to leave earlier than 3:15 will be brought to their parents at the ECC lobby doors. After 3:10pm, parents will have access to the ECC wings to pick their children up directly from their classroom.

If your child is going to be picked up before their usual time, please inform their teacher so your child is ready for pick up.

Absence

העדרות

If your child is going to absent for any reason, please inform your child’s teacher. This allows them to best plan for the day.

Release of Children Policy

איסוף ילדים

Children may be released only to their parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. We must have a release signature on file for every person authorized to pick-up your child (must be at least 18 years old). The Emergency Pick-Up form is for this purpose. This is an additional way in which we can ensure the safety of your child. Please update this information as frequently as necessary. Any person authorized to pick-up your child will be asked to show photo identification to ensure your child’s safety. If your child is being picked up early, please notify the class teacher as well as ECC Admin staff, so that we can prepare for your child’s departure. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired in the judgment of the director and/or staff member and feel the child would be placed at risk if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

- The child may not be released to an impaired individual.
- Staff members attempt to contact the child’s other parent or alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s)
- If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Division of Youth and Family Service’s 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Late Pick-Up

איסוף באיחור

Punctuality is very important to your child having a successful day. Please inform the school office if you will arrive later than normal or if an emergency has arisen. If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up the child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

- The child is supervised at all times.
- Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s)
- An hour after closing time and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to their authorized people have failed, the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center. The staff member shall call the Division of Youth and Family Service's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child. \

Late Pick-up Fee

תשלום על איסוף באיחור

There is a late pick-up fee of \$20 for every ten-minute beginning at 6:01pm. Fee is due within 48 hours. When we are informed of a delay, we can inform your child and plan accordingly. If you are detained and your child's classroom teacher must leave, your child will be supervised by an adult and will be waiting in the main office.

Days of Attendance

גוכחות

Each child must adhere to their scheduled days of attendance. All changes and additions are subject to availability. Adjustments to the daily schedule will be made, if possible, according to the school policy. Parents must notify us at least 24 hours in advance in writing if they would like to make a change in the schedule. Fee for permanent schedule change is \$25 (Please refer to the Optional Services Fee Form). **Please note, Day Swapping will be on a case by case basis.**



CONGREGATION BETH EL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER Optional Services

All changes and additions are subject to availability.

**Requests should be made at least 24 hours
in advance of needed coverage.**

Payments must be submitted to the Early Childhood Office
within 48 hours of attendance.

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Optional service date: _____ Amount Due: \$ _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Late Pick-up - \$20.00 for each 10 minute segment, beginning 1 minute past pick up time.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast Club (6:45–8:45am) - \$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon Adventures (3:15–6:00pm) - \$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Core (8:45am–3:15pm) - \$ 60.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Day (6:45am-6:00pm) - \$80.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch (11:30am-12:30pm) - \$15.00 (Parent provides lunch)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Schedule change fee - \$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Day Swapping Fee - \$40.00

Extra Day Fee

תשלום על יום נוסף

The family of any child attending an extra day must submit payment to the Early Childhood Center office within **48 hours of attendance. Extra Days are subject to availability.**

Tuition/Fees

תשלום

During registration, a payment plan shall be set up for any family not paying in full. Families must comply with the payment plan. Any fees accrued must be paid within 48 hours of charge.

Please note that if you fall over 30 days behind in your tuition payments, you will be asked to keep your child at home, until your account is current.

Parking

חניה

Please park in designated areas only. The police will ticket anyone parked illegally. Please do not park in handicapped or "15-minute parking" spaces if not applicable. In addition, please do not park in the circular driveway even for a few minutes. This is a fire lane, and you may be endangering the lives of the children in our school if you do so. Please do not park in any of the clergy or administrative staff's assigned spots.

For children's safety, please drive slowly in the parking lot.

School Closing Policy

סגירה בשל מזג אוויר או חירום

In case of inclement weather or an unforeseen emergency, it may be necessary for the Early Childhood Center to close. We will post all information about closing or late opening on our Facebook profile and on local television stations under Congregation Beth El ECC. We will also communicate closures and any other announcements through **REMINI** as well.

If, due to inclement weather or emergency, school closes early, you will be notified. If you cannot be reached, we will then contact the person you have authorized on your emergency form. Please be certain that your emergency contact list and cell phone numbers remain current and that any changes are reported to the school office immediately.

There is no refund for absences, holidays, inclement weather, or any other unforeseeable event that necessitates the closing of a class or the school.

Food

אוכל

As a Conservative synagogue, we abide by the Kosher dietary laws. We ask that you be meticulous in sending only dairy or pareve foods to school with your children. **No meat or poultry products are allowed in the school.** Fish, non-meat pizza, non-meat-based soups and vegetables are permitted. **Shellfish and seafood lacking fins and scales are not kosher and may not be brought to school.**

Breads for sandwiches, cookies and cake may not contain any animal shortening; only those whose labels read: "100% pure vegetable shortening" are permitted. When providing food for a class or group, bring in only certified Kosher foods, prepared in kosher establishments under Rabbinical supervision for consumption. This includes bread, cookies and snacks.

If an unacceptable item is brought to school, the staff will tactfully note the problem and provide the student with a substitute lunch. The unacceptable food will be sent home.

Please be aware that bakeries must be approved as Kosher. **Foods cooked at home may not be brought in for group consumption.** Classic Cake is a kosher bakery; Entenmann's is also kosher. Acceptable Kosher symbols are marked below.



Lunch

ארוחת צהריים

All lunches are to be packed in a paper bag or lunch box and clearly labeled with the child's name. Some foods to consider sending are tuna fish, egg salad, bagel, cheese, cream cheese and jelly, macaroni, plain pasta, pizza. Each classroom has a refrigerator and a microwave, which will be used for your child's lunch. We encourage healthy eating habits and request that lunches reinforce this concept.

The ECC does allow for nut products. Some classes may be designated as completely peanut free due to highly allergic reactions by students in the class. We ask that you respect this decision. If your child's lunch requires the use of the microwave, please supply the classroom with a microwave safe dish. In keeping our kosher dietary policy, please be sure to send in a dish that has not previously contained non-kosher foods.

Snacks

חטיפים

Healthy snacks of cereal, crackers, pretzels, and water will be available each day for all children.

Student Attire

ביגוד

The Early Childhood Center is a child-centered, child-friendly place. Our activities are active and often messy. Wearing clothes that are washable and are comfortable for your child is strongly recommended. Children are required to have a full change of clothes available. To best accommodate the wide range of activities, we strongly recommend that children, who are old enough to wear shoes, wear sneakers. Please label all clothing. Children are welcome to wear a Kippah while in school.

Health

בריאות

Parents are responsible for providing up-to-date emergency phone numbers, **promptly picking up their ill child** and when necessary, consulting with their child's doctor about diagnosis and care. **Parents and caregivers should notify the staff when their child or other family members are ill with a contagious disease.** Please also let us know if your child is on medication. Be sure to ask doctors if the illness has implications for a childcare program.

No child will be admitted to school if he/she arrives noticeably ill or with a rash or a fever.

Parents will be informed when a child is found to have a fever or appears to be sick. Regardless of how high a fever is, it is important to pay attention to how sick a child looks or acts.

Some symptoms to look for are:

- Unusual drowsiness or extreme fussiness
- Persistent or excessive crying
- Wheezing or severe coughing
- Difficulty or rapid breathing
- Unable to play (lethargic)
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea or vomiting
- Underarm temperature of 99.4
- Jaundice skin or eyes (yellow)
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Skin lesions/weeping or bleeding
- Skin rash with fever/behavior change
- Mouth sores with drooling

Illness at School

מחלה בגן

Should a child become ill during the day, he/she will be removed from the classroom and remain under adult supervision until a parent or authorized person arrives to take the child home.

Examples of this would include but are not limited to: fever of 99.4 degrees or above, as indicated on the school thermometer (OK'd by the School Nursing Services of Camden County), green discharge from the

nose, vomiting, or two episodes of diarrhea (loose stool). **He/she will be kept at home for at least 1 day (not counting the day sent home) both for his/her sake and for the consideration of others in the school. There will be no exceptions to this policy.**

If a child contracts a communicable disease and exposes the other children, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school so that notice of exposure can be posted, and parents can be notified. Please be sure to inform the Early Childhood Office of a diagnosis of a communicable disease such as: Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Fifth Disease, Impetigo, Conjunctivitis or Pediculosis (head lice) as soon as possible. The sick child will not be allowed to return to school until the Early Childhood Center receives a note from the child's physician indicating that the period of contagion has passed. A note from the child's physician is mandatory. Please see chart below for a list of the common illnesses you are required to report to the ECC administration and how long a child must remain away from ECC. (This is not an all-inclusive list)

Disease	When to return to ECC
Chickenpox	When all of the blisters have dried into scabs, usually about six days after rash onset.
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	Twenty-four hours <i>after</i> treatment begins.
COVID-19	Regardless of vaccination status, individuals who test positive must stay home for at least 5 full days after the onset of symptoms or positive test. When returning to childcare a mask must be worn for an additional 5 days.
Diarrhea (Infectious)	When diarrhea has stopped. For some infections, the child must also be treated with antibiotics before returning to ECC.
Diarrhea (Uncontrolled) – an increase in number of stools, compared with a child's normal pattern along with watery stools and/or stool that cannot be contained by the diaper or use of toilet.	Until uncontrolled diarrhea stops, or until a medical exam indicates that it is not a communicable disease.
Fever – axial temperature of 99.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.	When the child has been fever-free for twenty-four hours (<i>without the aid of fever reducing medicine</i>).
Hand, Food, & Mouth	Fever free and with Doctor's note to return to school, when all blisters have dried into scabs, no open or weeping sores
Impetigo	Twenty-four hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.
Lice (head)	When the first treatment is complete and no eggs (nits) are present
Rash with or without fever or behavior change	When a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease – a return to school slip signed by a physician must be submitted to administration.
Ringworm	Twenty-four hours after treatment has begun and ringworms must be covered with bandages.
Scabies	Twenty-four hours after treatment has begun.
Streptococcal Sore Throat	Twenty-four hours after antibiotic treatment has begun. Child must be fever-free for twenty-four hours.
Vomiting	Twenty-four hours after vomiting has ceased.

Child's Physician

רופא ילדים

It is the policy of the Early Childhood Center that all children attending the center have a **licensed physician other than a parent, or grandparent**, as we feel this could present a conflict of interest.

Universal Health Form

הצהרת בריאות

As a state licensed childcare, the ECC is required to have a universal health record on file which includes a date of physical exam. This exam must happen yearly and the form be update when the record of last exam is at the year mark.

Immunization Records/Flu Shots

טופס חיסונים

The ECC required children to be immunized by the guideline set forth in the Immunization of Pupils in School, NJ code NJAC 8:57-4. Please submit an updated immunization record when your child receives a vaccination. The ECC is also required to show proof of yearly flu vaccination to the Dept. of Health. All children attending the ECC must submit proof of seasonal flu shot before December 31st of each year.

Administering Medication

תרופות

Medications, whether prescriptive or over the counter, will be administered only if the parent and the child's physician have completed the medication form. Such medication must be sealed in its original container. If this is a prescription, the label must indicate that it is a current prescription for the specific child enrolled. Ointments such as sunscreen and diaper creams may be applied if we have a written permission form filled out and signed by a parent.

Behavioral Philosophy

התנהגות

The Early Childhood Center of Congregation Beth El honors the right of each person, adult and child, to express themselves and to be treated with respect and dignity. Through our positive discipline policy, self-esteem is fostered.

Positive Discipline Policy

משמעת חיובית

The goal of positive discipline at the ECC is to promote greater social and emotional competence. We adhere to the following principles in our approach to child discipline:

1. Re-directing a child to a new activity to change the focus of behavior. The child will be provided with alternative activities and acceptable ways to express their feelings.
2. Providing individualized attention to assist children in dealing with a particular situation.
3. All students are spoken to directly, in a respectful tone of voice.
4. Indicating natural and logical consequences of the child's behavior. Children and staff in classes for three-year-olds and older will jointly develop rules that are stated at the children's developmental level.
5. Offering a choice of two options, being certain that the options are realistic.
6. Being certain to make a distinction between the child and the behavior. The behavior may be criticized, not the child.
7. Praising a child when the child is treating others with respect and dignity.
8. The teaching staff is to maintain a log documenting challenging behaviors to help understand and redirect behavior.
9. A child is not to be disciplined for failing to eat, sleep or for soiling him/herself.
10. All students are spoken to directly, in a respectful tone of voice.

The Early Childhood Center staff will speak softly and kindly to all children, expressing a sense of caring. The staff will encourage appropriate, positive behavior. Physical punishment and degrading language are never used at the Early Childhood Center.

Managing children's behavior is a part of our responsibility and part of a child's learning process, staff will speak softly and kindly to all children, expressing a sense of caring. The staff will encourage appropriate,

positive behavior. The staff will model appropriate expressions of their own feeling and continue to learn about each child as we teach social skills and self-regulation.

“Time out” is a label that is not to be used at The Early Childhood Center. However, if a child needs to calm down, the child may be removed from the group so that the child may gain self-control. It is critical to remember that children will always be supervised. When speaking about an individual child or children in general, staff members are only to speak positively.

It is important to separate the child from his/her behavior when that behavior is not of a desirable nature as **there are no bad children at our center**. If an inappropriate behavior is consistent and disruptive to the entire class, the teacher will consult with the director to review alternative approach. The teacher will inform the parent, either in person or through a telephone conversation, of the behavioral issue and of the approaches being implemented. The parent is welcome to conference with the teacher and director at any time and has the right to be informed about these issues. The parent and school adhere to a philosophy of cooperation and are always working to create an environment which respects the rights of each person.

Physically Aggressive Behavior

התנהגות אגרסיבית

Physically aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to, biting, pushing, kicking, and/or hitting. The determination of what constitutes physically aggressive behavior is at the sole discretion of the classroom lead teacher and ECC director. If a child is physically aggressive the following procedures will be followed: The classroom lead teacher and/or director will confer with at least one of the child’s parents. It is preferable that such conference be held in person. When this is not possible, the meeting may be held over the telephone. During this conference the parent is to be informed that if another incident occurs, the parent(s) will be immediately contacted and will be required to pick up the child within one hour of this telephone call (or within a reasonable period of time).

After the telephone call is made indicating that a child must be picked up, the child will be removed from the classroom and supervised by an Early Childhood staff member. The teacher will complete an incident report for person hurt and the physically aggressive child. The teacher will maintain a log documenting physically aggressive behavior.

If three such contacts are necessary, the family is to remove the child from the Early Childhood Center program for a period of time during which an appropriate behavioral specialist must be consulted and recommendations be made for the parents and the school. The child may return as long as a safe and secure environment is ensured for all of the children. When the child re-enters the program, the parents will continue to be regularly apprised of the child’s behavior.

If the physically aggressive behavior continues which is either harmful to the other children or disrupts the class, the child may be removed from the school permanently.

Biting Policy

גודל גשיכות

Biting is considered developmentally normal for infants and toddlers, it is nonetheless of concern to parents and staff. This behavior, which is not appropriate, starts out as exploratory. It is important that any child who bites is told that this behavior is not appropriate.

Following is the procedure that is to be followed when a biting incident occurs:

1. Comfort, console and treat the child who has been bitten. It is important for the children, including the biter, to see this attention being paid to the bitee. The biter may also be frightened by the occurrence; if so, console the biter.
2. Speak to the biter in short, simple phrases to communicate that biting is not acceptable.
3. The child is then to be removed from the situation, not from the classroom.
4. Complete an incident report. Parents of the bitee and biter are notified immediately. The teaching staff is to maintain a log documenting such biting incidents.
5. If biting incidents do not decrease or stop within two weeks time, a conference with the parent(s) will be required. The purpose of this conference to gain information from the family to help in dealing with the biting, as well as to create an action plan.

After the above five-steps have been followed, if another biting incident occurs, this child may be removed from

the school for a period of time to be determined by the Early Childhood Director in consultation with the child's lead teacher. The above procedures will be followed upon the child's return. When the child re-enters the program, the parents will continue to be regularly apprised of the child's behavior. **If the biting behavior continues, the child may be removed from the school permanently.**

Denied Admission

סירוב קבלה

Unfortunately, a child may be denied admission, suspended, or expelled from our program. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the children in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. Here are the circumstances:

Parental actions for child's denied admission

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Physical or verbal abuse to Staff

Child's actions for suspension or expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive Biting

Proactive actions that will be taken in order to prevent expulsion:

- Staff will follow steps 1-10 of positive discipline policy.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, staff and parent/guardian will hold a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team

Schedule of Expulsion להשעות

If the remedial actions above have not worked, the parent/guardian will be notified verbally and in writing about the child's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time during which the parent may work on the child's behavior or come to an agreement with the center. The parent will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent an adequate amount of time to seek alternative childcare (approximately one to two weeks depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

Reasons a child will not be Expelled

סיבות לא להשעיה:

If a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements (1-877-667-9845)
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center (1-877-NJ ABUSE)
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures without giving the parent an adequate amount of time to make other childcare arrangements.

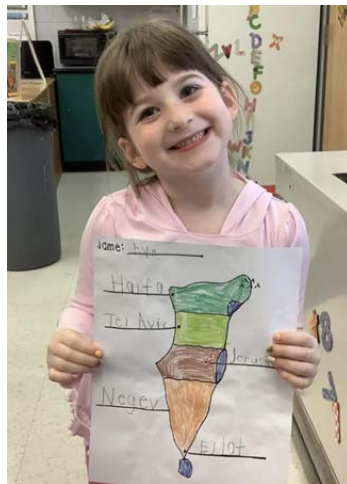
Waiver

כתב ויתור

Should a family engage any Early Childhood Staff member to perform work for that family, it is with

the understanding that such private arrangements are solely between the family and the individual they choose to engage. Families and staff members entering such private arrangements both agree to **indemnify, defend, and hold Congregation Beth El and its Early Childhood Center** harmless from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, damages and liabilities of whatever kind or nature, in law or in equity, arising out of these private arrangements.

“Play is the highest form of research”
~ Albert Einstein



Parent-Teacher Group (PTG)

ועד ההורים

The PTG is the community-building and fundraising division of the Early Childhood Center. PTG coordinates the majority of the fundraising for the ECC and uses the funds for several initiatives such as assemblies, Teacher Appreciation Lunches, food for the Model Seders and Tu B'shevat, and Class Wish Lists. PTG is open to all ECC families, and all parents are encouraged to attend PTG meetings and be active participants.

Current Fundraisers

- Bagel Wednesdays and Pizza Fridays
- Shabbat Birthday Celebration
- Purim Carnival
- Food Coupon Book
- Parents' Night Out
- Hanukah Raffle
- STEAM Room



A few PTG-Sponsored events:

- Thanksgiving Feast
- Passover Seder
- Tu B'shevat Seder
- Family Fun Days & Parent Nights Out
- Teacher Appreciation Week



Remini App

אפליקציה Remini

The ECC uses Remini as a daily form of communication. Please maintain an active account and we recommend having the app downloaded on your phone. The ECC will upon need send out SMS messages through Remini. Your child's teacher can also send and receive messages through Remini, but please note, they will only do so when it does not take away from the supervision of the classroom.

Parent-Teacher Communication

תקשורת בין הורים ומורות

Communication between parents and teachers is essential in working together for the benefit of your child. If you would like to contact your child's teacher and/or the Admin office, please leave a message in the school office 856-675-1166. We will get back to you as soon as possible. If it is an emergency, the office will contact the teacher immediately.

Since it is important for the staff to devote the full educational day to the children, please keep arrival and drop-off conversation general in nature. Any discussion specific to the progress of your child should be reserved for a telephone call during a teacher's break, prior to or after the school day, or during a pre-scheduled conference. School notices will be sent home in your child's school bag. Please check daily for information on trips or special events. Monthly calendars will provide you with further information. The ECC director also emails out a weekly memo with important happening in the program.

You are your child's first teacher and know more about him/her than anyone. If you should ever have a concern about your child and/or anything happening in the class, please contact your child's teacher first. This person is the staff member who knows your child the best. After speaking with the head teacher, if you have any additional concerns, please feel free to contact the director. We have an open-door policy and encourage a two-way conversation when needed or desired. We encourage you to keep us informed. Please also let us know of the birth of a sibling, a new pet, an upcoming vacation, a death in the family, a divorce, a move to a new home, etc. Knowing this information will permit our staff to be responsive to your child's specific needs.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

אסיפת הורים

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year beginning with 2-year-old class. You will receive information from your child's teacher to determine when and how to schedule this informative meeting.

Please feel free to request additional conferences as needed. Our teachers are always willing to discuss your child's progress.

Open Invitation to Visit

הזמנה לביקור

We welcome your visit to the school! This is your school and your child's education. Because of occasional field trips and special activities, advance notice is requested. All parents are to stop at the Early Childhood office prior to visiting a classroom. Permission is required by the parents, in advance, authorizing any other visitors. Please understand that the children come first during class time, therefore, the teachers may not be free to speak at length with you.



Classroom Placement & Transition

שיבוץ ומעבר כיתה

Many factors go into placing your child in a classroom that is appropriate for him/her, such as class size, birth dates, girl/boy ratios and teacher recommendations.

Transition into classrooms depends on physical, emotional, and developmental readiness of your child and will be determined by the ECC Administrative team, and the teachers.

Infants

תינוקות

Please send in bedding, sheets and blankets for your child's crib. It is important that we always have an extra set of clean linens in case of an unexpected situation. Due to DYFS regulations, no bumpers, toys, or mobiles are permitted in or on the crib. Bedding will be sent home with you at the end of your child's week so that you may launder it. We have adequate space to store your diapers and diaper wipes so, please bring us a two-week supply, and we will let you know when it is time to replenish. Two labeled changes of clothing are kept at the ECC at all times in case of accidents. We will return any soiled items to you on a daily basis.

Parents must supply all of their infant's food. All bottles are to arrive at school clean and fully prepared for feeding. We have adequate space to store a two-to-three-day supply for your child. All breast milk must be dated and will be kept for one month. Please contact us regularly to keep us apprised of changes in feeding habits. We like to know if he/she is solely on bottles, has just begun solids, is mixing solids, is feeding him/herself in any fashion, etc.

It is expected that all children arriving after 8:30am will have had breakfast. This does not include bottles.

Please be certain to label all items, including lids and containers, brought to school.

Please make sure to check REMINI, as many of your child's activities will be documented there, with wonderful photos, and exciting updates. We enjoy hearing about your child's adventures while at home, so, please...tell and kvell and we will do the same.

Also, we ask that **parents with older children at the Center please take the older sibling to their class prior to dropping off your infant.** We ask this for the safety of your child, as well as for the safety of the other children in the room. This also allows the parent to speak with the Infant room staff without interruption and without having to worry about supervising the older child.

Toddlers and Two-Year Olds

פעוטות ובני שנתיים

Please send a two-week supply of labeled diapers and diaper wipes along with a labeled change of clothing. We have adequate space for storage so you can replenish weekly. When you desire to start toilet training with your two-year old, please inform your child's teacher about his/her experience and share your specific concerns. You may also wish to send in a potty ring for your child's comfort. For naptime, please be sure that your child has a labeled small blanket, a small sheet, and a cuddly toy, if appropriate. We require an extra labeled set of linens so that we can be prepared in case of an accident. Soiled linens will be sent home for you to launder. Please send fresh linens to school the next day to replace the ones sent home.

Three- and Four-Year Olds

בני שלוש וארבע

The children will have a state mandated rest time each afternoon of at least forty-five minutes. Some children will sleep, and others will have a quiet time on their cots/mats. Please ensure that your child has a labeled change of clothing, a small blanket, a small sheet and a cuddly toy and/or a favorite book. At the end of each week the used blanket and sheet will be sent home for you to launder. Please send fresh linens the following Monday.

Kindergarten

גן חובה

Children learn to solve problems, become independent, responsible, and cooperative learners, and develop the

skills and confidence needed to excel in first grade. Our certified teachers use learning centers and whole-class activities that teach children to function in structured groups and still preserve a sense of community. Learning is individualized so we can meet the unique needs and learning styles of our children. In addition, they gain a basic knowledge of Hebrew and Judaism and a love of learning to last them a lifetime.

Potty Training

גמילה מהיתולים

We encourage children in classes for three-year-olds to be toilet trained. Toilet training is a very personal and individual process. We suggest that you not broach the subject until you think your child is ready. While he/she is in the process of training, it is recommended that the child wear pull-ups during school hours. Once the transfer to wearing underpants full time (usually after the child has had no accidents in a 2-day period) is made, **please make sure to provide us with a few complete changes of clothing, including underpants, socks and shoes.** We understand that accidents happen and this way, are prepared for them.

Throughout the potty training process, it is beneficial to maintain close communication with the classroom teacher. For children in our two-year old full day classes, please discuss your child's toilet learning process with their teacher.

Field Trips

טיולים

The three, four and five-year olds will be taking field trips throughout the year. Field trips are a marvelous adjunct to the classroom experience. Information and permission forms will be sent home prior to each trip taken from the Main Street complex. Only children with **signed permission forms** from a parent or guardian will be permitted to go on a trip. These excursions enhance the learning and offer hands-on experiences.

Parents will be invited to accompany us for some of these outings. Only parents who were assigned by the teachers as chaperones should accompany the children on the trip, unless specified otherwise. A trip fee has been assessed along with your tuition.

Note: If a child is not potty trained, a parent or parent designee must accompany the child on a class trip.

At the beginning of the school year, families with children in the infant and toddler rooms, will receive a permission slip, applicable for the entire year, for "walking trips" in the buggies within the Main Street complex. We are most fortunate to be within close proximity of a beautiful goose pond where we can observe the wonders of nature firsthand. Taking advantage of this treasure is part of the magic of our location. A note will be posted on the classroom door when such walking trips are taken.



Shabbat at the ECC

קבלת שבת

Friday mornings are very special at the ECC. We celebrate Shabbat with the entire school, our Rabbis, Hazzan, ECC Staff and Bamba (Our Shabbat guest puppet!). We sing, tell stories, celebrate birthdays. After the school wide pre-Shabbat ceremony, Shabbat is then celebrated in the individual classrooms. The children enjoy taking turns being the "ima" or the "abba" in their classrooms. Parents of the "ima" and "abba" will be invited to join their child's class to lead a special activity and/or to share their unique talents. We also collect money for Tzedakah and each child bakes a challah each Friday (see Challah recipe on p.24). Congregation Beth El welcomes you and your family to join us for Friday morning Shabbat and the Prayers in Pajamas services. Prayers in Pajamas occurs the first Friday of each month. Shabbat services can be found in the Beth El News, or by contacting the main administrative office at (856) 675-1166.

Birthday Parties

ימי הולדת

Birthdays are a wonderful time at school and are celebrated on Fridays during the school wide Kabbalat Shabbat with the clergy and Bamba (Beth El's mascot). We encourage each family to join us for a celebration with their child. Kosher treats from the birthday child, along with the parent visiting to read a story or enjoy an activity with the class, make this time a very special one for all. Donating a book to the Early Childhood Center library or to the child's classroom is a great way to honor this special occasion. For your convenience, the Parent/Teacher Group is offering a birthday party package (ice cream and a book) for students to help them celebrate in the classroom. If you are interested, please contact the PTG or the school office for information about this opportunity.

Invitations to home parties can be distributed in school only if the entire class is invited and the party is not on Shabbat or a Jewish holiday. In keeping with the religious objectives of our school, we urge parents not to hold out-of-school parties on Shabbat or Holidays. When planning such celebrations, please be aware that many of our students eat only Kosher foods.

Holidays Not Observed at Beth El

חגים שלא

חוגגים

Please note that Halloween and St. Valentine's Day are **not** celebrated at the Early Childhood Center. Please do not send children with cards, candies, or costumes.

Spirit Days

ימי מורל

Throughout the school year children will have opportunities to express themselves while having fun in our school-wide spirit days. Examples of our spirit days include: Pajama Day, International Food Day, Earth Day, Crazy Hat Day, Dr. Seuss Day, etc. Parents will get notification in advance on how you can participate in making these days successful.





WE LOOK FORWARD TO A WONDERFUL YEAR AT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER.

B'nai Yisrael - The Jewish People

Beit Midrash - House of Study

Boker Tov - Good Morning

Bracha (Brachot - pl) - Blessing(s)

Chag Samayach - customary greeting on or before a holiday (Lit. - Happy Holiday)

Chanukah - Jewish Holiday - marks the miracle of the oil burning for 8 days following the victory of the Jews against the Syrian-Greeks in 165 BCE

Chol HaMoed - intermediary days of Sukkot and Pesach

Cholent - stew-like food customarily eaten for lunch on Shabbat.

Chumash - 5 books of Moses

Daven - pray

Fleishik - food with meat ingredients or kitchen utensils/appliances used in preparation of meat

Gemarah - compilation of Jewish laws and traditions

Good Shabbos - customary greeting on the Sabbath

Ivrit - Hebrew

Kashrut - Jewish Dietary Laws

Kipah (Kipot-pl) - Skullcap(s)

Kosher - foods that meet the standards of Jewish Dietary Laws

Mensch - a well-behaved person who acts and speaks in a respectful manner

Middot - positive character traits

Milchik - food with dairy ingredients or kitchen utensils/appliances used in preparation of dairy foods

Minyan - quorum for prayer, consisting of 10 men over the age of 13

Mishna - compilation of Jewish laws and traditions

Mitzvah - Commandment or good deed

Oral Law - Mishna, Gemarah, Talmud

Oy Vey! - Oy Vey!

Pareve - Foods that are neither meat nor dairy (e.g. fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables)

Parsha - weekly portion of the Torah read on Shabbat

Pesach/Passover - Jewish Holiday - commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. No bread or leaven food products are eaten. The holiday lasts for 8 days.

Purim - Jewish Holiday - commemorating the triumph of the Jews over Haman who tried to destroy them

Rosh Chodesh - the beginning of a new month on the Jewish calendar

Rosh Hashana - Jewish New Year Holiday (Lit.-Head of the Year)

Seder - the holiday meal on the first two nights of Passover

Sefer Torah - Torah Scroll

Shabbat - Sabbath

Shabbat Shalom - customary greeting on the Sabbath

Shavuot - Jewish Holiday - commemorating receiving the 10 Commandments on Mt. Sinai

Shul/Beit Haknesset - Synagogue

Siddur (Siddurim-pl.) - prayer book(s)

Simchat Torah - Jewish Holiday - celebrates the annual completion of reading the Torah and beginning again

Sukkah - a temporary booth in which meals are taken for 8 days during the holiday of Sukkot (pl. of Sukkah)

Sukkot - Jewish Holiday - Fall Harvest Holiday - lasts for 8 days

Talmud - compilation of Jewish laws and traditions

Tefillah (Tefillot-pl.) - prayer

Tefillin - ritual item worn over the age of Bar Mitzvah

Torah - 5 books of Moses (the Old Testament; see Chumash), also refers to Torah Scroll

Tu B'Shvat - Jewish Holiday - Jewish Arbor Day

Tzedakah - charity

Yarmulkah - Skullcap

Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israel Independence Day

Yom Ha'Shoah – Holocaust Memorial Day

Yom Hazikaron – Israel Remembrance Day

Yom Kippur - Jewish Holiday - Day of Atonement, where forgiveness is asked for sins committed over the past year - it is a 25-hour fast day

Shabbat

We celebrate Shabbat every Friday at 9:30 in the morning with music and dancing, as well as celebrating any birthdays that week! Parents are always welcome to join us in the Sanctuary to celebrate the magic and beauty of Shabbat. We continue the celebration in the classes where each week a different child is Shabbat Eema/Abba (Mother and Father). The children learn the blessings over the Shabbat candles, Challah and Wine (juice). Shabbat starts at sundown on Friday and lasts through sundown on Saturday.



Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. In Hebrew, Rosh means Head and Shana means year. We eat sweet tasting foods, such as apples dipped in honey, teaching the children that we hope that we will all enjoy a sweet new year! We also eat round challah to remind us that the year goes around and around. The Shofar, a ram's horn, is blown to announce the beginning of the new year. Our 4-year-old classes are treated to a special activity where they learn to make their own shofar!

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the Jewish Day of Atonement. We teach our children that this is a time to reflect on our behavior and our choices and that we can apologize for any wrong-doings. We discuss different ways that we can make ourselves better people. Some families spend their day praying in synagogue, and many adults fast during Yom Kippur. We teach our children about how they can be the best possible friend and a great helper in their family.

Sukkot

Five days after Yom Kippur we celebrate Sukkot! We build a beautiful Sukkah in our courtyard and each class makes beautiful decorations to be hung in the Sukkah. We also eat lunch and snack in the Sukkah. Some families build a Sukkah at home and eat their meals in them. Building, praying, eating and sometimes even sleeping in the Sukkah, is a way to remember how the Jewish people wandered the desert. The children learn all about the Lulav and Etrog. The Lulav is a long palm branch, myrtle and willow branches wrapped together. The Etrog is a citrus fruit that looks like a lemon. The children get to say the special prayer with the Lulav and Etrog.

Simchat Torah

The Torah is our most sacred scroll, which tells the story of the creation of the world and of the Jewish people. During Simchat Torah, we read the final portion of the Torah, and then we roll the scroll all the way back to the very beginning. In the ECC we celebrate all of the lessons that we learn from the Torah, including the ten commandments that were handed down to Moses. The children will parade around with our Clergy and celebrate the holiday with in-class projects and special snacks!

Chanukah

Chanukah is our festival of lights! We celebrate Chanukah to commemorate the Maccabees victory in

Jerusalem and the miracle of the tiny bit of oil that they found. That tiny bit of oil lasted for 8 nights! During Chanukah the children make beautiful menorahs, and we celebrate by playing dreidel, and eating delicious foods fried in oil like potato latkes and *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts). We have a school-wide Chanukah celebration, celebrating the beauty of this holiday together!

Tu B'Shevat

Chag La'Ilanot! This holiday celebrates the birthday of the trees. Jewish people have always revered plant and animal life. We celebrate nature by planting trees, and learn all about how to treat nature. We learn about the nature in Israel and how planting trees in Israel is a beautiful way to commemorate a special occasion. We enjoy a special feast in honor of Tu B'Shevat, enjoying the fruits that grow and thrive in Israel: dates, almonds, figs, oranges and pomegranates. There is a Sephardic folktale that says at midnight of Tu B'Shevat, the trees stretch out their branches and embrace each other wishing each other a good new year.

Purim

Purim is one of the most joyous holidays in the Jewish year. The story tells us about Mordecai and his niece Esther, a Jewish girl who married King Ahasuerus, the king of Persia. When the king's prime minister, Haman, plotted to get rid of all of the Jewish people, Esther risked her life to make the king aware of Haman's evil plans; and saved all of the Jews. Traditionally, we dress up like characters from the Purim story. Here in our ECC, we celebrate by wearing costumes, having a costume parade and eating delicious cookies called Hamantaschen.

Passover

Thousands of years ago we were slaves in Egypt. Moses was born and to save him from Pharaoh's decree, Moses' mother put him in a basket and sent him down the river. The Pharaoh's daughter found the basket and Moses was raised a prince of Egypt. Many years later, Moses discovered the truth, that he was a Hebrew and a son of a slave. Moses was chosen to lead the slaves to freedom. Here in our ECC, we celebrate Passover with a special meal called a *seder*, which means order. During the seder we learn about all the story of Passover, including the ten plagues, and celebrate with traditional foods like Matzah and *Charoset*, (an apple and cinnamon spread) which each class makes in their classrooms. During the Seder we use the *Hagaddah*, which tells the story of Passover. Passover is a celebration of freedom!

Yom Ha'Atzmaut

On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel read the Declaration of Independence for the new state of Israel! Every year we celebrate Israel's birthday with music, dancing, a big parade throughout the school, and with special traditional Israeli foods. The children make and decorate Israeli flags and hats for their parade. We have a schoolwide birthday party for Israel with loads of special treats!

Shavuot

Shavuot celebrates when the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are our set of special laws for helping people live together peacefully. It is also a harvest festival where we celebrate first fruits and first grains harvested in Israel. We decorate with flowers, and we celebrate with dairy themed desserts including Blintzes and Cheesecake and various other dairy foods. Here in our ECC we celebrate with special treats and we make flower decorations. We also create our very own Ten Commandments!

Challah Recipe Ingredients

- 1 package dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs plus 1 extra egg yolk
- 3 1/2 cups flour plus some extra

**Directions**

1. Break three eggs into a small bowl. Beat them slightly with the fork. Set aside.
2. Put the warm water and yeast into the large bowl. Stir with the wooden spoon until the yeast is dissolved. (The yeast is what will make the bread rise.)
3. Add honey and salt to the water and yeast. Stir until dissolved.
4. Add the three beaten eggs to the big bowl mixture. Stir in.
5. Add the 3 1/2 cups of flour, a little at a time, and stir into the liquid. The dough will be very sticky.
6. Sprinkle cutting board with some flour. Place the dough on the board and knead the dough for five minutes. Since it's so sticky, use just your fingers (not your whole hands).
7. Put the dough back into the large bowl and cover it with the damp cloth. The cloth will keep the dough from drying out as it rises. Leave it alone for two hours.
8. When you look at it again, the dough will have become much bigger! With your fingers, push the dough back down to a smaller size (so it is about the same size as when you made the dough in the first place).
9. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
10. Put the dough back onto the floured cutting board and divide it into three equal portions.
11. Here's where you braid the dough (this is what makes a challah look like a challah!). Sprinkle some extra flour on each portion of dough to make it a little less sticky. Roll or pull each piece to make a tube of dough about 12" to 15" long. Lay the three tubes next to each other, then braid them. To do this, cross the right one over the middle one (so the tube that WAS the right one is now the middle one). Then cross the left one over the middle one (so the tube that WAS the left one is now the middle one). Keep doing this until it's all braided.
12. Put the braided dough onto the cookie sheet.
13. The last step before cooking is to cover the dough in one egg yolk. To do so, gently crack a fourth egg, and pry apart the two halves with your thumbs, making sure to keep the egg in the two half-shells. Then pour the egg yolk from half to half, letting as much egg white as possible dribble out each time into a small bowl. Eventually, you'll have just the yolk in one shell.
14. When you've done that, put the yolk into a different small bowl. Break the yolk with your fingers, smooch it around, the finger-paint the top of the dough with the yolk. This will make it brown nicely.
15. Using oven mitts, put the dough into the oven. Cook for 35-45 minutes.
16. At the 35-minute mark, check to see if it's done by looking at it (it should be a nice golden brown) and by tapping it with a spoon (it should be crusty). If it's not quite done, put it back in the oven for five minutes.
17. When it's all ready, use your oven mitts to remove the baking pan and bread from the oven.
18. Clean up the kitchen before you enjoy your food. That way, when you're done, your challah will have cooled off.