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PARENT HANDBOOK

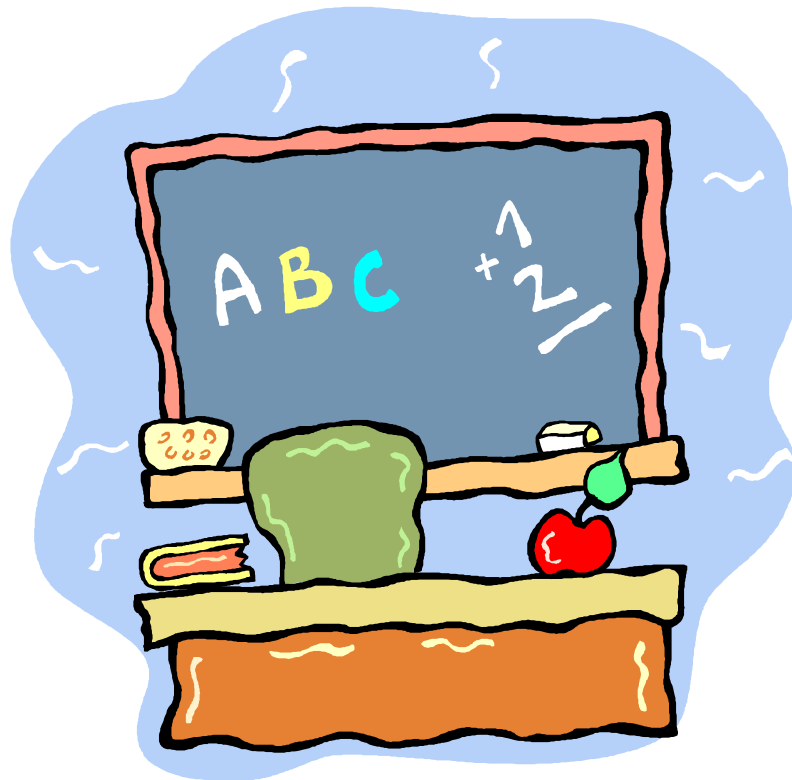


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1. Background Information

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 caring atmosphere in which children can grow emotionally, socially and intellectually. We provide children with a quality education, and offer an enriched program geared to the developmental growth needs of young children. We are guided by the philosophy that “play is children’s work”.

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. Through the celebration of Shabbat and the Jewish holidays and of Israel, our children experience the beauty and joy of their heritage.

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 are teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool, but all throughout their lives. We are allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We are giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

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

Awareness of Ourselves, Others, and the Surrounding World

- Providing an environment that supports a non-stereo typing, non-sexist, multi-cultural approach to learning
- Providing a classroom environment that is inclusive, offering books, games, and pictures of differently abled people in a natural way
- Providing experiences implementing this 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. We cannot provide after school supervision of children.

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. Children leaving school early must be signed out at the Early Childhood office.

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 in January for our 2 year olds, 3 times a week. These optional after school programs are 45 minutes long. Some offerings for this extension have been: Pee Wee Pros, Twisters, Boppersize, Mad Science and more, Taekwon Do, Abrakadoodle and Imagination Station.

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

c. Payment of Fees

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

Cars are not to be parked in the driveway, even for a few minutes. We must keep the driveway clear at all times for carpools. Please park in the parking lot if you are coming into the building.

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 chicken pox, 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 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, 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.

Do not send your child back to school until he/she is ready to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. We require that children be fever free for 24 hours before returning. Your cooperation is necessary for the benefit of the entire school population.

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 PARENT 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

Of course, it is preferable that a three-year-old child is toilet trained when he/she begins school. However, if your child is “on the verge” we will work with you. We also have many tried and true suggestions to make it easier for all of you. (Should your child need frequent changing, we will ask that someone from home be available to come to school each time it is necessary.)

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 the following for craft projects and playtime: feathers, ribbons, felt, corks, dress-up clothes and shoes, costume jewelry, shells, spools, and trays.

7. Appropriate Clothing

Please dress your child to school 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 bag or 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.

9. Trips

Our three and four year olds will occasionally take trips during the school year. The cost of the trips is non-refundable if your child does not attend. You will be notified prior to all field trips.

Parent volunteers are needed to accompany the classes on some of our trips. The teachers will choose the appropriate number of parent volunteers for each trip. If you have an opportunity to assist us on a trip, we will then give other parents a chance on future trips.

10. Shabbat

Shabbat is very special time in our school. We encourage your participation by joining us on your assigned day. You and your child will be honored on that day. We meet the Rabbi in the sanctuary every Friday. 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 class 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. Parents will be notified of incidents that happen at school with a phone call followed up with a written incident report.
- c. Should a child suffer from a serious head injury, (bump, swelling), he/she will be taken care of by Emergency Medical Services, parent will be notified and incident report will be filled out.
- 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 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 teddy 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.

- g. Individual conferences are scheduled twice a year, fall and spring. Also, please feel free to contact the school at any time to discuss a problem, ask a question or arrange a conference.
- h. 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.

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 fruits, vegetables, challah, juices and food items the children prepare and bake themselves. 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 days a week at an additional cost. If you wish to purchase lunch 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 or cupcakes. These treats must be kosher. Some suggestions for purchase are: "The Bakery" in the Waldbaums Shopping Center, or buy Entenmanns, Dutch Maid, Taystee or Drakes products.

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 and that you serve kosher food at the party. We hope you will not ask us to distribute invitations in school if you cannot comply with these suggestions.

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 feelings about separation are part of the program. We expect children to experience such feelings and we accept them.

A parent or caregiver must be present the first two days of school. Children will stay for a shorter session the first few days of school. When children feel comfortable in the room, teachers will tell parents/care-givers to leave for appropriate periods of time, until the child is comfortable in the situation. For the next few days, a parent or caregiver must be available in case adjustment is difficult.

Our 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:

- a. 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.)
- b. Keeping your goodbyes short.
- c. Arriving a minute or two early to help your child adjust to the group and get involved.
- d. 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:

- a. The teacher and child discuss the problem. The necessary steps are taken to help the child resolve the problem.
- b. If necessary, the director intervenes with the child and/or offers suggestions to the teacher.
- c. When indicated, the teacher and/or director have a conference with the parent.

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