EARLY LEARNING AT BETH SHOLOM CONGREGATION

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2020-2021

preparing your child to navigate this world

EARLY LEARNING

At Beth Sholom Congregation

Beth Sholom Congregation
8231 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
215-887-3625

Eileen Weingram, Director of Early Learning
eweingram@bethsholomcongregation.org

SYNAGOGUE STAFF:

David Glanzberg-Krainin, Senior Rabbi
Andrea Merow, Rabbi
Robin Minkoff, Executive Director

EDUCATIONAL STAFF:

Eileen Weingram, Director of Early Learning
Bernice Schwartz, Assistant to the Director
Ellen Kovnat, Accountant

FACILITIES MANAGER

James Smith

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the new school year 2020-2021 (5781) at Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation. We are excited about starting another year with your children. We are proud to say that our school is a Pennsylvania Keystone Star 4 Preschool. We accept children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old and provide the availability for full year-round child-care for those families in need of it. This is the seventh year that we are offering a wonderful Tuition Incentive Program to new members of Beth Sholom Congregation. Later this year, we plan to continue a taste of Mandarin, presented by a native speaker, for our older children, in addition to Hebrew.instruction.

Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation offers a two-track Preschool program to give parents more options and flexibility for their children. The entire school benefits from the strength of the two learning approaches. Our teachers work together to share ideas and programs so that both tracks can participate. Our director and teachers will help to direct parents to the environment which will be most motivating and suitable to each child.

TRADITIONAL TRACK

Parents can choose to send their child to a stimulating, traditional preschool track program, which focuses on child development, group and individual learning. Classrooms are divided by ages and the curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

MONTESSORI TRACK

The Montessori track is geared toward child-directed learning in an enriching environment. Classrooms are multi-aged and curriculum is based on the Montessori principles. The morning class is a combination of group meeting time and individualized explorations. The afternoon sessions further individual learning and extend that learning in small "work" groups.

For you, our parents, there are many options available to make connections and get involved in our school and in the synagogue community. Our goal is to form a "partnership" between the family, the children, and the teachers and staff at Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation. We are fortunate to have a wonderful, active PTO. Their meetings are held monthly and are open to everyone. Please join them.

I welcome all parents to get in touch by calling me at 215-887-3625 x 223 with any questions, comments or concerns that you would like to discuss. My email address is eweingram@bethsholomcongregation.org.

Sincerely,

Eileen Weingram,

Director of Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT US 2

Philosophy
Mission
Certification
Hours of Operation
Holidays
Admission and Enrollment
Inclusion 4
Non-Discrimination
Confidentiality
Staff Qualifications
Child Supervision and Ratios

COMMUNICATION 5

Daily Communication
Tadpoles
Conferences
Parents and Parent Involvement
Publicity

CURRICULUM AND LEARNING 8

Learning Environment
Curriculum and Assessment
Transitions
Multiculturism
Enlish Language Learning
Mandarin
Hebrew
Toilet Training

JEWISH ENRICHMENT 10

Tzedekah
Kashrut Information (for packing lunches, etc.)

BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS 11

GUIDANCE 12

Our school philosophy
Challenging Behavior
Working with children with behavioral or learning concerns
Developing a care plan

Biting
Working with Parents - Suspension and Explulsion Policy

CHILDREN'S SCHEDULES 14
Changes in Child's Enrollment
Policy for Infant/Toddler Credits
Policy for changes to schedule
Early Care
Late Care
Late Pick-up Fees

TUITION AND FEES 15
Payment
Returned Checks

ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL 16
Absence
Withdrawals
Transfer of Records
Closing due to Extreme Weather

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP 17
General Procedure
Cell phone usage
Authorized pick-up
Right to Refuse Child Release

PERSONAL BELONGINGS 18
Supplies
Cubbies
Lost & Found

NUTRITION 20
Food Allergies
Choking Hazards

HEALTH 21
Immunizations
Health Assessments
Illnesses
Medications
Sunscreen & Pacifier Policies

Communicable Diseases 23

SAFETY **24**

Rest Time
Clothing
Extreme Weather and Play
Injuries
Respectful Behavior
Smoking
Prohibited Substances
Dangerous Weapons
Child Custody
Suspected Child Abuse

EMERGENCIES **26**

Fire Safety
Security
Emergency Preparedness
Emergency Transportation

CAMP **28**

***Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plans (ISFP)** **29**

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

ABOUT US

Philosophy

We believe that **Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation** is a place that encourages families of all kinds to grow with us. Our belief is largely based upon the NAYEC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) position statement that "a high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families."

We advocate that children learn by DOING, in a fun, secure, loving environment. Our dedicated staff is devoted to providing your child with a program that encourages active learning and fosters creativity, inventive thinking, problem solving, curiosity and independence.

Our early childhood educators are challenged by a unique opportunity to not only promote the growth of each child's emotional, social, physical, intellectual and moral development, but also to create a Jewish atmosphere for our children which sensitizes them to our rich Jewish heritage.

Mission Statement of the Early Learning Committee

The mission of the Early Learning Committee is to ensure the success and excellence of our educational programs. The committee will support the preschool director in policy making that impacts the life, values and culture of the Preschool. The committee will assist the director to achieve the goals of the preschool. The preschool committee is an advisory arm to the synagogue executive leadership.

Certification

Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of. Human Services. We are a Pennsylvania Keystone Star 4 Preschool, the highest attainable level.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, year-round.

Holidays

The **Infant/Toddler Center** is closed on the following Legal Holidays during the school year, as well as the important Jewish holidays.

Labor Day	
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Thanksgiving and the Friday following
Presidents' Day	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Passover holiday	New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day (July 4)

The **Preschool** is closed on the above days and is also closed for Winter break, Passover holiday, and at the end of August.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance. An enrollment fee of $300 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable but is applied to the preschool tuition and fees.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.

Infant Center Vacation Policy

No tuition reduction or credit will be given for missed days due to illness, holiday, or vacation.

Schedule Change Fee

A fee of $50 per change will be assessed if a student's tuition needs to be revised due to schedule changes after two times.

Inclusion

Early Learning at Beth Sholom believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs. Training and support is provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all of our children. We work as a team with parents and other professionals to develop, carry out and review plans for children with additional support needs.

Non-Discrimination

At **Early Learning at Beth Sholom** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be pro

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications.

Caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing professional development in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism. As a member of a Keystone Star 4 school, every full-time teacher must take 24 hours of professional development annually.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Early Learning at Beth Sholom.**

COMMUNICATION

Daily Communications

We make every effort to have close school-home communications to help make our program the best for families and children. Our teachers try to give frequent feedback about your child either in person or by phone, in writing or on Tadpoles.. Infants and toddlers have daily progress sheets, which parents will find at the end of each day. Posted outside each classroom is a white board with news about that day's events.

Tadpoles

Our school uses the TADPOLES system in order to maintain the best communication between the teachers, the school, and our families. Every family will receive photos and news about their children and activities at school. Infants and Toddlers now receive the private updates on their child's daily progress.

Bulletin Boards

Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide documentation of classroom activities, center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletter

Each teacher will be sending home a class newsletter to inform you of specific activities and events happening in your child's class.

Conferences

Family and teacher conferences occur throughout the year. Two parent conferences are offered. At the conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and progress. We will use our Creative Curriculum and its child evaluation tool, Teaching Strategies, as our guide. Parents may request a conference regarding their child's progress at any time.

Reaching the Director

If at any time you need to speak to the director, Eileen Weingram, feel free to stop in or call at 215-887-3625, extension 223 or email: eweingram@bethsholomcongregation.org. Eileen will get back to you in a timely fashion, during school hours.

Open Door Policy – WII resume after COVID

We are delighted to have family members participate in our programs. Parents/Caregivers are welcome to visit the program at any time during regular program hours. The Infant Center welcomes parents/caregivers to nurse or feed their infants. It is advisable to let us know you are planning to stop by.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/caregivers. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Parent Involvement

Your involvement in our school can serve as a model for your child displaying the importance that school has in your life. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in our school and synagogue community. We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

- Discussion of program goals – annual "Back to School Night" for orientation to our program and for families to provide input into our plans for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets quarterly to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- PTO – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraiser.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful, active PTO. Their meetings are held monthly and are open to everyone. Please join them.

After COVID, If you would like to volunteer to be a classroom mom or dad or to help the PTO plan events, please tell your child's teacher or the preschool director, Eileen Weingram.

Publicity

Unless the family indicates that they do not want their child to participate, we may use pictures of children for publicity.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that much learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curriculum & Assessment

When a child enters **Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation,** he or she is evaluated using Ages and Stages, as required by DHS. Our entire school is guided by The Creative Curriculum and its assessment tool, Teaching Strategies. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so we can deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

Parents can read the daily schedule and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

Transitions

Your child's transition in school should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns.

Transition between learning programs

Children in the Infant/Toddler Center are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Transition to elementary school

Transition activities such as creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Multiculturalism

Exposing children to various cultures is vital for all children because it promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, toys, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

English Language Learning for Preschool Children

Early Learning at Beth Sholom welcomes children of all cultures and races and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences that support the full access and participation of every child.

The staff is expected to provide programs designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn. We embrace family's home languages and we desire to incorporate home languages into our program. Parents will be encouraged to share information that will create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for their child.

Mandarin -Will resume after COVID

We are very excited about our Mandarin Class, returning for a seventh year. The children in our Traditional Preschool and Montessori students will continue learning about the Mandarin language and culture, taught by a native-born speaker.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

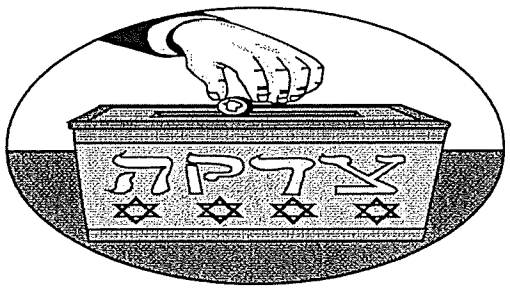
Hebrew Instruction- Will resume after COVID

The children in our Traditional Preschool and Montessori groups will be learning Hebrew with an experienced teacher.

JEWISH ENRICHMENT

FRIDAY IS TZEDAKAH DAY

An important value we teach our children is the importance of Tzedakah (helping the needy) As part of the Shabbat program, which is held every Friday, children are encouraged to bring a small amount of change to contribute to Tzedakah. During the year, Early Learning makes contributions with the donations to worthwhile causes .



SPREAD THE JOY OF SHABBAT – After COVID

Each Friday, **parents and guests are invited to join us** for our weekly Shabbat celebration led by the children and staff! You may enhance Friday night in your home by eating challah, offered by a weekly PTO challah sale. The challah is sent home with your child each Friday.

KASHRUT INFORMATION

Staff or parents who bring food into the building must abide by the following guidelines:

1. Baked goods must have a symbol of *Kashrut* or be purchased at a Kosher bakery.
2. Homemade baked goods cannot be shared by the class.
3. Meat products and shellfish are not permissible.
4. Packaged foods brought into the center must be clearly labeled *kosher.*
5. Dairy and Pareve (vegetarian) meals are permissible for both staff and children lunches.

BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS -Will resume after COVID

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

It's fun for your child to celebrate his/her birthday with friends in the preschool. This gives parents and guests an opportunity to visit our school and make the Birthday Child feel special. Please clear the Birthday party date and time with the teacher to avoid conflicts with our programming. The following party refreshments are welcome:

- One Birthday cupcake per child (from a certified *kosher* bakery) or one cake (from a certified Kosher bakery)
- Ice Cream Dixie and spoon for each child (labeled *kosher*)
- Also acceptable are Entenmanns or other boxed cakes that are labeled *Kosher.* (see Kashrut policy on previous page)

Remember that any food that you bring in must clearly be marked Kosher, peanut and nut-free, when choosing a treat.

To reinforce the religious objectives of our school, enhance your child's Jewish education, and be sensitive to the personal observance of others, ***please do not schedule birthday parties on Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday) or Jewish holidays, and please serve only dairy or kosher products.*** We strongly recommend that all children in your child's class be invited to the party. Invitations may be distributed at school only if all children are invited. In a small community like ours, excluding just a few children is hurtful to both child and parents. The Jewish way is to foster community and inclusion.

GUIDANCE

Our School Philosophy on Discipline and Special Care

Early Learning at Beth Sholom is committed to providing each student success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at school has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center, Eileen Weingram.

Working with Children with behavioral or learning concerns

When teachers notice a child exhibiting learning or behavior concerns, that child will be closely observed and the behavior documented. The parents will be consulted. First, an attempt will be made to adapt the activities and environment to meet the child's needs, with help from the Director. A meeting will be set up with the parents/teachers/director to discuss concerns on documented behaviors/learning and the options for proceeding. The director will provide the parents with the names and contact information so that they can set up special education screening. Future plans will be formulated after reviewing the results of the screening.

Developing a Care Plan for Children

A care plan is required to meet the individual needs of children who require extra support so they can derive the maximum benefit from a childcare facility's activities and services.

A child requiring extra support may have developmental delays or a diagnosis of a physical, emotional, or intellectual impairment requiring extra support and thus needs a care plan to document how that extra support is to be provided.

Information for a care plan will come from discussion with the child's parents, other caregivers, medical practitioner(s), early childhood intervention services[1] or other health care professionals, and from observing and working with the child. The plan will describe the child's needs and how the childcare facility can best meet those needs.

A plan may also include a list of medical, safety, and emergency considerations.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. The family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family will both be notified. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Working with Families – Suspension and Expulsion Policy

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

CHILDREN'S SCHEDULES

Child supervision and ratio

Children are well supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to maintain alertness. We maintain low child to staff ratios.

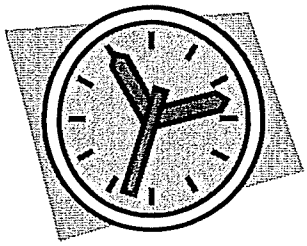
Changes in Child's Enrollment

All changes in a child's enrollment must be discussed with the director. We staff our classes according to the number of children enrolled. Although we'd like to accommodate the needs of our families, it is not always possible in order to assure that our staff/child ratio is at a safe level.

Early Care

Early Care is open for any child enrolled in our school. Drop-off begins at 7:30 a.m. and lasts until 9:00 a.m.

This service is available daily, weekly or yearly and is part of the full time, monthly fee for full day enrollees. The fee is $25.00 per day for the occasional necessity and ***must be paid in full before or at time of service***.



If your child is not signed up for early care, please check with the director or early care teacher before bringing him/her in order to insure proper staff/child ratio.

Teachers arrive earlier than class begins to set up for the day. They are not responsible for children entering their classroom before 9:00 a.m. (7:30 am in infant/toddler center and preschool early room).

*Late Care**

After COVID, Late care is available until 6:00 PM.

**Late Care* *will be only until 5:30 during COVID so that the teachers can disinfect the classrooms.*

Your child must be registered in advance to use this service. For occasional use, the fee is $25.00 per day and ***must be paid in full before or at time of service. To register for late care, please contact the director.***

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence

If your child is picked up past the designated time of dismissal, the late pick-up fee is $25 per child. If your child is picked up after 6pm, the late pick-up fee is $25 per child for every 15 minutes of additional Late Care.

If an emergency occurs and you need later care than your child is scheduled, please give us as much notification as possible to insure staff/child ratios are met

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Infant Center Vacation Policy

No tuition reduction or credit will be given for missed days due to illness, holiday or vacation.

Schedule Change Fee

A fee of $50 per change will be assessed if a student's tuition needs to be revised due to schedule changes more than two times in a given school year.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Additional Fees Credits – Only for the School Year. This does not apply to Camp.

- **Withdrawals** - If a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 2 week written notice of withdrawal, a 2 week tuition fee may be applied.
- **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – There are no credits for sick days. Sick days are considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
- **Credit will not be given for Inclement Weather or holidays**- If we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM, please call us at 215-887-3625 ext. 218 or send an e-mail to Bernice at bschwartz@bethsholomcongregation.org. You can also send a message through Tadpoles. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Withdrawals

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally. If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather or Other Emergencies

Should severe weather or other conditions (e.g. snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, or require for us to close early, our families will be notified in several ways, by electronic phone messages, e-mail messages, and also posted on the news stations on the television, on their websites, and on KYW News Radio. Our school number is 3079 for KYW.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure – Please see special attached instructions during COVID

Please do not drop-off your child prior to your scheduled time. Parents or caregivers are expected to park in the parking lot and accompany their children to the classroom.

Please allow enough time to arrive so that your child does not miss out on any of the learning and fun.

After COVID - Classes dismiss from the classroom, the playground, or the Fischman Auditorium in inclement weather. When picking up or dropping off your children in the building, please park your car and come through the main security entrance of the school building hallway. Infant/young toddler parents please enter through the security doors on the lower level..

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Children will only be released to those people who are on the written release/emergency form. Please make sure that you have listed at least one other person, besides yourselves, as Emergency Contacts. This is for your child's safety! Please notify us *in writing* if there are any changes during the year. If an emergency arises and you must be late, please call the school office at 215-887-3625, ext. 218 or 223.

If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Supplies needed

Parents will receive a packet from the school with specific instructions for the supplies needed depending on the age of your child. Please **label everything** to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

LABEL EVERYTHING

All children should have comfortable, washable, weather appropriate clothing and footwear for school.

Please bring the following items to school at orientation or the first day here. Each child will be given his/her own cubby in which to keep the items that are listed below, as well as COVID-related daily papers.

1. A completed health assessment form and emergency contact form, food allergy form, sunscreen and/or pacifier permission form, parent questionnaire, photograph permission form, tuition contract, signed Parent's Civil Rights form, parent directory information and your child's schedule. Please leave no blanks.
2. **After COVID** - One large school bag - please place your child's name on the outside.
3. Change of clothing, underwear, socks, pants, and top. (Please put these items in a shoebox with child's name).
4. Full day and extended day preschool children should bring a crib sheet, blanket and small pillow (optional) for rest periods.
5. Coverall apron for water play and painting. (Plastic is preferred - look for an apron that has no ties and the child can use independently.)
6. Outer clothing for the season...a light sweater or jacket for the fall or spring; heavy slacks or snow pants for winter;
7. If your child is not trained, please bring in one pack of diapers and baby wipes and diaper cream (optional) (Infants and Young Toddlers- see your list for more needed items).
8. Many teachers request at least one or two recent photographs of your child and your family.
9. Box of tissues
10. Comb or brush (optional)

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the School Office. Please note that we are not responsible for any lost items.

Toys from Home – Not permitted during COVID

Regarding toys from home, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home except for transitional dolls or stuffed animals or blankets that help ease the home/school transition. We encourage each child to share, however, favorite toys often become a disruption and can cause your child unnecessary upset.

It is ALWAYS appropriate for children to bring a book or favorite CD to school to share with the teacher and class. Often children do enjoy bringing items from home that relate to topics being studied in class. However, **toy weapons of any kind are not allowed!** *Please remember to label all toys and special belongings*!

NUTRITION

Due to the increase of young children with peanut and nut allergies, we are now a

PEANUT & NUT-FREE SCHOOL.

Two delicious alternates are sunflower seed butter or soy nut butter.

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions. Please talk to the director or her assistant if you have any questions. See special instructions for lunches and snacks during COVID.

- We maintain a Kosher facility. All lunches and snacks brought to school must be dairy, parve or vegetarian.
- No meat or shellfish is permitted, even if it is Kosher meat.
- After COVID, Food that will be shared with other children must be store-bought, in its original package and labeled Kosher.
- Baked goods made at home are not permitted to be shared with other children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Left-over food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. We will make the necessary accommodations in the classroom to protect your child, as much as is possible in this setting.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Choking Hazards

To keep our children safe, the following foods are not allowed - those that are round, hard, small, thick, sticky, compressible, dense, or slippery, like raw carrot rounds, raw peas, hard pretzels, whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, chips, popcorn, marshmallows, and rice cakes unless they are cut up as described below.

Grapes and cherry tomatoes can only be sent to school if they are cut into quarters.

Food for infants should be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller, food for toddlers should be cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking. (Caring for our Children, p.181).

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY – See attached instructions for COVID

Your child's health and safety are two of the most important issues concerning us daily. Upon enrollment in our school, your child is required to have on file a health form completed and signed by your child's physician. This needs to be updated according to guidelines by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, yearly for preschoolers, and every 6 months for those children under the age of two.

Being a part of the community has its responsibilities. Help your child to become concerned about others by not sending him/her to school while ill. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please *do not* send him/her to school:

- upset stomach and / or diarrhea or vomiting
- elevated fever(100 or above)
- fever of 99 –100.9 with other symptoms
- heavy nasal discharge (yellow/green indicates infection)
- sore throat
- inflamed, red eyes
- unusual crankiness and fatigue
- rash of unknown origin

Colds are most contagious *before* symptoms occur. Therefore, a child with an average cold can be at school, providing the child is not running a fever and feels well.

If other than COVID, a child placed on antibiotics may return to school 24 hours after the medication is begun and the child is feeling better.

To protect the well-being of all our children, ***we reserve the right to request that a child be taken home*** if he/she has the symptoms mentioned above or does not seem well enough to participate fully in school activities. The child may return to school after being symptom-free and home for **at least one full day,** for illnesses other than COVID-related.

In case of an accident or injury, we will make every effort to contact a parent. If we cannot reach a parent or the emergency contact person, we will then call the child's physician.

If it is necessary for any reason for a child to be taking any kind of medication during school time, please note our policy here:

According to state regulations, No medications will be administered without written parental permission and current prescriptions must be in your child's name or a doctor's note must specify your individual child, the dose and time of day to be given. A sheet for our "Medication Log" must be filled out by the parent, and then the staff member when the medicine is administered. No medicine or any other potentially dangerous substance can be kept in a child's bag. For further information on medications for your child, contact the center director, Eileen Weingram at eweingram@bethsholomcongregation.org.

Please note the following policies:

Sunscreen application by teachers

Please apply sunscreen to your child before entering in the morning.

If you would like your child's teacher to apply sunscreen or any other over-the-counter cream that you supply, to your child, we must have written permission from you.

Pacifier policy

Following recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, all babies and toddlers who use a pacifier must have parental permission and follow the guidelines found on the attached sheet.

Communicable Diseases

Please notify the teacher immediately if your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases. When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19 Virus
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilic Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

HEAD LICE

Head lice is a minor nuisance which can happen to anyone and has no boundaries. Our school is not immune to this common problem. Children do come in close contact with one another and this can result in the transmission of head lice. If a child is found to have head lice, our school policy is to send the child home, along with a letter being sent home to all parents in that class. The child cannot return to school until the scalp is "nit-free."

SAFETY

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs.

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time.

All children who nap should bring a crib sheet to cover their cot, as well as a blanket, all labeled. These will be sent home weekly to be washed and returned the following week.

*Clothing**

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities.

Sandals, Crocs, and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

*Please refer to the COVID letter attached about shoes.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside "real feel" temperature is greater than 90 F or less than 25 F degrees.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the rare event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with smoke alarms, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers. We practice fire drills with the children and staff every other month. Our staff receive annual training in the procedures involved with fire and other emergencies.

Security

With everyone's vigilant assistance, **Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation** can remain a safe, relaxed atmosphere. Every door remains locked. Every preschool family will be issued a fob with a $10 deposit, to use for admittance. This deposit will be refunded when they leave the school. Please carry the fob with you every time you enter our building.

Emergency Preparedness

We keep copies of Beth Sholom's Emergency Operations Plan, as mandated by the state, to provide for the care and well-being of the children under our care and for our staff, in case of any type of emergency. **To facilitate our plan, it is very important that we have your child's current Emergency and Health form.**

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Emergency Phone Calls

We have added a few features, in an effort to be able to communicate more efficiently in our building among staff and when receiving calls from you.

First, we have purchased additional walkie talkies so that every classroom has one with them wherever they go.

Second, Bernice and I will continue to forward our calls to the main office whenever one of us is not in the school office.

Third, we have added a new feature to our telephone system. In the event of a true emergency, when you have tried to phone the school and/or synagogue office, and there is no answer, follow the prompts in the voice mail message for making an urgent call. There are several steps to follow. This will ring through to my cell phone. This is only to be used after you have tried the office and when it is important to speak to me.

Some examples are:a different person is picking up at dismissal or, it is Friday after 4:00pm when the main office is closed.

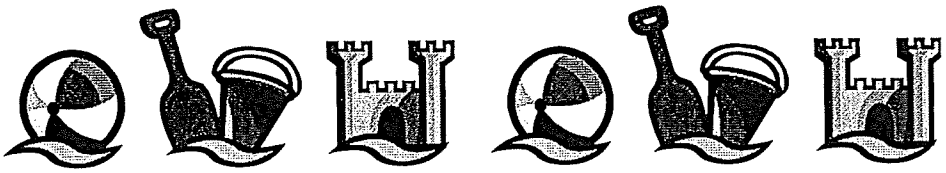
IMPORTANT NUMBERS FOR YOU TO HAVE IN YOUR TELEPHONE:

EILEEN WEINGRAM 215-887-3625 EXT 223

BERNICE SCHWARTZ 215-887-3625 EXT 218

MAIN OFFICE 215-887-1342 EXT 100

BETH SHOLOM GAN YELADIM
(SUMMER CAMP)



In addition to our fun-filled school year, we offer a summer camp for the preschool. You may sign up for the whole session, or any part of the summer.

Faculty from our own preschool will staff the summer session.

Weekly themes have included countries from around the world, these United States, Circus Week, Farm Week (featuring chick hatching), Nature Week (featuring Bug Day), Under the Sea Week (with a visit from the Franklin Institutue), Space Week, , Sports and much more!

The children enjoy days filled with water-play in our outdoor sprinklers, arts and crafts, snacks, playground play, cooking, Music, and weekly visits from Coach Dave. Our preschoolers also participate in bi-weekly *Soccer Shots*. We also have special visits from the the Franklin Institute, musical guests, Hat Man, Mad Science, and many others.

It is the PERFECT camp program for toddlers and preschoolers in the safety and familiarity of "home".

INFANT/TODDLER CENTER
(SUMMER PROGRAM)

Our toddlers participate in water play and attend age appropriate, special events. They continue their regular program and hours all summer.

*Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plans (ISFP)

It is important to our School and Child Care programs to gather as much information as we can about the best ways to care for and educate each child. All children have special educational needs. If your child already has an educational or behavioral plan in place, through a school, other child services organization, or through private testing and therapists, we should have the plan in your child's Early Learning at Beth Sholom's file to help us meet your child's special needs. Our Keystone STARS Performance standards require us to request copies of IEPs, ISFPs, and behavioral plans for each child enrolled in our School, Child Care and School Age programs. The information on these forms is protected by privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA.)

Please speak to our director to discuss this further.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center after a thorough review of this handbook.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed it with a member of the **Early Learning at Beth Sholom Congregation's** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the **Family Handbook** and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in this Family Handbook that I do not understand.

Recipient Name - Please print

Child's Name

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date