

TEMPLE SINAI



Early Childhood Center

Parent Handbook

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TEMPLE SINAI ECC PARENT HANDBOOK

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The goal of our center is to foster excitement and independence in learning as well as pride in our Jewish heritage. In order to achieve this goal, we seek to develop within our children the fundamental ingredient necessary to successful learning – a positive sense of self. To this end we are committed to helping young children make sense of their world through learning in a trusting, nurturing environment. Our classrooms and programs are designed to help children gain skills and knowledge while nurturing their desire to learn. As children learn and grow their thinking capacities expand and become more flexible. By encouraging divergent thinking, we allow children to explore creative solutions to problems. We recognize that children learn through play, through active involvement with people and materials, and through social interactions with adults and other children.

LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION

Our Center is licensed by the Bureau of the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DFYS) and must comply with the Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers. Additionally, our school is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Only 7% of Early Childhood Centers in the nation meet the high standards for this prestigious accreditation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER STRUCTURE

The Temple Sinai Early Childhood Center (ECC) is a service provided to Temple Sinai Members and Non-Members. The administration of the school is delegated by the Board of Trustees of Temple Sinai to the Early Childhood Parent Association. This committee consists of involved and caring parents, many of whom are Temple members. The Parent Association and the Center Director work together to build community among the ECC families and fund-raise for the school.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

All ECC and Temple Sinai member families in good standing may register for the following school year during the priority registration period when financial incentives may be offered.

After January 1st, registration will be opened to the general public at the full tuition rate. To register, a child's parent must complete an enrollment contract and submit it with a non-refundable deposit and building security fee.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Each child's class placement is determined at the discretion of the Director.

PAYMENT

A **NON-REFUNDABLE, NON-TRANSFERABLE** deposit is required with all registrations and becomes part of the **FULL YEAR'S TUITION**. Tuition payments are due as stated in the contract. Parents are unconditionally obligated to make **ALL** tuition payments set forth in the contract. Registration for subsequent fall or summer programs will only be accepted if **all financial obligations are up to date**.

BEGINNING OF SCHOOL

Separating from loved ones and creating new attachments requires the building of trust. It is a difficult transition at every stage in life. It is more so the first time a child separates from his/her parents. Parents set an important example by showing their children that they approve of the school, teachers, and the positive experience that school will provide. This will make it easier for the child to relax in this new environment. Parents should plan to stay for as long as the child needs them for the first few days. Teachers will help parents decide when it is appropriate to leave the room. Be prepared to be on call the first weeks of school if your child has difficulty separating from you. Initially some children may seem to adjust, but may have a delayed reaction to separation. All these are normal processes.

It may take a while for a child to fully adjust and participate in all classroom activities (especially with two year olds). Many times a child needs just to observe for a period of time to find his/her comfort level.

It is important for all preschoolers to have calm, pleasant, unhurried separations. Make sure you tell your child when you are leaving the room as they need to develop a trusting relationship. Sneaking out can only hurt that relationship. The time invested in forming the home-school relationship will pay great dividends later on.

EDUCATIONAL GUIDELINES

These are our goals:

- ❖ To facilitate children's development of social skills by modeling our own behavior and by giving them the tools to negotiate their own solutions.
- ❖ To help children develop positive self-esteem through appreciation of their own uniqueness and their responsibility to a broader group.
- ❖ To introduce Jewish heritage and Israeli culture to children through experiences involving art, music, history, drama, cooking, and science at a level that is appropriate to their stage of development.
- ❖ To expose children to the activities which encourage the development of skills in the areas of fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, language, and group dynamics in preparation for the next level of learning.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENT ASSOCIATION

All families enrolled in the Center are encouraged to join the Early Childhood Parent Association. The PA works to provide the school and children with special programs and equipment beyond that which is included in the Center's budget, as well as planning social and educational activities for parents. The PA maintains the templesinaipa.com website with an up-to-date calendar of school events. The PA has a scholarship program and encourages and welcomes all contributions.

SECURITY

Each family will be assessed an annual security fee as stated in the contract. Please help us keep the ECC safe by doing the following:

1. Always use your family's unique building access code every time you enter the building. It is okay to share your code with relatives or employees designated to pick up or drop off your children. Access codes can and should be changed if given to someone no longer authorized to enter the building on your behalf.
2. **Do not hold the door open for anyone you don't know.** Encourage others to do the same.
3. Visitors to the school (including support professionals visiting classrooms) must sign in at the main office each time they are here.
4. Check in at the Director's office before entering a class after class has begun.
5. Report any suspicious activity to the Director.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Our staff is certified in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. In the event of an emergency the school will make every effort to contact you, or your emergency contacts, and we will follow any directions written on the medical form.

FIRE & LOCKDOWN DRILLS

We are required by law to conduct fire drills monthly and lockdown drills. During a fire drill we must leave the building immediately without coats. If you are in the building when the alarms go off, exit the building or follow the teacher's direction and **DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING** until the Director gives the **ALL CLEAR**.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

You will be informed of school closings due to inclement weather by email, text and a robo-call via **ONE CALL NOW**. Please do not opt out of this communication vehicle, we truly use it only in emergency situations. In general, we abide by the same closing as Tenafly Public schools; however, since we are involved in the transporting of children in private vehicles, we tend to be more cautious.

PARKING

Our parking lot is a busy one. Please observe a 5 MPH speed limit and do not drive beyond the barriers. Do not park in spaces designated for Temple staff or the handicapped at any time. Your cooperation is appreciated.

ARRIVAL

Although our teachers are in their classrooms well before the scheduled arrival times, they are preparing for the day and are not ready to accept children. We ask that you adhere to arrival and dismissal times. When children are late to school it becomes difficult to join friends who are in the midst of play.

DISMISSAL

According to NJ State regulations, all children must be signed out of school every day. Children will only be released to their own parents or authorized caregivers. Any other arrangement MUST be made through direct written or oral communication with the school by the child's parent. If the parent or person authorized by the parent to pick up a child appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the Director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm, the child will not be released to such individual. Please try to be on time to pick up your child to avoid unnecessary anxiety. Teachers will deliver children to the After Care room at 2PM if caregiver has not arrived and extended care charges will be assessed.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

- 1) The child is supervised at all times;
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s);
- 3) An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parents(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

COMMUNICATION

Our goal is to keep the lines of communication open so that we can work together for the best interest of your child. Special times are set aside during the year for parent/teacher conferences; twice a year for three and four-year-old children and once during the year for two-year-olds. Our staff has been trained, and continues to receive training on the most current educational assessment tools and methods of communicating the results. The staff meets with the Director prior to conferences to review assessment results and recommendations for parents. Parents are invited to arrange for conferences outside these times as needed. If a significant change occurs at home, please inform us as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. Common causes of distress include one or both parents being away from home for any reason, a new person living in the home, illness of either parent, illness of a sibling, any hospitalization, accident or death in the family, a new caregiver or any new employee, moving, or the death of a pet. The teachers/administrators will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment which may affect your child as well. Please be sure to always check your child's cubby for notices.

Teachers will inform parents of what to expect via a monthly newsletter. Dryboards outside each classroom indicate daily special activities or events. Teachers use email, phone or Remini in the evenings to communicate with parents.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Posting photographs or videos of any child enrolled in our school, other than your own, is strictly prohibited.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We feel that parent participation enriches our program and aids children in making a comfortable connection between home and school. Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to spend time in our classrooms and to share any of their skills or interests. In addition there are certain times during the year when we request parent assistance for special events. There are several times during the year when we require parent attendance at holiday celebrations in the classroom. If you are unable to attend, please have a relative or family friend attend in your place.

In our celebration of Shabbat we ask parents to take turns in providing challah and kosher grape juice (Kedem or Manischewitz). We also have a concurrent schedule for providing a healthy snack for the class. Each of these occurs two or three times during the school year.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Snacks are served daily to the children. On Mondays and Tuesdays, fruits and vegetables are provided by Healthy Life Kitchen, a kosher caterer. All snacks purchased by the school are kosher and nut free. Pretzels, crackers, cereal, raisins, etc. have o-u or Kof-K certification. We avoid snacks with a lot of sugar, salt, preservatives, artificial flavoring and artificial coloring. On Wednesday and Thursdays the Shabbat Family will be asked to provide healthy choices of fruits and vegetables. Shop with your child or ask which fruits or veggies he would like to bring in for his friends. Please do not send candy and gum. We do not serve nuts, popcorn, carrots or whole grapes to children under three. We do not allow peanut butter or nut products in our Center. The PA offers an optional lunch program which is nut free and kosher to accommodate our children's needs. Parents may choose to send lunch from home. Temple Sinai does not permit shell fish, pork products or foods that combine dairy and meat to be brought into the building.

Please make sure your caregiver understands and follows our food policies.

BIRTHDAYS

We enjoy celebrating each child's birthday in school in a simple manner. Please ask your child's teachers for information regarding the time of celebration in class. You may purchase cupcakes on your own. Most local supermarkets have cupcakes clearly labelled Kosher & Nut Free, or we can recommend either Butterflake Bakery on Cedar Lane in Teaneck or Zadies Bakery on Fairlawn Avenue in Fair Lawn. Following a Jewish tradition of giving in honor of a joyous event (a simcha) you may acknowledge a birthday by making a donation to our ECC Scholarship fund.

PLEASE DO NOT USE SCHOOL CUBBIES TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OR TO SEND GIFTS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our faculty meets monthly after school for staff meetings. Several times during the school year there will be half-day closings to allow for overall program planning, in-service training (professional development), CPR and First Aid certification, and parent conferences. Additionally, school will not be in session one or two days per year to allow teachers to attend professional conferences. You will be notified well in advance of these days.

HEALTH & WELLNESS POLICIES

- Keep your child home if any of the following has occurred the night before: upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or complaint of unusual pain.
- For a common cold, children should be kept at home if they are constantly coughing and sneezing, have a thick mucousy nasal discharge, and have a steady runny nose (have to wipe it twice or more in fifteen minutes).
- We maintain a 24 hour wellness policy: a child must have 24 hours of normal body temperature before returning to school; and must experience 24 hours without any episodes of diarrhea or vomiting. When coming back after an illness, a child has to be well enough to be in a group, and able to participate in all indoor and outdoor activities.
- Notify the school as soon as you know your child or any of his/her siblings has a major contagious disease, such as: chicken pox, rubella, mumps, meningococcal, shingles, tuberculosis, whooping cough, head lice, or pinkeye. We will inform you if your child is exposed to any communicable disease.

If your child is ill, please consider the health of other children and teachers and keep your child at home. If your child should develop any of these symptoms while in school, they will be isolated from the general population and you will be called to have them picked up. Please be sure that we have an emergency card for your child; listing individuals who may pick him/her up if you are not available, and that is kept up to date. If your child is sent home with a rash or pink eye, you must supply a doctor's note upon his or her return.

MEDICATIONS

If your child has an allergy, whether to food or environmental conditions, we are required to have an Allergy Action Plan signed by your pediatrician on file. Please supply us with two Epi pens (one for the classroom, and one for the office) and antihistamine as directed by your child's physician. If your child requires medication to be given in school, a note from your doctor is required. This note is to include: the child's name, the date, name of medication, dosage and time to be given, and your signature. The medication will be stored in the refrigerator and/or in a locked cabinet. All staff has been trained to administer medication and Epi-Pens as part of the American Heart Association First Aid/CPR training.

IMMUNIZATIONS

New Jersey State Law requires that a completed, up-to-date Medical Report be on file BEFORE a student enrolls in school.

At the bottom of the report is an immunization chart. There is a hand-drawn

BOX

 the age that certain immunizations are mandated by New Jersey state law.

The State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families requires that children enrolled in early childhood programs must be up-to-date on all immunizations as per the NJ State Department of Health requirement schedule, including yearly flu vaccines each fall.

The State of New Jersey permits no exceptions to these mandated dates for immunization. A pediatrician's note explaining a delay in a child's immunization schedule is NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE STATE.

If your child's immunizations are not up-to-date, the State will not allow your child to continue in our program. Your child will be permitted to return when his/her immunizations are in compliance with the law.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE REGULATIONS WILL CAUSE US TO LOSE OUR LICENSE TO OPERATE THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER.

CLOTHING

Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing which she/he doesn't have to be concerned about getting messy. **LABEL ALL CLOTHING**. We encourage pants with elastic waistbands as one piece suits and overalls make it difficult for the young child to become independent in dressing. Belts are extremely difficult for the very young child to manipulate. Please do not allow your child to wear cowboy boots or clogs to school as these are not as safe as rubber soled shoes and make climbing more difficult. We also discourage the wearing of Super-hero clothing. Please avoid having children wear jewelry and do not send umbrellas to school. During outdoor play, we do not allow children to wear scarves.

At the beginning of school we ask that you supply a complete change of weather appropriate clothing (labelled with his/her name) in your child's cubby including pants, shirt, underwear, and socks. If they come home in any piece of emergency clothing, please remember to replace it the next day. During the cold winter months, please send in warmer clothing (which will also likely be in a larger size). Finally, in the warmer spring weather, make one more size/temperature adjustment.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

We have carefully selected the materials and toys in our classrooms and outdoor play area to create a desired environment for play and creativity. We have found that personal toys may conflict with the type of play we wish to encourage, and often result in hurt feelings among children and sadness at any loss or breakage. If there is a special item which must accompany your child to school, please discuss this with your child's teachers. (War game toys are unacceptable.)

FIELD TRIPS for PRE-K

Our PreK children participate in age appropriate trips throughout the school year. Transportation is by school bus with seatbelts.

TOILETING

Our three and four-year-old children are encouraged to handle their toileting needs independently. A teacher will be glad to help any child needing assistance.

Toilet learning should be a positive experience. If your child is in the process of toilet learning we will support and continue the process at school.

We do however, discourage the use of pull-up. We will be happy to discuss in greater detail suggestions for successful toilet learning.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a very important part of our curriculum. We go outside in all but very frigid or wet weather. It is important for children to be dressed appropriately for the weather. This includes jacket, hat, boots, mittens and snow pants if necessary. Please do not send SCARVES or jackets with LONG DRAWSTRINGS (cut them off) as they have proven to be playground hazards. **Label all outer clothing.**

NURTURING POLICY

While specific teaching styles may differ from classroom to classroom, the spontaneous nurturance of children within the program is expressed in the following ways - hugging, holding on laps, carrying, rocking, rubbing backs and patting heads.

We want all parents to feel at home at Temple Sinai. Your ideas, energy and commitment will enhance our program. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

We would like to continue our close relationship with parents, and therefore we encourage your participation in all activities. Notices are sent or placed in your child's cubby and/or email. Watch for special messages!

GUIDES FOR DISCIPLINE

Children are encouraged to express negative feelings and to settle their disputes through using words. We do not allow hitting, pushing, biting or any acts or threats of physical aggression by children or adults. At times and at the discretion of the teachers it may be necessary to separate a child from the group. At times it may be necessary to limit a child's time in school.

The goal of discipline in an early childhood program is to help children develop inner control and become responsible and caring individuals. This is a slow process due to the egocentricity of preschoolers. Staff members at Temple Sinai work on this goal by:

1. Setting up the environment to provide developmentally appropriate activities
2. Modeling behavior
3. Redirecting activities
4. Using natural consequences whenever possible
5. Giving the child the opportunity to regain control of his/her behavior

The cardinal rule for children is: you can't hurt yourself, the other children and adults, or destroy the materials.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

- All methods of discipline used shall be positive and consistent with the age and developmental needs of the child.
- No corporal punishment is used.
- Cruel, severe, unusual or unnecessary punishment is not inflicted on children.
- Derogatory remarks will not be made to children about their families or about the children themselves.
- No child or group of children will be allowed to discipline another child.
- A child may be removed from a group activity to another area, provided that the child is continuously visible to a staff member.
- No child will be deprived of meals or any part of meals for disciplinary reasons.
- No child will be disciplined for failing to eat, or sleep, or for soiling him/herself.
- Reports of mistreatment of children will be brought to the attention of Child Protective Services.

- Any suspected abuse and/or neglect of a child will be reported in accordance with Division of Youth and Family Services guidelines.

This statement of policy is required by the Department of Licensing.

EXPULSION POLICY

The State of NJ has mandated an expulsion policy for all licensed preschools in our state. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to terminate or suspend a child from the center:

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure of parent to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms or providing copy of child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness of picking up your child.
- Physical or verbal abuse to staff.
- Noncompliance with school policy.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR 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.
- Child is a danger to him/herself or others.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT WILL BE TAKEN IN ORDER NOT TO EXPEL A CHILD

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
 - Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
 - Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
 - Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
 - Staff will apply consequences for rules consistently.
 - Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
 - Child will be given verbal warnings.
 - A brief time period will be given so child can regain control.
 - Note(s) will be sent home to parent/guardian describing behaviors in detail.
 - Literature sent home to parent regarding behavior.
 - Parent conference.
 - Written parent/center action plan.
 - Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- And/or
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.
 - Parent called to pick up child.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

- If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding:
 - The length of the expulsion period.
 - Expected behavioral change required in order for the child or parent to return to the center
 - A specific expulsion date that allows the parent an adequate amount of time to seek alternate child care (usually one to two weeks notice depending on the other children's safety)
- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED

- On the basis that 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: 1-800-215-6853 or 1-800-792-8610 (after 5 pm)
 - * Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
 - * Without giving the parent an adequate amount of time to make other child care arrangements, unless the child/parent is in immediate danger to others.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Differences must be resolved - it is in the best interest of the child to do so. Remember, sometimes a disagreement occurs as a direct result of misunderstanding. Always clarify the issues at hand.

- Parents and school staff members must work closely together to address the issues.
- Pro-active means of reducing conflict include sharing positive information about the student with parents in an ongoing manner.
- It is essential for both parties to realize that the goals for the child are 'shared goals'. Both must agree that the child's interest comes first.
- Avoid confrontation and deal specifically with solutions to the identified issues and be prepared to offer alternatives.
- Always deal with the issues rather than the emotions and the people involved.

Acknowledging the emotions may be a positive way to diffuse them.

- Decide on what you can compromise on, effective resolution usually requires some form of compromise on both parties behalf.
- Be sure that your expectations are realistic and reasonable.
- Specify both long term and short term goals and state when a follow up visit should occur.
- All parties need to commit to the recommended solutions and agree jointly.
- All parties must rely on each other, it is therefore essential to work out differences and work together regardless of how sensitive the issue is.
- If a reasonable compromise/solution cannot be met in between the parent and teachers, then the Director should be brought into the conversation.