

Shoresh Preschool Parent Handbook 2020-2021

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**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IN ADDITION TO THIS DOCUMENT THAT YOU READ THE
ENTIRE GUIDELINES AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS REGARDING IMPORTANT HEALTH
CHANGES AVAILABLE AT: www.nertamid.org/shoresh**

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PHILOSOPHY: Our goal at Shoresh is to instill in each child a sense of self-worth...to give each child a meaningful, happy and successful experience learning and interacting with peers and teachers. We strive to provide a nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment that reinforces a child's natural curiosity. Each child is a unique individual and is allowed to progress according to their own rate of development.

Young children learn through play and need the opportunity to explore their environment in a way that feels safe and secure to them. Our teachers provide age-appropriate learning activities which will guide the children through the important areas of language, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth.

TUITION/REGISTRATION: A non-refundable registration fee of \$250.00 will ensure your child's placement in the program. Tuition is billed on a monthly basis. In the event of a school closure due to COVID-19, families are responsible for the tuition due for the month of the closure. Billing will cease at this time, until such time when/if we re-open. Partial monthly refunds will not be offered. The Tuition Payment Agreement must be completed and returned. No refunds of tuition will be granted for holidays, vacations, emergency closures or brief illness. No refunds will be granted after March 1.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: If your child has been evaluated and/or diagnosed by:

Child Study Team

Learning Disabilities Specialist

Speech/Language Therapist/OT/PT

Pediatric Neurologist

A copy of the IEP/IFSP (if applicable) must be sent to the Shoresh Preschool office so that our staff can plan for your child's individual needs. We may recommend an assessment period of approximately 4-6 weeks to determine our ability to create a successful learning environment for your child. All information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

While we are committed to meeting the needs of each child, we cannot overlook the needs of the class as a whole. We reserve the right to remove a child from our program if at any time the behavioral/educational needs of an individual child far surpass our ability to meet the socio-emotional or educational goals of our school.



Removal from the program, should it become necessary, is based on evaluations by the teacher, the director, and at least one other professional. This would be a last resort after meeting with the parents and trying some alternate strategies in the classroom.

OUR PROGRAM: Shoresh Preschool is licensed by the State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families. Shoresh provides a variety of programs to meet the needs of our families. We will not be able to offer extended morning care hours (Breakfast Club) this year, due to the pandemic. Extended care for after-school is available from 3:00pm - 6:00 pm (4:00pm on Fridays). These are available for an additional fee.

Our preschool classes are as follows:

- Our Parent/Toddler program for children aged 15 - 23 months, is not available for this school year due to COVID-19 preventative measures.
- Younger Two's class (for children who will be two by January of the new year) and an Older Two's class (for children who will be two by September 1) both meet M, W, and F or T and Th or M-F from 9 - 1 or 9-3.
- Three's class meets M, W, F or M-F from 9 - 1 or 9 - 3.
- Four's class meets M-F from 9 - 3.

PHILOSOPHY OF CHILD DISCIPLINE AT SHORESH PRESCHOOL

It is the philosophy of Shoresh Preschool to help children grow emotionally as well as intellectually, to help children succeed, feel good about themselves, and be able to express their feelings in a positive and constructive manner.

It is our policy that discipline be positive at Shoresh. It is a way of helping children learn to identify socially acceptable behavior. Punishment teaches children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do.

Within Shoresh, limits and rules are clearly defined, consistent with and in accordance with the appropriate development and age of each child, and the program in general. We focus strongly on the reinforcement of acceptable behavior and the prevention of undesirable behavior by being consistently responsive to the needs of the children.

The ways of correcting inappropriate behavior at Shoresh consist of the following:

1. Teachers will begin by validating the child's feelings.
2. Change the focus of a child's behavior by redirection of activities.



3. Help the child to deal with a particular situation on an individualized basis.
4. Removal of a child from the area of activity for a couple of minutes, so that they may have some "think time" (NOT a time-out) and regain self-control (taking a walk, getting a drink of water, etc.).
5. Respond to and reinforce positive behavior, acknowledging or praising the child when behaving well to let them know that what they are doing is appropriate.
6. Staff will communicate with the Director and the parents when a child's behavior becomes too disruptive in the classroom. The teacher, parents and Director will meet to formulate a plan of action for the child.

** No child shall be subjected to corporal punishment, emotional neglect, abusive language, ridicule, or any behavior that shall intimidate, frighten, or endanger the child or their self-image.

CURRICULUM: Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of each child through developmentally appropriate activities and to encourage children to become self-confident, independent learners. Each age group has its own unique curriculum, which is reassessed on an ongoing basis. Age-appropriate activities in the areas of math, language arts, science, social studies, art, and music are provided in a creative classroom environment. The classroom design allows children to learn through play and exploration. The children are guided through sequential steps to new levels of accomplishment through block building, dramatic play, use of manipulatives, and fine and gross motor activities. We ensure that the children experience a balance in scheduling which includes group activities, independent play, gross and fine motor activities, and quiet time.

The following list represents a sampling of what your child will be learning in different curricular areas:

- Literacy - vocabulary, letters, language, words, books, reading readiness skills, including comprehension and inference-making
- Math - numbers, patterns, shapes, spatial awareness, measurement, graphing, sorting
- Science - physical properties of objects, experimentation, nature, living things, caring for the environment. Our garden provides many wonderful learning experiences for the children.
- Social Studies - how people live and get along with others
- Arts - painting, drawing, dramatic play, dance, music
- Process Skills - exploring, observing, problem solving, communicating, organizing



The teachers will also take into consideration the unique interests of the children and may plan lessons and activities around those interests.

JEWISH HERITAGE: Our multi-cultural program is integrated into the curriculum. We hope to instill in each child a sense of Jewish history, a love of Jewish heritage, and create many Jewish memories. We celebrate Shabbat every week, recite the blessings before snack, and learn about the holidays through cooking, art projects, songs, and stories. We meet weekly with either Rabbi Marc or Cantor Meri to celebrate Shabbat as a school, during which the children are exposed to the rituals of Shabbat (candle lighting, blessing over the kiddush cup and blessing over the challah).

SHABBAT: Friday mornings are special at Shores, but will be structured differently this year. Due to COVID-19 preventative measures, our classes will not be able to join together to celebrate Shabbat. Either Rabbi Marc or Cantor Meri will lead us individually as classes or via zoom in song, dance, and Shabbat blessings. The children also learn about any upcoming holidays.

Tzedakah ("doing the right thing") is an important part of our program. Sharing and caring for others who are less fortunate is a valuable learning experience for children. Should the situation with the current health crisis improve, we will ask that you allow your children to feel the warmth of giving by bringing in coins to put in the class tzedakah can every Friday. Additionally, the children will create their very own tzedakah box in January which will be kept at home for coin collection until spring. At the end of the year all of the money collected from both home and school is sent to a variety of charitable organizations which the children help to select.

MUSIC: Shores has a certified music teacher on staff who sees the children every week. She exposes them to a variety of traditional songs, holiday songs, and creative movement experiences.

SECULAR HOLIDAYS: At Shores we do not celebrate Halloween or St. Valentine's Day. We ask that you please refrain from sending your child to school in costume on Halloween and please, no Valentine's Day cards. Costumes are encouraged for the holiday of Purim, however!

BIRTHDAYS: We love celebrating birthday celebrations in school but they are optional. If you elect to celebrate in school, please think healthy and safely. Individually wrapped treats for the class to share are recommended and appreciated.



Birthday party invitations may be given out in school **only if the entire class is invited**; otherwise we ask that you send the invitations by mail to avoid any hurt feelings.

Sorry but due to COVID-19 preventative measures **NO HOMEMADE FOODS PLEASE!**

SNACK/LUNCH: Your child should bring a snack and lunch with a reusable bottle/thermos of water each day. Please choose finger foods for snack time - nothing that requires heating or utensils. In the event that your child does not have their own snack, we will give them one of our snacks (pretzels, crackers)

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO INFORM YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER OF ANY POSSIBLE FOOD ALLERGIES.

Any pre-packaged food brought into school must be packaged with a clearly legible ingredient label so that we can screen for potential allergens. Again, please think healthy.

Due to new health and safety standards, do your best to provide disposable containers and utensils to limit the handling of food items.

FOOD ALLERGIES: We are concerned about the health of your child. The number of children with severe food allergies seems to grow each year. Please be sure to let us know if your child has any allergies. **We want to provide a safe environment for your child and to that end we will remain a Peanut/Tree Nut Sensitive school (no peanut/tree nut products allowed). Please read labels carefully, as sometimes there are traces of peanuts/tree nuts in foods like cookies or cereal bars.** If your child has a food allergy there will be a specific allergy form that you will need to complete. Additionally, as per state law, medication can only be administered to a child if there is a written, dated, and signed request by a licensed physician.

BATHROOM POLICY: Children who are in our three and four-year-old program will be taken to the bathroom several times during the day and individually as needed. Teachers will assist students with snaps, buttons, and clothing items. It is our policy not to "wipe" children when they use the bathroom in school. However, we will certainly assist the children verbally when necessary.

TOILET TRAINING: Please inform the teacher if you are in the process of toilet training your child. It will be handled in a calm and patient manner. Children will not be required to use the facilities, but will be encouraged to try at your request. No child will ever be punished for having an accident. Children in our program who attend wearing diapers or pull-ups will be changed as necessary.



CLOTHING: Clothing should be selected for its durability, comfort, and convenience in play. **Clothing should ALL BE LABELED.** Clothing that encourages self-help is important. Clothing that is easily managed builds self-esteem. Clothing should be simple. Shirts and pants are best for floor play. Overalls might present a problem with toileting because of the straps. Sneakers with Velcro straps are preferable to open sandals or clogs in warm weather. No open back shoes at all.

**EACH ARTICLE OF CLOTHING BELONGING TO YOUR CHILD MUST
BE LABELED WITH THEIR FULL NAME.**

Each child should bring their **LABELED** school bag each day.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS: Each child is required by the State and local health departments to submit a completed universal health care form PROVIDED IN YOUR FALL PACKET, as well as a record of the proper immunizations before entering school in September. This form, entitled UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE FORM is required by the Township of Bloomfield Health Department. Your pediatrician's healthcare form is not acceptable but may be provided until you can have the universal form provided filled out, signed and returned. Please call the office to let us know if your child will be absent from school.

**PLEASE REFER TO OUR GUIDELINES AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS
REGARDING IMPORTANT HEALTH GUIDELINES at
www.nertamid.org/shoresh**

TRANSPORTATION: Drop-off AND pick-up will be conducted only through the car-line procedures outlined in our GUIDELINES AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS.

CLASS TRIPS: TBD

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL: Teachers will sign your children in and out each day.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN: Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. We will use the name/s provided on the white emergency card you filled out as part of the school packet.

As per State Policy 10:122-6.5 Policy on the release of children, if the authorized individual(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the school's closing and staff



members have attempted to contact those individuals authorized by the parents and an hour has passed, the preschool will call the Division's 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent or person authorized by the child's parent is able to pick up the child.

Important note: Should a staff member determine that a parent (or authorized person) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the same procedure as above would apply.

POLICY ON THE USE OF TVs, COMPUTERS, AND iPADS: The staff at Shoresh believe strongly in play as a learning tool. For this reason, Shoresh does not use "screen time" on any regular basis. iPads or phones may be used occasionally to research a question that arises during classroom discussion or to take photos of the children and their work. Should electronics be used in the daily curriculum at some point in the future, children will be engaged for no longer than 20 minutes consecutively and teachers will track each child's use of the equipment. All use of this equipment will be under the guidance and supervision of a teacher. There may be shown, at the director's discretion, a short educational video to supplement, our curriculum once or twice throughout the school year.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: This social media policy applies to parents and other guardians, members of staff, students, committee members, and volunteers at Shoresh Preschool. This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies, and is adhered to per your signed permission:

- Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Temple web site, or Shoresh PR)
- Discussion forums
- Media sharing services (i.e. YouTube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. We therefore require that:

- No photographs taken within the preschool setting or at a preschool special event or outing with the children are to be posted for public viewing, except for those of your own child/ren. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. This excludes pictures taken by staff for which we have a signed release.



- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding the preschool children, staff, or committee business (except appropriate use of marketing for fund raising events) or that could be construed to have any impact on the preschool's reputation or that would likely offend any member of staff or parent attending the preschool.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Under normal circumstances, we welcome your involvement in our program! Due to COVID-preventative measure we will unfortunately not be permitting any parents to enter the building. You can still become a class parent or join the Shoresh Preschool Parent Committee, which is made up of parent representatives from each class and each age group. The Committee meets with the director and the Temple's Vice-President for Early Childhood Education throughout the school year to help formulate school policies, design new programs, and to keep the lines of communication open. Your children are the beneficiaries of a strong partnership between home and school, and so we strongly encourage that connection. Throughout the year we hope to provide, via zoom, opportunities for parents and families to participate in school functions, social events, and celebrations.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION: It is the policy of Shoresh Preschool to maintain open lines of communication with our families. Important announcements, reminders, alerts, as well as routine communications are generally sent home through a combination of emails, text messages, and/or printed flyers.

If your child is sick or we need to reach you quickly, we will call and/or text the phone number you listed as the main number on your child's registration. If there is no answer, we will then try any additional numbers you listed. In the event of an emergency, we will call the numbers on your emergency contact card until we reach someone.

CONFERENCES: You will have the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher during one or two scheduled zoom conferences – early winter and, if you request it, again in late spring. If you have any questions or problems before those times, please do not hesitate to speak to the director or to your child's teacher. Open communication is the key to solving most problems.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS: In the event of inclement weather or when it is considered hazardous to open school, you will be notified by text message or by a phone call. Additionally, Shoresh will not be in session when the Bloomfield schools are closed because of snow or another emergency. When this occurs, we will notify you by text message or by a phone call.