

2023 - 2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK



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www.shirami.org

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ELC Adminstrative Staff

Nina Orr, Director
Cheryl Primola, Administrative Assistant

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Professional Leadership

Charles Briskin, Rabbi	Julie Berlin, Cantor
Rabbi Eric Goldberg, Religious School Director	Ferne Levy, Youth Director
Phil Nordlinger, Executive Director	Stephanie Kravatz, President

School Hours

7:00am	Infant Center Opens
7:00—9:15am	Before Care (prior registration required)
9:00am	Kindergarten Begins
9:15am	Bright Beginnings to PreK Begins
12:00pm	Bright Beginnings and 2's Dismissal (no lunch)
12:15pm	Half Day Dismissal for 3's and PreK
1:00pm	Bright Beginnings and 2's Dismissal after lunch
1:00pm	PlayCare Begins for Bright Beginnings & 2's
2:15pm	Full Day Dismissal 3's and PreK
3:00pm	Kindergarten Dismissal
2:15—5:30pm	After School PlayCare Program (prior registration required)
5:30	Infant Center and PlayCare Closes

Shir Ami ELC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at Shir Ami ELC. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

From The Director:



Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Shir Ami and as Director of the Early Learning Center, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our school family.

This is an exciting time in the life of young children. The world around them provides a vast array of new learning experiences. Together, we are all active participants in this process. The staff and administration of Shir Ami Early Learning Center believe that quality education is a collaborative effort between the family and the school. We pride ourselves in the fact that we have a close relationship with our school parents. This relationship not only gives us a better understanding of the children but it clearly sends a message to you that this is a safe and fun place to be.

This Family Handbook is your introduction to our school setting. It is a compilation of school information, guidelines, policies and protocols that help manage the day-to-day operation of our program. Our actions and requests are geared toward providing the best possible program for the children while complying with state regulations and our high standards. As you will see, we have taken our responsibility to keep your children safe and healthy very seriously. We are here to partner with you. We are hoping to have trust and a commitment between us. We want you to trust us with your children and that we are doing the right things and are committed to adhering to the protocols. In return, we trust that you will be committed to being open and honest with us and adhere to the protocols as well.

I invite you to join me and this staff in becoming active participants in the education of your child. As a family, we will surely accomplish our most important shared goal: to convey to each child a love of learning, both secular and Judaic.

Thank you for choosing Shir Ami Early Learning Center. We look forward to a wonderful year.

Sincerely,
Nina Orr, Director



Preschool Committee

Providing our children a wonderful education with a Jewish theme is one of the greatest gifts we can give them. We are fortunate that Shir Ami gives our children this opportunity. The Preschool Committee is proud to work together with the Shir Ami Preschool staff to insure that our children and their families enjoy this experience.

The Preschool Committee is composed of parents that wish to be part of their child's education and school. Parents can be involved in various events related to three central goals:

- * Enhance the preschool program through various fundraising activities
- * Conduct family programs
- * Act as a liaison between the Early Learning Center and the congregation

The committee is very excited about the numerous activities scheduled for this year and is looking forward to adding some new programs based on your involvement. The following is a brief list of some of these activities which have been favorites in the past: challah, latke sales, Hanukkah and Sweetheart dances, in addition to everyone's favorite - the hot lunch program. None of this can happen without you! PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING FOR JUST 1 THING!

Thank you in advance!

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a fun and safe environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of each child. Our nurturing and experienced staff convey to each child a strong feeling of self-worth, a love of learning and an appreciation of our Jewish heritage.

Shir Ami Early Learning Center is licensed by the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education, Department of Human Services, and a Keystone S.T.A.R.S participant.

Our Goals

- To encourage and guide the growth of social skills with peers and adults.
- To help the child develop at his/her own pace.
- To help the child develop a positive self-image by communicating our respect for each child's uniqueness.
- To provide an environment which will serve as a foundation of concrete experiences on his/her own level.
- To teach responsibility and respect for the world around us.

Shir Ami's Curriculum Overview

Shir Ami's school curriculum is thematic in nature with a strong emphasis on the PA. Early Learning Standards. A thematic approach to the curriculum provides us with the opportunity to expose the children to appropriate developmental skills. Through hands on Experiential Learning, children are learning in a way that is meaningful and fun.

Our Judaic Curriculum

Our Judaic curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of the children in all our programs. The children will experience wonderful stories related to the holidays. They will also be introduced to Jewish holidays, Hebrew words, Jewish music, and cultural experiences. Our teachers will integrate this segment of the curriculum into their monthly themes and lesson plans.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Our curriculum seeks to provide quality age and developmentally appropriate programming that addresses the needs of the whole child. Our Preschool & Kindergarten aim to offer opportunities for children to grow and develop in the areas listed below:

SENSORY AWARENESS

Using eyes, ears, hands, nose and mouth to explore the world

GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Using large muscles (arms and legs)

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Using small muscles (fingers and toes)

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Showing wants, needs, and ideas with words, sounds and actions.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Understanding and associating words with sights and sounds

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Understanding basic ideas

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Learning to think and solve new problems

CREATIVE SKILLS

Using imagination

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Getting to know oneself and others

BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT

Learning to act and react

SELF HELP

Taking care of oneself

Security

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, the doors to our Temple building are kept locked at all times. We have a buzzer/audio system that allows us to speak to people at the doors without opening them. Under normal circumstances, each family receives a key fob which serves as a source of identification and allows entry into the building. This year, however, the key fob system will be deactivated. The windows in the front of the school entrance and the classrooms have a reflective film, preventing anyone from seeing in. All of our classrooms have coded door locks to prevent anyone from entering the classroom from the hallway or the playground. There is also a security door between the synagogue and the preschool which can only be opened by key code assigned only to staff members. You can help enhance our security in the following ways:

- * Never open the door for anyone you do not know
- * Do not allow your children to push the green button when exiting
- * Alert the office of strangers or strange items in the building

Orientation

The week before school, children and parents will be invited to a Meet & Greet. Parents and children will have the opportunity to meet their teachers. Your child's teacher will contact you during the month of August to introduce him/herself and answer any specific questions about your child.



Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Here at Shir Ami Early Learning Center, we want to make your child's school experience a safe and happy one. In accordance with the Pennsylvania child safety seat law, all children under the age of 8 must be in a child safety/booster seat. We will not release a child unless a safety seat is provided.

For Bright Beginnings through PK - If you wish to walk your child into school, and you arrive prior to 9:15am, please wait outside the lobby area until "carline" is called before sending your child down to his/her classroom.

Carline Procedures

Infants: Please park your car and walk your child into the building

Kindergarten, Bright Beginnings and 2's:

For Arrival: Kindergarten carline begins at 9am and those children will be brought into the building first. Bright Beginnings and 2's carline begins at 9:15am, please do not line up prior to the assigned time.

When entering the parking lot proceed towards the rear of the building. Turn into the Temple office circle. Pull your car up to the end of the circle and wait there for the teachers to get your child out of the car. During the first week or two of school, teachers/assistants will take their own class of children from the cars and walk them into the building. After this period, teachers/assistants can take any child from the cars into the building. We have found over the years that this system works very well for the efficiency of the car line and safety of your children.

Bright Beginnings/2's Dismissal: Follow the same procedure. The children will be brought out to your car. **Kindergarten** dismissal will follow 3's and Pre-K procedures.

3 year old and Pre-K classes:

For Arrival: When entering the parking lot proceed towards the rear of the building until you reach the Preschool Lobby doors where the carline will form. Wait in your car for the teachers/assistants to get your child out of the car. During the first few days of school, teachers and assistants are at carline. The teachers take children from their own class out of the cars. After this initial period, most staff remain in their classrooms to greet the children as they arrive to class while assigned staff are outside getting the children from the cars, regardless of whose class they are in. Staff are positioned along the way to guide them and ensure their safety of children from the cars to their classes.

3's, Pre-K and Kindergarten Dismissal: Follow the same procedure, lining up at the Preschool lobby doors.

For all Families Using the Carline

1. We will be outside as promptly as possible. If you are in a rush, please park your car and walk your child into his/her class. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR UNATTENDED IN CARLINE TO WALK YOUR CHILD IN.**
2. For safety's sake, please **do not get out of your car at arrival and dismissal time**. Also, do not allow your children to get out of the car and run around unsupervised.
3. We will try to get everyone out of and into the cars as quickly as possible during arrival and dismissal, but please for the safety of everyone, remain in line!! **PLEASE DO NOT PULL AROUND CARS AHEAD OF YOU.**
4. Any pertinent carpool information should be given to your child's teacher, in writing, on the first day of school.
5. Please follow the correct direction of the carline. If you are parking in the lot, **DO NOT GO AGAINST THE ONE WAY ARROWS.**

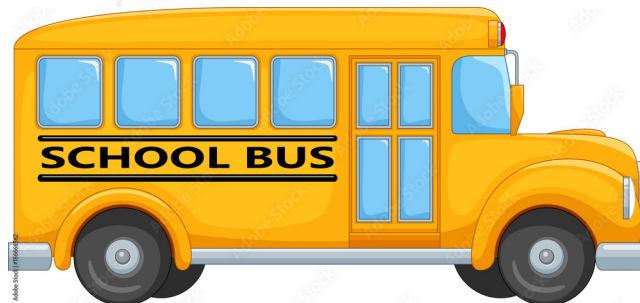
School Departure

Please inform your child's teacher and the office of individuals allowed to pick up your child from school. We must have a note or a phone call from the parent of any child leaving the building with anyone other than the regular pick-up person. If the staff member is unfamiliar with the person picking up your child, we will ask for picture identification. **WE WILL NOT RELEASE ANY CHILD TO AN UNFAMILIAR PERSON UNLESS WE HAVE A NOTE OR PHONE CALL.**



Rules for Kindergarten Bussing

Children must get off the bus at their assigned stop. A child may get off at another stop with a note from both parents that must be given to the preschool office. We, in turn, need to clear it with the transportation office of the school district. This policy is for the welfare of your children and also to avoid overcrowding on the buses. The policy of the school districts is that **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** can children be transported from another school district.



School Bus Conduct

- observe the same conduct as in the classroom
- be courteous
- use indoor voice on the bus
- cooperate with the driver
- bus driver is authorized to assign seats

Violations of school bus conduct are handled by the Director.

School Closing & Early Dismissal Policy

Shir Ami Early Learning Center uses the Council Rock School District **AS A GUIDE** for closures and early dismissals. Please check for closings by looking for a an email or text from the ELC Director or Shir Ami:

If Shir Ami ELC has a 2 hour delay:

*Infant Center - Opens at 9:00

*Bright Beginnings & 2's – ALL classes will be from 11:15-1:00 (regardless of whether your child is in the 12pm or 1pm class)

*All 3's and Pre-K classes - 11:15-2:15 (regardless of whether your child is in the morning or split program.

*Kindergarten - 11:00-3:00

PLAYCARE: Morning PlayCare will begin at 9:00am.

Kindergarten bussing is determined by your home school district. If your district has a 2 hour delay, but Shir Ami has a regular schedule, you will get bussing **2 hours later than your regular time**. If your district is closed, but Shir Ami isn't, you will not get any bussing. **If your district is on a regular schedule and Shir Ami has a 2 hour delay, you must provide your own transportation to Shir Ami**, as there will be no one from kindergarten to receive your child at 9am.

Your child would get pm bussing home.

School Health Policy

Your child's health is very important to all of us. As required by the State, **ALL HEALTH AND EMERGENCY FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE PRIOR TO THE START OF SCHOOL.** All children must be fully vaccinated based on Pennsylvania standards for your child's age. Shir Ami ELC does not accept claims of religious or personal exemption for required immunizations. Regular attendance is an important factor in your child's adjustment to school. There are, however, times when health, travel or special family circumstances interfere. If these absences are anticipated, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible.

In any school setting, transmission of illness is a very common occurrence. Therefore, in our effort to control the situation, Shir Ami has established the following illness policy:

Please keep your child(ren) home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms

- * sore throat * chills * diarrhea * muscle pain * nausea/vomiting
- * shortness of breath * loss of taste or smell * congestion/runny nose
- * undiagnosed rash * fever (100.4 degrees or higher) * headache
- * communicable conditions

If your child has a cold, fever or Covid like symptoms please stay home.

We will call you to take your child home from school if we determine that the:

- * child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher.
- * illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the class activities.
- * illness makes the child have a greater need for care than the staff can manage without compromise to the other children.
- * illness is likely to expose others to a communicable disease.

Please report any contagious diseases. It is helpful for parents and teachers alike to be informed about possible exposure, so that they may be alerted to early symptoms.

Medication



All medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) to be administered by our staff must be in its original container, with its proper measuring device, accompanied by written instructions by either a parent or physician and a note from the parent with permission and administrative directions. Please see the Office for the proper permission form. Medication will not be administered as a prevention against fever.

Emergency Medical Care



Should your child need emergency medical care, 911 will be called immediately. You will be called immediately following. We will do everything to make your child comfortable in the interim as learned in our first aid training class. If your child needs to be transported to the hospital emergency room before your arrival, the Preschool Director will accompany your child in the emergency vehicle. The office will inform you as to which hospital to go to upon your arrival.

Minor Accidental Injury and Illness



In case of a minor accident, first aid will be given by a staff member. An accident report form describing the circumstances of the accident, injuries incurred, and first aid given will be completed and filed in your child's folder. In case of illness, parent will be notified immediately. Care will be given by a staff member until child is picked up. Injuries and illness will be noted on the classroom logs to keep track of trends. Preventative measures will be made based on what we find. This will be done for both children and staff.

Discipline

Discipline techniques are established with the knowledge that children need clear limits that are set in ways that DO NOT negatively influence self-esteem and are always developmentally appropriate. In the case of persistent or serious behavior problems, parents and teachers will discuss ways the home and school may work together. In the unusual event that a serious behavioral problem interferes with the functioning of the class, or the health and safety of children and teachers are at risk, Shir Ami reserves the right to dismiss the child from the Early Learning Center.

Communication

We believe that communication between school and you, the parent, is essential so that you will always know what is happening in your child's life here at Shir Ami. You will be receiving such things as:

- * a monthly calendar which gives you an accounting of the monthly themes and curriculum and any special requests by the teacher.
- * weekly emails from the ELC Director.
- * our Facebook page posts many pictures of the children and their fun activities. Please sign the photo waiver for your child's picture to be posted.
- * school calendar with closing dates, holidays, vacations and events for the whole year is attached to the back of this manual and will also be mailed to you.
- * Procare communication app to communicate with teachers.

Parent/teacher communication is an important part of a successful early learning program. If a question arises, please feel free to call the office. In order to properly address any concerns you might have, we request that you not only give us a call, but please put it in writing as well.

In partnering with our families, we request that you please share with the Director a copy of your child's IEP, IFSP, written plans, and/or special needs assessments completed by professionals. These will be shared with classroom teachers. We will gladly meet with you and your child's therapists/specialists to further discuss individualized instruction to better meet your child's needs. We also recommend that you include your child's teacher, our Resource teacher, and our Director to participate in all IEP/IFSP meetings.

Shir Ami does not allow solicitation of parents on its premises other than through approved fundraisers.

Conferences



We reserve a day before school begins as an information sharing session (Meet and Greet). In addition, we have conferences in January. This is extremely important and gives us an opportunity to explain your child's progress and development throughout the year. If at any time during the year you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, arrangements can be made through the office.

Screening

Shir Ami ELC uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as the approved screening tool. Within 45 days of the start of school, parents and teachers complete an ASQ to determine whether there may be questions or concerns about a child's development. Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities. Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include assessments, observational data, and child work sample collected on an ongoing basis.

The information from above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about a child's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them.
- Improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment and the environment and improving the program.
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones throughout the year.
- To indicate possible areas that raise concerns for educators and parents and help to develop an action plan to address those concerns.
- To assist the teacher in arranging for developmental screenings and referrals for diagnostic assessments when needed.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or assessments, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestion for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents or by the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Resource Teacher for support and strategies.
- A request is made to Bucks County Early Intervention or the Bucks County Intermediate Unit.

Transitioning to Another Educational Setting or Age Level

Whenever a child who is enrolled at Shir Ami ELC leaves to begin a new journey in another educational setting, we make every effort to make this transition as seamless as possible for both parents and children. Many times their new school requests records from their previous learning setting. With parent written permission, we will provide new schools with all records that they will need including progress reports, conference forms, health information, etc. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance in transferring this information.

In keeping with continuity of care, children transition to the next age level every September at the start of a new school year. In June of the prior school year, children are exposed to books, visits to new classrooms, and activities with new teachers to prepare and expose them to the next age level.

Biting

We recognize that younger children may go through a phase of biting. This is a very normal, although undesirable, developmental process. If a child bites, our staff will not punish or harshly discipline the child. We will simply redirect the child to a different activity and tell them, "no biting." If your child is bitten or bites another child, you will be notified. Our staff is instructed not to discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered confidential and cannot be disclosed.



Social Media

Facebook....Twitter..Instagram.. That's just some of the social media that we now use to share our pictures and stories with the world. However, it also presents some challenges. When posting pictures or stories, please be respectful of the privacy of others. Not all parents may want their child's picture (even in a group photo) or even a cute anecdote of what happened in class that references their child, posted.

Our Preschool has its own Facebook page. It is a wonderful way for you to see pictures of all our programs and receive important messages. You can request to be our friend at "Shir Ami Elc". **No one may post pictures of other preschool children on their wall or tag children in any pictures.** This is for the safety of all the children who attend our program. Not every parent gives permission to be affiliated with Facebook and this could pose a legal issue for you.

Custody

If there are any COURT ORDERED custody issues that involve your child during the time s/he is in our care, please make sure we have a CERTIFIED copy of the court order. We can abide by them **only** if we have a copy on file. This applies to a Protection from Abuse Order as well. Unless stated otherwise by a court order, both parents have the same rights to access his/her child and records.

Snack



All children will be served a daily snack consisting from the following:

graham crackers, crackers, Goldfish, vanilla wafers, pretzels, animal crackers, Cheez-its, fruit bars, apples, cheese sticks, etc., and water.

Please notify us, IN WRITING, of any allergies your child may have. On Fridays, the children have challah as part of their Shabbat observance.

Lunch

Children staying for lunch time at school must bring a lunch from home. Lunches may be brought in a lunchbox. Thermoses, containers and utensils are acceptable to bring and will go home at the end of each day. Lunches will be refrigerated. Children may bring water bottles that will be sent home each day so they can be properly washed and returned the next day. Your child's lunch must have his/her full name printed clearly on the box/bag.

When packing lunch, please keep in mind that Shir Ami is a "Kosher Style" facility. No pork products or shellfish may be brought into the building. No milk and meat products may be eaten together within the same meal. This means that yogurt or cheese may not be eaten with a turkey sandwich.

Hot lunch Coordinator Needed

We would love to offer hot lunches this year but are in need of a volunteer to coordinate with Meglios Pizza and find help to do the lunch sides shopping.

All staff and children will wash their hands before and after all meals. Staff will wear gloves when handling food or assisting children with opening of packages.



Celebrations

Your Child's Birthday



Your child's birthday is his/her 'most special day.' You may provide a special snack for that day. The snack must be store bought. Please check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies the children in the class may have. Please keep in mind that we will not distribute your child's birthday invitations or thank you notes in class unless the entire class is included.



Shabbat And Shabbat Parents

Each class will celebrate Shabbat on Friday both in the Sanctuary with the rest of the school. Our Shabbat program includes candle lighting, songs, Shabbat blessings, and challah. Children in our 3 year old program and older will have the opportunity to be a Shabbat Star. On this very special day, s/he will help to prepare the Shabbat table, bring a special treat, and help lead in the Shabbat blessings. We encourage you to read your child's favorite story to the class. If you wish to send in a special Shabbat treat, it must be store bought. Your Shabbat date will be given to you at the beginning of the school year.

Spanish



Children in our Pre-K and Kindergarten classes will participate in a hands-on Spanish program designed to incorporate math, science, and reading readiness while learning a new language.

Music Class



Music is always a favorite with the children. We have a fun-filled music experience for our children with a wonderful music specialist. Curriculum includes rhythms, creative movement, songs, and instruments.

Gym Programming



Children in our 3 year old, PreK, & K programs will participate in a creative gym program. Gym class is a fun, interactive program to develop fundamental skills, such as: throwing, catching, jumping, and other hand-eye coordination activities. Noodles, bean bags, balls and hula hoops are used as well as obstacle courses to encourage coordination, balance and gross motor skills.

Toileting

The initiation of toileting and hygiene needs to originate from home, but we certainly want to partner with you in the process. Please dress your child in clothing that s/he can manage independently. Flushable wipes should be sent in to help with personal hygiene. Please make sure you send in several changes of clothing in your child's school bag in case accidents occur.



Clothing



Young children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. Their school clothing should allow comfortable freedom of movement without undue concern over spills and stains. Please do not send your child to school in clothes that cannot get messy. Accidents with art materials and snack happen. Also try to avoid dressing your child in complicated clothing (belts, straps, etc.) to help foster a feeling of independence.

Each child should have a long sleeved smock to wear for painting and messy activities. **Children should also have 2 complete changes of clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, pants) to be kept in school in case of emergency.** You will be asked to update the clothing seasonally. PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL.

Confidentiality

In order to protect the rights of privacy of all of the children in our care, all information and records concerning your child(ren) will be kept confidential. Similarly, no information about any other child in our care will be released to you. Information requested by another party regarding your child will only be provided with your written permission and consent.

PlayCare Before & After School Program

Hours: 7:00am - 9:15am

1:00pm - 5:30pm (Bright Beginnings & 2's)

2:15pm - 5:30pm (3's & PreK)

3:00pm - 5:30pm (K)



Your child will be engaged in theme based, age appropriate activities. The children will have structured fun creating, dancing, moving, eating and more... all while you are at work! Younger children will get their naps. Homework club is always available for our Kindergarteners! Children attending before or after care will do so with other children in their age group.



The program ends promptly at 5:30pm. Please be respectful in picking up your child. **There will be a \$10.00 charge (payable directly to the staff member) at time of pick-up for every 15 minutes you are late picking up your child.** There are no exceptions.

Please note that PlayCare is an extension of the regular day. If your child does not attend school for the day, do not bring him/her in after school.

After School Activities

KARATE BY ACTION KARATE

3 Year Old & Pre-K Classes:

Thursdays

14 weeks

2:15 - 3:15



SOCCER BY SOCCER SHOTS

3 Year Old & PreK Classes:

Tuesdays

14 weeks

2:15 - 3:00



YOGA FITNESS & FUN BY Yogamazia

3 Year Old & Pre-K Classes

Wednesdays

14 weeks

2:15 - 3:15



Inclusion Policy

We believe that inclusion programs provide the best educational settings for all children and that each child contributes his/her own personal value to our program. Children benefit from an environment that promotes diversity and respect for differences. All children learn best when they participate with others who have different learning goals and abilities.

We welcome children with special needs into our program and make sure that they are fully integrated members of the classroom in which they are enrolled. To make certain that our classroom environment is appropriate for you child, we ask that you set up an appointment with the Director and Resource Specialist to discuss your child and our ability to meet his/her needs. We also ask that you provide us with information from other professionals involved with your child such as an Early Intervention professional, an IU teacher or therapist. To maintain a high quality of care and education for all enrolled children, we ask that the family provide a special aide (TSS) for a child that requires frequent and prolonged one-on-one guidance or care from an adult.

In general, we believe that therapists (speech, behavioral, etc.) should work with children within the child's regular classroom setting and within the child's normal classroom routines. Our staff is eager to collaborate with consultants/therapists on classroom curriculum and activities. When therapy must take place outside the classroom, we make every effort to reserve an appropriate space in our building for your child's therapeutic sessions.

Suspension / Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to ask that a child be removed from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

WHEN A CHILD IS HAVING A PROBLEM IN THE CLASSROOM

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature of other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation.
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

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 an 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 school.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion policy.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the school.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payment.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Verbal abuse to staff.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical abuse to staff or other children.
- Unable to toilet train in our three year old program.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED IF CHILD'S PARENTS:

- Made a complaint to DHS regarding a school's alleged violation of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the school.
- Questioned the school regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

Non-Violence Policy



One of our primary goals in our school is to teach our children to share, cooperate, and to live in this world peacefully. Research has proven that children who are exposed to violence on television gradually accept violence as a means of problem solving. Play toys resembling weapons are not permitted at Shir Ami. Because we feel so committed to this philosophy, we ask your cooperation by not sending in any toys that would lend themselves to aggressive play behavior for "Show & Share" or at any other time during the year. Any threats made by parents to the safety and well being of our staff, children and parents of enrolled children will not be tolerated.

Supervision Policy

Shir Ami Early Learning Center ensures to provide children with indoor and outdoor learning environments that are positively and actively supervised in order to maintain their safety, individual needs, and their curiosity to learn and explore. We believe that supervision is the most important element in the safe provision of child care.

The following is a list of the positive and active supervision strategies that the educators of Shir Ami ELC implement on a daily basis (indoors/outdoors) during the supervision of young children in their care:

- To ensure that the minimum staff to child ratio as outlined by the Dept of Human Services, is maintained at all times.
- To be in close proximity to children's play and continuously monitor, scan, and count all children in care.
- To communicate to each other before changes in supervision occur.
- To track enrollment and attendance on an on-going basis.
- To do a head count before and after transitions.
- To be aware of unsafe play and stepping in to redirect play towards a safer, positive direction.
- To know the capabilities and limits of each child in their care.
- To use direct supervision with those children that require extra support for safety.
- To use clear, consistent, and simple safety rules that the children can understand and follow.
- To eliminate any potential hazards and to create "off limit" zones for areas that are deemed unsafe.
- To position oneself strategically in order to be a presence and also in close proximity to step in quickly.
- To position oneself in a manner that allows one to be able to scan and move around the environment easily while being aware of the group as a whole and to anticipate potential trouble spots.
- To use positive guidance methods and redirection in order to make the environment successful and inclusive for each child.
- To arrange the environment so that one can see all areas of the environment.
- To be available to children to facilitate negotiation, problem solving, turn taking and other conflict resolution techniques.
- To be available to support children's learning by answering questions, modeling, positively commenting and facilitating questions back about what the children are doing.
- To be able to assist children if they need to leave the environment to use the bathroom while maintaining the appropriate staff to child ratio and the child's privacy.
- To maintain scanning position when talking with children, families, and fellow educators.
- To never leave children unattended at any time, even in emergency situations.
- To plan and prepare activities and experiences at a time when children have appropriate supervision and will not be left unattended to do so.

CHIP

What is CHIP?-CHIP covers all uninsured children and teens in PA. It's short for the Children's Health Insurance Program-PA's program to provide health insurance to all uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance. There are lots of reasons kids might not have health insurance-maybe their parents lost a job, don't have health insurance at work or maybe it just costs too much. Whatever the reason, CHIP might be able to help.

So is my child really eligible for CHIP?- All uninsured PA children and teens who are not eligible for Medical Assistance have access to affordable, comprehensive health-care coverage. And no family makes too much money for CHIP. CHIP is there for your kids with quality, comprehensive health insurance coverage for routine doctor visits, prescriptions, dental, eye care, prescriptions and much more.

I thought CHIP was only for low-income families?-Not true! CHIP covers all uninsured kids and teens up to age 19 who are not eligible for Medical Assistance. No family makes too much money for CHIP because there is no income limit.

What is the cost for CHIP coverage? For most families, it's free. Families with incomes above the free CHIP limits will pay low monthly premiums and co-pays for some services.

Who offers CHIP insurance?-CHIP is provided by private health insurance companies that are licensed and are regulated by the PA Insurance Department. Coverage is excellent, and comes from major insurance companies with large networks of physicians, specialists and care facilities near you, so you may be able to enroll in CHIP without even changing doctors.

How long is my child covered once they are enrolled in CHIP?-Once enrolled, children are guaranteed 12 months of CHIP coverage unless they no longer meet the basic eligibility requirements. Families renew their coverage every year in order for coverage to continue.

My child has a pre-existing condition. Will that affect our eligibility?-Pre-existing conditions are covered. There are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions in CHIP or Medical Assistance. However, if your child has a serious medical condition or disability, s/he may be considered for Medical Assistance.

Does CHIP have a waiting list?-No-there is no waiting list to enroll in CHIP.

Questions?-please visit the website-www.chipcoverspakids.com or call 1-800-986-kids

Tax Credits CHILD CARE AND FAMILIES

Child and Dependent Care Credit

The Child and Dependent Care Credit is a tax benefit that helps families pay for child care they need in order to work or to look for work.

Ten things to Know About the Child & Dependent Care Credit

If you paid someone to care for your child, spouse, or dependent last year, you may be able to claim the Child & Dependent Care Credit on your federal income tax return. Below are 10 things the IRS wants you to know about claiming a credit for child and dependent care expenses.

1. The care must have been provided for one or more qualifying persons. A qualifying person is your dependent child age 12 or younger when the care was provided. You must identify each qualifying person on your tax return.
2. The care must have been provided so you—and your spouse if you are married filing jointly—could work or look for work.
3. You and your spouse if you file jointly—must have earned income from wages, salaries, tips, other taxable employee compensation or net earnings from self-employment. One spouse may be considered as having earned income if they were a full-time student or were physically or mentally unable to care for themselves.
4. The payments for care cannot be paid to your spouse, to the parent of your qualifying person, to someone you can claim as your dependent on your return, or to your child who will not be age 19 or older by the end of the year even if he or she is not your dependent. You must identify the care provider(s) on your tax return.
5. Your filing status must be single, married filing jointly, head of household or qualifying widow(er) with a dependent child.
6. The qualifying person must have lived with you for more than half of the year. There are exceptions for the birth or death of a qualifying, or a child of divorced or separated parents.
7. The credit can be up to 35% of your qualifying expenses, depending on your adjusted gross income.
8. You may use up to \$3,000 of expenses paid in a year for one qualifying individual or \$6,000 for two or more qualifying individuals to figure out the credit.
9. The qualifying expenses must be reduced by the amount of any dependent care benefits provided by your employer that you deduct or exclude from your income.
10. If you pay someone to come to your home and care for your dependent.

