



Parent Handbook

2018-2019

1190 Indian Hills Parkway - Marietta, GA 30068 - (770) 977-3384

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Etz Chaim Preschool

Vision Statement

Etz Chaim Preschool provides a nurturing educational environment for young children and their families, encouraging the incorporation of Jewish ideals and practices into their everyday lives.

Mission Statement

At Etz Chaim Preschool, we believe that learning should be meaningful and relevant while taking place in the natural environment. The incorporation of nature into our classrooms and the understanding of *Tikkun Olam*, taking care of our world, while being a *kehilla*, community, is an important component in our curriculum. Research shows that play is a key component in creating self -confident and competent individuals and we nurture the social, emotional, spiritual and academic development of our students while allowing physical activity and play to help drive the delivery of our curriculum. As part of our conservative synagogue, we incorporate Shabbat and holiday celebrations, as well as lessons reflecting the Torah, *mitzvot* and *tzedakah* into our daily routine. Understanding the needs of the whole child enables us to facilitate their readiness for school and for life.

Etz Chaim Preschool Philosophy

Etz Chaim Preschool believes that all children should be given the opportunity to learn in a child directed, developmentally appropriate environment, where learning takes place in real and natural environment. Opportunities for learning occur at all times throughout the day and we capitalize on those opportunities as often as possible. It is our policy to accept children who have either medical or learning needs that require special assistance. Every effort is made to include the child within the classroom environment and we work with the family as well as Cobb County Public Schools to help us meet the needs of all of our students.

Etz Chaim Preschool believes that children learn best while experiencing all aspects of the curriculum in a play-based, developmentally-appropriate classroom. Our teachers are trained to recognize these learning moments and guide your children to make the best of them.

Many parents have inquired about “what we do” with a child whose behavior is out-of-control, aggressive, or disruptive. As we believe that children learn best through experiences. We believe that teachers must lovingly guide and redirect the children to help them learn to cooperate with their peers and to have positive, educational experiences that will encourage and enhance their growth and development. We believe we can best accomplish this through a variety of techniques that include: offering children a variety of activities, group management techniques, redirecting behaviors, speaking with a child, and providing alternatives or choices for behavior. When more than one child is involved in an incident, we speak to all of the children involved so that we can understand the complete situation. We then discuss ways to better handle things and will provide suggestions for ways to navigate through this difficult time. We feel it is our responsibility to model appropriate use of language and actions. We will continuously provide for opportunities to teach the children age appropriate skills for conflict resolution. Removal from the group or “time out” will only be used when a child seems unable to control him/herself or needs a few minutes to collect him/herself. We rarely use the phrase “time out” but rather talk about needing a break. After the child calms, we will discuss why he/she was removed, model problem-solving strategies and return to the activity.

As we deal with certain behavioral issues at school, we know that there may be times that issues arise at home that may require a change in parenting strategy. The Director of Education has many years of experience working with children and guiding parents in ways to facilitate appropriate behavior and is available for individual meetings. In addition, the Education Office has several books on raising children, developing self-esteem in preschool-aged children, and various other parenting topics. Please feel free to borrow these books at any time.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Ages of Children served: 14 months – 5 years

Months of Operation: August-May (school year) and June-July (camp)

Days of Operation: Monday-Friday

Hours of Operation for Students in Our Core Preschool Program: 9:30 am – 1:30 pm

Hours of Operation for Students in our Extended Day Program: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm

Etz Chaim Preschool Policies

ACCIDENT/INJURY POLICY

All of our teachers and staff are yearly certified in CPR/First Aid. In the case of an injury during school, a staff member will administer first aid and/or CPR. In the case of an accidental injury requiring more than simple first aid, the parent or authorized adult will be notified immediately. If we are unable to contact you immediately, we will contact the next person listed in your emergency contact list. If medical attention is required, the staff will call emergency 911, who will transport your child to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta – Scottish Rite. Incident report forms are filled out for all accidents and a record is kept in your child's confidential folder.

ACTIVITY FEE

Each family will be charged a \$125 per child activity fee, which will be due before the beginning of school. This fee covers the following costs: Playball and other special programs, our Chesed Fund (providing meals to our families in good times and bad) and teacher appreciation gifts throughout the year.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Parents are required to complete all pre-admission forms before their child can be admitted to school:

- Application For Enrollment
- Tuition Agreement
- Current Immunization Form from your child's health care provider

Once the school year has begun, it is critical that parents keep these records up to date. It is your responsibility to supply and maintain accurate information, and to notify us of any change in your children's information (e.g., contact information, health and medical changes, custody changes, etc.).

All children must have an immunization record with a current expiration date. Failure to provide an up-to-date immunization record for your child will result in suspension from school. Approved immunization records must contain your child's name, birth date, name, address and phone number of a Physician or Health Department, "Certified By" signature, date of issue and the dates (month, date and year) in the vaccine history that the immunizations were administered. In addition, those students who are under the age of four must have a valid date of expiration and those students four and over must have an X in the "Complete For School Attendance" box or a valid expiration date. These requirements are taken directly from Policy Guide 3231INS from the Georgia Department of Health.

Etz Chaim Preschool admits students of any race, color, nation and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its policies and admission policies.

ATTENDANCE

Please notify the school if your child will be absent or significantly late in arriving. You may reach the Education Office directly by dialing 770-977-3384. Please notify your child's teacher in writing when someone other than yourself or another authorized adult will pick up your child.

Should you need to pick up your child earlier than afternoon carpool, please adhere to the following procedure: Park in the one hour parking spaces in the front of the building. Go directly to the Director of Education's office to notify the school that you will need to take your child home early. The Director will get your child from his/her class.

No child will be released to anyone other than the people designated on your Application For Enrollment. Please be sure that the information is up to date. Please be aware that we will ask for proper identification of anyone unknown to us.

Should your child miss school due to illness or school closing please note that we do not offer make-up sessions. Should you require an additional day of school, please contact the Education Office to inquire if there is space for your child on your selected day and know that you will be charged our daily rate of \$35 in addition to your monthly tuition. *This fee does not include extended day tuition, should you utilize that as well.*

BELONGINGS

We are a busy school and have much going on! Please be sure to mark **ALL** belongings (e.g., cups, lunchboxes, containers, clothing, shoes, coats, hats, etc.) with your child's name in permanent marker so that we can make sure your belongings get back to you.

Additionally, we ask that children leave their toys at home, unless specifically requested by the teachers for an activity. We find that special toys brought from home are difficult to share, and we certainly wouldn't want your child's "special" something to be lost or damaged during the course of the school day.

CAR POOL

We will be utilizing our car pool line for drop off and pick up of children for the regular four hour preschool program. (If your child is participating in the Extended Care program, please see below.)

We will begin unloading cars at 9:30 a.m. Circle the building and come up to the overhang. Do not try to make a "u turn" once you are by the parking lot or circle through the parking lot. Please form two lines under the overhang so that we might move through carpool in a more efficient manner. This will also alleviate the traffic back up around the driveway. Move into the second lane as you are approaching the straight away that is in line with gate of the playground. Please do so with caution. *Please put your car in park while waiting in your car for someone to greet your child* and escort to his/her classroom. **Please do not get out of your car.** If you want to walk your child into the building or come inside at the end of the day, please park in one of the one hour parking spaces in front of the building and enter through the glass front doors.

Please do not pass the car in front of you while we are unloading, as this would be a safety hazard. While in the carpool line, do not back up and turn back into the parking lot, unless specifically instructed to do so by the school staff.

Children will be dismissed beginning promptly at 1:30 p.m. All parents should arrive at the Preschool at that time and be in the carpool lane by 1:30 p.m. Please call the preschool if you anticipate arriving after 1:30 p.m. **If you would like to pick up your child without waiting in carpool, please park in the one our parking spaces in the front of the building and enter through the glass doors in front. We also ask that you arrive five minutes early and wait outside your child's class for dismissal.**

If your child is participating in the Extended Day Program please park your car (in the carpool line) and walk your child to the Extended Care area and sign him/her in. Unless other arrangements have been made, please plan to walk in to pick up your child in the afternoon as well.

Please be aware that all children should be seated in a car seat or booster seat, even if someone other than a parent is transporting them!! We will not put a child in any car that does not have the appropriate safety restraint for that child's age or size. Please be patient as we load the children. Some cars have more than one child, some have challenging car seats and/or boosters and some have children who do not sit down as quickly as others.

Please remember that when you are pulling away from the carpool lane, you should do so slowly. Obey the yield sign and allow the right of way to the traffic coming down the driveway. **PLEASE USE CAUTION AT ALL TIMES!**

On a final note, please consider turning off your car's engine should you arrive early and THERE SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO CELL PHONE USAGE WHILE IN THE CARPOOL LINE!

CHESED (KINDNESS) OUTREACH

During the course of the school year, many events occur that are both positive and negative in nature. As a preschool, we strive to be a community and available and supportive in all situations. The *Chesed* Outreach program is designed to help our families by providing meals when the need occurs. This is done on both a school wide and individual basis. Part of your activity fee will cover the cost of a kosher meal being sent to a family who has experienced a birth, illness or surgery. This will be coordinated by the volunteer *Chesed* Chair. Additionally, the class room parent may coordinate a meal from within the classroom of the child whose family is being acknowledged.

COMMUNICATION

For both ecological and expediency purposes, some of our official correspondence will be done electronically, via email and/or announcements on our school website, www.etzchaim.net/preschool If you would prefer to receive notices only in paper form, please notify the Director of Education.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Etz Chaim Preschool is committed to the privacy of our students, their families and our staff, while ensuring that they have access to the best preschool experience possible. We aim to ensure that all parents and teachers can share information in confidence, and that it will be used to enhance the development and well-being of the children. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis with appropriate staff, consultants, and other professionals.

We keep two kinds of records on children in our school:

1. Developmental records:
 - a. These include observations of children in the school setting, samples of their work, summary developmental reports, and records of achievement.
 - b. They are usually kept in the classroom and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents.
2. Personal records:
 - a. These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child custody matters.
 - b. These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure in the office of the Director of Education.
 - c. Parents have access to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
 - d. Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of the staff or other parents, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff orientation includes awareness of the importance of confidentiality.

DIAPERING/TOILET TRAINING

If you are in the process of toilet training your child, please remember to notify our staff so that we, at Etz Chaim Preschool, can work with you. Remember to send in a few extra pairs of underwear and pants/skirts/leggings/socks in your child's backpack each day. Our school's approach toward toilet training is one of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children are not pushed or shamed into using the toilet. Please consider your child's teachers to be partners in this process with you, and understand that a child's readiness at home may be different than a child's readiness at school.

All children who are not toilet-trained will have their diapers changed in the designated diaper changing areas in the appropriate classrooms. Please send in enough diapers each day to allow for a diaper change every two hours that your child is in school, plus one additional diaper per day. Our teachers use the highest standards of hygiene and wear a new pair of non-latex gloves when changing diapers, as well as wash their hands before and after each diaper change.

DISCIPLINE/SAFETY

It is our policy and philosophy of Etz Chaim Preschool to assist children who struggle in situations by using aggressive behavior in a firm, but friendly manner. We never belittle or humiliate a child in front of others. If one child hurts another child, we console the child who is hurt first.

If a child's misbehavior requires that he/she take time away from the group to collect themselves and calm down, we will utilize that time to help the child understand the need to reset his/her actions and handle this differently.

We speak with the child about the proper way to behave, using language that is appropriate to the child's level, such as "no hitting, hitting hurts". Most importantly, we give the child who has been hurt the language to use with the aggressor- "I don't like that. That hurts."

In addition, if you are working with a specialist of any sort, we expect to be apprised of the techniques used to partner with the team so that all expectations and consequences are consistent.

The lessons from the Torah can help to guide our conversations about appropriate behavior. Torah stories can help generate ideas on how to share, take turns, and hence be a better person and a better Jew. Abraham and Lot sharing the land, Joseph's brothers behaviors because of their jealousy, and Pharaoh's being a bully are great ways to talk about behavior with young children.

The Preschool Board has developed a policy to ensure the safety of all children in the Preschool which states: **if a child's behavior becomes such that the emotional and physical safety and well-being of other students is at risk, Etz Chaim Preschool reserves the right to request that a child be removed from the program.** Every effort will be made on the part of the Preschool staff to meet with the parents to discuss the issues, develop and implement a plan of action, and meet again to discuss the effectiveness of the plan. Removal will occur if the plan is unsuccessful in changing the behavior or if the parents are unresponsive in the attempts to meet with the staff or to help implement the plan of action.

FUNDRAISING

Every year, a fundraising line item is included in the preschool budget, which allows us to keep tuition costs down. We will have a few fundraising opportunities that we are asking you to support this year and will inform you of them in a timely manner. Kids Night Out is one of those opportunities. On Saturday evenings throughout the year our faculty will be here to watch your children in a familiar, comfortable environment while you go out for a few hours. You will receive information on those when they are scheduled.

Many of the improvements to our preschool are made possible through donations to our Preschool Fund. Please keep us in mind when you are celebrating a birth or other simcha, or an accomplishment as well as sending condolences and wishes for a speedy recovery.

ILLNESS

Please keep your child home from school:

- **if your child has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.**
- if your child has been experiencing vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- if your child has been on an antibiotic for **less** than 24 hours.
- if your child has a heavy nasal discharge (**clear or green**) and/or constant cough.
- if your child is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself
- if your child has a communicable or contagious disease or a parasitic condition, such as lice, pinworm or scabies.

We will notify you if your child develops a fever, experiences diarrhea or doesn't seem to feel well during the school day. Please be prepared to be asked to pick up your child in the Director's office should any of these symptoms occur.

Notification will be sent to all families whose children have been exposed to certain communicable illnesses, when appropriate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCIES

In case of inclement weather, Congregation Etz Chaim Preschool will *generally* follow the Cobb County guidelines for school closing. However, based on our later arrival time, we often find it appropriate to conduct school, despite what the county has decided. You will receive an electronic notification of all school schedule changes via email or Mail Chimp.

Etz Chaim Preschool has detailed Emergency Response procedures which are available for your review at any time upon request, and are also posted in the office of the Director of Education.

MEDICATION

In general, children needing over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol, should be kept at home until feeling better.

Except for first aid, our staff will not dispense prescription or non-prescription medications to a child without specific written authorization from you or your child's physician. (Medical Authorization Form)

Unless otherwise agreed upon with the parents, medications will only be dispensed by the Director of Education. Medication shall only be dispensed out of its original container which must be labeled with the child's name. **Written authorization to dispense medications shall be limited to two (2) weeks unless otherwise prescribed by a physician.** We will return to you the unused portion of medicines which are no longer to be dispensed.

In the event that a child has an adverse reaction to any prescribed medication, parents (or other emergency contact if parents are unavailable) will receive an immediate phone call and 911 will be called if deemed necessary by the preschool staff and/or the parents.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a necessary part of a successful preschool! You will have an opportunity to sign up for activities both inside and outside of the classroom. Example of classroom volunteer opportunities include, holiday preparation, challah preparation, journal writing, and cooking. We also expect that every preschool family will volunteer in some way for our fundraising opportunities. Room parents are also needed. Our success depends on you! Please sign up when you receive your information. If you have volunteered your time but cannot make it into the classrooms, please try to switch dates with another parent or contact the teacher or Director as soon as possible.

PRESCHOOL DIRECTORY AND ADDRESS USAGE

The Preschool directory is for personal communications only and should not be used for the purpose of fundraising and/or business promotions. Please do not use email addresses or mailing addresses for anything except preschool-related communications.

SECURITY

All outside doors will remain locked at all times. After 10:00 am, all visitors and parents should enter through the front entrance of the synagogue. **Please identify yourself by name when you buzz the intercom into the front office and remain standing in front of the camera.** As the employees in the main office have our safety at heart, please be understanding should they ask you for additional information such as the name of your child or his/her class.

All parents have the right to access all areas used by their child and we ask your cooperation in keeping our school's perimeter as secure as possible. Please do not let in anyone unknown to you when entering, or leave a door propped open for any reason.

SHABBAT, HOLIDAY AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Every Friday at 9:45 am, our school celebrates a *Shabbat Shira*, Shabbat Sing in Phillip's Library. Parents are always welcome to join us. In addition, each class has a special Abba and/or Imah (father, mother) who will be honored with leading the Shabbat blessings either during or after lunch. Your child's teacher will notify you of the time for the Shabbat celebration, so you can join us as your time permits. Parents will be asked to choose and sign up for one or two days over the year for your child to be the Abba or Imah Shabbat. You may want to select the Shabbat closest to your child's birthday.

Etz Chaim Preschool does not celebrate the following secular holidays: Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day or Easter. Halloween parties and costumes, as well as Valentine's Day cards are not appropriate for our program. If you are having a party in celebration of one of these events, please do not utilize the Preschool as a way to send home invitations.

Birthdays are a special time in every child's life. At school we will sing "Happy Birthday" to your child during *Shabbat Shira* or morning sing and will acknowledge each child's birthday on our welcome board at carpool. We request that rather than focus on a snack, parents give the gift of time to their child. To that end, we are inviting you or a special someone, to join your child in class for about 20 minutes during a time determined by you and the child's teacher. This will allow you the opportunity to spend some time visiting and then read a story to the class (perhaps your child's favorite book.) If

you would like to add to the celebration by donating the book to the class, it is a wonderful way to mark the occasion in a more permanent way.

When planning an out of school party, please be aware that many of our families observe Shabbat and attend synagogue services on Saturday and holiday mornings. As a synagogue Preschool, we strongly request that birthday parties not be planned for Shabbat or any other Jewish holiday. We will gladly distribute your party invitations in the backpacks ONLY if the entire class is invited and the party is not scheduled for Shabbat or Jewish Holidays.

SNACK/LUNCH

Please send in only **DAIRY OR PAREVE** as well as **NUT FREE** foods for lunch, so we may continue to observe the synagogue's policy of Kashrut. In addition to a daily lunch, parents should provide snacks for their own children on a daily basis.

If you are sending in a substitute for a nut product, such as sunflower butter, please clearly mark the item so that we can be sure it is safe for all. If you need a list of appropriate food items, your child's teacher or the Director can provide one.

Please consider using re-sealable containers to minimize waste associated with pre-packaged convenience foods. In addition, this will help to better evaluate your child's lunchtime needs when you see what and how much food comes home.

SUSPECTED ABUSE.

It is mandated by State law that any teacher who suspects child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation reports that to the Department of Family and Children Services. If a teacher suspects such treatment, he/she will report it to the Director of Education immediately, and then to the appropriate authorities.

TUITION AND FEES

There are two options for tuition payment. You may choose to pay your entire annual tuition in one payment *or* monthly, by the 10th over a 10 month period. If you choose to pay your tuition monthly, we require 10 post-dated checks or a VISA or MC number on file. If any payment is returned unpaid, you will owe the bank service charge. An invoice will be sent home in your child's bag at the beginning of each month with an invoice indicating any fees due at that time. Please make checks payable to Etz Chaim Preschool and return it to school at your earliest convenience. If you arranged to pay your tuition using a credit card, we will charge that card accordingly. We will pro-rate tuition for students who enter at mid-month. Etz Chaim Preschool makes every effort to accommodate the financial needs of each family. Please contact the Director of Education if you are in need of a tuition assistance form.

The Preschool Board has implemented the following policy regarding delinquent tuition:

"Tuition is due by the 10th of each month. Tuition not received by the 10th of the month is considered delinquent. By the 10th of the following month, unless (1) all delinquent and current tuition payments have been paid for in full, or (2) the family has contacted the Director of Education and made alternative arrangements, then the child will be considered no longer enrolled or eligible to attend class. Alternative financial arrangements will be approved by the Preschool Board Finance Committee (consisting of the Preschool Board Chairperson, the Preschool Board Finance Chairperson, and the Director of Education)."

All Registration and Activity fees must be paid in full before a child will be admitted to school. No refunds or credits will be issued for vacations, sick days, or other absences.

PART TIME	Fee for Members		Fee for Non-Members	
	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition
Days of the Week				
2 Days per Week	\$266	\$2660	\$306	\$3060
3 Days per Week	\$359	\$3590	\$414	\$4140
4 Days per Week	\$425	\$4250	\$490	\$4900
5 Days per Week	\$465	\$4650	\$536	\$5360

8AM - 5PM	Fee for Members		Fee for Non-Members	
	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition
Days of the Week				
2 Days per Week	\$429	\$4290	\$469	\$4690
3 Days per Week	\$592	\$5920	\$647	\$6470
4 Days per Week	\$718	\$7180	\$783	\$7830
5 Days per Week	\$810	\$8100	\$881	\$8810

7AM - 5PM	Fee for Members		Fee for Non-Members	
	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition	Monthly Tuition	Annual Tuition
Days of the Week				
2 Days per Week	\$473.80	\$4738	\$513.80	\$5138
3 Days per Week	\$659.20	\$6592	\$714.20	\$7142
4 Days per Week	\$807.60	\$8076	\$872.60	\$8726
5 Days per Week	\$922	\$9220	\$993	\$9930