



Adath Emanu-El ECC Parent Handbook 2019-2020

I. Introduction

Welcome! We are thrilled that you have chosen to enroll your child in the Early Childhood Center at Adath Emanu-El! This coming school year promises to be an exciting one filled with learning, growing and a lot of fun!

The Early Childhood Center at Adath Emanu-El has served the communities of Southern NJ for over 40 years. While our philosophy is very intentional and comprehensive, our school's goal is simple: we are dedicated to implementing an inspiring and developmentally sound early childhood curriculum that promotes your child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and foster creativity and a lifelong love of learning. The developmental aspect of the spiritual, moral values and the joyful celebration of the Jewish culture play a vital role in our program as do all of our academic standards.

The physical development of your child is very important during the preschool years. Children who have command of their bodies and muscles are strong enough to handle a variety of challenges. We encourage the development of gross motor skills with structured activities your child can engage in such as climbing, walking and balancing. We are equally committed to building your child's motor-planning skills, which include eye-hand coordination and fluidity of movement in gross motor activities! Subsequently, we provide ample time and space for active play, both indoors and out, so that our little learners have many opportunities to grow!

The **cognitive/academic** development aspect of the program includes the following areas of concentration:



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- **Literacy** through storytelling, conversation, experience charts, journal writing, dramatic play, consonant and vowel recognition, story structure and sequencing;
- **Mathematics** through 1-1 correspondence, patterning, sorting, grouping, matching and math manipulatives;
- **Science** through discussion, demonstration, experiments and exploring the natural environment through study of seasons, plants and animals;
- **Music** by singing and using musical instruments to promote creative movement and expression.

The **Social and Emotional** development program provides our little learners with the opportunity to become a part of a group. Learning to take turns, negotiating with peers, sharing, as well as learning to lead and to follow peers are all important aspects of the socialization process in the formative years. We encourage the children to establish a trusting and comfortable relationship with their teachers and friends, while helping them to learn to respect the feelings, needs and differences of others.

The **Judaic** component is the important thread that weaves itself throughout our entire program. The children celebrate each holiday with food, music, and appropriate prayers in order to experience Jewish practice through multiple modalities. Your child is encouraged to practice *tzedakah* (righteous giving) and to understand the importance of *mitzvot* (commandments/good deeds). Jewish values are also developed by including the children in the Jewish life of our synagogue community, thus creating a sense of pride and ownership in one's own Jewish identity.



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II. Technology and “Screen” Use

At Adath Emanu-El ECC, we seek to provide unique exploratory and sensory-based learning experiences for our students. We take the Pediatric Association’s recommendations regarding “screen time” seriously, and only use technology (tablets, computers, videos, etc.) in the classrooms to enhance learning opportunities by supplementing our lesson plans with their use. We limit screen time to less than 30 minutes in one day, but strive to use screens and technology as intentionally and sparingly as possible to allow for more authentic play-based learning. Screen time at the ECC is a rare occurrence!

III. Conditions of Acceptance

For a child to be accepted into our preschool program, parents are required to complete and sign the following forms:

- Registration and Consent Forms
- All Medical/Vaccination Forms
- Emergency Forms and Cards
- Signed Health and Wellness Handbook Form
- Signed Parent Handbook Form
- Signed Social Media and Electronic Messaging Policy
- Allergy Alert Forms
- Child History Form
- Non-Refundable Deposit



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III. Ensuring the Best for Your Child and Your Family

To ensure the best for your child, staff enrichment is of utmost importance to our program. Our staff participates in full-day workshops as well as monthly meetings to stay abreast of current trends and practices in the field of early childhood education. We also participate in staff meetings to discuss curriculum plans and to participate in staff development workshops.

Nurturing the growth and development of your child is a partnership between parent and teacher. Children tend to have more positive experiences when their families are involved with their education. We offer two parent-teacher conferences a year. We encourage you to keep the lines of communication open with your child's teachers. Stay tuned to our website for upcoming events and please read the daily reports from your child's teacher, the synagogue and the ECC! Remember that, above all, this is a family experience and you and your family are an important part of our community!



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IV. Emergency and Safety Information

School Cancellations usually follow the Mt. Laurel Public Schools in the event of inclement weather; however, in some cases we do make our own decisions based on the facts available. Closures will be listed on the ECC and Adath Emanu-El website and parent Facebook group. You will also be notified via email and text message through Tadpoles to let you know of any cancellations. We will also send out an email blast to the community to let you know of any changes in the synagogue or ECC's schedule. If the public schools delay or close early, the ECC will make its own determination as to our plans. ***Please remember that no refund is given for family vacations, holidays, illness, inclement weather or natural disaster related closures.*** School cancellations take the safety of our staff and our students into consideration; our community's safety is our highest priority.

Security and Emergency information is important for all parents to know as our procedures and policies help ensure the highest standard of safety and keep our program running smoothly. All those entering the building will be allowed entrance by office or ECC staff. The building remains locked during the day to ensure the safety of Adath Emanu-El's staff and the safety of all the children in the ECC. If an emergency occurs during school hours, we will evacuate the children to an appropriate and safe place, at which time parents will be notified via Tadpoles email/ text message and given specific instructions to follow regarding student pick-up procedures.



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Adath ECC Play Philosophy

Both structured and unstructured play is an important part of our curriculum! Children benefit from child centered *and* teacher directed play. While we have a centers based learning model in each of our classrooms, we also allow for freedom of choice and less structured play time as well.

Our philosophy is that we do not interfere with children's play or the materials they choose to use during play unless we are concerned that they are hurting themselves, others, or property.

Dramatic play costumes are always open to everyone, and we will never tell a child that they cannot dress up in something that they chose. *Choosing to dress up is the right of the child*, and we support all student dress up and gender identity choices during play without exception.

We also believe that fresh air and outdoor exploration help develop and strengthen their gross motor, motor planning and motor coordination skills. We will be going out to play EVERY DAY unless it is raining or below 28 degrees (including the wind chill). Please be sure to dress your child appropriately for all play experiences! Teachers may decide to play in the snow with their students! When this occurs, your teacher will ask you to kindly send children in with a large bag and any snow gear you chose!



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V. Medical and Health Policies OVERVIEW (Please see Health and Wellness Handbook for specific school guidelines)

A medical form, proof of immunization form, two emergency cards and an allergy alert form must be presented each year before your child can be admitted to the ECC. **Please keep children home if they show any signs of communicable diseases (including, but not limited to, strep, conjunctivitis, head lice, chicken pox, and impetigo).** If your child is ill with a bacterial infection, please notify the Director so she can alert the families in your child's class about their possible exposure to the illness.

*****PLEASE REMEMBER: NO CHILD may return to school within 24 hours of running a fever, vomiting or having diarrhea. Any child coming to school who evidences these ailments or exhibits any symptoms will be sent home pending a full recovery and/or a doctor's note. *****

We are committed to providing a safe and healthful environment for all children and families, and therefore are very appreciative of your support for our ECC's health policy! **When in doubt, please keep your child at home.** It is essential that you notify the school about any major health issues (including asthma, severe allergies, etc.), developmental issues, diagnosed delays or sensitive family concerns so that we can understand how to best serve your child's needs. The ECC at Adath Emanu-El is a family and we are here to support your family in any way possible. **PLEASE NOTE: If a student has a temperature of 100.5 F or higher, we will require that a guardian or an adult listed on the emergency card come pick the student up within the hour. No exceptions to this rule will be made.**



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In a medical emergency, we first call 911 and then we notify the student's parents. Only staff members who are MAT (medication administration trained) are permitted to administer medications such as Epi-Pens. School personnel are not permitted to transport children for medical attention. If a child is taking medication, parents need to notify the teachers, as a child's behavior can be affected by medication. We are not responsible for any side effects or adverse reactions that medication can induce. It is the parent's responsibility to keep medical and emergency forms up to date! As per our emergency cards, we require that you list two possible neighbors or relatives who will assume temporary care of your child if you cannot be reached. These temporary caregivers should be no more than 15-20 minutes away from school. Parents of the ECC are permitted to list other ECC parents as emergency contacts if you discuss and agree upon this in advance. It is important to note that the ECC will only release children to those guardians/emergency caretakers/other adults who are specified in writing. If any of your emergency contact information changes, we ask that you notify your child's teachers and the Director so that the appropriate changes can be made to your emergency medical forms!



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****Medical and Vaccination History Requirements:***

As a community based Jewish preschool program, we take our commitment to the health and safety of all of our students and their families very seriously. Not only do we create inclusive policies that are designed to protect and nourish our community, but we also strive to balance the needs of individual families with the needs of the larger group.

Judaism places a strong emphasis on shielding our children and our community from any foreseeable danger, including but not limited to the spread of communicable diseases. ***Therefore, it is the policy of Adath Emanu-El ECC, Religious School and The Synagogue (as per the board of trustees) that we cannot accept Religious or Personal Exemptions from mandatory state recommended vaccinations.*** The only exemption from a vaccine that we are required by the state of NJ to honor is a, "Medically Justified Exemption." This may include children who have an allergy, adverse reaction to a vaccine, or who are immunocompromised or on an alternative schedule and are unable to receive it at the time of enrollment. All relevant documentation from licensed healthcare providers is required upon registration. Admission will be granted to students whose caregivers provide adequate documentation from a licensed healthcare professional.

VI. Lunch, Snack, and Food Policy

LUNCH: Adath Emanu-El does not adhere strictly to the laws of kashrut, however, the ECC follows kosher-style guidelines. Please check all ingredients and share only those food items that do not contain pork or shellfish products. We also welcome homemade goods in the classroom, but again we please ask that they do not contain pork or shellfish products!



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Lunches that are provided by parents must fit within our general snack and food policy.

- Please remember that we can serve lunch, however we cannot prepare it. The only food we can heat up or prepare is food provided by our school lunch program. Please refrain from sending in food that requires cooking or reheating. Cooking food during the school day takes our teacher's attention away from the children. Thank you so much for understanding that our primary role is to care for your little ones!
- Our infant room is equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, and bottle warmer.
- All students under 12 months need an individual feeding plan to be kept on file in their classroom.

FOOD and SNACKS: *We strive to be an allergy aware, nut sensitive environment! To protect all of our children, the ECC does not serve snacks that contain peanut or tree nut products. All store-bought food brought in by parents must be in its original package.*

- The ECC ***does not*** serve snacks labeled "may contain traces of peanuts or tree nuts..."
- The ECC ***does not*** serve snacks labeled "made in a facility that processes peanuts and/or tree nuts."

Please try and share healthy food items such as fruits, vegetables, crackers, cheese or yogurt. We encourage you to send store bought cookies, donuts and cakes only for birthday and special celebrations! We serve water and healthful dry foods for snack, and challah on Shabbat.



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VII. Rest Time/Napping Time Procedures:

All children who attend out preschool program for more than four consecutive hours a day will have a “quiet rest period” of 30 minutes in their classroom daily. “Rest time” is defined as a quiet time where the lights may be turned off, soft music is played and the children relax with quiet activities like reading on a mat, drawing or writing on a dry erase board, sitting quietly at a table with manipulatives, etc. Children will be encouraged to use soft voices during this time if they wish to communicate with other children. All children who “nap” for an extended period of time in a designated “napping room” must provide a sheet and a blanket for their child. We do allow special toys/transitional objects for children to help make their nap time a positive and calming experience. For those children who require longer rest/sleep periods and prolonged naps, nap/rest time is determined by individual discussions and consultations with each caregiver, and caregivers may alter their child’s napping schedule if their child no longer requires a prolonged nap period during the year. Each child’s needs are different and are constantly changing, which is why we are here to partner with you in this journey.

VIII. Celebrations and Joyous Occasions

Each Friday morning, our school celebrates Shabbat as a whole community. Each week, one family is invited to be the Shabbat Family! We gather together as one community in the sanctuary to light the Sabbath candles and to sing blessings that are developmentally appropriate for all of our little learners! After Shabbat, the children will return to their classrooms to continue their celebration. Parents are welcome to join us at any Shabbat celebration!



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Birthdays are a special day to celebrate and we are delighted to have a special birthday celebration in school for your child! Please feel free to purchase cupcakes or other allergy-sensitive treat and join your child for a special snack and story in the classroom! Please remember that we are an "allergy aware" school, so no nut products of any kind can be served! In your birthday planning for celebrations outside of school, please remember to include all the children in your child's class! Your child's connections with their peers are important, and we hope that all families will be included in these special events! **Special Guests** are encouraged to come and visit the school! Your child's teacher will invite you, or any member of your family that you choose, to join your child's class as their "special guest." This is another opportunity to come and share and take part in your child's classroom environment! We look forward to sharing your child's classroom experience with you! Our doors are always open!

IX. Appropriate Dress in School

Throughout the school day, your child will be engaging in all kinds of exploratory play, both in and out of the classroom setting. Children should wear comfortable play clothes that allow ***freedom of movement and that are easy to remove for toileting***. Additionally, our little learners work very hard during school -- doing lots of messy activities -- so please remember to dress them in clothing that can allow for their creativity! Shoes should have rubber soles for active play! Please do not send your child to school wearing flip-flops or sandals because they can be hazardous for children when they run and climb. If students insist on wearing a particular pair of shoes that are not safe for play, we encourage parents to pack a safe pair of shoes for the student to change into prior to the start of school.



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X. Toilet Training

Adath Emanu-El does not require our little learners to be potty trained upon entering our 2's or 3's programs. However, we ask for you to participate by actively encouraging bathroom independence! If your child is enrolled in our 3's program, we will ask that your child begin engaging in the potty training process by February. We do understand and respect that potty training is an individual process for each and every student and that we are here to partner with caregivers in this process. Please note, that we are here to teach students how to use the bathroom without a teacher's assistance. That being said, we are here to support them should they need help while cleaning, clothing, and washing their hands.

If you would like the teacher to assist your toilet trained child with cleaning, you must put in writing your desire for the staff to help your child in the bathroom. This written consent will be kept on file.

Accident protocol for our 4's class is as follows:

- 1st and 2nd accident of the week, the teacher will clean and change the child's clothing following all bathroom guidelines. A phone call to the parents will be made to notify them.
- 3rd accident (and any other subsequent) of the week **OR** a 2nd accident in the same day, the teacher will clean and change the child's clothing following all bathroom guidelines. **Parent must come pick up child from school.**

Accident protocol for our Kindergarten class is as follows:

- 1st accident of the week, the teacher will clean and change the child's clothing following all bathroom guidelines. A phone call to the parents will be made to notify them.



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- 2nd accident (and any other subsequent) of the week OR a 2nd accident in the same day, the teacher will clean and change the child's clothing following all bathroom guidelines. **Parent must come pick up child from school.**

XI. Discipline Policy

Positive reinforcement, praise, problem solving and consistency are the most effective ways of working with and nurturing little learners when dealing with less than desirable or disruptive behaviors.

When children have a clear understanding of expectations, a defined routine and consistent reminders of how to behave safely and kindly, it helps them to develop a positive self-image and ultimately makes them feel successful. It is the policy of the ECC at Adath Emanu-El to redirect and mold children's behavior in positive and constructive ways in order to support the emotional well-being of our students in the classroom.

Children will be asked to take a break from play *only* if they are endangering themselves, others or property, and will never be asked to take a break for more than a few moments. If they continue to demonstrate behaviors that endanger themselves, others, or property we will call home and ask that your child be picked up for the day. If we feel that a walk down the hallway or a visit to preschool office to calm our bodies and emotions is needed, we will absolutely make that strategy available. Our teachers are here to make sure that we bring children back into play as quickly as possible while still making sure children understand how and why they can be successful again. **Our ultimate goal is to teach children pragmatic language skills and self-regulating techniques that will enable them to solve their own peer conflicts as they develop and grow!**



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XII. Drop-Off, Pick-up, Drop- In, and Schedule Change Policy

Adath Emanu-El ECC is open at 7:30 a.m. and closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. During the school day, there are several pick-up times from which parents may select. We hope that you will respect our staff members and our school by dropping off and picking up your little learner during your scheduled time. Please understand that chronic lateness, when picking up a student, may result in administrative action.

All parents/guardians and caregivers are responsible for their children en route to and from school. If others will be dropping off or picking up your child, the school must be notified in writing (email is acceptable) each time. No child will be released to an adult without written authorization! If someone other than the child's primary caregivers are collecting the child after school, a photo ID will be required before we can release the child. All parents/guardians and caregivers must plan to stay with their child until 9:00a.m., the beginning of the school day. If you are utilizing our early drop-off program, you must be with your child until 7:30a.m. Children also need to be picked up promptly at the end of each school day. All children must be signed in and out by a parent/guardian or caregiver. All parents must agree to adhere to the policies of Adath Emanu-El and the Early Childhood Center, including but not limited to, the health, pick-up, drop-off, sign-in, sign-out procedure, registration, payment, and food policies established.

IN THE EVENT THAT WE FEEL A CAREGIVER IS IMPAIRED AT THE TIME OF PICK UP, WE CAN REFUSE TO RELEASE THE CHILD TO THAT INDIVIDUAL.



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Drop-Off, Pick-up, Drop- In, and Schedule Change Policy continued:

If lateness occurs, an overtime rate will be assessed beginning at 12:05 p.m., 1:05p.m., 3:20 p.m., 4:35 p.m. and 6:01p.m.

- If you are anywhere from 5-10 minutes late picking up your child from our school, we will charge you an additional fee of \$20.00 each time lateness occurs.
- If you pick up anytime between 10-30 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time, our school will charge \$40.00 each time lateness occurs.
- Chronic lateness (regardless of degree) may result in your child's expulsion from our program.

While we understand that lateness can occur due to emergencies or unforeseen circumstances on rare occasions, chronic lateness does not enable us to run our school to the best of our abilities and does not meet with our vision or educational philosophy. Please plan accordingly.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and partnership!

DROP IN'S: An online form is available each week for early care, late care and additional day drop-ins. Please make sure that you inquire first regarding the availability of the day. Some days we may have no availability to add additional students. If we can accommodate families we always try to!

Schedule Changes: We are always flexible and willing to allow families to change their child's school schedule throughout the year. Families who wish to increase/decrease their child's schedule can always reach out to the Director to ensure that there is space available. After one schedule reduction, there will be an additional \$10 schedule change fee associated with any alteration.



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XIII. Expulsion Policy

Immediate Causes for Expulsion:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members/the Director.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff/Director in front of enrolled children.

Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion:

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms, including immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child
- Verbal abuse to staff/Director/Students
- Other - at the discretion of the Director

Child's Actions for Expulsion

- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Bullying or hurting other children (i.e., pushing, kicking, punching, cursing, etc.)
- Threatening other children/adults with violence
- Verbally or physically causing harm to teachers and other children
- Other - at the discretion of the Director



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Schedule of Expulsion

- If the remedial actions have not been effective, 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 come to an agreement with our program.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return to our program.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on the risk to other children's
- welfare or safety). Failure of the child/caregiver to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from our program.
- **No advance warning of expulsion is required when the Director/Staff/Parents or Students feel threatened by a child/family's words or actions. We can ask you to vacate the premises immediately and not allow you to return if we feel the physical or emotional safety of a child or adult is at risk.**

A child will not be expelled if the child's caregiver(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding our program's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at our program.
- Questioned our program regarding policies and procedures.



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-Are not given sufficient time to make other child care arrangements (length of time depends on the risk to other children's/staff's welfare or safety).

Proactive and disciplinary actions that will be taken to prevent expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess the classroom/playground environment, appropriateness of activities, and supervision.
- Staff will use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply predictable and age-appropriate consequences for breaking classroom and school rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time and space (when possible) to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidence.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally of consistent disruptive behavior.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- Director, teacher(s) and parent/guardian will meet to discuss strategies to promote positive behavior.
- Parent/guardian may be provided with resources regarding methods of improving behavior, including printed materials and referrals for professional evaluation and treatment.



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As always, if you have any questions about any of the information in the Adath Emanu-El ECC Parent Handbook, or any ECC policies or procedures, you should feel free to contact Sandi Toben. You can contact by email her at stoben@adathemanuel.com or feel free to call her at Adath Emanu-El (856) 608-1200.

Welcome to the Adath Emanu-El ECC Family!

We're Glad You're Here!