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ECEP Re-Opening Update – August 1, 2020

Dear ECEP families -- here we are with another update on our thoughts, policies/plans and logistics, as of today!

At this point, we have every intention of opening school in-person, 5 days per week, in September. We have confirmed our enrollment, and our teachers and Temple Sinai are committed to moving forward with all the plans necessary to open as safely as possible. We are expecting to open around September 14, with a soft opening from September 9-11.

Our current focus is transitioning the children back to school by creating in-person and virtual opportunities for the children to “meet” their teachers and spend short periods of time on the temple grounds. The logistics are still to come, and parents will have flexibility in taking part in some or all of the gatherings with teachers and peers. We hope to begin the programs mid- to late August.

Tuition Refund and Withdrawal Policy: The Tuition Refund and Withdrawal Policy has been finalized. In brief, if the ECEP is required to close due to COVID for more than 4 weeks, families may choose to remain enrolled in the ECEP program (which will include online offerings) at a reduced tuition rate. Otherwise, families may choose to withdraw from the ECEP program and receive a full prorated tuition refund. [Click here for the full Modified Tuition Agreement and Refund Policy.](#)

Enrollment forms: In the next week or two, you will receive instructions on completing our online enrollment forms through your account on the Temple website. NJ State requires an updated Universal Health Form and Immunization form to be submitted before the start of the school year. For children under the age of 2-½ years, the last physical must have taken place within 6 months of the start of school; for children over 2-½ years, we are required to have documentation of a physical within 1 year of the start of school. [Click here for the Universal Health Form](#) and [here for the Immunization Record](#) to submit to your child’s physician. Completed forms can be mailed to the temple, emailed to [Lara](#) , or faxed to 908-273-3653 (to Lara’s attention).

Re-opening Task Force Takeaways (from the July 20 meeting):

- Families are getting more accustomed to being out of the house
- Children are getting more comfortable wearing masks and seeing others in masks
- Families appreciate our email communications with FAQs, want regular updates on policies which help them make decisions for their families and feel comfortable with our planning.
- Families expressed the importance of helping parents build relationships with other parents in the class and school communities before school starts and throughout the school year, especially because they will not be able to meet in person during drop-off and other times.



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- Families are supportive of more time outside in most weather

The next installment of FAQs: Thank you again for asking any questions that come to mind. Here are our responses to a few more, based on regulations and plans at this time.

- Will the children distance in the classroom or in our outdoor spaces? As per NJ State Licensing, we will not expect or require the children to remain 6 feet apart in the classrooms or outdoors. Each class will function as a cohort and will not come in contact (within 10 feet) with children or teachers in other class cohorts.
- Have you given any thought to ventilation in the classrooms? The filters in our HVAC system were changed recently and will continue to be changed frequently. In addition, the settings for the HVAC system were adjusted to allow for the greatest ratio of fresh air to recirculated air that the system can accommodate. The filters in the window AC units will be cleaned weekly. Finally, each classroom has windows that will be opened as often as possible, weather permitting.
- Do you have any more information about the morning drop-off and screening process? At this time, we are re-thinking the screening process and are leaning toward having screening stations set up by the front door of the building. Parents/caregivers would be asked to park in the Temple lot and remain in their cars until their assigned drop-off window. Adults would then bring the children to the station for a temperature check. A few screening questions would be asked, and adults and children will say a quick good-bye before the children meet up with one of their teachers to head to the classroom. Each person/family will be expected to remain at least 6 feet from anyone else present. We will likely have a practice screening during one or more of our in-person transition gatherings.

Please do not hesitate to email or call with any questions, concerns or ideas. We are excited to be working toward a time when we will be together again!



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ECEP Re-Opening Update – July 13, 2020

Dear ECEP Families -- thank you for recommitting to your children's enrollment in the ECEP program for the coming school year. We are humbled by your trust and are intent on putting everything in place for a school year full of laughter, exploration, learning and fun. Some of the routines will be different as we adapt to the new realities, but our energies will be focused on keeping the children safe in ways that are as invisible to them as possible.

Below, we have some calendar reminders, two important summer updates (including registering for our Summer Sensory Exploration boxes!), and the next installment of FAQs related to re-opening in the fall.

Virtual Summer PopUps: we invite you to join in the following Zoom get-togethers:

- Tuesday, July 14, 9:30 am -- [Scavenger Hunt Show and Share](#) (bring along something that is your favorite color, your favorite book, your favorite mask, something that smells good, something squishy, something that gets wet, something that starts with "s" and something from outside)
- Friday, July 17, 9:30 am -- [Shabbat celebration](#)
- Tuesday, July 21, 9:30 am -- [Virtual Playdate](#) (details to come)

Re-Opening Task Force: Our ECEP Re-Opening Task Force will be meeting again on Monday evening, July 20. We will share the takeaways from this second meeting with you in a subsequent update. If there is anything on your mind that you would like the task force to explore, please email me or [Lara Davis](#), our program coordinator, and we will add it to the agenda.

Summer Sensory Exploration Boxes: As you may remember, we began working on a sensory exploration box to provide a little extra summer fun (and skills development) for our ECEP community. We have made great progress, and we plan to have the boxes ready for curbside pick-up at the Temple by the first week of August. The materials are divided into 4 bags, and our ECEP teachers will support the "opening" of a bag each week. Many thanks to the ECPC (Early Childhood Parent Community) for granting a stipend to our teachers to support the children virtually as they learn with these materials. The materials will require supervision at home while the children are using them, particularly for younger children and those who have not used these types of open-ended materials recently.

This box is a gift to our ECEP families from Temple Sinai - boxes will be available, one per family, as supplies last. [If you are interested in requesting a box for your family, please click here.](#) If you are so inclined, we invite you to make [a donation to the ECEP Discretionary Fund](#) in support of the 2020-2021 ECEP Re-Opening.



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Frequently Asked Questions: Thank you to those who have contacted us with questions about the coming school year. Here are our responses (based on regulations at this time).

- Will the children be able to spend additional time outdoors? Natalie Bergman (our “Nature with Natalie” nature specialist) and I met at the Temple recently to brainstorm how we might use our beautiful outdoor space in the backyard to create “destinations” for the children and teachers. We ultimately hope to create 4-5 different spaces which would allow the classes to be outdoors as often as the weather permits. Our ECPC chairs, Liz Keil (mom of Dylan in the 4s class) and Arielle Densen (mom of Barr in the 2s class), are working with us on plans for some new portable outdoor materials for these spaces. We will share more information in future updates - we may also ask for your suggestions in naming the spaces!
- What changes will be visible in the classroom as a result of the new Licensing requirements? There will be a number of changes in the classroom, but only a few will be visible to the children. As you are aware, there will be more frequent handwashing and cleaning, the teachers will be wearing masks (and children will be supported in wearing masks when it is feasible and developmentally appropriate), and we will be spending more time outdoors as weather permits. The children and teachers in each class will remain together, and all-school celebrations (like Shabbat) will take place without contact between classes. There will be some changes to the way we use common spaces (like the playground, hallways, lobby, and bathrooms), including limiting the opportunity that classes will come in contact with one another in these spaces. Otherwise, at this point, we don’t anticipate any other significant changes to the children’s experience. Our teachers are excited to be back in their classrooms and are committed to creating a classroom learning environment in which the children will interact with each other and the classroom materials in a careful but playful, supportive, and social manner. As one of the families on the Re-Opening Task Force stated so eloquently, our plan is that the children should be, and will be, generally unaware of all [that] is happening behind the scenes.
- Will multiple classes be scheduled for the same classroom in one day? In other words, will the classroom be used in the morning for one class and the afternoon for another? No. At this time, we have no plans to use a classroom for multiple classes in a single day. In addition, any shared space will be disinfected (according to state licensing and CDC guidelines) before another class uses the space.
- Since families won’t be entering the school during drop-off, pick-up and school hours, how will you foster relationships between and among families and teachers? Our goal is to begin creating a strong home-school connection in the weeks before the start of school. The plans will be created in collaboration with our teachers, our ECPC (Parent Community) and our Re-Opening Task Force. Beginning in mid- to late- August, we will be planning in-person and virtual



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opportunities for the children and families to “meet” their teachers and each other. All opportunities will be voluntary, though we do request at least one virtual meeting between the children and their teachers take place before the start of school.

Please do not hesitate to email any additional questions to us for inclusion in our FAQs -- your questions will help us provide information that is relevant and valuable to all of our ECEP families.

We will continue to send email updates regularly throughout the summer, and we hope to see you online or at curbside pick-up for the Summer Sensory Exploration Boxes.



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ECEP Re-Opening Update - June 30, 2020

Dear 2020-2021 ECEP Families –

We would like to update you on the first Re-Opening Task Force meeting that took place on Thursday, June 25. The meeting was structured to allow the parents to share their thoughts and concerns regarding the coming school year. There were three main takeaways from the meeting that will form our priorities, beyond physical health and safety, as we move forward with our planning.

Our three main takeaways can be summarized as follows:

1. The importance of careful planning for the transition to school - timing and logistics
2. The importance of reciprocal communication between the ECEP, Temple Sinai and families
3. The importance of supporting the children's emotional well-being and creating shared language between home and school

Thank you to those who have contacted us with questions about how school might look in the new year. Here are our responses (based on regulations at this time) to the three most frequently asked questions.

Will the children be required to wear masks throughout the school day? Licensing guidelines recommend that, but do not require, children to wear masks at school. As a school, we are required to develop a procedure that promotes the use of cloth masks when it is feasible and developmentally appropriate. We interpret this as our responsibility to create an environment that is “mask positive” – that explains that masks help us keep people safe, that people wear masks out of kindness (not fear), that many people wear masks for their work, that teachers wear masks at school because they care about each other and the children, that sometimes children wear masks at school for the same reason, etc. While things may change with licensing, at this point, we plan to ask parents to send masks with their children to school each day. Whether the mask is worn or not, it will be sent home at the end of the day to be cleaned.

How will the transition to the new school year look? Given the information we have at this time, our plans are to start the school year in-person at Temple Sinai. As we have shared, Licensing regulations are very consistent in their restrictions regarding visitors in the school during operating hours, so we are working on transition plans that will begin in mid- to late August before the first day of school in September (after Labor Day). These may include family visits to our outdoor spaces, “home visits” (virtual or outside students' homes), a brief visit to the classroom, and a gradual transition in terms of length of the school day, all to provide opportunities for children/families to get familiar with the school space and their teachers. Decisions on visits and on-site gatherings will be determined mid-summer and



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will be based on state health and safety precautions at the time.

How will refunds be offered in the event of a prolonged school closure? In the event of a COVID-related closure, we will utilize virtual platforms to maintain the home-school connection. Tuition refunds for Early Drop-off and Extended Day programs will be offered for the full prorated tuition amount during closures. If a closure extends beyond four consecutive weeks, we will offer partial tuition refunds for Toddlers Together, 2s, 3s and 4s classes for families whose accounts are current, in keeping with our ability to do so.

Your questions are very valuable in shaping our planning and the information we include in our updates. We welcome them at any time, and we will continue to provide more information as it becomes available.

Together, we will create a safe, supportive and joyful community for our children, families and teachers.



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ECEP Re-Opening Update - June 24, 2020

Dear 2020-2021 ECEP Families –

We understand that your decision to recommit to 2020-2021 Enrollment may be dependent on your understanding of the health and safety measures that we will put into place. Below is a very basic description of the new COVID-related requirements from the NJ State Office of Licensing.

Screening and Admittance: All staff and children will complete a temperature and symptom check before being admitted to school each day.

Social Distancing:

- Drop-off and pick-up will take place from the parking lot. Times will be staggered to reduce crowding.
- Only children and staff will enter the school during operating hours.
- Children and teachers will remain in their class group throughout the school day; classes will not mix for all-school gatherings, extended day options, or when using shared spaces (e.g., playground, indoor play, bathrooms, hallways).
- Within classes, children will not be required to maintain 6 feet of distance from one another. Activities that encourage close person-to-person contact (i.e., hugging, holding hands, games that involve tagging) will be strictly limited.

Enhanced Health and Sanitation measures:

- Staff will be required to wear cloth face masks or face shields while working. Children age 2 and older will be encouraged to wear cloth face masks to the extent that it is developmentally appropriate and feasible.
- There will be increased scheduled hand washing, including when children/staff enter the building.
- A detailed cleaning/disinfecting policy, with increased frequency for high touch areas and items, will be in place in accordance with Licensing and DOH requirements. This will include thoroughly cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting all school spaces at the end of each day.

Protocols in the event of COVID symptoms or exposure:

- Any child or staff member who arrives with, or develops, COVID-like symptoms will not be allowed to enter or remain in the school. As per Licensing guidelines, staff and families will be required to contact their healthcare provider for additional guidance.



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- The ECEP will have a detailed policy regarding communications about COVID symptoms and exposure. The policy will include Temple Sinai's commitment to communication of important information to families ***and*** families' commitment to communication with ECEP and Temple administration.
- If notified of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID in our ECEP community, we will inform our local Department of Health for up-to-date guidance regarding disinfecting and/or closure.

If you would like more information about the new requirements, you may contact us with specific questions or take a look at the resources on the [NJ Department of Families and Children's Coronavirus website](#). The new Licensing requirements are found in the document entitled, "[COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements](#)."

Our commitment to you: As we ask you to recommit to your enrollment for the upcoming year, we also recommit to you to create a joyful early childhood experience for your children that will support their development in all areas while keeping the entire ECEP community's health and safety in the forefront of our minds. As our tagline says...Each Child ~ Each Family ~ One Community.