



Carol Schoke Early Childhood Center at Temple Israel
14 Coleytown Road
Westport, CT 06880
Phone: 203-227-1656



Temple Israel
WESTPORT, CT

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives, the cumulative experience of many masters of craftsmanship; and it also marks the quest of an ideal after necessity has been satisfied and usefulness achieved."
-William A. Foster

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME – A Note from the Director	3
PHILOSOPHY/JEWISH EDUCATION/CURRICULUM	4-7
<u>THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS</u> Classes for Twos, Threes, Pre-K Fours, Tov Time, Afternoon Enrichment, Gan Katan & Spring Into Summer	7-9
ECC STAFF/STARTING YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT!	9-12
CONFIDENTIALITY/ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL/EMERGENCY/FIRE PROCEDURES	12-15
INCLEMENT WEATHER/HEALTH PROCEDURES	15-19
ECC DISCIPLINE POLICY/CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR	19-21
TOILET AND TRAINING	21-22
TOYS /FOOD ALLERGY/ SNACKS/LUNCH	22-24
BIRTHDAYS/FIELD TRIPS/CLOTHING/BABYSITTING	24-26
PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION/GIFT POLICY	26-28
SPECIAL EDUCATION/EVALUATION SERVICES/CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT/WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM	28 - 29
PARKING LOT PROCEDURES/ FEEDBACK PROCEDURES	29-30
CONSULTANTS	31
THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM	32-33

“A Note from the Director”

The Temple Israel Early Childhood Center offers quality early care and education for children two to four/five years of age. The professional staff, including the Director and experienced teachers, is primarily responsible for ensuring that the curriculum, physical arrangement, daily schedule and routines are designed to meet both individual and group needs. Within this environment, children are encouraged to make their own choices and participate in both self-directed and planned learning experiences while achieving the goals and benchmarks outlined by the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards.

The classroom environment is welcoming, stimulating and challenging. Problem solving, experimentation, and social relations are nourished through the use of developmentally appropriate materials and learning experiences. These are acted out in the following manner: blocks, dramatic play, water and sand, art, cooking, music and movement, small and large motor activities, science, social studies, outdoor play and language/literacy experiences. The professional staff applies its broad range of training and experience in early childhood education methods to promote the development of each child.

We feel that parent involvement is essential to ensure your child's success. The teachers and parents work together in a partnership for the child's best interests. Communication between these partnerships is very important and is emphasized throughout the school year through the parent bulletin board, weekly newsletter, photos and videos, conferences, email reminders and daily interactions.

Nancy Isaacs

Philosophy

In a caring and positive atmosphere, we create a warm and inviting place for preschoolers to learn. Social/emotional, physical, cognitive and creative skills are introduced through materials and learning experiences that are child-centered and teacher-framed. Work is planned that emphasizes “the process rather than the product”, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Based on research that “children learn through play”, classroom routines encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation and reinforcement through repetition. Schedules are designed to balance structure and free choice, as well as active and quiet times.

Recognizing that children grow at different paces, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level he/she has attained and moving forward a step at a time. Each child’s development differs by rate and style. We teach a love of learning by allowing children to experience their own stage of development and helping them to feel success without pressure. Information must be meaningful in the context of a child’s own experience and development in order for the child to understand and fully remember. Children’s responses to rote tasks do not reflect real understanding of information. If learning is relevant for a child, he/she is likely to persist with a task and to be motivated to learn more. Our program is both play based and developmentally appropriate in order to provide the best opportunity for all children to succeed.

Our objectives are to:

- Provide a challenging environment with developmentally appropriate materials and supportive teachers who understand and facilitate the learning process.
- Guide children’s construction of knowledge through play and active exploration of the physical and social environment.
- Maintain a quality preschool program that reflects the interests of the whole child, including social/emotional, physical, creative and cognitive development.
- Establish and carry out a child-centered curriculum based upon observing, understanding and applying each child’s individual skills and interests.
- Respect and acknowledge that each child is unique with an individual pattern, pace of growth, personality, learning style and family background, which is reflected both in the curriculum and adult interactions with the child.
- Encourage parent involvement and provide children and parents with appropriate support as needed.

Intentional Teaching

Intentional teachers observe the children to assess their educational needs and set appropriate individual and group goals for each child. Learning goals (Connecticut Performance Standards) for your child include all aspects of growth and are grouped into four domains: Personal and Social Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development and Creative Development. As teachers, we select several performance standards to work on each week. This process of planning and observing ensures that not only are your child's developmental needs being met, but they are continuously challenged to their fullest potential. Planning and Implementing, Observing and Assessing, and how repeating the cycle influences the progression of our curriculum. Documentation of the children's "work" illustrates the phases of intentional teaching.

The implementation of Intentional Teaching is facilitated by the process of engaging in ongoing child assessment. Utilizing the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework each classroom team will engage in assessing a small group of children on a consistent basis. The assessment shall include, but is not limited to: anecdotal records; work samples; informal notes; and observations. The primary use of the assessment will be to influence the classroom curriculum.

Our Curriculum

We use your child's interests and prior knowledge to individually tailor learning experiences. We take an eclectic approach to the curriculum, incorporating current research with time proven methodology.

Early childhood developmentally appropriate curriculum is carefully planned and guided integrating proven theories such as scaffolding (Vygotsky), which applies children's prior experience and knowledge to the daily and weekly plans and projects. Provocations set the stage for questioning and exploration of a given topic, while documentation highlights the process and collaboration of the children's work (Reggio Emilia).

The classroom environment and layout are guided by the principles of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner). The materials and learning centers in each classroom are chosen in response to the full range of multiple intelligences. Musical/kinesthetic (classroom music, rhyming, yoga), interpersonal (morning meeting, library corner), visual/spatial and logical/mathematical (manipulatives, block building) learning are all facilitated and encouraged in the classroom learning centers.

Projects (Lillian Katz, the Project Approach) begin with brainstorming sessions, which allow each child to pose questions and guide the scope and direction of his or her learning, while allowing the teacher to assess prior knowledge and experience. Knowledge of a specific topic will deepen as skills are introduced or further developed. Questioning,

risk taking and problem solving are all explored and documented through scientific inquiry aligned with early childhood learning (STEM). The children draw, measure, write, read, listen, discuss and problem solve in order to complete projects. In-depth investigations will challenge your child's thinking and further stimulate his/her development. Our staff evaluates children throughout all these processes to track learning and expand interests.

The curriculum goals of the Early Childhood Center are thoughtfully and carefully aligned with the CTEDS (Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards) as well as those recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Jewish Education and Culture

We reinforce the connection between your child and his/her Jewish heritage by integrating the unique traditions and values of the Jewish family into the curriculum. Shabbat is joyously celebrated each Friday morning as described below.

Traditional holiday festivals are celebrated in ways that are meaningful to children. Art, cooking, books, puzzles and other materials are available to enhance Jewish learning experiences. Adding to our Jewish curriculum are holiday visits with our cantor. Our cantor gathers with the children in their classrooms or in our school lobby to sing and provide engaging music experiences.

Parents are invited to participate in these special events as well as our weekly Shabbat celebrations.

Friday Shabbat Celebrations

Each Friday the classes celebrate the coming of Shabbat together with the clergy in the Sanctuary. All families are asked to celebrate with their child's class at least two times each school year. The Shabbat family will participate in the Shabbat celebration in both the sanctuary and the classroom, bringing white grape juice, flowers and their child's favorite storybook to read to the class. The family will also have the responsibility of providing a healthy snack on the day designated by the classroom lead teacher. Of course, parents are always welcome to stay and join us as we sing in the sanctuary on any Friday morning you are available.

Holidays and Festivals

The calendar of the Jewish year is celebrated in ways that are meaningful to children. Art, cooking, music, books, puzzles and other materials are accessed to enhance Jewish learning experiences. The Rabbis will also periodically visit with the children in the classroom to share stories with the children. Parents are invited to join in on Chanukah, Purim and Passover festivities. Early Childhood Center families are also

invited to attend all Temple sponsored holiday events. Classes will not be held on the Jewish holidays as listed on the ECC school calendar.

Mitzvot and Outreach

Even the youngest children can learn about “Tikkun Olam” – repairing the world - through meaningful and concrete acts of kindness and mitzvot (good deeds). The teachers and Director will plan activities and collections throughout the year that reflect the in-reach and out-reach needs of the community.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Twos Program

Our Twos program offers the opportunity for children to attend three, four or 5 days a week, from 9:00 am-12:00 pm September through December, with a transition to 9:00 am-12:30 in January. Beginning in January the children will have lunch at school. Each class is limited to 8 children with 3 teachers. Children are guided in learning how to separate from parent or caregiver and encouraged to develop important skills while engaging in developmentally appropriate social/emotional, cognitive, language and physical learning experiences. The classroom offers children the opportunity to gather as a group, participate in age appropriate sensory and creative experiences, and dramatic play experiences that help to develop essential social/emotional skills. Children in this program must turn 2 by December 31 of the year in which they begin the program.

3 day – Monday/Wednesday/Friday

4 day – Monday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday 5 day – Monday through Friday

Threes Program

The Threes Program meets Monday-Friday 9:00 am-12:30 pm. The main goal of this program is to encourage a sense of independence and a love of learning, while recognizing that all children have different experiences and backgrounds and must be regarded not only as participating members of the class, but also as unique individuals in unique stages of development. Throughout the day each child participates in small group, large group and independent learning experiences. Learning experiences are designed to promote the child’s ability to problem solve, self-regulate and negotiate as he/she explores and interacts with friends in the classroom. Our literature and print rich environment introduces the child to the concept of letters, particularly the letters in his/her name, and a love and appreciation for reading. Daily small motor activities begin to develop each child’s ability to draw and write.

The room is arranged with many interesting and inviting centers, including art, writing, book, dramatic play, block, sensory, science, math and manipulative centers. All activities in the classroom are based on the idea of the process being more important than the product.

Monday-Friday 9:00am-12:30pm

Tov Time Threes

Meaning “good” time, Tov Time is offered 3 days a week (Tuesday-Thursday) for three year olds. The program extends the school day until 1:30 pm. During this time your child will participate in learning experiences that include literacy, games and music and movement. Registration will take place on a rolling admissions basis and enrollment will begin prior to the start of school in September. Tov Time begins the second week of school.

Tov Time is an optional program that allows parents to select any combination of days for their child. Acceptance into the program is on a first come - first serve basis and determined by the ability to secure the appropriate staffing in accordance with state ratio requirements.

Fours Program

The Fours Program meets Monday-Friday from 9:00 am-1:30 pm. Children in this program must turn 4 by December 31 of the year in which they begin the program. The main goal of this program is to continue to develop the whole child while also providing developmentally appropriate experiences that will prepare him/her for kindergarten. Our focus also stresses the development of independence and self- esteem. Our dynamic curriculum provides learning opportunities that promote critical thinking and problem solving skills. Opportunities are provided to create and explore cognitive concepts that include math and science. A literature rich environment promotes and encourages the ability to understand print concepts and letter recognition. The classroom writing center incorporates a word wall and journal writing which promotes each child’s ability to read and write words. Upper and lower case letter writing and recognition as well as initial consonant sounds are taught and reinforced through a pre-k writing program. Daily small motor experiences strengthen the children’s abilities to draw and write.

Mathematical concepts are learned through manipulatives that promote one to one correspondence. A rich and varied block area encourages mathematic cause and effect.

Weekly formal science experiments are documented by the children in their science journals.

Gan Katan

Gan Katan, literally meaning “little garden,” is especially geared for the youngest members of our ECC community (12-24 months) and their parent or caregiver. Our hope is that your child will blossom at Temple Israel as they learn about Judaism, its holidays, and its traditions. Through this program your child will begin to embrace life-long Jewish values such as *kavod* (respect), *derech erez* (good manners), and *kehilah* (community) through developmentally appropriate stories, games, songs and activities

SPRING INTO SUMMER PROGRAM

We offer a 3 week program to bridge the gap between the end of the preschool year and the public school year. This program is offered to our 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Weekly themes may include “Under the Sea”, “Things with Wings” or “Summer Olympics”. More details become available in February.

After School Enrichment Programs

In an effort to ease the day’s schedule of running around to different after school programs, Temple Israel ECC offers you the option of extending the day right here at school. Enrichment is offered over three “semesters” – Fall, Winter and Spring. Your options may include Musical Mondays, Kempo Karate, Super Soccer Stars, PlayBall and Mad Science.

Please see the descriptions on our website, where a direct link to registration for each program is also provided.

Please note that registration is available on a first come, first served basis. Each session has a maximum capacity of participants to provide a quality experience for all.

ECC Staff

Warm, welcoming, competent, creative and professionally trained early childhood educators teach in our program. The Director supervises the staff through regular staff meetings, professional development and classroom participation. Each staff member is certified according to licensing regulations in C.P.R., First Aid, and administration of Epi-pens and emergency medications.

The staff participates in professional organizations such as the Jewish Early Education Network and Fairfield County Association for the Education of Young Children and attends annual in-service training to continually enhance their teaching and nurturing skills. The Rabbis, the Cantor, and Director actively participate with the children. Geri Stone, the Assistant to the Director, also knows the children and parents and is an important part of our school family.

Starting Our Year off Right!

The beginning of the school year is perhaps the most important time of being at Temple Israel’s ECC. In order to make this the smoothest transition possible, please be sure to read the following information, and contact the ECC office if you have any questions.

Visiting Days

Before school begins, each child will be invited to visit the school with a parent or primary caregiver. All classes will have a scheduled classroom visit. Information about these days will be mailed out in August.

Two's Transition

The school year begins on an abbreviated schedule for the twos, as they are “transitioned” into school for a comfortable and successful beginning. The schedule is sent to parents during the summer.

The experience, usually called “separation”, is better viewed as “creating new attachments”. Healthy separation is one of the most important child development milestones. It instills feelings of trust in children that are fundamental to their positive sense of self and the world around them. As children join our school for the first time or are returning, one of the most important things a teacher must do is help them and their families create these new attachments so they may have a successful year.

1. One of our primary goals is to help your child make a gentle transition from home to school and discover that school is a happy, interesting and fun place to be. Parents and teachers will work together to help your child feel secure and cared for in the school setting.
2. Separation is an important process and gradual process for all families.
3. Each child will adjust to preschool at his/her own pace.
4. We offer a well-planned curriculum that provides children with opportunities to exercise self-competency and mastery, which in turn makes children feel comfortable and safe.
5. Our nurturing staff is trained to be sensitive to the needs of the young child.
6. **Special Separation Guidelines for the Twos:** During the first couple of weeks of school, it is very important that your child get comfortable being left in this new environment. Therefore, we ask that since this is such a new situation, a parent or any primary caregiver stay readily available by phone. If your child is having a difficult time with separation we will continue to work on an abbreviated schedule until your child is able to stay for the full three hours. The Director and teachers will guide you through this process.

For Parents: Nurturing separation for all ages of children.

Separation is a time when both you and your child will experience many different emotions. Your child will often be caught between his/her need to be close to you and his/her growing independence. This is an important part of a child's growth, so we want this experience to be a positive one. Here are some strategies to help make the process go more smoothly.

1. Do something special the night before school begins.

You and your child can pick out what he/she would like to wear the next day and read a book about going to school.

2. Be creative with your morning ritual.

Take time to do something special. Plan for your child's favorite breakfast and make it together.

3. Decide on a special "friend" or object to bring to school.

These important objects can be comforting in the early days of school.

Ask your child if she/he might like to choose a favorite stuffed animal or transition item to bring to school. The item will be kept in the child's cubby during the day. Sometimes during the day, the children like to go to their cubbies and check on their item to assure that everything is okay.

4. On the way to school, discuss what each of you will be doing that day.

After your child has adjusted to school and knows you will be leaving, take time to talk about what you will be doing while she/he is at school.

5. Let your child see that you and his/her teachers are building a relationship.

Greet your child's teachers warmly, and, as you talk, bring your child into the brief conversation. "Jennifer, can you tell Rachel where we are going this afternoon?" Be positive with your children about the school day. "Your teacher has such fun things for you to do with your new friends."

6. Always take time to say goodbye.

It may seem tempting to leave while your child is involved in an activity and might not notice your departure, but this does not promote trust in the end. Clear goodbyes build trust. Over time, this can strengthen your child's belief that you will come back. Please accept suggestions from our teachers regarding adjustment to the situation. Although it is disheartening for a parent to see your child in an upset emotional state, the child will often be fine shortly after the parent leaves. At that time, the teachers will be able to involve the child in an activity. The Director will be glad to observe, offer suggestions and help the teachers, children and parents through this time. When you leave, say, "I'm going now." Alternatively, "I will see you at lunchtime." or "Have a great day." A simple statement and no

looking back are often enough. **Please do not ask your child for permission to leave.** You are the parent- you have chosen this school and a “Bye, I love you” will convey to your child that he will adjust to this great place. **Please do not return to the classroom once you have said goodbye. The Director will also check in with you as needed.**

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Confidentiality

Within Temple Israel confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of the TIECC who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents and/or children of TIECC will not be shared with parents as we strive to protect everyone’s right to privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: disability information, personnel related issues and health related information of anyone associated with TIECC.

Outside of TIECC confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. You may observe children at our center who are disabled, who have personal aides working with them in the classroom or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of TIECC are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. Conversely, the teachers will not discuss anything of a sensitive nature in front of your child or others. Teachers are always happy to speak on the phone after hours or meet for an early morning appointment. You may email the teachers or Director to make these arrangements.

Arrival

We all know that arrival is an important part of the day as children transition into school but did you know that there is learning happening during this time as well? Teachers work with children in many different capacities to follow directions and eventually to be able to complete two, three and four step directions without teacher assistance. The arrival process serves as one of the most important teachable moments and provides emotional security via these daily rituals. Being able to separate from parent or caregiver (social/emotional), hang up your jacket, lunch box and personal belongings (physical), washing hands (physical) and transitioning into play with friends (social emotional and cognitive) are all examples of steps we want the children to accomplish on their own. In order to achieve this independence we ask that you follow these guidelines when dropping your child off in the morning:

1. If you arrive before 9:00 a.m. please gather in the school lobby. Early drop-off is available at 8:15 daily in Room 7. Parents must pre-register and pre-pay online by 3:00 pm of the previous day to access. The morning time is very busy for our

teachers as they are preparing the classroom for the day. They will need the hallway in front of their classrooms to be clear so we ask that you do not gather in front of the classroom doors. When the teachers are ready they will open their doors and let you know they are ready to receive the children.

2. Use your time in the lobby to encourage your child to use the bathroom if they need to. Please do not allow the children to jump off the benches or run in the hallways. There are PJ Library books available for the children to look at.
3. When the classroom doors open please bring your child directly to his/her classroom. Until your child learns where their cubby is help them to find it. Encourage them to put away his/her belongings. A teacher will also be located in the cubby area to help your child find his/her cubby.
4. Once you have helped your child find his/her cubby please quickly wish them a goodbye and transition out of the classroom so that other parents and children may go through the same process. It is important to say your goodbyes and leave the classroom promptly so that your child may begin his/her day.
5. **If you need to speak to the teachers, it should be brief or an appointment can be made to talk at another time. Greeting all the children and parents and getting them involved must be the teachers' focus during the arrival and dismissal periods.**
6. Remember that for young children it can be difficult to comfortably enter the classroom if they are late. Please make sure you do not place any stress on your child by arriving late, on a regular basis, after the class begins. If you are late please sign your child in on the late drop off form.
7. Please call the office and leave a message or email nisaacs@tiwestport.org if your child is going to be absent so we do not worry and wait to start circle time for someone. If your child has a contagious illness or an illness which requires the use of antibiotics, please let us know to help advise parents of communicable illnesses – again, on a confidential basis. By staying informed we can help minimize the spread of illness. It is also our policy to call a sick child at home and sing him/her a special get well song – which has been proven to speed the healing process!

Dismissal

If you arrive early to pick up your child please wait in the school lobby until the appropriate pick up time. Once again we ask that you do not gather in front of the classrooms because once the children see their parents it will be difficult to finish up the planned learning experiences. Here are additional guidelines to follow:

1. It is important to pick up your child on time. If you must be late, please call the school office so we can inform the teachers and they can reassure your child. Children who are not picked up at the scheduled time will be brought to the Director's office to wait.
2. If you are carpooling, be sure that the staff has a detailed list of drivers and schedule on the required **Student Emergency Sheet**.

3. If a family changes caregivers any time during the year, the school must be informed in writing and the above procedure applies. Please collect all papers from your child's cubby or backpack on a daily basis.
4. Teachers are never permitted to dismiss a child to anyone other than the parent or the designated car pool person or caregiver, unless the teachers are given clear, written, dated and signed instructions from the parents in the form of a handwritten note or a message from the Director or ECC Assistant to the Director. New people who have never been seen by the teachers or Director will be asked to present their drivers license.
5. Once your child has been dismissed from the teacher, she/he is in the caregiver's care and is now that person's responsibility.
6. Please do not allow the children to play on the stairs in the lobby. It is only for access to and from the second floor. The leaf-shaped benches in the school lobby are for sitting only.
7. Please encourage the children to use their walking feet in the hallways and school lobby.

Plan and Procedure for Child Left after Hours

No child shall be released to any other adult unless the school receives written notification from the child's parent /guardian or verbal notification to the Director or her Assistant. Any child left beyond the five minute designated dismissal time is considered late. The teacher shall try to contact by phone:

- a. Parent / guardian
- b. Emergency contact person
- c. Alternate pick up person
- d. Westport Police Department will be notified one hour after school is closed.
- e. Department of Children and Families

Emergency Procedures

It is essential that we have on file current phone numbers for the following: home, cell, and place of work for parents, emergency numbers (grandparents, other relatives or close friends) and pediatrician. Be sure to notify the ECC Office if you change your home, cell or work phone numbers or address during the school year. Emergency sheets need to be updated.

Temple Israel takes every precaution to prevent accidents. However, accidents do happen. In an

emergency, we will try to contact you. If we cannot reach you, we will then call the other people on your emergency sheet in the order that you specified.

Please make sure those on your list know they have been designated to make decisions concerning your child in an emergency. If the emergency involves an illness or injury that requires immediate care, we will also contact your pediatrician when we cannot reach you. In the event of a serious accident, the ambulance and 911 will be contacted immediately. All necessary measures will be taken to protect your child's safety and well-being.

Please be sure to give us all necessary information and medication regarding allergies.

Emergency plans are posted in each classroom. A school accident report is filled out by the classroom teacher and the child's parent is asked to sign-off on the form. A copy is given to the parent and one copy is kept in the school office file.

Fire Emergency Plan

Procedure:

1. In case of fire, 911 is dialed.
2. The Director or Assistant to the Director will ring the school office bell to notify the teachers to leave the building.
3. Children are immediately evacuated to designated areas as posted in each classroom.
4. Teachers are responsible for the safe and orderly evacuation of all the children from the building. Attendance books, and emergency books, which contain all emergency card information, must accompany each teacher out of the building.
5. All children will reconvene on the playground located at the back of the property. Attendance will be taken and if necessary, parent or emergency contact person will be notified.

***We have regular monthly fire/evacuation drills and regular lock down drills*

Inclement Weather/School Closing Policy

When the Westport public schools are canceled, our school is canceled. **When the Westport Public Schools have a 90-minute or two hour delayed opening, we open at 10:00 AM and close as usual.** If there is an early dismissal we will close at noon and there will not be any Extended Day for the Fours or Tov Time program. In case of an emergency closing, (i.e. broken or frozen water main or no heat) parents will be notified by phone and email to pick up their child.

To inform you of a closing or delayed opening the Director will send out an email, text and phone call to the whole school via the "One Call Now" system, which each family must register for during the first month of school. The "HOTLINE" at 341-1766 (1 SNO) is for the Westport public school system.

The safety of the children and teachers is our utmost concern. To this end on occasion the

Director may make an independent decision from the Westport Public Schools about the need to close, delay or dismiss early. We do not make snow days up at the end of the year.

Health Forms and Procedures

Health Forms - Connecticut State law requires a yearly examination by a physician and completion of a health form. These completed current child health forms must be submitted to the Early Childhood Center office **prior** to the start of school. **No child can begin school unless a correctly completed, signed current health form (each form is valid for one year after the exam date) is on file in the ECC office.**

Notification of Absence

Parents are required to call or email the school office by 8:30 am if a child will not be attending on a scheduled day. This will enable the school to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. The ECC will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based, whatsoever, on your decision to share (or not) the reason for your child’s absence from school.

Illness Exclusion Policy

School is a place for children to learn and interact with others. If your child is sick, cranky, and uncomfortable or needs the full attention of a staff person, then your child deserves the comfort of home and caregiver. If your child’s presence compromises the health or care of the other children and staff, then your child should be at home. If your child starts the day with a stomach ache, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, persistent cough or fever, please keep him/her at home. If a child becomes ill during school, the office will call the parent to pick up the child. If a parent cannot be reached, one of the authorized emergency contacts will be called. We will keep your child comfortable in the Director’s office until he/she is picked up.

The following illnesses (and others indicated by your doctor) must be reported to the school:

1. A fever or vomiting during the previous 24 hours;
2. Nasal discharge that is yellow or green;
3. A persistent cough;
4. Vomiting and/or diarrhea (three or more loose bowel movements anytime during the day before);
5. Reddened eyes with a discharge and/or crusty eyelashes; conjunctivitis/pink eye
6. Undiagnosed mouth and skin sores;

7. General fatigue, unusually fretful behavior or loss of appetite might indicate oncoming illness
8. Chickenpox - A child can be re-admitted to school only after the rash has scabbed and no new lesions are forming (approx. 5 -7 days from onset);
9. Head Lice - Please report any case to the office and keep your child home until successfully treated. The Director will check your child's head before allowing them to return to the classroom.
10. Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever - A child should be kept home until s/he has been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
11. Influenza

In order to return to school following an illness, a child should be able to participate fully in activities, including outdoor play. She/he must be fever free for 24 hours.

Your child may not return to school until they are no longer contagious. Our nurse consultant, Jean McPhilly, RN, MS or our pediatrician medical consultant, Nikki Gorman, MD will be called if we have any questions regarding your child's health.

Head Lice Policy

This school policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of Temple Israel Early Childhood Center (TIECC) school community members in community efforts to control head lice. This school policy draws on information obtained from the CT State Department of Public Health, Westport Department of Health, Center for Disease Control and head lice removal experts in Fairfield County.

All members of this school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage head lice effectively. Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate head lice but we can reduce the number of cases if all school community members work together in a coordinated manner. In this school community there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:

- If a case of active head lice is detected in a classroom the parents of the child will be notified and asked to pick the child up. The parents will be provided with literature and other resources on how to treat head lice. Children will be checked by the Director or classroom teacher upon re-entry.
- The school will notify parents/caregivers of children in a classroom when a case of head lice is detected in the classroom to alert these families of the need to check their own children daily. If the child who is discovered to have lice has a sibling then the sibling's class will also be notified.
- The name of the child who is discovered to have head lice will be kept confidential.
- Only children who have live insects will be sent home. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that, "No-nit policies requiring children to be nit-free are not recommended because they may keep a child out of school needlessly and unduly burden the child's parents/guardians who must implement this measure".
- Parents/caregivers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice or nits and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.

To support parents/caregivers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to students, staff and their families at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Maintain (anonymous) records of head lice cases detected through the school, for monitoring purposes.
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatizing/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centers and local government (Environmental Health Officers).
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced
- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centers and local government (Environmental Health Officers) if required.
- The Early Childhood Committee will review the *Head Lice Policy* annually.
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

Blanket head inspections or head lice screening by school staff are strongly discouraged. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that such programs:

- Take away from student curriculum time
- Are potentially intrusive of student privacy
- Take over family rights and responsibilities
- Convey the message that head lice management is a school issue rather than a household and wider community responsibility

However, in a wider outbreak, the school reserves the right to call in/consult with licensed head lice treatment and prevention professionals.

Dispensing Medication

The ECC will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions. The ECC will only give medication to the child for whom the doctor's note is written and for whom the medication container is labeled. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor's note must identify the dates that the medication is to be given.

Parents are required to complete an Administration of Medication Form for each different medication that is to be dispensed. These forms are made available to parents at the start of the

school year and are also available in the school office. Medication forms, doctor's notes and medication are to be turned into Geri Stone or the Director.

The Director and teaching staff participate in yearly training on administering medication. The nurse consultant trains the staff on the five right practices of medication administration: 1) verifying that the right, 2) child receives the right medication, 3) in the right dose, 4) at the right time, 5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time medication is given.

Discipline Policy

Discipline at the Temple Israel Early Childhood Center (TIECC) is implemented with support and encouragement of positive behavior through a planned environment that provides a variety of activities from which the children may choose. The Temple Israel ECC staff follows developmentally appropriate practices using positive guidance, re-direction and setting clear limits to encourage self-control, self-discipline and positive self-worth.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited by anyone on the premises; any use of the described practices shall be grounds for immediate termination of staff. The Discipline Policy is covered annually with the staff and with all parents upon entrance into the program.

- No child shall be subject to physical, corporal, neglectful, humiliating, or frightening punishment, verbal abuse or threats by staff, or parents while on center property.
- No child or group of children shall be allowed to discipline another child.
- Unsupervised isolation of a child is never allowed.
- The withholding of food, water, or bathroom facilities is to never be used as punishment for a child.
- A child is never to be physically restricted in any way unless his or her actions would bring harm to self or others.
- An adult shall never address a child harshly, with intimidation or ridicule.
- Adults are never to discuss a child's behavior with another adult in the presence of other children or other parents. Written or verbal reports to parents regarding conflicts or disagreements between children shall not include the name of the child who hit, bit, or pushed their child.

TIECC staff maintains a safe, non-threatening environment. We foster creativity, encourage children to explore, and allow them to make discoveries. When inappropriate behavior occurs, it is dealt with immediately. Teachers individualize responses to the children's behavior, in relation to the particular child and the situation. They try to identify the cause of the inappropriate behavior and recognize that repeated problem behavior may be the child's way of signaling that he/she needs help in dealing with a certain task or situation. Teachers can then modify the learning environment and/or activities to help resolve the situation. We set limits and encourage self-discipline, because boundaries reassure young children and because order and stability are as important to a child as freedom.

To enforce the boundaries and rules at the center, the adults use the following techniques with the children:

- Clear statement of the limit. ("Blocks are for building, balls are for throwing.")

- Stating expectations positively. (“The blocks are for building.”)
- Redirection. (“Let’s go see what Jacob is cooking in the kitchen.”)
- Supporting problem solving and negotiation between the children. (“What words could you use to tell John that you would like to have a turn with that truck?”)
- Logical consequences or choices. (“You are having a hard time playing with the blocks without throwing. Please make another choice. Do you want to play with play-dough or to paint at the easel?”)
- Modeling effective ways to express feelings and emotions. (“It makes me sad when you grab the book from my hands. Which words can you use to let me know that you need something that I have?”)

Research tells us that positive discipline is much more effective when we tell the children what they CAN do instead of what they SHOULDN’T or CAN’T do. Below are some examples of how this approach is implemented by our staff.

Use the Positive	(instead of)	the Negative
Do use walking feet		Don’t run
Do keep your hands and feet to your own body		Don’t hit
Do use your inside voice		Don’t yell
Blocks are for building		Don’t throw the blocks
Toys are for playing with		Don’t throw the toys
Feet on the floor		No jumping
Give that to...Let’s put that...		Don’t take that
Hands off/Hands down		Don’t touch that
We talk with our mouths/we eat with our teeth		No biting

There are times when all of the above mentioned techniques are implemented and the problem persists. It is at these times that we invite the child to have a calming down period. We do not have a “time-out” place and this alone time is not seen as punishment. Rather it is seen as a time to regroup. Children will be asked to visit the book area and/or go for a walk outside of the classroom with a teacher.

If a child displays repeated inappropriate behavior and shows little progress toward changing that behavior, the teachers will call upon the child’s parent(s) to work cooperatively in developing strategies that will meet the child’s needs. **Any disciplinarian action that warrants calling the parent(s) will be documented and kept in the respective child’s file. This documentation is for the purpose of information and reference for future behavioral issues.**

Challenging Behavior Policy

At Temple Israel Early Childhood Center (TIECC) the purpose of discipline is to help children develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill. We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people’s feelings and to negotiate their own conflicts.

Challenging behavior is addressed first through teacher observations. It is important to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that predict and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. After the function of the child's behavior is assessed, positive and supportive strategies are then put into effect.

If a child exhibits continually challenging, disruptive and/or unsafe behavior that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will discuss the situation with a supervisor, parent, and/or other professionals to develop an individualized action plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. Staff will keep parents informed of the progress made. Referrals to community resources or an outside evaluation may be suggested.

Teachers like to work closely with parents to understand each child and to determine which methods work best for that child, thus, teamwork with parents is very important. If a parent declines to work with the staff in resolving the problem and/or the behavior problem persists resulting in a chronic situation requiring greater need for care than the TIECC teachers can provide, then the child's enrollment is subject to termination.

Toileting and Training

Most children are developmentally ready to begin toilet training between the ages of two and three. However, each child does develop at his/her own rate. Our toileting policy has been developed with these differences in mind.

In order to meet our license requirements, the Staff must follow an approved plan regarding the changing of diapers and the toileting of young children. Children entering the Twos do not need to be toilet trained. There is a changing table in each Twos room. We ask that parents keep us updated on any changes in the toileting process of their children.

We anticipate that most children enrolled in the Threes program will be potty trained by the start of school in September. Please inform us of your child's toileting schedule so we can anticipate bathroom needs. We take the children to the bathroom as needed and ask the children throughout the morning.

We understand that for some children they may still be working on the process. If a Threes child is not fully toilet trained we ask parents to contact the Director prior to the start of school so that a plan can be developed to assist with the potty training process. We will ask a parent or a designated contact to be available to change a child in the event of a consistent daily bowel movement during school hours. For occasional wet underwear, teachers will help the children change their clothing.

We do not recommend the use of pull ups during the training process but we will support your efforts should a pull up be necessary during the first weeks of school. *Please discuss extenuating circumstances with both the teachers and the Director so that arrangements and a plan can be developed for children with medical issues that prevent them from being trained.*

A few helpful tips:

- Please practice with your child on how to remove and replace his/her clothing by him/herself.
- Practice with your children the correct way to wipe themselves throughout the toilet training process.
- Dress them in comfortable, loose clothing that can be removed easily. Suspenders, overalls and zippers can be difficult for young children, **so please keep clothing simple**. Sweat pants and pants with elastic band waists are easiest for children to wear when beginning the process of toileting on their own.
- We know that accidents can happen so please send in a full set of extra clothes that fit well and are seasonally appropriate, so children can be changed into dry, clean clothes if the need arises.
- Occasionally, children in the process of toilet training have a setback when a new baby arrives or something else happens to disrupt the family routine. Please do not be discouraged. You can pick up the training in a few weeks when your routine is re-established. Once your child is wearing underpants, we expect your child to show consistency in using the bathroom at school.

Toys from Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are asked not to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Please consult the teachers to find out which books and music would complement the curriculum. Except for “transitional” toys needed in the early days of school, especially the Twos, we ask that your children leave all toys at home. If toys do come in during arrival the teacher will ask the parent to take them back home.

Food Allergy Policy

Temple Israel Early Childhood Center (TIECC) is committed to taking the necessary precautions to keep children with food allergies safe. We recognize the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies. These allergies may include a condition known as anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction brought about by exposure to certain foods or other substances.

TIECC does not claim to be, nor can it be deemed to be free of food items and non- food items that may lead to a severe allergic or anaphylactic reaction. The preschool will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis in accordance with this policy. Our school strives to be allergy and nut safe.

Medical Management

The parents of a child with food allergies are responsible for alerting the ECC director to the food allergy. Each student at risk for a life-threatening allergic reaction must have a Food Allergy Intervention Protocol Form completed annually by a physician and on file in the school office. A copy of this form will be stored with each of the student’s Epi-pens/Twinjects. (Additional forms for administering medications will also be required. Forms will be provided to parents and must be handed in on or before the first day of school. Children without the proper documentation and prescribed medication will not be permitted to attend school.)

Students' Epi-pens or Twinjects will be stored in a secure but unlocked location easily accessible by the classroom teachers to ensure prompt availability in the event of an allergic emergency at school. Any student who has been administered epinephrine via an auto-injector device such as an Epi-pen, will be transported to the hospital via emergency services personnel.

Teachers are trained annually to recognize the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction, as well as how and when to administer an Epi-pen or Twinject.

Teachers are responsible for transporting emergency medications at off-site activities such as fire drills and field trips.

Risk Reduction - Snack and Classroom Safety

If a child has a severe allergy to a food that requires the need for an Epi-pen or Twinject the director and classroom lead teacher will work with the parent to develop a plan to safely execute meals at school. Parents of children with food allergies are encouraged to provide a daily snack for their child. Providing your own snack significantly reduces the risk of your child being exposed to potentially life threatening foods. The director reserves the right to require parents to provide a daily snack if that is deemed the safest way to accommodate the allergy. The option of eating pizza, chicken fingers and Challah will be discussed and decided upon as part of a food management plan. Accommodating children with food intolerances will be done on a case by case basis with input from the director, parent and classroom lead teacher. Parents will be asked to fill out a Food Intolerance Status Form.

Packaged snacks which state that they were, or may have been, processed in a shared facility will be monitored closely by the classroom teachers. Depending on the presence or severity of students with food allergies in the classroom the teachers will have the authority to ask a child not to eat a packaged item sent from home that bears a warning regarding the presence or possible presence of nuts or other allergens.

Food brought into the classroom for class holiday parties must meet these same peanut and nut-safe criteria, and should include full labeling information. Students with food allergies are required to keep a supply of safe food choices at school for these type of occasions. Classroom activities that involve the use of food, either for craft or educational purposes, require advance verbal permission from the parent of a child with food allergies. Teachers must post a notice in their classroom regarding the presence of students with food allergies in their class, as well as the location of the appropriate medications. This will enable anyone who comes into the classroom as a substitute to be prepared for an allergic emergency.

Snacks

A mid-morning nutritious snack consisting of water, crackers, cheese, fruits or vegetables is provided. A snack menu is posted in each classroom. Please notify the Director and teacher if your child has **any food allergies**. This information needs to be recorded on the child's Emergency Information Sheet. (Snack items are prepared, stored and served in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines).

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions (i.e., lactose

intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets and any allergies, food or otherwise).

The weekly Shabbat family also brings in a nutritious snack on the day designated by the classroom teacher. The snack menu is posted on each classroom cabinet as per licensing requirements.

Lunch

Parents are responsible for providing lunch. A cold pack has to be included in the lunch box for items that need to be chilled. Ham/pork products and shellfish are not permitted. During Passover, the school provides matzoh and cream cheese during snack for the children. The school asks parents to pack only suitable for Passover meals; no breads, cookies, etc. Keep the lunches healthy and candy-free; no lollipops, full-size candy treats such as Skittles, gum, or soda in your child's lunch. Meat or poultry are allowed in a child's lunch. We will send home unfinished food, so you know exactly what your child has eaten, unless the container is not able to be sealed. **Our school is allergy and nut safe.** At any given time we have several children in the program with moderate to severe allergies to nuts and tree nuts so we ask all parents to abide by this policy. We do not allow peanut butter or peanut butter products in the classrooms. The Threes and Fours children are eligible to participate in purchasing hot lunch on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

We ask that you do not send in any food items that have nuts. Please refer to our Food Allergy Policy for additional details.

Birthdays

During this special time we invite a parent or family member to come into the classroom to read a book. If you are agreeable we welcome you and your child to donate the book to the school. The books will remain in the classroom for the entire school year and then they will be added to the school library. The donation is entirely optional and there is no obligation to participate. We respectfully request that you do not send in any food related items during your child's birthday. Many children in our program have a wide variety of food restrictions and allergies; therefore we cannot partake in these treats.

Please do not hand out birthday invitations at school unless all children in the class are invited. Mailing them to homes will avoid hurt feelings of children who are not invited.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of our curriculum at TIECC and may take place a few times a year for 3 and 4 year old children. Trips away from the building provide a visual and hands on experience related to what the children are learning in the classroom. 2 year olds will take field trips in the building and on the Temple grounds.

Each time a field trip is planned, each child will be required to have a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian. Children without a signed permission slip will not be able to attend. The Director and/or Lead Teacher will make arrangements for the child to be supervised in another classroom until the trip is over. The permission slip will let parents know: the location of the trip, the date, time and who will be driving their child*.

All field trips require adult supervision. When parents are asked to drive they are also

responsible for providing supervision as needed. The Lead Teacher will express his/her expectations of drivers prior to going on the trip. Any adult who will be chaperoning and/or driving on a field trip will be required to have the following:

- Current Driver's License
- Valid registration
- Appropriate liability and vehicle insurance
- A mobile phone

Teachers must ensure that each driver has with them in their car a folder with a copy of each child's emergency card and health form. For children with emergency medications a teacher trained to administer epi-pens must accompany that child in the car with the appropriate medications. Drivers must leave and return with the same children.

All vehicles must be either equipped with seat belts that are in good condition or for children fewer than 40 lbs a car seat must be available. Car seats must be appropriately restrained with seat belts. For children over 40 lbs a booster seat must be used until they are over a minimum of 60 lbs for seven years old.

Teachers are required to inform the Director of a field trip at least two weeks before the trip. The Director must give approval before a trip can be planned or communicated with families. Teachers are responsible for the following in the field and must bring these items:

- Signed Permission Slips
- Attendance Book/Sheet
- Copies of the emergency cards and health forms for all children on the trip
- Mobile phone
- First Aid Kit
- Name tags for children (first name and Temple Israel)
- Medications for children with severe allergies (medications must be stored at a moderate temperature)

*If you do not want your child to be driven by another parent please speak to your classroom Lead Teacher.

Clothing

All parents enjoy seeing their children looking their best. However, in school, children need to dress in clothing that can withstand an active pace, survive paint, glue and outdoor play. A desire to keep clothing free from mess or stains should never take precedence over new experiences and discoveries. Clothing with lots of buttons, zippers, belts and snaps make independence at the toilet difficult. Simple clothing that allows for independence gives children that wonderful feeling of success. Sneakers or rubber-soled, closed shoes are necessary for the active play at school. **Open-toed shoes, including flip flops, are not allowed on the playground. Please keep the Crocs at home as they are not allowed in the school or on the playground.** Safe shoes (i.e., sneakers) are required for playground use.

Each child needs a complete change of seasonal clothes in school. Please mark each item with

the child's name and place them in a labeled gallon-size zip lock bag. When soiled or wet clothing is sent home, please send back replacements as soon as possible, labeled with the child's name. Teachers will remind parents to send in seasonally appropriate clothes as the weather changes.

The children play outside daily. It is important that you dress your child appropriately for the weather. Please provide jackets, coats, boots, gloves, scarves and hats as needed. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

Babysitting Policy

In an effort to maintain the professional status of TIECC preschool staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, it is strongly recommended that parents not request the preschool staff to babysit for current preschool children or their siblings. Our staff immensely enjoys spending time with your children, but it is difficult for staff to accommodate requests for babysitting services as well as maintain an appropriate teacher-child and/or teacher-parent relationship in the classroom.

Parent Involvement

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled for late fall and early spring for three and four year olds. A winter and spring conference is scheduled for children enrolled in the Twos program. The purpose of these conferences is for parents and teachers to share their knowledge of the child to facilitate development. Conferences take place during non- school days. Child care will be made available for your preschooler so that you are able to attend your conference. Depending on coverage we may or may not be able to accommodate providing child care for younger siblings.

A conference may be arranged at any time throughout the year at the request of the parents or the teachers. Parents are expected to be available upon the request of the teachers or Director if issues develop during the school year. The Director is available to parents also. To allow for an uninterrupted time, please call to make an appointment. We are here to help your child grow and develop. We use the Connecticut State Department of Education Preschool Assessment to track each child's development in the educational domains. The Benchmarks for those domains for children ages 2 ½ through 6 are part of our planning guidelines for the daily lesson plans.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the preschool experience. You are the link between our school and home that provides us with individual understanding of your child. We welcome suggestions at all times.

Simple ways to participate are through our school celebrations like birthdays, Shabbat services parent coffees and holiday parties like Chanukah and Passover. We encourage parents and/or family members to share interests or unique talents in order to compliment the classroom curriculum. Parents of three and four year olds are asked to assist in class events such as field trips.

We have an ECC Committee that is incredibly active and works toward reviewing and discussing policies that continue to help our program thrive in the community. Room parents assist classroom teachers in facilitating holiday celebrations and events. An annual ECC Parent

Cocktail party takes place in the fall and allows for new and returning families to become acquainted. Other social experiences and meet ups are also a common occurrence.

Being that our ECC is part of the larger Temple Israel community there are many opportunities for parents to become involved. Each year the Temple hosts a Purim Carnival which is run jointly by the ECC and the Religious school parents. Each family is expected to volunteer and participate in some way at the carnival. Other events include Sukkah decorating in the fall, a spring gala, a women's group and food drives. Copies of the Temple Chronicle will keep you informed of when and how to get involved.

Early Childhood Committee

The mission of the ECC Committee is to support the Director and staff in engaging families, coordinating and facilitating ECC related Temple events, acting as a sounding board regarding matters of policy and promoting an overall positive image of the program in the community. Participating in this way the committee's goal is to ensure parent involvement, sound policy practices, and high quality education. The ECC counts on the Committee to be positive ambassadors for the school.

Room Parents

Each classroom has one or two class parents who act as liaisons between parents and school. These parents volunteer their time to help make phone calls or email to pass information on to all families and to help plan class parties and school celebrations. Classroom parents are chosen by opting to volunteer.

Parent-School Communication

Frequent and clear communication is essential for every family to feel welcomed, informed in our school and connected to our teaching staff. You will have the opportunity to speak in person to your child's teachers at Parent Orientation in September and briefly during the first few days of school and at arrival and dismissal. The daily "Ask Your Child About..." postings and email will help you speak with your child about his/her day. Photos/vidoes shared throughout the week and on Fridays with the weekly newsletter will help keep you informed. Each week on Friday afternoon, the Constant Contact newsletter you receive will include a section "From the Director" with calendar updates, special programs and other important notes.

Our Parent Orientation evening provides parents an oportune time to learn more about our practices and procedures, meet the staff and visit the classrooms. Through email newsletters and written correspondence, families will learn about their child's class activities. Teachers will inform families about their child's day, especially information about injuries and any changes in the child's health or eating habits. ECC teachers seek parents' specific ideas for working with the child while in the program.

It is important that you keep the school informed of any changes in your child's daily life or family circumstances over the course of the school year such as a new caregiver, a parental trip, an illness or death in the family (including a pet), and any changes in living arrangements or work schedules or the arrival of a new sibling. These may affect your child's attitudes toward school and the content of your child's play. We can support your child much more successfully if we are aware of such events. Changes that affect children, such as

changes in classroom, teacher, or use of special services, are discussed with parents before decisions are made.

Teacher & Administrative Gift Policy

It is at the discretion of each ECC family if they would like to participate in group gifts for the teachers, security guard, school director and administrative assistant. Room Parents may collect from each family a maximum of \$100 per child in their class for group gifts, which will be presented once during the year at the holidays. (Thus, a maximum of \$200 may be collected from a family with two children in one class.) As a guide, if \$100 were collected, then \$80 would be divided evenly with respect to the teachers of that class and used for the teachers' gifts, \$5 would be used for the security guard's gift, and \$10 would go towards gifts for the school director and administrative assistant. Funds for the gifts for the security guard, school director and administrative assistant would be aggregated from all the classes, and a collective, school-wide gift would be presented to each of them.

There will be a school-wide teacher appreciation breakfast at the end of the year in lieu of end-of-year gifts and the remaining \$5 out of the \$100 per child total will be allocated for that breakfast.

Contribution amounts to the group gifts can be anonymous. We suggest families not give anything "extra" on their own unless it is a homemade gift like a card, picture or treat made by your child, which are always allowed and appreciated by your child's teachers.

Student Special Education/Evaluation Services

We use the Special Education Services of the Westport, Weston, Wilton and other Public School systems. Services of a speech clinician, a psychologist, and a social worker are available. We have a system in place for making referrals if a **parent requests** to have their child observed by specialists from preschool services from the town in which they live. The preschool services department of any public school may screen any child over the age of three years, free of charge. Birth to Three programs screen children under the age of three. The classroom teachers and the Director will assist in this process as needed. Head teachers also attend PPT- Pupil Placement Team meetings in the school system as an advocate for the family.

Child Abuse and Neglect

You have entrusted your child's care to the professional staff of this program. We are committed to providing the best possible and most appropriate learning experiences for your child. Occasionally, there are factors in a child's appearance and behavior that lead to suspicions of child abuse, neglect or imminent risk of serious harm. Connecticut law requires that all child care professionals, including all staff of this program, report suspected abuse, neglect or imminent risk of serious harm to the authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and that the family may be helped.

Our policy below supports Connecticut laws in this regard and requires that all staff report suspected abuse, neglect and imminent risk of serious harm to the Department of Children and Families' Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and / or the local police department. At all times, the intent is to protect your child from harm and to provide services to strengthen your family.

Each and every employee of the Temple Israel ECC is mandated to report to their immediate supervisor that being the Early Childhood Director, or to a designee of the Early Childhood Director, any reasonable suspicion that neglect and/or abuse of a student has occurred. This suspicion includes, but is not limited, to the neglect/abuse of a student by an employee of Temple Israel. If there is any doubt about making such a report, such doubt is resolved in favor of the child and report is made immediately to Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Abuse and Neglect are defined by this agency as follows:

Child Abuse- Non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child for which there is not "reasonable" explanation.

Child Neglect -The failure of an adult to provide for the physical care, safety education and emotional well being of a child.

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a staff member abuses a child, the Director will suspend the employee. The suspension will be with pay and continued benefits and must remain in effect until satisfactorily resolved by the employer.

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect the Lead Teacher in the class will inform the Director and the Director will report to DCF. The DCF hotline number is 1-800-842-2288. The Director will inform the parents of the child that a report has been made to DCF. The Director will work closely with DCF representatives to ensure the ongoing safety of the child. If needed the Nurse or Physician Consultant will be contacted to ensure the health of the child. All Temple staff will be protected from discrimination and/or retaliation for reporting abuse or neglect by the Temple council.

If it is necessary for DCF to interview the student at school, staff will cooperate. The DCF social worker will have access to a setting, which protects the privacy of the student during the interview. School personnel will only be part of the interview if specially asked to do so.

Staff training on the topic of Abuse and Neglect will be provided on a yearly basis by a qualified health care consultant or by the Connecticut Department of Family and Children.

Program Withdrawal Information/Procedures

Enrollment is for the entire school year. Fees are not prorated for absences of days lost due to inclement weather/illness/family vacations. Written notification must be sent to the Director as soon as possible if it becomes necessary to withdraw a child. Registration and deposit fees are non-refundable. If a child is withdrawn for any reason, no refund of tuition paid or waiver of fees

owed are given. Request for refunds may only be made through the Temple Executive Director and approved by the Finance or Executive Committee of Temple Israel.

PARKING LOT PROCEDURES

- When the safety cones are placed in the front spaces of the Education wing entrance, it means, “**NO PARKING HERE**”. Do not try to park between them.
- The lane must be free of parked cars during ECC drop-off and pick-up times.
- If you leave your car running in those front spaces, and the Director or Administrative Assistant are walking your child in, you may remain there in the car for 5 minutes.
- If you have a sleeping child in the car in the morning and need to walk another child in, please call the school office. Geri Stone or I will be happy to assist by standing by the car with your sleeping child or walking your other child in.
- **The parking lot at the top of the hill is only for Temple Israel Staff Parking, which includes all Temple office staff.**
- **The crosswalk needs to be free at all times.**

Feedback Procedures- Compliments, Comments, Complaints

Our goal is to have a collaborative partnership between staff and families. We aim to achieve this through regular communication. As we are licensed by the Office of Early Childhood in the State of Connecticut, we have guidelines to follow for health and safety. Most problems that occur in the preschool setting are non-life threatening and can be resolved by teachers and parents by first discussing the situation.

The first line of communication is always your child’s Lead Teacher. Notes, telephone calls and conferences can often resolve any questions or concerns. In order to insure resolution of concerns, the Director can also be asked to help if a family or staff member continues to need assistance. If, after those discussions, issues are still unresolved, the Early Childhood Committee is available for consultation. Families and staff can contact the Committee chair.

Nancy Isaacs: School Office: 227- 1656 X 312

Email: nisaacs@tiwestport.org

Parents have the option of contacting the Office of Early Childhood;

State Licensing Representative: 1-860- 500-4472

Thank you for reading this handbook carefully and we remind you to refer to it during the school year. Please continue to read the supplemental notices and newsletters that we send home in your child’s mailbox and via email. You are an important member of our Temple Israel Early Childhood Center community.

We welcome suggestions, comments, constructive criticism and your involvement. We look forward to working together to benefit our children and programs.

For questions, concerns, comments, call the Early Childhood Center office to speak with:

Nancy Isaacs, Early Childhood Director, at 227-1656 x 312 or contact the school's support staff, Geri Stone at 227-1656 x335.

Consultation Services

Educational Consultant: Sheila May, Director
K'Tanim Preschool Congregation Beth El
1200 Fairfield Woods Rd.
Fairfield, CT 06825
(203)376-6655

Nursing Consultant: Jean McPhilmy, R.N.
5 Charcoal Rd
Norwalk, CT 06905
(203) 434-1112

Physician Consultant: Nikki Gorman – Village Pediatrics
156 Kings Highway North
Westport, CT 06880
Phone: 203-221-7337

Dental Consultant: Marvin Frimmer, D.D.S.
2303 Bronxwood Ave
Bronx, NY 10469
(914) 253-8142

Social Services Consultant: Joan Frimmer, MSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Westport, CT
(203) 454-7205

They will be available by phone to assist the Director and Staff when necessary and will be available to review any policies and In-Service Educational Programs for the Staff. They will monitor and consult with the program as needed and abide by the regulations set by the CT Office of Early Childhood.

The Hidden Curriculum

Unfortunately we cannot send each child home with a product of our Hidden Curriculum to be hung on the kitchen refrigerator or to be sent to grandparents and appreciated. There is no material product as there is in woodworking, drawing or painting, displaying creativity and development of skills.

Consider the children who spend a long period of time building an imaginative complex of blocks, adding garages, bridges, airports and houses. They adapt the space needed to fit the trucks and the number of children participating. Consideration is needed for this cooperative effort of building. Also, consideration is needed on the part of the other children to refrain from knocking the blocks down.

Creativity abounds in block play. In language arts the children are involved in the exchange of ideas, the planning and naming of buildings, discussing the function of various structures and making signs to enhance their creations.

In math they are developing early concepts of measurement, spatial relationships, classification, and recognition of shapes and size relations. They explore such problems as, is the bridge high enough? The doorway wide enough?

Block play aids eye-hand coordination, hand manipulation and visual perception. Is it balanced? Will it fall? How high is safe? Socially, children share a feeling of competence and enjoy the cooperative effort of working together. Even putting away has positive learning opportunities as the blocks need to be matched to the correct pattern on the shelves.

But at the end of the morning/afternoon we are unable to send home a sample of the artistry of their block building. It is part of the Hidden Curriculum.

Consider now the children at the water table pouring endlessly from one container to another. Children love water. It does what they want it to-- it moves; it goes in; it is soothing, relaxing, easy to handle. With water they are learning about volume. How much is full? Half full? Which container holds the most? How does a funnel help in pouring? Also, the children observe which objects float, which sink, what happens to soap suds. Eye-hand coordination is greatly developed with pouring as is hand manipulation. But we can't send home at the end of the day a sample of the giggling, happy talk and great feel of sudsy water splashing. This is also part of the Hidden Curriculum.

There is one final part of our Hidden Curriculum that goes home with each child which is to be nurtured and developed. There is an awareness and respect for others, a feeling of

confidence and well-being for himself or herself. There is no game or toy or instructional device on the market to teach this.

This learning is derived from attitudes and feelings throughout the school day. “Please” and “Thank You” are used by teachers and expected in return. Each person is important. Each person is different. Some toys have to be shared and then there are very special objects to be viewed with only our eyes.

We help each other. We listen to each other. If emotions get too overwhelming, there is room on a teacher’s lap for comfort.

So on the days when your child comes home and his or her hands are empty—remember he or she may really be carrying an important part of the Hidden Curriculum.