



# **Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center**

## **Parent Handbook 2024/2025**

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# General Information

## Contact Us

Email - [eccdirector@bethsholom.org](mailto:eccdirector@bethsholom.org)

Phone - (301) 279-7010 (Press 5 for ECC)

Address - 11825 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854

Netali Goldman – Director

[ngoldman@bethsholom.org](mailto:ngoldman@bethsholom.org)

x 212

Heather Strauch - Administrative Coordinator

[hstrauch@bethsholom.org](mailto:hstrauch@bethsholom.org)

x 214

Meredith Salamon - Curriculum Specialist

[msalamon@bethsholom.org](mailto:msalamon@bethsholom.org)

x 224

## Hours of Operation & Program Options

<u>Tiny Tots &amp; Toddler Options</u>		<u>Two's, Three's, &amp; Four's Options</u>	
8:00 – 9:00	Early Drop - <b>All Ages</b>	8:00 – 9:00	Early Drop - <b>All Ages</b>
9:00 – 12:30	Core Program - <b>Tiny Tots &amp; Toddlers</b>	9:00 – 1:00	Core Program - <b>2's</b>
12:30 – 4:00	Nap/Aftercare - <b>Tiny Tots, Toddlers</b>	9:00 – 2:00	Core Program - <b>3's &amp; 4's</b>
4:00 - 5:00	Late Stay - <b>All Ages</b>	1:00 – 4:00	Nap/Aftercare - <b>2's</b>
5:00 - 5:30	Extended Day - <b>All Ages</b>	2:00 – 4:00	Aftercare - <b>3's &amp; 4's</b>
		4:00 - 5:00	Late Stay - <b>All Ages</b>
		5:00 - 5:30	Extended Day - <b>All Ages</b>

## School History

Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center has been in existence for over 40 years. We operate under the auspices of Beth Sholom Congregation, a Modern Orthodox shul that is proud of its diverse and welcoming community. Beth Sholom Congregation offers religious, social and educational programs to members and their children, as well as to the greater community.

## **School Philosophy**

At Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center, we believe that each child is a unique and special individual. Children are viewed as competent, curious, full of knowledge and interested in connecting to the world around them. Our play-based, child-centered program gains inspiration from the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia, Italy. We support active, 'hands-on' learning through exploration of materials, ideas and the relationships that we develop with one another. The environment we carefully provide for the children is viewed as another teacher in the classroom. Our warm and nurturing program is designed to meet the individual needs of each and every child. We encourage children to grow and develop at their own pace and in their own way. Children develop cognitive, social, emotional, language and motor skills through meaningful classroom experiences. Rich learning experiences include dramatic play, block building, science, math, cooking, storytelling, music and peer play activities. Importantly, our children develop an intense feeling of pride in their Jewish heritage as they observe and participate in traditional Jewish customs, rituals, prayers and holiday observances.

## **Staff**

Each class has two educators, a Lead Teacher and at least one Assistant Teacher. Our staff is chosen for their warmth, educational training and experience, knowledge of Judaism and love of children. Teachers are required to grow professionally throughout the year. They participate in professional development both through Jewish Federation of Greater Washington's Jewish Life and Learning training and our school's workshops and training. Additionally, our entire staff is trained in CPR and First Aid.

## **Professional Days and Faculty Meetings**

Staff professional days and faculty meetings are scheduled throughout the school year to ensure that teachers increase professional growth and communicate with each other regarding important school issues. Staff meetings cover topics such as school-wide policies and procedures, curriculum development and the planning of school events.

## **Licensing**

Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center holds a Child Development Program License issued by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care. We are a participating school of the Jewish Life and Learning Department of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. We also hold a Private Educational Institution License issued by Montgomery County, Maryland. We are a proud participant of the Maryland Excels Program.

# Curriculum

## **Flow of the Day - (Daily Schedule)**

During our core program, children begin the day with classroom exploration. During this time, children have the opportunity to self-select what they play with in the classroom. Children choose from a wide variety of manipulatives, blocks, dramatic play, art exploration, science and nature, book corner and the writing center (4's classrooms). The classes also partake in our morning specialties, snack time, outdoor play (indoors during inclement weather), morning meeting, library visits, art studio and much more. At the end of the day, children enjoy lunch together before dismissal or participating in afternoon activities (for those who stay for our afternoon program).

## **Physical Fitness**

At Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center, physical education and gross motor activities are an important part of the curriculum. Our school provides safe and appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage large muscle activities throughout the day. A variety of fixed outdoor equipment (slides, climbing structures) is available to meet the needs of active children. Outdoor play equipment supports climbing, balancing, hanging, sliding and other full body movements. Portable play equipment (hoops, balls, bean bags, etc.) is also available to promote important skills such as throwing, catching, striking as well as motor planning, eye-hand and eye-foot coordination. Teachers incorporate many physical activities in their daily plan for individual children, small group and whole group play. We encourage children to wear clothing that allows for active movement, as well as sneakers or closed toe shoes.

## **Special Activities**

As part of our morning core program, we offer music, yoga and a movement. All of our specialists are trained in their field of expertise and have had a criminal background check before working with children.

## **Shabbat**

Shabbat celebrations take place every week in the classroom and always include challah and grape juice. In addition to class Shabbat celebrations, every Friday the children will join together for a special Shabbat Sing with our ECC Administrative Staff, our music teacher Anne Laurie, Rabbi Antine and Rabbi Cooper.

# Communication

## Weekly Highlights

Every Friday, the administration updates parents on weekly happenings and Shabbat sing via the Remini app and on Instagram.

Additionally, the Director is available to talk to any parent who is concerned about his/her child or has a question or suggestion related to the school in general.

Communication is offered via email, phone or Zoom meeting.

## Weekly Class Newsletter

Every Friday, your classroom teachers post a newsletter on Remini, re-capping the week and informing you of any important information they wish to share with you.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year for all children. These conferences allow the teacher to share relevant information about your child's school behaviors, social skills and academic development. Parents are encouraged to share observations, thoughts and concerns about their child's growth and development. Optional conferences (on an as-needed basis) are scheduled any time during the school year.

Assessment and teaching are inseparable processes. When children are assessed as part of the teaching-learning process, the information gleaned helps gauge what things children already know, what things could be understood with more practice and experience and what things are too difficult without further exposure and exploration. We use a variety of informal assessments to support children's learning, to identify strengths and to identify any learning differences or special needs a child may have. Teachers carefully observe children during individual, small group and large group activities. Teachers reflect, review and analyze each written observation in order to understand the child's development, growth and interests. Samples of children's drawings, writings and other work are reviewed. Children's answers to oral questions as well as the questions they ask themselves are all part of the assessment process. The information is shared with parents so both teachers and parents understand the child's developmental level across all domains (cognitive, physical, social-emotional, language).

## **Child Assessment**

Assessment and teaching are inseparable processes. When children are assessed as part of the teaching-learning process, the information gleaned helps gauge what things children already know, what things could be understood with more practice and experience and what things are too difficult without further exposure and exploration. We use a variety of informal assessments to support children's learning, to identify strengths and to identify any learning differences or special needs a child may have. Teachers carefully observe children during individual, small group and large group activities. Teachers reflect, review and analyze each written observation in order to understand the child's development, growth and interests. Samples of children's drawings, writings and other work are reviewed. Children's answers to oral questions as well as the questions they ask themselves are all part of the assessment process. The information is shared with parents so both teachers and parents understand the child's developmental level across all domains (cognitive, physical, social-emotional, language).

## **Password Protected Remini App**

Each class will post pictures on our password protected Remini website. Each parent will have login for the Remini site/application. Additionally, pictures and highlights of your child/ren's day will be shared on Remini for your convenience. You may communicate with your child's teacher using this platform, as well.

## **Teacher Meet & Greet**

All families are invited to school to meet their child's teachers. This is an opportunity to set both parents and children at ease and to get to know the children a little prior to the official start of the school year.

## **Back to School Night**

Parents are invited to Back to School Night approximately a month after school begins. At this meeting, parents are informed of school procedures and policies. Parents are also given a description of the school day and introduced to the school community.

## **Parent Initiated Contact**

Parents are welcome to call the school at any time to speak with an administrator or teacher. If a teacher is in class, the phone call will be returned at the teacher's earliest convenience.

Our teachers and administrators are also happy to schedule a conference with a parent at any time. We ask that you refrain from discussing a lengthy issue at drop-off or pick-up time. Teachers are always open to a quick message, such as a home situation which might be troubling the student that day. This type of message helps the teacher to be sensitive to a student's special situation or needs.

You may also reach out to your child's teacher via Remini. Teachers will respond to messages in a timely manner, after the end of the school day. During school hours, our teachers are focused on taking care of your children. If you need to give an immediate message to the teachers, please call, message the Administration on Remini, or email our office and we will pass along the message.

Many of our teachers are also members of the local community and are seen on a regular basis outside of school at the grocery store, synagogue or other social settings. While it may seem convenient to approach a teacher at these times, we ask that parents respect the teachers' privacy and the right of the children not to have personal issues discussed in these venues.

### **Parent Concerns**

**If a classroom problem arises, it should immediately be discussed with the teacher**

**first.** If the problem involves more than one classroom, or a sufficient result is not obtained by speaking directly with the teacher, the Director will be notified. If the problem still persists, the parent may approach the Beth Sholom Congregation Executive Director or the Early Childhood Center Board Members.

### **Cell Phones**

During the first few weeks of school, we will be in contact with all parents, and in particular those whose children are having difficulty with the separation process.

**Please be patient when waiting for a response to a Remini message to the teachers during the school day, as they are not allowed to be on their phones while taking care of the children.** If you need to contact them urgently during school hours, please Remini message the Administration, email, or call the office and we will pass along the message.

### **Screen Time**

Except as set forth in §C(4) of this regulation, a child in attendance who is: younger than 2 years old may not be permitted to view any passive technology; and 2 years old or older may not be permitted to view more than 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive technology per week.



## **Out of School Contact with Teachers**

To maintain a high level of professionalism, we do not allow our teachers to babysit for any families currently enrolled in the ECC. We will provide a list of willing Beth Sholom Members who have children at the babysitting age who parents can contact.

Additionally, in order to respect our teacher's time outside of school, we ask that parents refrain from inviting teachers to birthday parties. However, the teachers can enjoy celebrating with your children in school.

## **Parent Involvement**

### **PTO**

The Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) acts as a support group for the school, a social conduit, a forum for discussion and a charitable organization. All parents are encouraged to participate. The PTO coordinates school activities, school improvements and fundraising projects. The PTO also co-sponsors with the school a number of parenting workshops and classes throughout the year. PTO meetings are held regularly throughout the year. We urge you to attend to help enhance your child's preschool experience. You can volunteer in a large way (chairing an event) or in a small way (making a few telephone calls or writing a few emails). All efforts, large or small, are greatly appreciated!

Here are some of the exciting special events planned:

### **Room Parents**

Responsibilities include:

- Organizing a class playdate at the park
- Collecting class 'chesed' money for lifecycle events
- Organizing a Parent's Night Out
- Collecting teacher's class wish list
- Sending out email reminders for school events
- Ice Cream Scoop Night
- Sukkah Party
- Chanukah Celebration
- Pajama Havdalah Party
- Purim Carnival
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Transportation Day

## **Field Trips (3's & 4's)**

Field trips are a valuable part of the learning experience. They provide enriching educational experiences, different from those that are possible in the classroom. We need parents to serve as chaperones on these trips. Parents will be informed of all trips as far in advance as possible and are asked to sign a permission slip allowing their child to attend. All parents are welcome to attend, although the ECC is financially responsible only for as many chaperones as we need. Parents are asked to dress their children in Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center t-shirts on field trip days.

## **Student Services**

### **Student Resources**

Early intervention improves and enhances the development of a child with developmental delays or other special needs. It is key in the development of children who may require additional support. We offer a variety of services to help parents identify any area in which their child may need extra support. Vision and Hearing Screening and Speech and Language Screening will be offered during the first few months of school. Information on these screenings will be sent home and interested parents can register for them through the ECC office.

In addition, we contract with Child Development Consultants, LLC, and an experienced team of early childhood experts, to provide services on an as needed basis. Child Development Consultants, LLC, is an organization committed to supporting children with developmental delays or learning challenges through assessments, consultation, program development and professional education. Occasionally, a teacher may have concerns about a specific aspect of a child's development. After observing and consulting with the Director, the Director may suggest to the parents that an assessment/observation be scheduled with the consultant team. With parental permission, the assessment and follow up consultation are provided to the parent free of charge.

We believe that parent education is also important to the success of our children and our program. To that end, we try to provide parent workshops and information that parents will find useful and stimulating. Please look for information regarding upcoming workshops on our website, via email and in our weekly highlights.

### **Special Needs**

If your child is receiving support services from an outside provider (therapist or specialist), the provider is able to meet with your child at school. We have space

available for a provider to work with your child, in private, at any time during the day. If the provider needs to work with your child in the classroom, we ask that you inform both the Director and your child's teacher of the days and times that the provider will be in the building. If your child needs to have services provided off-site during the course of the school day, please make sure that we are aware of those days and times. Also, if your child needs to ride the bus to and from his/her program, our staff will deliver the child to the bus and wait for him/her to be dropped off at our site.

Additionally, please let us know about any services your child is receiving. If your child has an IFSP or IEP, please share that information with us. It is important that we work together to best serve and meet your child's needs. It is helpful for therapists to speak with classroom teachers to ensure that a child's individual needs are being met, both in and out of the preschool settings.

## Food

### Kashrut

Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center observes a strict level of Kashrut in school facilities and during all school-sponsored activities. As such, **no food from any private home may be heated up on school premises.** A thermos is recommended for keeping food warm until lunchtime. Fruit may be brought in to celebrate birthdays or other special occasions, but it must be prepared in our kitchen.

### Allergies and Food Sensitivities

**Sholom ECC is a Peanut /Tree Nut Aware School.** This means that **no products containing peanuts or tree nuts will be allowed in the school building.** We know that this may be inconvenient to some, but we trust that you understand how serious this is. We all want students at our school to be safe. Please be sure to follow the important steps listed below.

1. Do not send any food items to be eaten as lunch or snack in our school with ingredient labels indicating they contain **peanuts or tree nuts.**
2. Food items from a facility that **processes nuts are okay.**
3. Parties are a special time for children, but can be difficult for the child with a food allergy. When purchasing baked goods, please be careful about the ingredients. Many local stores carry nut free baked goods.

## Nutrition

We know that children need healthy food for their growing bodies and developing minds. We provide fresh fruits and vegetables at least three times a week. We also limit fats, sugar and salt. Parents are responsible for sending lunch to school with their child each day. We encourage parents to pack a well-balanced lunch which includes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein. We ask that you limit sweets. Teachers pay close attention to the lunch's children bring to school, encouraging students to eat their 'healthy' foods first. If a sweet treat is included for dessert, teachers try to make sure it is eaten last. In the unlikely case that a child forgets to bring a lunch, the school provides a healthy lunch for the child.

## Snacks

Snacks will always include milk, water, fruit, protein or a starch. Some examples of our snacks are:

- Multi-grain or whole wheat crackers
- Bananas
- Pretzels
- Clementine's
- Celery with cream cheese
- Apple slices
- Eggs
- Cheesesticks

## Shabbat Celebrations

Shabbat celebrations happen every week and always include challah and grape juice.

## Birthdays

Please be sensitive to the levels of religious observances in our school community and refrain from scheduling private parties on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. We also ask that parents follow our school Kashrut and allergy policies. **\*Please reference our Kashrut**

**Guidebook on our ECC website.**

For birthdays celebrated in class, we encourage you to share a special activity or book to help celebrate. If you would like to send in a treat, we strongly recommend that you bring in fruit, a small baked good or another healthy snack. Small portions are best for small bodies. Candy will not be permitted.

- Food must be certified kosher (dairy or parve). Please refer to the symbols below.
- Food must be in an unopened package.

- Foods prepared in private homes cannot be shared in school.
- Baked goods maybe purchased from Shalom Kosher Market, Kosher Mart, Kosher Pastry Oven, Ben Yehuda Café, or Siena's Kosher Restaurant.
- Foods should be sensitive to **any** food restrictions of the children in the school and class.
- All food should comply with our Peanut Free/Nut Free Aware food policy.

### Lunches

Children's lunches should be kosher dairy or pareve (no meat). If you child has any perishable foods you may pack an ice pack with their lunch or place all refrigerated items in a labeled disposable bag with your child's name. Due to covid-19, we are unable to put reusable lunch bags in the refrigerator.

### Acceptable Hechshers



In addition to these 5 symbols you may view the entire list at:

<http://bethsholom.org/content/kashrut-symbols>

**\*\*Please note: plain K is not acceptable\*\***

### Hot Lunches

We are happy to offer Pizza Lunch on Wednesdays for an additional fee. More information will be provided during the first week at school.

## Policies

### Admissions & Mandatory Paperwork

Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center serves a broad spectrum of the Jewish community. In order to register for our program, all families must submit a completed application form to the school office and any associated fees. The Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center does not discriminate or turn families away on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin or gender. However, if, in the opinion of the Director of the Early Childhood Center, the program will not meet the needs of the child and/or family, then the Director reserves the right to deny admission to the School.

Each child must have a current Immunization Record and Health form on file. Children will not be admitted to school until these papers are on file.

Additionally, all parents must complete an Emergency Form (included in the back to school packets) in order for their child to attend our program. You will also receive a form to fill out via Remini for parent permissions.

### Inclusion Statement

Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. Children with and without special health care needs, disabilities or delays have access to the same routines, play and learning experiences. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support everychild needs to reach their full potential. The School will make every attempt to implement necessary adaptations or modifications in order to meet the needs of the child. However, the Director of the Early Childhood Center reserves the right to remove the child from the School if the child's needs cannot be met. If this is the case, the Director will meet with the family to recommend other, more appropriate programs to better meet the child's needs.

### Class Placement

Children entering our 2s, 3's & 4s programs must meet the age requirement of the State of Maryland which is **September 1<sup>st</sup>** of that school year. Toddlers must be 18 months old and walking on their own to attend our Toddler Program. Tiny Tots must be 12 months old to begin our program. Depending on enrollment, some classes may require mixed

age groupings according to the ratio requirements of the Maryland State Department of Education.

Class placements are based around calendar year ages, unless compelling evidence is presented to Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center to do otherwise. Limited exceptions to this placement policy may be made at the discretion of the administration, in conjunction with classroom teachers and the child's parents in order to meet the goals of the child's IEP, as necessary.

### **Toileting**

Children in our program are not required to be toilet trained to be admitted to our school. We recognize that toileting may be challenging for both children and parents, and we are happy to assist with this developmental milestone. Toilet learning requires collaboration between parents and teachers and we ask that parents keep us informed of toilet learning progress. Children in all classes are offered several opportunities for toileting. **Once the child is working on toileting at home**, the teachers will make an effort to continue the learning in school by offering frequent trips to the bathroom. The teachers will assist the children in undressing and dressing, as necessary. Soiled diapers, as well as noticeably wet diapers, will be changed. Please be sure to keep a supply of disposable diapers and wipes at the school. For sanitary and licensing reasons, parents are not permitted to send children to school in cloth diapers.

### **Outdoor Play**

We are required by the Maryland State Department of Education to take our children outside once in the morning and once in the afternoon, unless the weather is inclement. Inclement weather includes rain, heavy snow, gusting winds or extreme heat. In the winter, all classes will go outside if the temperature is above 32°F. When it is below 32°F, it will be at the discretion of the individual classroom teachers whether or not the class will go outside. The wind chill factor will be taken into consideration. If the children are taken outside, it will be for no more than 15–20 minutes. If it is a snowy day, children will go outside in the snow. In the spring and summer, if the temperature is above 95°F, the children will be taken outside early in the day, for up to 30 minutes. Air quality will be taken into consideration.

With this policy in mind, please make sure that you send in appropriate seasonal clothing with your child; a warm jacket, gloves or mittens, a hat and boots for when it is snowy in winter, and t-shirt, shorts and a water bottle in summer.

As with our illness policy, if you feel your child is unable to participate in the program 100%, including outdoor play, please do not bring them in that day.

### **School Closing & Weather Policy**

From time to time it is necessary to close school due to inclement weather or other unforeseen emergencies. In such cases, **Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center will make an independent decision on whether or not to open during inclement weather.** If we feel we need to have a delayed opening, Beth Sholom will open at 9:15 am and there will be no early drop care. Early closing will be made at the discretion of the ECC Director. Parents will be notified of any closings by text alert and email.

### **Positive Discipline & Behavior Expectations**

At Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center, we use positive discipline strategies to help children grow socially and emotionally, to get along with others and to feel good about themselves. Positive discipline strategies not only include interventions to be used with children when they misbehave, but also techniques to create a respectful, fair, consistent program. All children deserve to feel emotionally and physically safe within their classroom and school. Child guidance through positive discipline is a process of assisting children in understanding and using positive behaviors. The teachers seek input from the children, whenever possible, to develop clear rules and expectations for the classroom. Children are encouraged and helped to reflect upon their behaviors so that they understand the consequences of their actions. Reflection helps each child and the entire class understand their emotions and the impact that their behaviors have on themselves and others.

To accomplish these goals, the following strategies, among others, are used as appropriate:

- Set children up for success. We develop routines, schedules and planned activities with a back-up so children are involved in constructive activities and interacting positively.
- Establish simple, clear, consistent rules and expectations. Simplicity and consistency are key elements to preschool children learning appropriate behavior. The children have input into the rules.
- Offer choices. Offering several choices is a good way to teach decision-making, while allowing children input into their day.



- Ignore negative attention-seeking behaviors. We do not address negative attention-seeking behaviors. We understand that rewarding negative behaviors would reinforce them.
- Reinforce positive behavior. We give lots of attention to children who are behaving in ways that are appropriate.
- Redirect. We create another activity or event to draw a child's attention away from inappropriate behavior.
- Show appropriate ways of seeking attention. Biting and hitting often indicate a need to communicate. We demonstrate appropriate ways to communicate and get attention, like a gentle tap on the arm.
- Offer alternatives to undesirable behaviors. We model appropriate behaviors such as negotiating for a toy instead of grabbing it.
- Reward children for achievement. When a young child has several triumphs at changing a behavior, we take a moment to tell the child that we noticed the change. When the child makes an effort to do the right thing, we recognize the effort with a kind word, sticker or hug.
- Conflict prevention. We identify the right combination of classroom materials, play equipment, structure, and space. We understand that the overall classroom environment can help prevent conflict;
- Teach problem-solving skills and moral reasoning. We help children understand the natural consequences of their actions.

An individualized school behavior plan will be developed for any child who displays uncontrollable, inappropriate and frequently aggressive behavior and who does not respond to the above strategies. To develop the individualized behavioral plan, a learning needs specialist may be consulted to design a plan to best meet the child's needs. The cost of additional staff, if deemed necessary, will be the responsibility of the parents. If, after the implementation of an appropriate individualized behavior plan, a child continues to be a threat or a danger to himself/herself or other students or staff members, Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center reserves the right to temporarily or permanently dismiss the child from the school.

## **Biting**

Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all toddlers and two year olds bite, biting is considered a normal stage in a child's development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. Young children may bite for any of the following reasons:

- **Teething**: Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something might relieve the pain
- **Sensory Exploration**: Toddlers and 2s are very good at using all of their senses to learn about the world. The "oral mode", an important style of learning for infants, and continues into the twos.
- **Cause and Effect**: Toddlers and 2s are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response. Often, the response is dramatic: there is a lot of noise and attention from adults.
- **Self-Assertion**: This is probably the most common reason toddlers and 2s bite. It is a way to express frustration when they don't yet have the language skills to do so. When a child is bitten, that child is immediately comforted and the bite is washed with antibacterial soap and a Band-Aid is applied if skin is broken. The biter is told very firmly, but without anger, something similar to "Teeth are not for biting. Biting hurts very much." The teacher encourages the child who was bitten to express his/her feelings. "It hurts" or "Don't bite me" are sentences teachers will model for the child to repeat.

Parents are informed about what happened by receiving an 'Incident Report' on the day of the incident for each child involved. In order to preserve the dignity and confidentiality of those involved, the report does not include the name of the child who was bitten or the name of the child who did the biting.

If the biting persists, the Director will be notified and a plan of action will be put into place by the Director, parents and teachers.

## **Reporting Abuse**

All ECC staff are required by law to report any suspected incidents of physical or emotional child abuse to the proper authorities.

## **Employee Misconduct**

At Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center, it is our obligation to the children, parents, school and synagogue, for our entire early childhood staff to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Below is a list of offenses that will warrant immediate actions. Depending on the severity of the offense and the Director's discretion, violations may be followed by a warning, a suspension, and/or termination of employment. Severe offenses may result in immediate termination.

Should an offense be reported, the situation will be assessed and a full investigation with all parties involved will be done.

- Inappropriate behavior toward parents. All staff are expected to be professional and courteous at all times. If a parent is rude to you, please allow the Director to handle the situation.
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child
- Withholding of food, nap or other comfort from a child
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed while employed by the center. Fighting, threatening violence or boisterous and disruptive activity in the workplace
- Leaving a child unattended, inside or outside
- Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Insubordination that shows gross disrespect such as threatening, profanity, or yelling at the Director
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Sharing confidential information about the center or any of its employees
- Promoting and sharing rumors or negative information about Beth Shalom ECC.

## **Health and Safety Procedures & Policies**

The health of our children is a primary concern for both the parents and school professionals in our community. When children are feeling well they are happier and more open to new information and experiences.

### **Immunization Policy**

Maryland State law requires that all children registering for school be up-to-date with their childhood immunizations. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommended immunization schedule is available for review in the school office.

Beth Shalom ECC requires all children to be immunized before entering our program. We do not accept religious exemptions.

## **When to Keep a Child Home**

The school must rely on parental judgment and discretion in deciding whether children are ill and unable to attend school. We want to emphasize that a child who is ill is not an effective learner. In addition, schools can be breeding grounds for contagious infections unless parents exercise reasonable caution in monitoring the health of their children. If a child is brought to school and is unable to appropriately participate in the day's activities, the child will be sent home immediately.

**Fever** – Defined as 100.0° or higher; a child should be free of fever and associated symptoms for a full 24hrs the day AFTER they were sent home, without the aid of medication, prior to returning to school. This means they must stay home at least a full school day AND be free of fever and symptoms before returning to school. A child will not be readmitted to school the day after they were sent home with a fever.

**Rash or Eye Inflammation** - The condition should be diagnosed by a physician and a physician's note should be sent in, prior to sending a child to school/returning to school after being sent home with symptoms.

**Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea** - A child who is nauseated or has vomited/had diarrhea must be kept home for at least 24 hours AFTER the last episode. A child will not be readmitted to school the day after they were sent home with a diarrhea.

**Colds/General Feelings of Unwell** - A child who exhibits the early symptoms of a cold should be monitored at home before coming to school. Cold symptoms, especially sneezes and coughs, can easily transfer germs among children. Frequent hand washing is important to avoid spreading colds. If your child exhibits signs of feeling unwell, we will ask that you keep your child home and monitor them accordingly. They may return to school only if their symptoms subside, they are fever free, and have not been on any OTC medication for at least 24 hours.

**Antibiotics** - A child whose doctor has prescribed antibiotics should be on medication for a *minimum* of 24 hours prior to returning to school. Often, while the child is no longer contagious at this point, they are not prepared for the rigors of a classroom setting. Please consider your child's best interests when deciding when it is appropriate to re-enter school.

## **Illness During the School Day**

If a child becomes ill at school, or requires medical assistance due to an accident, parents will be contacted immediately. In the event that a parent cannot be notified, the emergency numbers listed on your child's Emergency Form will be called. It is our expectation that our parents (or those authorized by parents) will pick up the sick or

injured child promptly. Please keep emergency numbers current, and inform people whom you designate as contacts of their responsibilities.

### **Illness Prompting Parental Notification by the ECC**

Some common childhood diseases, while usually mild, can occasionally have more serious consequences. With this in mind, the ECC often sends home notifications to parents regarding the presence of a certain illness in the class. This notification is based upon the recommendations of the State Health Department, as to which illnesses prompt notification. If a child in the ECC is diagnosed with a condition in this category, like strep, flu, pink eye, or covid -19, the ECC will provide email notification to parents of children in that child's class(es) or school-wide, if necessary. Notification will occur as soon as possible after the administration becomes aware of the diagnosis. Should the parents contact the administration outside of normal school hours, the school will make every effort to contact families as soon as possible, but full notification might not be practical until school returns to session.

### **Dispensing Medication in School**

If a child will be taking medication in school, parents are required to bring the medication to the office in an original container with a pharmacy label. Most pharmacists will issue two containers upon request at no additional charge (one for home and one for school). **The school will also require a signed Medication Dispensing Form, from both the parent and the student's physician, before we can administer medication. NO medication, either prescription or over the counter, will be dispensed unless these conditions are met.** Forms are available in the school office. Parents must give children the first dose of medication at home. Only one dose of non-prescription medication can be dispensed in school per day.

Parents of children with chronic medical problems such as asthma, severe allergies or diabetes, must discuss these conditions with the child's teachers and the Director prior to the start of the school year so that appropriate action can be taken should a problem arise. Special medications or devices should be made available to the school by the parent with specific instructions from the child's physician or health care provider.

### **Pediculosis Policy (Head Lice)**

Head lice, also known as pediculosis, are neither a health hazard nor a sign of poor hygiene and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. It is unlikely that all head lice infestations can be prevented, because children and adolescents come into head-to-head contact with each other frequently. It is prudent to teach children and

adolescents not to share personal items such as combs, brushes, hats, and pillows, but individuals should not refuse to wear protective headgear because of fear of head lice. In environments where persons congregate, infested individuals should be treated promptly to minimize spread to others (American Academy of Pediatrics ).

If a child is found to have pediculosis while at school, a parent will be notified. The child will be allowed to remain in school, however prompt treatment must occur the same day of notification to avoid any further discomfort to the child. As a precaution, and to avoid a full class infestation, all members of the affected child's class and the child's siblings attending Beth Shalom will be checked at school as well.

If a child has persistent infestations, at home remedies are not effective, and/or the class becomes affected, then the school will request the child visit their pediatrician for further medical advice. At this point, a child will need a doctor's note indicating a treatment is in place and the child is able to return to school. A courtesy notice stating that lice/nits have been discovered in the class will go home to all families in the affected child's class.

## **Security**

ECC families may enter the building through the Fox Wing entrance located in the center of the building. The elevator can be accessed through this entrance, as well.

The ECC has 6 internal doors - 3 leading from the synagogue into the school building and 3 internal stairwell doors by the main ECC entrance. These doors should be shut and locked at all times. Door access is via the phone app reader or key card.

If a grandparent or caregiver needs access for drop-off or pick-up, please let us know ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly.

The ECC has a camera system in place, which includes 34 cameras throughout the interior and exterior of the building. All shul & ECC administrators are able to view these live feeds on their computers for easy monitoring. These cameras are also monitored by a central monitoring hub through the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

As always, please do not hold the door open for anyone you do not recognize. Conversely, please understand if someone on staff does not allow you to enter the building. Again, this is for everyone's safety.

If a nanny or such person is terminated from employment etc., please notify the school office immediately and we will remove them from the system.

Each class, as well as the ECC administration, has their cell phone with them at all times. In the event of an emergency, faculty will be notified via our WhatsApp group. We have scheduled intruder lockdown drills at least twice a year to prepare the staff and children, in the event that an intruder gains access to our building.

Beth Sholom has also installed a PA system throughout the entire building to notify staff and anyone in the building in the event of an emergency.

In addition to the safety measures mentioned above, the ECC has 5 hours of daily police coverage.

The safety & security of your children is of utmost importance to us. These security measures help create a safer and more secure environment for your children.

# Arrival & Dismissal

## School Arrival

School arrival procedures ensure that the school day gets off to a safe, organized start. In addition to developing good habits, children need a few minutes to mentally prepare for the start of class. Our core school day runs from 9:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m./2:00pm (4's). Many young children have difficulty entering into an already busy classroom and arriving on time also eases the transition from home to school.

**We therefore ask that parents arrive at either 8:00am or 9:00 am for arrival and stay in their cars in the carpool line.** Please do not park in the carpool lane and walk up to the door. We will open the doors at arrival time to welcome your children, and staff will go up to car's to bring your children to the building.

If a parent needs to park, we ask that parents park their cars in appropriately marked spaces in the parking lot. Please refrain from parking, even momentarily, in the handicap parking spots or yellow-lined curb areas. A brief good-bye is suggested to ease the child's transition from home to school. Arrival is a good time for a quick comment or question between parents and teachers, however lengthy conversations should be addressed at a later time. Issues that require privacy or a more in-depth discussion should, be scheduled for a separate, mutually agreed upon time.

## School Dismissal

Children who are in the 2's and up, and going home at 3:45 pm or earlier, will be picked up from the carpool lane in front of Fox Wing. Tiny Tots and Toddlers will be picked up down the ramp by the lower, side entrance of the ECC. Any children that goes to Late Stay or Extended Day will be escorted by their teachers to the correct location.

Late Stay/Extended Day Dismissal: All remaining children dismissing at 4:40 pm or 5:20pm will dismiss from the carpool lane in front of Fox Wing.

**Any changes in your child's dismissal schedule must be written on Remini or emailed to your child's teacher and the ECC office. Advanced notice must be given.** If we have not received notice, we will not release your child to any other caregivers until we have verbal or written confirmation from you.

## Special Situation Pickups

It is extremely important that we maintain the highest level of safety for our children. We therefore request that you observe the following procedures when a change in your usual dismissal routine is required.



**Contact the ECC office via email or Remini if pick-up is during class time.**

An administrator will relay the message to your child's class and someone will bring your child out to your car.

**Come to the office if pickup is during class time.** An administrator will go to your child's class and bring your child to the office. This avoids unsettling the other children in the class.

**Late Pickups**

Your child expects you and looks forward to seeing you at the end of each day. **Lateness can cause uneasiness, especially in younger children, so please be on time.** A child remaining after school hours will be brought to the office or late stay room until a parent arrives. **Parents who pick up their children late will be assessed a late fee of \$1.00 per each minute of tardiness, after a 5 minute grace period, at the discretion of the ECC**

**Administrative Team**

**Before & After Care**

If you need to sign up your child for before or after care as a drop-in (space dependent), please notify our office via phone or email. Families will be billed for these drop-ins. Bills will be mailed to your home after the records are given to our bookkeeper. Please inquire with our office about drop-in rates

Families will be billed for dropping off children before our core classes open at 9:15 am.

**Friday Dismissal**

On Fridays, in preparation for Shabbat, Aftercare and Late Stay dismissal is at 4:00 pm. All other dismissal procedures remain the same. There will be no Extended Day option on Fridays.

# **Financial Responsibilities**

## **Financial Responsibilities**

To enroll your child at Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center, a non-refundable \$200 registration fee is required with a completed application. Upon acceptance, a non-refundable deposit of \$350 must be submitted to hold a place in the program for your child. The deposit is credited to the student's annual tuition (credited to the Family Benefit Package), which can then be paid through one of four methods:

- Payment in full
- 2 equal payments in September & January
- 10 Equal Installments, with post-dated checks for the first of each month (August to May)
- 10 equal debits to your credit card on the first of each month (August to May)

Tuition is based on a yearly tuition schedule, NOT monthly. Credits will not be given for weeks or days when school is not in session, as the tuition rates are calculated with these school closures in mind.

Families with more than one child enrolled at the Early Childhood Center receive a 5% tuition discount off the core program for each child after the first child.

Please note that Beth Sholom Congregation members receive priority enrollment and a reduction in fees for most programs. Along with the many other benefits of membership, this incentive is a strong argument for considering Synagogue membership.

**No application will be accepted and no space held without payment. ALL SCHOOL PAYMENTS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE.** No refunds will be given for absence or withdrawal prior to or during the school year. Should the ECC exercise its right to deny admission to a child, a full refund will be made.

In the event any part of your Synagogue account becomes delinquent, your child will not be admitted into the school until the account is brought to good standing.

### **Returned Check Policy**

In the event that a deposited check is returned due to insufficient funds, the amount of the check plus the bank charges assessed must be received within 7 days.

### **Financial Assistance**

Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center provides tuition assistance to families who are unable to pay full tuition for our program. Tuition assistance is available **on our core tuition only**, but we will take into account the entire number of hours that your child is in our program.

Financial assistance is given on a yearly basis and all families who wish to be considered must submit the application prior to the upcoming school year. All financial assistance packages end in June for the current school year. Due to an increase in financial assistance, we ask that you be vigilant in your request as we are only allotted a certain amount of funds for assistance per school year.

The information on your application, and any additional attachments, are kept in the strictest confidence, and only reviewed by our financial assistance committee.

### **Additional Financial Assistance Options**

We here at the BethSholomEarlyChildhoodCenter understand that each family has different financial needs, and due to our participation in the Maryland Excels Program, we are able to accept the Child Care Scholarship assistance through the state of Maryland for all qualifying families.

If that option does not apply to your family, we accept the Working Parents Assistance Program as well. Please contact the office for additional information.