



# TEMPLE EMANUEL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK **2024-2025**



Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center  
10101 Connecticut Ave.  
Kensington, MD 20895  
301-942-2000

# WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Families,

In 2008, Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center was founded as an integral part of the greater Temple Emanuel community; a community that honors intellectual and spiritual growth, holds a deep appreciation of the natural environment, practices a commitment to social action, and respects and celebrates the diversity of our membership. Since then, these rich Jewish values continue to guide and influence the culture and daily life of our ECC program.

Our learning practices and pedagogical philosophy are inspired by Constructivist Theory, the Reggio Emilia Approach, and our Reform Jewish values. We view children as competent and capable citizens of the world, full of rights instead of needs. Our educators view themselves as partners and collaborators in the learning process rather than purveyors of knowledge. We encourage children to take risks, question, hypothesize, and think critically.

At TEECC, we uphold the value of community and connection, learning to recognize ourselves within the other. Relationships are at the forefront of everything we do. By cultivating rich and meaningful relationships amongst children, families, and educators we foster a learning environment where children feel safe, valued, connected, and supported. Our goal each day is to help children realize the many capacities they possess and discover a love of learning through curiosity, exploration, and inquiry.

We look forward to partnering with you on this journey. Here's to a fantastic year together!

L'Shalom,

**Dana Robinson**

Director of Early Childhood

## ABOUT TEMPLE EMANUEL

### Vision Statement

Temple Emanuel is an inclusive and progressive Reform Jewish community. Our vision is to be a spiritual home rooted in God, Torah, and Israel; where tradition meets innovation, and where everyone can find their unique path to Jewish engagement.

### Mission Statement

1. Cultivate innovative and participatory approaches to worship, spirituality, ritual, and practice that resonates with our diverse congregation.
2. Provide exceptional educational experiences for all ages.
3. Champion and pursue social justice and social action as ethical and moral imperatives in pursuit of *tikkun olam*, repairing our broken world.

4. Strengthen connections to the Jewish people worldwide and advocate for the State of Israel as a just and secure homeland for the Jewish people and all its inhabitants.
5. Foster open dialogue and understanding on complex issues, including Israel and current events, while respecting diverse viewpoints within our community.
6. Enrich our worship and community through music and the arts.
7. Warmly welcome and fully integrate interfaith families and non-Jewish members, celebrating the rich tapestry of our congregation.
8. Nurture a culture of philanthropy to ensure our temple's financial stability and growth.
9. Develop strong leadership and plan to secure our temple's future.
10. Grow our membership while maintaining our down-to-earth, *heimish* (warm and informal), atmosphere.
11. Build bridges between Jewish and non-Jewish communities in our area, promoting understanding and cooperation.

Through these endeavors, we strive to create a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive Jewish community that enriches the lives of our members and positively impacts our broader society.

Temple Emanuel's Ethics Code can be found on our website: <https://www.templeemanuelmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Temple-Emanuel-Ethics-Code-4-15-24.pdf>

## **TEMPLE EMANUEL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER – WHO WE ARE**

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## ECC LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE



**Dana Robinson** ([dana@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:dana@templemanuelmd.org))

**Director of Early Childhood:**

Responsible for the vision, leadership, supervision, and fiscal management of Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center (TEECC). The Director serves as the primary liaison to the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees, Senior Staff and Clergy, ECC Families, and broader Temple Emanuel community. The Director oversees daily operations, creates and implements policies and procedures, and coordinates all ECC events and programming.



**Jennifer Gauthier** ([jgauthier@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:jgauthier@templemanuelmd.org))

**Pedagogista:**

Serves as a compass for our curriculum ensuring that the values and principles of TEECC are reflected in the life of the learning in the classroom. The Pedagogista partners with educators to plan and implement curriculum through meetings, informal observations, and modeling. The Pedagogista supports the growth and professional development of the school through staff meetings, providing resources, and parent community events. The Pedagogista oversees daily operations of the school in the absence for the Director.



**Leslie Hurd** ([eccleslieh@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:eccleslieh@templemanuelmd.org))

**Atelierista:**

Serves as a thinking partner with the ECC educators and Pedagogista, promoting the use of materials as means through which children can research theories and express thinking. The Atelierista supports teaching teams in selecting materials and designing contexts that meet the planning goals of the educators. The Atelierista curates the school's collection of materials and maintains the community's Atelier.

## Temple Emanuel Clergy & Senior Staff

Dianne Neiman – Executive Director: [dianne@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:dianne@templemanuelmd.org)

Rabbi Adam Rosenwasser: [arosenwasser@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:arosenwasser@templemanuelmd.org)

Cantor Lindsay Kanter: [lkanter@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:lkanter@templemanuelmd.org)

Laura Naide – Director of Congregational Learning: [lnaide@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:lnaide@templemanuelmd.org)

Snir Holtzman – Director of Youth Engagement & Shaliach: [youth@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:youth@templemanuelmd.org)

## 2024-2025 Temple Emanuel Lay Leadership

Andrew Stavisky – Temple President: [president@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:president@templemanuelmd.org)

Robbie Voigtmann – ECC Board Chairperson/3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President: [robbiev@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:robbiev@templemanuelmd.org)

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER PHILOSOPHY

Our program is based on the spirit of community where children, parents, and educators feel a strong sense of partnership and belonging. By building strong relationships within our community we believe children are

given the support they need to explore, create and research theories about the world around them; to learn and develop in joyful and meaningful ways.

## Guiding Principles

***The image of the child:*** We see children as competent and capable; as responsible decision makers, citizens within our learning community, with rights instead of needs. We believe children start with the potential for creating relationships, constructing knowledge and negotiating the world around them. As a community we support their curiosity and thirst to make sense of the world. The 'Third' Teacher - Educational environments and aesthetic design

***The role of space:*** We believe our spaces should be beautiful, safe, engaging, and purposeful. The school's aesthetics have intention and the environment is designed to invite exploration, encourage relationships, and foster communication. Educators thoughtfully organize space for large and small group exploration, balancing the learning environment to meet the needs of the entire community.

***The role of time:*** The ability to work at our own pace allows educators and children an opportunity for discovery. It provides space for listening, dialogue and reflection. Intentional investigational studies are not fragmented; rather they build upon one another over time. As the children revisit their original work and ideas, time provides the opportunity for new experiences which deepen the knowledge already learned. Working at a slow but purposeful pace deepens our knowledge and relationships.

***The role of the educator:*** Our role is different than in many other schools. We are not "experts" giving our knowledge to children, rather we are co-learners working with children to discover and construct knowledge together. Our role is to support, guide, observe and partner with children. Through thoughtful planning we scaffold learning, explore new theories and experience joy as partners in the learning process.

***The role of materials:*** We recognize that spoken words are not always the initial way children choose to communicate. Materials offer children the opportunity to express ideas, thoughts, and questions through a limitless number of media. Materials are used in research as a way to demonstrate an idea, test a theory or ask a question. Materials are a means for thinking.

***The role of documentation:*** Documentation of children's work in progress is viewed as an important tool in the learning process for children, educators, and parents. Photos of children engaged in experiences, their words written out as they discuss what they are doing, feeling and thinking, and the children's interpretation of experiences are displayed to deepen understanding. These traces lend insight into children's thinking, offering the community an opportunity to reflect and ask questions thereby spurring deeper and meaningful research.

**תְּקוּן עוֹלָם Tikkun Olam (repairing the world):** Tikkun Olam emerges throughout our day in both concrete and abstract ways. Through composting, recycling, and caring for our environment we find tangible ways to make a difference. Through a more abstract lens, how we treat those around us; advocating for others and using our voices to support each other Tikkun Olam represents our call for social justice.

**הַכְּנֵסֶת אֹרְחִים Hachnasat Orchim (welcoming guests):** We aspire our school to mirror the message sent by Abraham: our doors are always open. Seeing and appreciating the other and enveloping them within our communities is a constant goal.

**שְׁמֵרֵי אֲדָמָה Shomrei Adamah (caretakers of the earth):** As citizens of this planet we are seeking ways to gain a greater understanding of its blessings. Through gardening and outdoor explorations we seek to enrich our knowledge and create reciprocal relationships.

**צְדָקָה Tzedakah (justice and charity):** Through passing the tzedakah box each shabbat we create a concrete method for understanding the value. We are on a constant quest to deepen our understanding of tzedakah moving from an act of social action to one of social justice.

**כְּבוֹד Kavod (kindness and respect):** Treating those around us with kindness and empathy helps us build strong bonds and establish deep and lasting relationships.

## TRANSITIONING TO PRESCHOOL

The transition to preschool can illicit mixed emotions for both children and parents. Our staff of educators and the leadership team are here to support your entire family during this adjustment period. In early August, TEECC will hold a New Family Orientation for incoming or recently enrolled families. We also encourage families to visit the ECC with their child during the months leading up to the new school year. Please reach out to the Director to schedule your visit.

## First Week Graduated Schedule

To help ease the transition to school, new children are expected to attend their first week on a graduated schedule:

Children 2 years old:

- Day 1 & 2- Half-day schedule (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)
- Day 3- Pick up after naptime (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)
- Day 4- Begin full-day schedule

Children 3 years old:

- Day 1- Half-day schedule (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)
- Day 2- Pick up after naptime (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)
- Day 3- Begin full-day schedule

Children 4 years old:

- Day 1- Optional half-day schedule (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

*\*Please Note: Returning TEECC children are not expected to follow a graduated schedule*

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Families are an integral part of our program. We welcome, encourage, and depend upon parental involvement to enrich the culture of our community and the learning occurring in our classrooms. Family members are invited to join the community each week for Ta'am Shel Shabbat (A Taste of Shabbat) as well as throughout the year for various events such as Hanukkah and Purim celebrations, Pre-K Siyum, Parent Coffee Hours, family picnics, and much more.

## Volunteer Opportunities



In addition to participating in the day-to-day life of TEECC, parents are invited to take on additional responsibilities within our community through a variety of volunteer opportunities such as becoming a Room Parent, coordinating an ECC event, or joining the ECC Board.

## **ECC Board**

The ECC Board is made up of current and former ECC parents, the Director of Early Childhood, and other ECC staff members. The mission of the ECC Board is to foster deeper connections amongst the TEECC community and the larger Temple Emanuel community. The Board serves as a resource for the Director and families and promotes the best interests of the ECC to the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees. The Chair of the ECC Board serves on the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees and Executive Committee.

### **2024-2025 Temple Emanuel ECC Board Members**

Robbie Voigtmann (ECC Board Chairperson)

Nicole Schechter

Amy Rosenfeld

Erica Vagnoni

Russ Burnett

Jessica Reader

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Enrollment**

#### **Application Process for New Students**

For new students, a one-time application form must be submitted along with a non-refundable application fee. Priority enrollment is given to temple members and siblings of current TEECC students. Once you are offered and accept a spot in the ECC program, an enrollment contract must be signed and returned with additional fees as well as a one-time \$500 deposit. This deposit is returned at the end of your child's final enrollment contract period.

Please contact the Director for specific information regarding enrollment fees and tuition rates.

#### **Reenrollment**

All currently enrolled children are guaranteed enrollment for the following school year, provided families return the annual contract and all required fees by the specified deadline. Payment of fees and tuition must be current to re-enroll a child. Membership fees must also be current to receive the Temple Member Tuition Rate.

#### **Required Forms**

In addition to the [Application & Enrollment Contract](#), the following forms must be completed and submitted prior to your child's first day of school:

- [Emergency Information Form](#) (Resubmitted annually)
- [Family-Child Information Form](#)

- [Health Inventory](#)
- [Immunization Certificate](#)
- [Blood Lead Testing Certificate](#)
- [Medical Attention Release](#)
- [Photo Release](#)
- [‘Off Grounds’ Permission Form](#)
- [Coronavirus/Covid-19 Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability](#)
- [Topical Application Authorization](#)
- If applicable: [Medication Authorization Form](#), [Allergy Action Plan](#), [Asthma Action Plan](#), & [Seizure Action Plan](#)

For your child’s safety, if there is a change in address, home or work phone numbers, emergency contacts or caregivers, please notify us of this change in writing immediately.

### ***Medical Immunization & Health Forms***

The Maryland State Department of Education requires that all immunization and health forms be completed by a physician and submitted before a child may begin school. All children must receive appropriate vaccines and blood lead testing. Allergy Action Plan, Asthma Action Plan, Seizure Action Plan, and Medication Administration Authorization forms must also be completed if applicable.

### **Billing & Tuition**

All fees and tuition are non-refundable. Families can elect to enroll in the full 12-month program or the 10-month program that concludes in June. Families enrolled in the 12-month contract will pay tuition in 12 separate instalments due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Families enrolled in the 10-month contract will pay tuition in 10 separate installments due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. If you do not pay by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, you will be assessed a late fee of \$30. If payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, your child will not be able to attend school until payment is made. If payment is not made by the end of the month, your child will be withdrawn from the ECC program.

If a child begins attending on the 1-15<sup>th</sup> of the month, a full-month’s tuition will be due. If a child begins attending on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, tuition will be prorated by 50%.

Monthly payments can be made via check or via ACH/Credit Card through the ShulCloud management system. There is a 3% fee for credit card payment.

### **School Calendar**

Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center is open year-round from 8:00 am-6:00 pm each day. In addition to some federal and Jewish holidays, TEECC closes for a winter break at the end of December, Spring Break, a Professional Development week in August, and a two Professional Development Days in December and April. Please see the TEECC Calendar for specific holiday and closure dates.

## **Attendance & Pick-up Policies**

### **Illness & Attendance**

TEECC's illness policies are always established and implemented with consideration for the health and safety of our community at large, in balance with the needs of our working families. For the well-being of our community members, we require that ill children be kept at home until symptoms have resolved and children are without incidence of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours. More specific illness guidelines can be found on page 19 of this document.

## **Morning Arrival**

Children separate from their parents and adjust to school in many ways. One child may run into the classroom and never look back. Another may take several weeks to feel comfortable in a new setting. Some children make an easy transition in the beginning and have separation difficulties later in the year. All situations are normal and we are well prepared to help your child in a way that meets their individual needs. Separation can be difficult for parents as well and we are also here to provide any support that you may need.

It is helpful for you and your child to have a goodbye ritual and to reassure your child that he or she is going to have a wonderful day. Your show of confidence will enable your child to do that. If you need to check on your child's progress during the day, please feel free to check with a member of our leadership team.

TEECC opens at 8:00 am daily. From 8:00 am-9:00 am, our community combines in one or multiple designated shared spaces. The flow and location of morning drop off will be shared with families at the start of the school year. At 9:00am children then separate into individual classes with their classroom teachers.

Ideally, children should arrive no later than *9:30 am* so that they can orient themselves each morning and engage in key moments of classroom community-building and intentional learning. If you know your child will be arriving late due to an appointment or other circumstance, we ask that you notify your child's teachers and TEECC leadership team.

## **Afternoon Dismissal**

TEECC closes promptly at 6:00pm. It is very important that you arrive on time to pick up your child, as late pick-ups can cause anxiety for the children involved. In addition, our staffing schedules and compliance of teacher/child ratios are dependent upon timely pick-up of your child. We are not licensed to care for children after 6:00 pm.

We do understand that emergencies and delays can happen; please call the TEECC at (301) 942-2000 if you encounter any issues that will result in a late pickup.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Continued instances of late pick-up will result in assessment of a late fee. A fee of \$10 per 10-minute increment per child will be billed for arrivals past 6:00 pm. Upon your late arrival, you will be asked to sign a slip documenting your arrival time.

## **Sign-in/-out Policies**

For security reasons, your child will only be released for pick-up to a parent, guardian, or other individual authorized for 'daily pick up' on your child's [Emergency Information Form](#). In the event of an emergency, when parents or guardians cannot be reached, your designated emergency contact may be requested to pick-up your child. Additional written notification is required for any temporary release authorization (e.g. visiting

grandparents, neighbors, other TEECC families). Identification will be requested of any individual a staff member does not recognize or has not met previously.

For safety and licensing reasons, children are required to be formally signed-in and -out each day. Upon arrival or pick up, a designated staff member in your child's classroom or community space will document the time. Please be sure a staff member is always aware of your child's arrival or departure.

## **Classroom Procedures**

### **Faculty and Staff**

Our staff members are interviewed and carefully chosen based upon the special qualities, experiences, and unique talents that they can offer the children in our program. As a school that is inspired by the philosophy of Reggio Emilia, we believe strongly in the value of collegial collaboration and partnership. Each classroom has two co-educators who work together, with support of the Pedagogista and Atelierista, to plan and implement engaging and rich learning experiences.

Our Chaverim faculty members possess the same qualifications and experience as our classroom-based educators. Chaverim play a very important role in the life of our school and are vital members of our community. They build relationships with all the children at TEECC and are familiar with daily routines and intentional work in each classroom. A Chaver may join a classroom when an educator is absent, to cover meetings and planning sessions, or give additional support when needed. They are active participants and contributors to all that we do in our school.

As educators, we consider ourselves to be life-long learners, dedicated to continued growth and professional development. TEECC is deeply committed to supporting staff learning and we participate in many opportunities for continuing education and professional development throughout the year. Several of our staff have participated in learning seminars in Reggio Emilia, Italy and many are active participants in both local and national Jewish ECC and Reggio Emilia Inspired professional organizations.

Throughout the year staff members are formally and informally observed and provided with opportunities for professional growth and constructive feedback. There may be rare situations when a staff member's contract must be terminated or not renewed for the coming school year. The decision may be based on either personal or professional reasons. Details of termination are governed by the protocol of human resources and cannot be shared with the public. We will inform families of changes as appropriate.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires that all faculty and staff are fingerprinted and subject to a background check. All our educators are CPR and First Aid Certified and many are trained in Medication Administration. Additionally, each year, TEECC staff members undergo both generalized and active threat security training

### **Social Learning & Behavior Guidance**

At TEECC we aim to support the social learning and growth of young children through behavior modeling, conflict scaffolding, and empathetic mirroring. Our goal is to help children develop an internal sense of empathy, respect, and compassion for others as well as a sense of responsibility to the community. We focus on fostering problem-solving and communication skills, enabling children to solve problems with their peers,

and on helping children build positive relationships. This reinforces our belief in and respect for the capability of children.

Temple Emanuel ECC recognizes that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. While some behaviors may be typical for a specific “age and stage” we recognize that children learn appropriate social behaviors at different rates. With that in mind, we observe and make individual behavior plans when necessary.

Our staff provides a positive model of behavior by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care, and respect. Reflecting our strong belief in the competence and capability of children, we work with them to help them plan strategies to handle conflict, to problem solve and make positive choices. We focus on good behavior, rather than bad. We may need to redirect a child and speak with them about appropriate behavior. When necessary, we speak to a child with a firm, but caring voice. At times, it may be necessary to remove a child from the rest of the group so that we may speak with them privately or simply give them an opportunity to be in a quiet, peaceful place.

If behavior persists, we will meet with the child’s parents to create a behavior management plan that meets the needs of that particular child. If there is continued concern, it is also our practice and policy to consult with specialists who work with children and families. This is always done in partnership with parents.

As part of the synagogue community, we believe in working with families during difficult times. We ask for the family’s cooperation and assistance so that we may be able to continue our relationship with them. If we are unable to make progress in improving a child’s behavior, we may need to assess our program’s appropriateness for the child.

### ***Accidents and Injuries***

In the event of an accident, staff will comfort the child and attend to any injury, as needed. Due to MSDE licensing regulations we are not permitted to administer any oral or topical treatments without a doctor’s note. In the case of a wound or injury, the area will be washed with soap and water. Ice or a bandage will be applied if needed.

Following an accident, a copy of the report will be sent home for your records. Injuries requiring additional attention from a physician require a follow up report, per licensing regulations. Please see the ECC Director if your child’s injury requires additional medical attention. For added peace of mind, a phone call to families will be made for any injury to the head or face. In the event of a biting incident, both families will be notified by phone.

## **Communication**

While our educators can chat with you briefly during morning drop-off or afternoon pick-up, these can be very busy times when educators must be focused on engaging with children. For longer questions, concerns, or conversations, please send a message through email or the Remini application. Additionally, we are always happy to set up a phone call or in-person conference time with classroom educators.

To reach TEECC directly during the day, call the main phone line at 301-942-2000 and ask to be transferred to the ECC. If your phone call is urgent or time sensitive, and you are unable to reach a member of the TEECC leadership team, please speak with someone in the administrative office of the Temple and they will be glad to assist you.

We strive to maintain an active and transparent flow of information between home and school. Please let us know when your child will be absent for vacation or if they are experiencing symptoms of illness. We also encourage families to share news (both good and bad) to assist us in better caring for and supporting your child. Sometimes, something as simple as a family member leaving after a visit can affect your child's mood. Please rest assured that we value your privacy, and all information shared will remain confidential.

## Remini Application

Remini is a web-based and mobile application used for daily communications. It allows educators and families to send and receive messages. These messages are also copied to the administrative team, allowing for any important or timely messages to be communicated throughout the day. The classroom Remini feed allows families to see a glimpse into the pedagogical research conducted within a classroom. Educators use videos, photography, and children's words as tools to convey questions, discoveries and moments of wonder found within a day. Once a week, typically on Fridays, educators share a selection of the photos showing the life of the classroom, taken throughout the week. In addition, they will take an opportunity to share a summary of upcoming events and plans for the classroom. Finally, Remini has an online calendar, regularly updated with birthdays and community events.

Families are added to Remini (remini.me) when a child begins at TEECC. Parents will begin receiving push notifications to create an account following this addition. Additionally, 'fans' can be added to view a child's page; however, due to privacy concerns only immediate families are able to view a classroom feed.

## Email

### *Class Email*

Each teaching team will use a shared email account to communicate with families about general classroom business. The email address starts with the 'teecc' prefix, followed by the class name, @templemanuelmd.org (e.g. [teeccnarkisim@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:teeccnarkisim@templemanuelmd.org))

### *Weekly Newsletter from the Director*

A brief email newsletter will be shared with families from the Director each week on Friday afternoon.

## Other Communication

- **Website:** The ECC section of the Temple's website highlights information about our program and includes important forms and enrollment information (<https://www.templemanuelmd.org/early-childhood-center/>)
- **Documentation:** In addition to the Remini App, educators will utilize a variety of modalities (notes, photographs, written narratives, samples of work, etc.) to create visible traces of children's learning in the classroom and throughout the school.
- **Parent Events**
  - **New School Year Reception:** Takes place in early fall; Provides families an opportunity to hear about the school's goals and intentions for the year, get to know your child's educators, and meet other ECC families.
  - **Parent Community Nights:** Scheduled throughout the year; Offers families the opportunity to socialize with other families while focusing on a particular topic of interest, related to the foundations of TEECC's curricular approach.

- **Conferences:** Scheduled in February; A formal opportunity for families to meet one-on-one with their child's educators. Other opportunities to meet can be scheduled throughout the school year whenever a parent or educator feels that it is necessary.

## **Issues, Concerns, & Feedback**

If you have an issue, concern, or feedback, you are encouraged to speak with the ECC Director. If you require further assistance, you may contact the chairperson of the ECC Board, who serves as a representative on the Temple's Board of Trustees or to the Temple's Executive Director. All financial matters should be addressed with the Temple's Bookkeeper or Executive Director.

## **Partnering with Families When Children Need or Receive Support**

We recognize that all children grow and develop on their own trajectory, but there may be times that we realize a child is having a specific challenge or delay in reaching certain developmental milestones. At that time, we may suggest that your child be assessed or evaluated by a diagnostic professional. We are committed to supporting all of our children and families in the best way possible and must have the best information available to be able to do that. We believe in early intervention and partner with families and specialists who provide the services a child may need.

If your child is already receiving services from Infants and Toddlers, Child Find or a private provider, it is imperative that you supply that information to us so that we can help you build a solid foundation for your child.

## **Daily Life at TEECC**

### **Flow of the Day**

From 8:00 am-9:00 am, our community combines in one or multiple designated shared spaces. The location of morning drop off will be shared with families at the start of the school year. At 9:00 am children then separate into individual classroom teachers. Each class designs their own map of the day specific to their intentional work and community culture. Overall, the general flow of the day is as follows:

- Welcoming children
- Meeting (conversations about ongoing classwork, open-ended dialogue, setting intentions for the day)
- Small group work (collaborative, intentional work in groups of 3-5 children)
- Snack
- Outdoor time
- Lunch
- Story
- Nap/Rest time
- Afternoon snack
- Choice time
- Outdoor time/Gross Motor Play
- Story
- Pick-up

### **Outdoor Play & Learning**

We view our outdoor space, Gan Emanuel, as another classroom and we spend time outdoors as often as possible throughout the year. We plant and tend to our gardens, play in the snow and rain puddles, and explore the natural world around us. Additionally, we utilize other local natural spaces such as the forest or nearby parks and fields. Please keep this in mind when planning your child's school wardrobe, sunscreen, and bug repellent choices. Each day, Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center considers a variety of factors including precipitation, temperature, wind chill, humidity, and air quality, to determine the viability and safety of outdoor play. In the case of inclement or unsafe weather conditions, classes will use the social hall and Kikar spaces for gross motor activity.

## **Napping**

All TEECC children rest after lunch from 1-3 pm, no matter their age. We monitor the patterns children develop during the first few months of the school year. Some older 3- and 4-year-olds begin to give up napping. This type of transition is a delicate stage in a young person's life. Children are growing rapidly; their bodies need rest/don't need rest and it is a cycle of sleeping/no-sleeping. We think of ways to provide an adequate balance between nap and rest while staying in compliance with state-mandated policies. We are always evaluating children's nap patterns and our staffing patterns in order to support children's needs.

In our Pre-K classes, we offer "menucha" (*rest time*). Children still meet the first half of the mandated nap time with books on tape/chapter books/soft music and in the second half of the mandated nap time they are met with quiet activities, such as board games, puzzles, and drawing. Older children that still do need a nap are always given the opportunity to sleep.

## **Toilet Learning**

Toilet learning is not a requirement at TEECC. When your child is ready, we work closely with you and your child to gain the self-help skills necessary to use the toilet in a consistent, calm, and empowering manner. We celebrate successes and keep a positive, upbeat attitude when the child has an "accident." The parent and educators should follow a consistent and similar schedule. Your child's educators will keep you posted on progress. Please keep the teachers updated on progress at home, as well. Please note that while we recognize there are many methods for toilet learning, for sanitary reasons children must wear either a diaper or underwear at all times.

Parents are expected to provide diapers and wipes for their child. If your child uses diapers or pull-ups, they will have a designated drawer in the bathroom for these supplies. The staff will let you know when you will need to replenish your child's diaper supplies.

## **What to Pack**

While each classroom community may vary slightly, the following are some general items children will need at school. All items sent to school should be clearly and conspicuously labeled with your child's name.

- Framed Family Photo
- Lunch (no nuts, pork, or shellfish)
- Reusable Water Bottle
- Nap/Rest Items (Crib sheet or nap roll, pillow, blanket, lovey, etc.)
- Diapers/Pull ups, diaper creams, wipes, etc.
- Seasonally appropriate spare clothing (including multiple tops, bottoms, socks, underwear, and shoes)



- Rain/Snow Boots
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray

## **Clothing**

Children use materials such as paint and glue on a regular basis, they actively play outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, and they may have toilet accidents that require a change of clothes on occasion. Clothing should be comfortable, easy for children to get in and out of and something they would not feel badly about getting soiled.

A few changes of clothes should be sent each day. Clothing should include underwear, shirts, pants, and socks. If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, they will have an assigned drawer in the bathroom in which to keep an ample supply. Please be sure to update your child's extra clothes as the weather changes.

We take children outdoors in all types of weather. Please send your child to school in seasonally appropriate jackets, raincoats, snow apparel such as hats and mittens, and boots. Shoes should be comfortable and safe for running, climbing, and playing outdoors. Flip flops and thin-soled sandals are not allowed. Snow boots, rain boots and sturdy outdoor shoes can be kept at school – please label all items.

## **Photographs**

Throughout the school year teachers take photos of the daily life at TEECC. We may use these candid photos for documentation posted in classroom or hallways, in Remini posts, and occasionally on our Facebook account. Temple Emanuel may also incorporate these photos in our newsletter, website, and promotional literature. Parents are required to complete a photo permission release form as part of your child's enrollment paperwork.

Professional school photographs are typically taken once a year (during the Spring).

## **Jewish Holidays & Special Occasions**

At Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center we approach our daily lives and each Jewish holiday through the lens of our rich Jewish values. Some of these values that guide our work include Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World), Hachnasat Orchim (Welcoming Guests), Bal Tashchit (Do Not Destroy), Tzedakah (Justice & Charity), and K'vod (Kindness).

We respect and value the diversity of our community. While we do not celebrate Christmas or other religious holidays that are not part of our Jewish tradition, such as Halloween and Valentine's Day, we encourage and support all children in sharing their family traditions, stories, and rituals with us.

### **Ta'am Shel Shabbat (A Taste of Shabbat)**

Shabbat is a special day in the Jewish week set aside for rest and reflection. Each Friday, the TEECC community, including, children, teachers, parents, and clergy, gather to celebrate Ta'am Shel Shabbat, or 'A Taste of Shabbat'. Together we sing songs, listen to a special story, and recite the ritual blessings over the candles, wine (juice), and challah. We then return to our classrooms for a special snack of challah and grape juice.

## ***The Shabbat Blessings***

### ***Blessing over the Candles:***

The lighting of candles at sunset on Friday evening is the traditional ritual to welcome Shabbat. After lighting the candles, it is customary to cover the eyes and recite the following blessing:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

### ***Blessing over the Wine (Kiddush):***

The following blessing is recited over wine or grape juice:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

### ***Blessing over the Bread (Hamotzi):***

Prior to eating the bread (challah) on Shabbat the following blessing is recited:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.*

Temple Emanuel also holds monthly Tot Shabbat services that are held on Friday evenings. Members of our community and their friends are invited to participate. Please see the Temple Emanuel website for dates of these monthly services.

## **Birthdays**

Birthday traditions are an important part of our school culture. In each class, children will create and present a gift to the birthday child based on the year's intentional work with materials. The gift represents the child and becomes a permanent part of the classroom for the school year. Parents are invited to join the class for a brief celebration during the day. Many families bring a favorite book to read and then donate to the classroom library and then share a special [commercially produced] snack with the class. When possible, we encourage healthy birthday treats. Please refrain from sending in "goody bags." For safety and health reasons, balloons are prohibited at TEECC.

## **Food Policy**

TEECC follows Temple Emanuel's *Kashrut* policy. **Pork and shellfish products are NOT permitted.**

TEECC is a 'nut-free' school. A peanut/tree nut allergy can be life-threatening, and it is our responsibility to provide a safe environment for all the children in our community. Please see **Appendix A: Nut Policy**.

## **Lunch**

Children should bring lunch to school each day in a clearly labeled bag or lunch box. After 9:15, lunches are stored in the refrigerator. Warm food may be sent in a separate labeled thermos, but staff cannot heat food for children. You may include a drink in your child's lunch, or they can drink from their water bottle.

We ask that you do not pack candy in your child's lunch or send it in to share with others.

## **Snacks**

TEECC provides snack each morning and afternoon. Our snack menu is based on recommendations of a registered dietician who specializes in the health of young children, as well as MSDE regulations. Morning snack includes a cup of 1% or fat free milk. On Friday mornings, we will provide challah and grape juice to celebrate Ta'am Shel Shabbat

## Health Policy

### Medical Forms

The Maryland State Department of Education requires that all immunization and health forms be completed by a physician and submitted before a child may begin school.

The following doses of immunizations are required by the state of Maryland:

- 4 DPT
- 3 Polio
- 1 MMR
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Hib and 1 Varicella

Proper documentation of blood-lead screening is also required

### Illness Policy

TEECC's illness policies are always established and implemented with consideration for the health and safety of our community at large, in balance with the needs of our working families. For the well-being of our community members, we require ill children be kept at home until symptoms have resolved and children are without incidence of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours. Specific guidelines are listed below:

- **Fever:** A child with a fever should stay home until fever free, without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours. A fever is defined by MSDE as 100.4°F. It is our policy that we will notify families of a fever when a temperature rises to about 100°F.
- **Covid-19 & Other Respiratory Illness:** Children must be fever-free, with *significant* symptom improvement for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Strep Throat:** Your child may return to school 24 hours after antibiotics have been started and the child is fever free for 24 hours.
- **Vomiting, Diarrhea:** Vomiting and diarrhea generally indicate an active intestinal infection. Diarrhea is best defined as a significant increase in the frequency of normal bowel movements. Children may return to school if there is no vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours, and the frequency of bowel movements is returning to normal.
- **Colds:** A cold's symptoms are described as irritated throat, watery discharge from the nose and eyes and sneezing. A cold may or may not include a fever. Children are often most contagious in the early, runny nose stage of a cold.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): Bacterial** - Your child may return to school after antibiotic treatment has begun and eye ooze has stopped. **Viral** – Your child may return with a doctor's note that states the child is no longer contagious.

- **Head Lice:** The ECC follows the guidelines of Montgomery County Public Schools, which at this time states that a child may return to school after being treated. In order to keep outbreaks to a minimum, we ask parents to carefully follow hair-combing procedures after treatment.
- **Impetigo:** Your child may return to school if she or he has been on antibiotic treatment for 24 hours and shows significant symptom improvement.

### ***Notifying School***

Please notify us as soon as possible when your child is ill. You can leave a message on the phone line or contact us by Remini/email. This will enable us to track patterns of illness in the school and notify our community when necessary.

### **Medication**

In general, Maryland licensing regulations do not allow for staff to administer any medication or treatment at school without the proper [authorization form](#) from a child's physician. Completed forms along with the accurately labeled medication must be submitted to an ECC administrator. Please see specific guidelines below:

- **All Medications:** In addition to providing the proper consent/authorization form. A parent must administer the first dose/application of any topical product or medication and observe no adverse effects.
- **Over the Counter & Homeopathic Remedies:** Requires 'Medication Administration Authorization Form' completed by parent/guardian and prescribing physician. The medication must be in its original bottle/packaging and must be accompanied by the appropriate measurement spoon.
- **Epi Pens & Antihistamines:** An 'Allergy Action Plan' must be completed by a physician and submitted for all children with allergies. The documentation should include the allergen, history, symptoms, reactions, and treatment. This information will be kept on file and posted in your child's classroom. If your child's treatment plan includes an Epi Pen we require **two** be provided- one will be kept in the classroom emergency bag and the second will be stored in the Director's office. All medication, including Epi Pens must be in the original box from the pharmacy. The medication must be in its original bottle/packaging and must be accompanied by the appropriate measurement spoon.
- **Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Diaper Cream:** Requires 'Topical Application Authorization Form.' Children may only use sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper cream sent in by a parent/guardian. Sharing between children is not permitted.

**Please turn in all medications, creams, etc. directly to an ECC staff member. Do not leave them in your child's backpack or cubby.**

## **Security, Safety, & Building Procedures**

### **Reporting Abuse**

In Maryland, the child abuse law requires that anyone who suspects a child is being mistreated must report the matter to Protective Services or the police: "Notwithstanding any law on privileged communications, each

health worker who has reason to believe that the child is neglected or abused, shall notify the relevant authorities and if acting as staff of a hospital, public health agency, childcare institution, school or similar institution, notify immediately the head of the institution or the designee of the head. Any person who in good faith makes a report of abuse or neglect is immune from any civil liability or criminal penalty.”

## **Security**

The Temple Emanuel community takes security concerns seriously and, as necessary, plans are reevaluated when specific concerns arise. We will keep parents up to date when specific situations arise. The emergency procedure plan is evaluated and administered by the Temple Emanuel Board and its Security Committee.

Children and staff enter TEECC through the doorway that faces the side parking lot. The ECC doors are locked at all times but can be exited in case of emergency.

For security reasons, we ask that only adults use the keypad to enter the building. Please do not give the code to your children or allow them to enter the numbers into the keypad.

For those who need, we have handicap access to and from the building. Please only use the handicap buttons if you need them. We talk to children about the purpose of the handicap access and appreciate that you reinforce that.

## **Evacuations**

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, we will exit the building through the doors closest to the classroom. There are three emergency exits on the ECC level. These are the doors adjacent to the parking lot, at the end of the main ECC hallway, and Kikar.

In the event TEECC needs to evacuate the building children and teachers will conduct themselves as if it were a fire alarm. Teachers have been given previous instruction of the different fire routes and fire-drills are held monthly. In the case that children and staff cannot return to the building they will be brought to Warner Presbyterian Memorial Church.

Teachers carry copies of your child’s emergency information form in the classroom emergency bag. This bag always remains with the teacher when children are outside of the building.

In the event that we need to “shelter in place,” emergency supplies will be stored in an accessible area. We have both fire and emergency drills throughout the year.

## **Parking**

Families may use the parking spaces in the lot adjacent to the TEECC. Handicapped parking spots are available only to vehicles with a state-issued permit. We have a busy parking lot, and it is important to exercise caution when driving and walking through the lot. Please follow the directions indicated when entering and leaving the parking lot. Please do not park right in front of the entrance doors. This area needs to be kept clear for emergencies.

## **Snow/Inclement Weather Policy**

There may be weather conditions that force us to close or delay our morning opening for safety reasons. Our decisions are made with consideration for the safety of our children, parents, and staff. Whenever possible, these decisions will be made by 7:00 am and families will be notified through a recorded telephone 'Voice Shot' message. In addition, a message will be posted to Remini and on the Temple Emanuel ECC Facebook page.

Decisions regarding closures are generally made on a case-by-case basis with the following considerations:

- If the Federal Government is closed due to inclement weather conditions, the ECC will be closed.
- TEECC will check the decisions of MCPS Childcare Centers and Montgomery County Administrative Offices and may use that as a guideline for closing.
- The decision to close TEECC may also be based on safety conditions of the immediate area surrounding Temple Emanuel. If local road conditions are hazardous, we will close TEECC.

If we begin to experience inclement weather during the day, we will endeavor to remain open. Should we determine that it is necessary to close, we will notify parents and you will have a two-hour window in which to arrive at school. It is important for you to arrange to pick up your child as soon as possible, as chances are weather conditions will continue to deteriorate.

## APPENDIX A: NUT POLICY

Temple Emanuel strives to maximize the health and safety of each person in our community who may be subject to a life-threatening allergic reaction. In that spirit, we have instituted the following nut policy:

**The entire downstairs ECC school wing is nut free.** We ask that foods used or sent in for snack, lunch, or any other reason should be checked to make sure they are nut free.

**The remainder of the facility is nut sensitive,** meaning there can be no nuts in any ingredients in any food on the premises. The items do not have to be certified nut free or made in a nut free facility. Because this area is nut sensitive not nut free, we cannot guarantee that those who have nut allergies are totally protected.

You MUST avoid foods with any of the following ingredients:

Almonds	Marzipan
Almond Milk	Mixed Nuts
Artificial Nuts	Mortadella
Beechnuts	Nangai Nuts
Beer Nuts	Nougat
Black Walnuts	Nut Butters
Brazil Nuts	Nut Extracts/Flavoring
Bush Nuts	Nut Flours/Meal
Butternuts	Nut Meats
Cashews	Nutella
Chestnuts	Nut Milks
Chinquapin Nuts	Nut Oils
Coconut	Nut Pastes
Energy/Protein Bars	Peanuts
Filberts	Peanut Butter
Gianduja	Peanut Flour
Ginkgo Nuts	Peanut Oil
Granola/Granola Bars	Pecans
Goobers	Pesto
Ground Nuts	Pine Nuts
Hazelnuts	Pistachio Nuts
Hickory Nuts	Pralines
Lychee Nuts	Shea Nuts
Macadamia Nuts	Walnuts