



# TEMPLE EMANUEL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK **2025-2026**



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 (TEECC) 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 early childhood 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 Clergy & Senior Staff

Alissa Miller, Executive Director: [amiller@templeemanuelmd.org](mailto:amiller@templeemanuelmd.org)

Rabbi Adam Rosenwasser, Senior Rabbi: [arosenwasser@templeemanuelmd.org](mailto:arosenwasser@templeemanuelmd.org)

Cantor Lauren Adesnik, Interim Cantor: [ladesnik@templeemanuelmd.org](mailto:ladesnik@templeemanuelmd.org)

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

Tal Oren, Director of Youth Engagement & Shaliach: [youth@templeemanuelmd.org](mailto:youth@templeemanuelmd.org)

## Temple Emanuel Lay Leadership

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

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

The full roster of our 2025-2026 Board of Trustees can be found online:

<https://www.templeemanuelmd.org/about/lay-leadership/>

## ECC Leadership Team



**Dana Robinson (she/her) ([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 (she/her) ([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 of the Director.



**Pamela Zwebner (she/them) ([eccpamelaz@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:eccpamelaz@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.



**Danielle Myers (she/her) ([eccdaniellem@templemanuelmd.org](mailto:eccdaniellem@templemanuelmd.org))**

**Administrative Coordinator:**

Works with the leadership team to ensure the smooth daily operation of TEECC. The Administrative Coordinator supports families with the enrollment process, maintains up-to-date student records, and ensures the center's compliance with all MSDE licensing regulations and policies.

## Table of Contents

Welcome to Our Community.....	2
About Temple Emanuel.....	2
Vision Statement .....	2
Mission Statement.....	2
Temple Emanuel Clergy & Senior Staff .....	3
Temple Emanuel Lay Leadership .....	3
ECC Leadership Team .....	4
Our Philosophy .....	7
Guiding Principles .....	7
Our Educators & Staff.....	8
Transitioning to Preschool.....	9
First Week Graduated Schedule .....	9
School Hours & Closures.....	9
Daily Life at TEECC .....	9
Morning Arrival.....	9
Separation & Transition.....	10
Flow of the Day .....	10
Outdoor Play & Learning.....	10
Napping.....	11
Toilet Learning .....	11
What to Pack.....	11
Clothing .....	12
Jewish Holidays & Special Celebrations .....	12
<i>Ta'am Shel Shabbat</i> (A Taste of Shabbat).....	12
Birthdays.....	13
Family Participation .....	13
Volunteer Opportunities .....	13
Room Parent .....	14
ECC Advisory Board.....	14
Policies & Procedures .....	14
Enrollment & Tuition.....	14
Application Process for New Students.....	14

Reenrollment .....	14
Required Forms .....	14
Billing.....	15
Behavior & Inclusion.....	15
Behavior Guidance and Social Learning.....	15
Inclusion .....	16
Our Commitment and Capacity.....	16
Attendance & Pick-up.....	16
Illness & Attendance .....	16
Afternoon Dismissal .....	17
Sign-In/Out Policies .....	17
Snow/Inclement Weather Policy.....	17
Food & Allergies .....	18
Snacks .....	18
Lunch.....	18
Allergies .....	18
Health & Illness.....	18
Immunizations .....	18
Medication .....	18
Illness & Exclusion.....	19
Communication .....	20
Remini Application .....	20
Email.....	21
Other Communications .....	21
Photograph & Image Use .....	22
Screen Time & Technology Use .....	22
Security & Child Safety .....	22
Building Access .....	22
Accidents & Injuries .....	22
Reporting Abuse or Neglect.....	23
Appendix A: Nut Policy .....	24
Acknowledgement of Receipt.....	25

## Our Philosophy

At Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center (TEECC), we seek to foster a spirit of community where children, families, 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.

**תְּקֻן 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.

**הַכְנָסַת 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.

## Our Educators & Staff

At Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center, our educators are the heart of our community. We carefully select staff not only for their experience and qualifications, but for their curiosity, warmth, and their capacity to form meaningful relationships with children, families, and colleagues. We believe that each individual brings something unique to our school, and we celebrate the diverse talents, interests, and lived experiences that enrich our community—from a love of storytelling or music, to a passion for nature, art, or Jewish learning. Educators are encouraged to bring their full selves into the classroom, knowing that their individual strengths expand what’s possible for the children in our care.

As a Reggio Emilia-inspired school, we value collaboration and the shared construction of knowledge. Each classroom is led by a team of co-educators who work in close partnership to design curriculum, observe and reflect on children’s learning, and engage in meaningful documentation. These teaching teams are supported by our Pedagogista and Atelierista, who offer guidance and mentorship as they plan and implement rich and engaging learning experiences.

Our classroom-based educators are further supported by our Chaverim (Hebrew for “friends”), a team of educators who serve as floaters and substitutes across classrooms. Our Chaverim are deeply familiar with the rhythms, routines, and pedagogical research taking place in each classroom. Whether stepping in to cover an absence, support planning time, or providing additional help where needed, they build strong relationships and ensure continuity of care and learning throughout the school.

All of our educators see themselves as life-long learners and are committed to ongoing professional growth. TEECC invests deeply in supporting this journey through a wide range of learning opportunities, including:

- Weekly team planning and reflection sessions
- Monthly staff meetings
- Professional development days
- Conferences, workshops, and webinars
- Study tours (including Reggio Emilia, Italy)
- Participation in local and national Jewish and Reggio-inspired professional networks

This culture of inquiry, collaboration, and ongoing learning is what makes our educator community so vibrant—and what allows our school to remain a place of joy, wonder, and deep learning for both children and adults.



## 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 or Administrative Coordinator 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 enrolled in our Toddler and 2-year-old cohorts:**

Day 1 & 2: Part-day schedule (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

Day 3: Pick up after naptime (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)

Day 4: Begin regular schedule

### **Children enrolled in our 3-year-old cohort:**

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

Day 2: Pick up after naptime (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)

Day 3: Begin regular schedule

### **Children enrolled in our 4-year-old cohort:**

Day 1: Recommended part-day schedule (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

Day 2: Recommended pick-up after menucha/rest time (9:00 am – 3:30 pm)

Day 3: Begin regular schedule

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

## School Hours & Closures

Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center is open daily from 8:00 am-6:00 pm. 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 winter and fall. Please see the TEECC Calendar for specific holiday and closure dates.

## Daily Life at TEECC

### Morning Arrival

TEECC opens at 8:00 a.m. daily. Between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m., our school community gathers in one or more designated shared spaces before children transition to their individual classrooms at 9:00 a.m. The flow and location of morning drop-off will be shared with families at the start of the school year.

We encourage all children to arrive no later than 9:30 a.m. so they can participate fully in the important morning rituals that support a strong sense of belonging, orientation, and shared learning. If your child will be arriving late due to an appointment or other circumstances, please notify your child's teachers and the TEECC leadership team so we can welcome them with care.

# Separation & Transition

Children adjust to separating from their parents and beginning school in many ways. One child may eagerly run into the classroom on the first day, while another may need several weeks to feel comfortable in a new environment. Some children seem to transition easily at first and then experience challenges later in the year. All of these experiences are completely normal. Our staff of educators is prepared to support your child’s unique adjustment process with care and sensitivity. We also recognize that separation can be hard for parents, and we are here to support you through this important transition as well.

Establishing a consistent and loving goodbye ritual can help support your child in feeling secure and ready to begin their day. Children often draw confidence from the calm and reassuring presence of their adults, and your trust in the environment goes a long way in helping them feel at ease. If you are feeling uncertain or would like to check in about how your child is doing during the day, please don’t hesitate to reach out to a member of the leadership team via email or Remini—we are here for you, too.

# Flow of the Day

Each class designs their own schedule of the day specific to their intentional research and community culture. The schedule below offers one possible example of the flow of the day:

8:00-9:30	Arrival & Greeting/Explorative Open Play
9:30-9:45	Morning Meeting
9:45-10:30	Explorative Open & Teacher Scaffolded Play/Small Group Work
10:30-11:00	Morning Snack & Transitions
11:00-11:45	Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
11:45-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	Quiet Storytime & Transitions
1:00-3:00	Nap/Rest Time
3:00-3:30	Wake-Up & Transitions
3:30-4:00	Afternoon Snack
4:00-4:30	Explorative Open Play
4:30-5:30	Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
5:30-6:00	Storytime & Pick-up

# Outdoor Play & Learning

At TEECC, we embrace the outdoors as an essential part of our learning environment. Our outdoor space, Gan Emanuel, is considered an extension of the classroom, and we spend time outside as often as possible throughout the year. Children help care for our gardens, delight in snow and rain puddles, and engage with the changing natural world around them. We also explore neighborhood spaces, such as woods, parks, streams, and open fields—to deepen our connection with the environment and local community. We encourage families to keep our commitment to outdoor learning in mind when preparing for the day, including selecting weather-appropriate clothing and applying sunscreen and insect-repellent in the morning (TE staff will apply sunscreen and insect-repellent supplied from home in the afternoon, May through October).

Each day, our team carefully considers multiple factors—such as temperature, precipitation, wind chill, humidity, and air quality—to ensure that outdoor play remains safe and comfortable. When weather conditions are not suitable for outdoor time, classes will use indoor spaces for gross motor activity.

## Napping

All children at TEECC participate in a daily rest period from 1:00-3:00 pm, following lunch. We view this time as an important opportunity for children to rest their bodies and reset for the afternoon, while honoring each child's unique rhythms and developmental needs.

**Toddler & Two-Year-Old Cohorts:** Our toddler and two-year-old classes have a consistent and quiet nap environment, where children are given the opportunity to sleep for the full two-hour rest period.

**Three-Year-Old Cohort:** Children in our three-year-old classes are expected to rest quietly for up to an hour. After this period, children who are not asleep may be offered quiet activities such as books, puzzles, drawing materials, etc.

**Pre-K (Four-Year-Old) Cohort:** Our Pre-K children participate in *menucha* (rest time) in their classrooms. During the first hour, children rest with soft music, podcasts, chapter books, or books on tape. In the second hour, children may engage in quiet, independent activities using small manipulatives, tabletop games, or classroom centers, depending on staffing and group needs. Children who still need sleep are always given the opportunity to rest as long as they need.

We closely monitor children's rest patterns throughout the year and adjust our approach as needed. We recognize that the transition away from daily napping is a natural developmental stage, and we aim to support each child in that process with sensitivity and understanding. In keeping with our commitment to honoring each child's needs, please note that we do not wake sleeping children before the end of the rest period.

## Toilet Learning

Mastery of toilet use is not a requirement for enrollment at TEECC. We approach toilet learning as a developmental milestone that unfolds differently for each child. When your child shows signs of readiness, we partner closely with you to support them in developing the self-help skills needed to use the toilet in a consistent, calm, and empowering way. We celebrate each child's progress and maintain a positive, encouraging attitude, even when accidents happen. A shared and consistent approach between home and school is key to a successful transition. Your child's educators will keep you informed of their progress, and we ask that you also keep us updated on developments at home. While we recognize that families may follow a variety of toilet learning methods, we do require that children always wear either a diaper or underwear while at school in order to meet health and sanitation standards.

Parents are expected to provide diapers and wipes for their child as needed. Children who use diapers or pull-ups will have a designated drawer in the bathroom for their supplies. Staff will notify parents when it's time to replenish these items.

## 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.

At the start of the school year:

- Framed Family Photo
- Rain Boots

- Diaper Cream
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent
- Diapers/Pull Up & Wipes (replenish as needed)
- Seasonally appropriate spare clothing (replenish as needed)

Each day:

- Lunch (no nuts, pork, or shellfish)
- Reusable water bottle
- Nap/Rest Items (sent in each Monday, sent home each Friday)

## Clothing

At Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center children use a variety of art and sensory materials, actively play outdoors in all weather conditions, and may have occasional toilet accidents. For this reason, we ask that children wear comfortable clothing that is easy for them to manage independently and that they (and you) won't worry about getting messy. Additionally, children should be sent to school with appropriate outerwear each day- such as jackets, raincoats, snow pants, hats, mittens, etc.- so they may fully participate in outdoor play throughout the seasons. Footwear should be comfortable, sturdy, and safe for running, climbing, and playing outdoors on a variety of terrains. Flip flops, slides, and thin-soled sandals are not permitted.

We ask that you keep your child's cubby bin stocked with seasonally appropriate extra clothing, including multiple changes of shirts, bottoms, underwear, and socks. This ensures your child can comfortably continue their day in the event of spills, messy play, or toilet accidents.

## Jewish Holidays & Special Celebrations

At TEECC, we approach our daily lives through the lens of our rich Jewish values. In this spirit, we engage children in learning the stories, symbols, and rituals of each Jewish holiday, while also exploring the underlying values these celebrations invite us to reflect on and embody—such as courage, justice, pride in identity, and community. This values-centered approach makes the learning both universal and meaningful by connecting it to children's everyday experiences and helping all children, including those from diverse cultural and family backgrounds, find personal relevance and connection.

Temple Emanuel respects and values the diversity of our community. While we do not formally celebrate Christmas or other religious holidays outside of our Jewish tradition, including Halloween and Valentine's Day, we warmly encourage all children to share their own family traditions, stories, and rituals. These moments of sharing foster a sense of belonging, deepen mutual understanding, and enrich our community.

### *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.

### *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. 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 donate to the classroom library and share a special snack with the class. We request that you please refrain from sending in “goody bags.” Additionally, for safety and health reasons, balloons are prohibited at TEECC.

## Family Participation

Families are an integral part of our program. We welcome, encourage, and depend upon family involvement to enrich both the culture of our community and the learning taking place in our classrooms. When children see their families welcomed into the school environment, it deepens their sense of belonging and strengthens the bridge between home and school.

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, the Annual Fall Festival, Parent Coffee Hours, Family Picnics and Playdates, and more.. We also welcome families to share meaningful skills or stories in the classroom—whether it's reading a favorite book, leading a cooking project, or sharing about a family holiday or tradition. Parents are also encouraged to actively participate in the life of the classroom by visiting, viewing documentation displays, and engaging with daily Remini posts—sharing reflections, comments, or questions that help extend the dialogue between home and school.

We believe that children thrive when their families are seen as active and valued members of their learning community. Your partnership is essential, and we are grateful to walk this journey with you

## Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to participating in the daily life of TEECC, we invite parents to share their talents with the community through a variety of volunteer opportunities.

## Room Parent

Each classroom community will have one or two parents who are designated as Room Parents. Room Parent responsibilities include, but are not limited to, coordinating parent communication, planning social events outside of school hours, planning teacher appreciation gifts, and volunteering at ECC events.

## ECC Advisory Board

The ECC Advisory Board is comprised of ECC parents, the Director of Early Childhood, and other ECC staff members. The mission of the ECC Advisory 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 Advisory Board serves on the Temple Emanuel Board of Trustees and Executive Committee as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President.

## Policies & Procedures

### Enrollment & Tuition

#### 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 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

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.

#### Required Forms

Once enrollment is confirmed, the following forms must be completed and submitted prior to your child's first day of school:

##### *MSDE Health Forms*

- [Emergency Form](#) (Resubmitted annually)
- [Health Inventory](#)
- [Immunization Certificate](#)
- [Blood Lead Testing Certificate](#)
- If applicable: [Allergy Medication Action Plan](#), [Asthma Action Plan](#), [Seizure Action Plan](#), & [Individualized Care Plan](#)

##### *TEECC Waivers & Forms*

- [Family-Child Information Form](#)
- [Medical Attention Release](#)

- [Media Release & Image Use Permission](#)
- [‘Off Grounds’ Permission Form](#)
- [Topical Application Authorization](#)

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.

## Billing

All fees and tuition are non-refundable. Payments for all fees and tuition can be made via check or via ACH/Credit Card through the ShulCloud management system. There will be a processing fee for credit card payment. Tuition for the 10-month school year will be charged in 10 installments due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. The summer session will be charged in two installments, also due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Accounts with missed payments will be charged a \$30 late fee after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. If payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup>, your child may not be able to attend school until payment is made. Families with consistently delinquent payments or unresolved non-payment may be subject to withdrawal from the program. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please reach out to our office to discuss possible accommodation or payment plans.

## Behavior & Inclusion

### Behavior Guidance and Social Learning

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. Reflecting our strong belief in the competence and capability of children, we focus on fostering problem-solving and communication skills that enable children to resolve conflicts with peers and build positive social relationships.

We recognize that there are times when we may need to address conflict or challenging behaviors in the classroom. When necessary, we speak to the child with a firm, but caring voice, focusing on redirection to the expected appropriate behavior and avoiding admonishment for ‘bad’ behavior. Redirection may also include the opportunity for the child to choose a new area or activity in the classroom or to regulate in a quiet, peaceful space.

If a reoccurring challenging behavior is observed, we will first reflect upon the design, routines, and expectations of the classroom environment itself. This may include shifting transitions, modifying play groupings, changing classroom materials, or pausing to reflect on our partnership as a teaching team. Often, this process is enriched through collaboration with our outside early childhood and developmental consultants, including our partners through [Growing Minds Therapy](#).

Ongoing challenging, disruptive, or unsafe behavior may signal that a child needs additional support in developing social-emotional skills, communication strategies, or tools for self-regulation. In these situations, we partner with families to create a plan for supporting the child both at school and at home. This plan may include regular check-ins, shared strategies for consistency, increased communication, or collaboration with outside specialists or therapeutic providers. We ask that families participate in this process with openness, honesty, and a spirit of collaboration. Timely and responsive communication helps us align our efforts and best support not only the child, but also the overall well-being of the classroom community.



While we are deeply committed to supporting all children and view challenges as opportunities for growth, our ability to do so relies on a strong, reciprocal partnership between school and home. When significant behavioral concerns continue over time, it is essential that families actively engage in the process—including follow-through on strategies and collaboration with outside professionals when recommended.

## Inclusion

At TEECC, we believe children are naturally curious, capable, and eager to make meaning of the world around them. We provide opportunities for both independent exploration and collaborative learning in environments that are developmentally appropriate, relationship-driven, and intentionally designed to be flexible and responsive.

We recognize that each child grows and develops on their own unique timeline and brings with them a wide range of strengths, perspectives, and ways of engaging. Our classrooms are built to honor this diversity—adapting to meet children where they are and to support who they are becoming. Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center welcomes all children, including those with disabilities and special healthcare needs. We see every child as a valued member of our community and are committed to creating a learning environment where all children feel seen, supported, and able to thrive.

We work in close partnership with families and are happy to collaborate with outside service providers such as therapists, early intervention specialists, or consultants. If your child has an IFSP, IEP, or receives outside support, we ask that you share this with us so we can work together to ensure continuity of care and learning.

We are committed to making reasonable accommodations to support each child in reaching their full potential. This may include adapting schedules, materials, or expectations as needed to ensure every child has access to meaningful and inclusive learning experiences.

## Our Commitment and Capacity

We are deeply committed to creating an inclusive, nurturing environment. We recognize that supporting the success of each child depends on a strong, collaborative relationship between school and home. In some cases, whether due to a child's complex developmental needs or unsafe behaviors—we may reach a point where, despite thoughtful planning, intervention, and partnership, we are not able to meet a child's needs within the scope of our program.

In these rare and difficult situations, when continued enrollment no longer supports the well-being of the individual child or the broader classroom community, we may determine that a different educational setting is more appropriate. Should that become necessary, we will work closely with the family to support a compassionate and respectful transition.

## Attendance & Pick-up

### 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 at least 24 hours. Guidelines for specific illnesses can be found in the TEECC Illness & Exclusion Policy below.



## Afternoon Dismissal

TEECC closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Timely pick-up is important not only for maintaining required supervision ratios, but also to ensure that the end of your child's day is as smooth and secure as the rest of it. Children can experience anxiety when pickups are delayed, especially at the end of a full and engaging day. As a licensed early childhood center, we are not permitted to provide care after 6:00 p.m.

We understand that occasional delays and unforeseen circumstances may arise. If you are running late, please notify us as soon as possible by calling the office at (301) 942-2000 so we can support your child accordingly.

### *Late Pick-Up Fees*

To maintain fairness and staffing compliance, repeated late pickups will result in a fee. A charge of \$20 per 10-minute increment (per child) will be assessed for any pickup after 6:00 p.m. Families will be asked to sign a late arrival form documenting the time of pickup.

## Sign-In/Out Policies

Your child must 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. It is imperative that a staff member is aware of your child's arrival or departure.

Safety and security are our greatest priority at Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center. Your child will only be released for pick-up to a parent, guardian, or other adult clearly listed as 'authorized to pick up child (daily)' on your child's [Emergency Form](#). In the event of an emergency, when parents or guardians cannot be reached, your designated emergency contacts may be requested to pick up your child. Separate written notification is required for any temporary release authorization (e.g. visiting relatives, neighbors, other TEECC families. Photo identification will be requested of any individual a staff member does not recognize or has not met previously.

## Snow/Inclement Weather Policy

Throughout the year, 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 via SMS message through the Remini application.

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, TEECC 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 closure.
- 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 inclement weather develops while school is in session, we will make every effort to remain open. However, should we determine that early closure is necessary, families will be notified promptly. In that event, parents will have at least a two-hour window to arrive at school for pick-up. We ask that you make

arrangements to collect your child as soon as possible, as weather conditions may continue to worsen and impact safety.

## Food & Allergies

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**.

## Snacks

TEECC provides snack each morning and afternoon. Our snack menu is based on MSDE recommendations and requirements. Morning snacks include a cup of milk and a grain, and afternoon snacks include cheese and a fruit or vegetable. On Friday mornings, we will provide challah and grape juice to celebrate Ta'am Shel Shabbat

## Lunch

Children should bring a packed 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.

## Allergies

We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for children with food allergies. If your child has any known allergies, it is essential that you notify the school and complete the appropriate paperwork prior to the start of the school year or immediately upon diagnosis. This information helps us take the necessary precautions in classrooms, during snack and mealtimes, and allows us to notify staff and develop emergency care plans in collaboration with families and health professionals.

## Health & Illness

### Immunizations

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. Vaccines required by the Maryland Department of Health for children enrolled in preschool programs is available online:

[https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Shared%20Documents/2025-2026\\_Preschools\\_and\\_Schools\\_Vax\\_Requirements\\_Final.pdf](https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Shared%20Documents/2025-2026_Preschools_and_Schools_Vax_Requirements_Final.pdf)

### Medication

In general, Maryland licensing regulations do not allow staff to administer any medication or treatment at school without the required authorization form from a child's physician. Completed forms along with the accurately labeled medication must be submitted to a member of the ECC leadership team. Please see specific guidelines below:

- **All Medications:** In addition to providing the proper authorization form. A parent must administer the first dose/application of any topical product or medication at home and observe no adverse effects.

- **Over the Counter, Prescription, & Homeopathic Remedies for limited time use:** 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.
- **Prescription Medication for ongoing or reoccurring use:** Requires [Asthma Action Plan](#), [Seizure Action Plan](#), or [Individualized Care Plan](#) 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 list 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 request that **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:** Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, and Diaper Cream may be submitted to your child's teacher and must be accompanied by a completed [Topical Application Authorization Form](#). Diaper cream will be applied to children as needed. Sunscreen and Insect Repellent will be applied only in the afternoons during the months of May through October. Staff will only use sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper cream that has been provided by the child's parent and is listed on the Topical Application Authorization Form. Sharing between children is not permitted.

**\* Please turn in all medications, creams, etc. directly to the appropriate ECC staff member. DO NOT leave them in your child's backpack or cubby. THANK YOU!**

## Illness & Exclusion

TEEC'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 at least 24 hours. Specific guidelines for common illnesses are listed below:

- **Fever:** Child should stay home until fever free, without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for at least 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 100° F.
- **Vomiting & Diarrhea:** Vomiting and diarrhea generally indicate an active intestinal infection or virus. Diarrhea is defined by the Maryland Department of Health as a significant increase in the frequency and change in the consistency of normal bowel movements. A child may return to school if there is no incidences of vomiting and the frequency and consistency of bowel movements has returned to normal for at least 24 hours.
- **Covid-19 & Other Respiratory Illnesses:** Child must be fever-free, with *significant* symptom improvement for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

- **Strep Throat:** Child may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotic treatment and the child has been fever-free, without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for at least 24 hours.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):**
  - **Bacterial:** Child may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotic treatment and eye drainage has stopped.
  - **Viral:** Child may return with a doctor's note that states the child is not contagious
- **Chickenpox:** Child may return after all lesions have dried and crusted (typically 6 days after start of rash) and no new lesions have appeared for at least 24 hours.
- **Pertussis (Whooping Cough):** Child may return after completing 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment or 21 days from start of cough.
- **Head Lice:** Child may return following shampoo treatment. To keep outbreaks to a minimum, we ask parents to carefully follow head-check and hair-combing procedures for several days following treatment.
- **Coxsackie Virus (Hand, Foot, & Mouth):** Child may return to school if they have been fever-free, without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for at least 24 hours AND have no open sores, mouth sores, or uncontrolled drooling.

### *Notification & Return to School*

We kindly request that you notify us when you suspect your child is ill or has been diagnosed with an illness. This will enable us to track patterns of illness in the school and notify our community when necessary. In general, we ask that children recovering from illness only return to school when they are well enough to actively participate in all school activities.

## Communication

While our educators are happy to exchange brief updates during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, these are often busy times when their primary focus is on welcoming and engaging with children. For longer questions, concerns, or conversations, we ask that you send a message via email or the Remini application. We are always happy to schedule a phone call or in-person meeting at a mutually convenient time.

We strive to maintain open, transparent, and supportive communication between home and school. Please inform us when your child will be absent due to illness or vacation and share any significant events (positive or challenging) that may impact your child's mood, behavior, or needs at school. Even small changes at home, like visiting relatives returning home, can affect a child's emotional state. Out of respect for each child's dignity and privacy, we ask that sensitive topics never be discussed in front of children or other parents. We are committed to honoring your family's confidentiality, and all information shared with us will be handled with care and discretion.

To reach TEECC by phone during the day, please call the main phone line at 301-942-2000 and ask to be transferred to the ECC. If your call is urgent or time sensitive and you are unable to reach a member of the TEECC leadership team, the Temple's main office staff will be happy to assist you.

## Remini Application

Remini is a web-based and mobile application used at TEECC to support daily communication between educators and families. Through Remini, educators and families can send and receive direct messages,

which are also visible to members of the administrative team to ensure that important or time-sensitive information is communicated efficiently throughout the day.

The classroom Remini feed offers families a window into the life of the classroom and the ongoing pedagogical research taking place. Educators use photographs, videos, and children's quotes to document questions, discoveries, and moments of wonder that arise in daily experiences. Once a week, typically on Fridays, educators share a curated set of photos highlighting the week's classroom experiences.

Through the Remini application, families will have access to important documents such as daily reports, the Family Handbook, and Family Directory as well as an online calendar, regularly updated with important dates such as birthdays and school events.

Parents/Guardians will be invited to join Remini ([remini.me](https://remini.me)) shortly before their child begins attending TEECC. You will receive an SMS or email notification prompting you to create your account. In addition to parents or guardians, approved "fans" (such as grandparents or close family members) can be added to view a child's personal page of 'tagged' posts and photos. However, to protect the privacy of all children, access to the full classroom feed is limited to immediate family members only.

If you have any questions about using Remini or need assistance setting up your account, please reach out to the TEECC leadership team.

## 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 from the Director is shared with families each week, typically on Friday afternoons. We kindly ask that parents take the time to read this communication, as it often includes important updates related to policies and procedures, upcoming events, deadlines, and highlights from the week. Staying informed through this weekly update helps ensure smooth communication between home and school and supports your family's full participation in our community.

## Other Communications

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Scheduled in February, conferences are 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.
- **Documentation & Displays:** In addition to the Remini application, 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 building.
- **Website:** The [ECC section of the Temple's website](#) highlights information about our program and includes important forms and enrollment information for currently enrolled and prospective families.

- **Social Media:** We invite you to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and join us in our efforts to make our learning visible beyond the classroom and help advocate for the powerful and important work of early childhood.
- **Parent & Community Events:** Throughout the year we offer a variety of opportunities for parents, educators, and families to gather together in community and relationship building. Including our New School Year Reception, Annual Fall Festival, Parent Learning Nights, Purim Carnival, and more.

## Photograph & Image Use

At TEECC we view documentation as an essential way to make children's thinking, learning, and relationships visible. As part of our pedagogical practice, we often use photographs, video, and audio recordings of children engaged in meaningful experiences to reflect, communicate, and advocate for the important work of young children and early childhood education. This media will be used in internal TEECC and Temple Emanuel communications such as classroom or lobby displays and exhibitions, parent or member newsletters and emails, Remini posts, staff training, etc. It may also be used in external communications including, but not limited to, websites, social media platforms, television, printed or digital publications, promotional or informational materials, etc.

Children's images are always used with great care and intention, in ways that reflect the dignity and competence of young children. Names and identifying information are never published in external communications or publications. Families are required to submit a [Media Release & Image Use Permission Form](#) prior to their child's enrollment.

## Screen Time & Technology Use

Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Center's philosophy and policies on technology use are aligned closely with the [joint position statement](#) from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Fred Rogers Center. At TEECC, interactive technology or media may be used with intention and thoughtful discretion, only to support or enhance the active, hands-on learning experience. In keeping with our goal of making children's learning visible, children may employ photography or recording devices to document, reflect on, and share their ideas with others.

## Security & Child Safety

The safety and security of our families and young children is Temple Emanuel's greatest priority. Our security procedures and policies are reevaluated regularly by experts, and are updated when concerns, incidents, or new guidance arise. Early Childhood Center staff annually review our Emergency Preparedness Policies and Procedures as well as receive Situational Awareness and Active Threat training.

## Building Access

Temple Emanuel is a controlled access building. Staff and ECC families enter the building through the doorway that faces the side parking lot, using an assigned unique access code. These codes are confidential and should not be shared with others. Due to security concerns, we ask that **only adults input codes into the keypad**. Misuse or sharing of codes may result in deactivation.

## Accidents & Injuries

In the event of an accident, staff will comfort the child and attend to any injury, as needed. MSDE licensing regulations do not permit us to administer any oral or topical treatment without a doctor's note. In the case

of a wound or injury, the area will be washed with soap and water and ice, or a bandage will be applied, if needed.

Following an injury, a copy of the accident 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 Director if your child's injury requires additional medical attention. For added peace of mind, a phone call to families will be made in the event of any injury to the head or face.

## Reporting Abuse or Neglect

In Maryland, educators are considered mandated reporters and are required, by law, to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency. "Any person who in good faith makes a report of abuse or neglect is immune from any civil liability or criminal penalty."

## 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



## Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the 2025-2026 Temple Emanuel Early Childhood (TEEC) Family Handbook. I understand that the Handbook contains important information regarding the center's policies and procedures.

I agree to abide by the policies and guidelines outlined in the handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with its contents. I understand that if I have any questions or need further clarification, I may contact the Director of Early Childhood or Temple Emanuel's Executive Director.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_