



Where children are our world

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Parent Handbook **2024-2025**

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Mission Statement

The mission of the TBTST Early Childhood Center is to provide a safe, loving, nurturing environment for students to grow socially, emotionally, and academically. TBTST offers an age appropriate, center-based curriculum that meets students' individual needs to explore, encouraged by educators to actively participate in their own learning process. TBTST administration and educators strive to provide families with guidance, support, and opportunities to take part in their child's education.

Reflections: From the Director

My work in early childhood education is driven by a passion to support the self-actualization of small humans. To watch unfold the flourishing of a child is a magnificent thing. Children bring with them untold gifts into the world and the adults in their lives are tasked with helping them develop the skills, the impulse control, the confidence, all the qualities that will help them live lives of greatness. Every parent and every teacher is beholden to take time to reflect on the ingredients of a great life because we are, right now, stocking the pantry for the children in our care. We are providing the foundation.

When your children arrive in Kindergarten, well equipped for the curriculum that awaits them, my hope is that they will have more than a working knowledge of the ABC's and rudimentary mathematical concepts on which to build their understanding. I also hope for them to have more than the ability to sit quietly and listen to the teacher or walk with others in a straight line. Their teachers at TBTST will work on that, but these are small things compared to what I want for them.

I want them to walk into the next early chapter of their lives with their eyes bright with curiosity and excitement. I want them to chase joy and be truly competent at building friendships. I want them to approach the hard things in life with a deep sense of knowing that they are up to the task, because they've been successful at hard things before. I want them to be good to themselves and good to the people around them.

In my early months at the Early Childhood Center at Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek, it is important to me to deepen the understanding of the real work that we are doing in our classrooms and on our playground. It is now, while our students are small, that we must do the hard work of equipping them with the language and the skills to get their needs met in ways that build relationships, such as asking, "Can I use that when you're finished?" instead of grabbing, or saying, "I want to play with it by myself" instead of pushing. This is where we take children from creatures of instinct and self-preservation to functioning members of a community with a healthy sense of self-respect and respect for others. If we, as the adults, can approach this process with compassion for the baby inside the child, operating only by natural instinct, while holding in mind the respectful, helpful, generous version slowly taking shape, we can lovingly guide the child in the right direction.

Adults and children alike, we are all on a journey of self-development. We all grow better in an environment of love and respect, empathy, and high standards.

Let's enjoy the journey together!

Rivka Seeman

ECC Philosophy

TBTST Early Childhood Center's philosophy is based on the developmental needs of the child. Our goal is to promote a child's development in all areas, from cognitive to language to gross and fine motor skills, to emotional regulation and impulse control. This is accomplished through fun activities that are designed to promote practice in various skills. It also happens through self-directed play. We provide opportunities for sensory-motor exploration, exploration of language through songs and stories, outdoor time, creative play with art materials, and most importantly a loving and nurturing environment.

Early Childhood Education means the development of a child's independence, confidence, and pride while using creative expression and fun experimentation. TBTST Early Childhood Center's curriculum is center based and fosters a world of understanding and learning. The class atmosphere allows for a balance of child-led and teacher-led activities. TBTST educators provide a warm environment for children to express desires and interests. The curriculum includes language arts, math, science, and social studies. Children also enjoy art, music, cooking, the study of Jewish Holidays, Bible stories, Hebrew Language, and indoor & outdoor play. TBTST Early Childhood is an academically based private school which prides itself on providing a home away from home environment to its students and their families. TBTST Early Childhood Center strives to establish close communication with families and provides parents with opportunities to be actively involved in their child's educational experience.

Non-Discrimination Policy

TBTST does not discriminate based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, or sexual preference.

Absentee Policy

Please be aware that if your child attends school part time, days when your child is absent cannot be made up on other days.

VPK Absence and late Drop Off Policy

If you have enrolled your child in the state funded Voluntary Pre-K program, your child's absences **are limited to 20 days** per school year. If you exceed **20** absences, you will be asked to withdraw from the state funded program and begin paying regular Pre-School fees as TBTST will not be paid by the state to cover your tuition.

VPK students must arrive at school no later than 8:55 AM as VPK instructional time begins at 9 AM sharp. You may drop off as early as 8:45 AM or you may sign up for early care and drop off between 7 AM and 8:45 AM.

Late Drop Off and Late Pick Up Policy:

TBTST Early Childhood Center provides students with an academic based learning environment. Daily routine is structured to ease students into their day and provides them with an adjustment period in the morning. Schedule consistency allows students to establish a sense of comfort and security. Students are expected to arrive by their class scheduled time, between 8:45 and 9:15 AM and start the day with their peers. Please do your best to schedule doctor visits for the afternoon as an early pickup is less disruptive than a late drop off.

Early Bird and After Care

Please understand that we open at 7:00 am sharp and close at 5:30 pm sharp. Opening teachers are instructed not to come to the door before 7 AM so they have time to prepare for their day. Please refrain from putting them in an uncomfortable position by arriving early, though you are welcome to wait in the parking lot until 7 AM if you need to arrive a few minutes early.

Our staffing depends on the number of students that we are expecting at any given time. Please arrive according to your scheduled time. Arriving before your child is expected can throw us out of ratio. If something comes up and you need to come earlier one day or change your child's schedule, please make sure to contact the director via BrightWheel or email Preschool@TBTST.org.

Children must be picked up by 5:30 PM as teachers often have other professional and personal responsibilities in the after-school hours. If your child is not picked up by 5:30pm, **a late fee will be charged to your account.**

The late fee is \$2 per minute (per child). The fee is used to pay the staff who remain with your child. If you know you are going to be late, call us at

954-722-9537. If we want to keep good teachers, we must respect their time as well. It is important that parents take our hours into consideration when enrolling in our program.

We do understand that unforeseen events can happen. If you know your arrival is going to be delayed, please message us on Bright Wheel or call the school at 954-722-9537. If we have not heard from you by 5:30 pm and we cannot reach you by phone, your emergency numbers will be called and one of those contacts will be asked to come and get your child. If neither you nor your emergency contact can be reached, we will keep your child for one hour. Please recognize that our teachers have obligations and interests that require their leaving work as scheduled. After that time, the police will be contacted to see if there has been an accident and/or to drive by your home to see if there is a problem. If no problems are found, then *Child Protective Services* will be called.

Weather Emergencies

In the event of severe weather – the following procedures will be followed...

1. If a hurricane “WATCH” goes into effect stay close to news/weather updates.
2. If a hurricane “WARNING” goes into effect the school will be closed and will remain closed until weather conditions improve. **If the “WARNING” is issued during a time that your child is IN SCHOOL... you MUST pick-up your child IMMEDIATELY!**
3. We will follow the guidelines used by Broward County Schools. Therefore, if the public schools close, we will be closed on the first day. School closure will be reassessed based on circumstances after the first day.

Lock Down

Lock Down is implemented when the threat of violence or gunfire is identified. During LOCKDOWN, students and staff are to always remain in designated lockdown locations. This response is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, the following types of emergencies: Gunfire, Threat of extreme violence outside the classroom, Imminent danger in the surrounding community.

Lockdown requires closing and locking doors immediately after which NO ONE is allowed to enter or exit. In the event of a lock down the following procedures will be followed...

1. **Code Red:** Teachers will be notified immediately and will follow

procedures to gather students into their designated lockdown location. Parents will be notified through Bright Wheel and an email. Classroom doors and school's doors will be locked, and **NO ONE will be allowed to enter the building. PARENTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PICK THEIR CHILD UP!** Parents are encouraged to follow media notification.

2. **Code Yellow:** Teachers will be notified by administration. Parents will be notified through Bright Wheel and email. Students will be able to walk freely in the classroom environment; however, classroom doors and school's doors will remain locked. **NO ONE will be allowed to enter the building. PARENTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PICK THEIR CHILD UP!**
3. **Code Green:** All clear! Teachers and students will be able to resume activities. Teachers will be notified by administration. Parents will be notified through Bright Wheel and email. Parents will be encouraged to pick their child up.

To ensure your child's safety, NO pictures of children will be taken during code red and code yellow.

Termination of Enrollment

If it becomes apparent that our program is not suitable for a child, the following will occur, prior to termination of enrollment:

1. Meeting with parents, teacher, and director to discuss the situation.
2. Plan of action developed, including but not limited to: discussing several behavior modifications to be tried both at home and in the classroom to attempt consistency...seeking professional advice in ways to help student...suggesting testing through private or public school means... developing timetable to institute changes, assess change and set another meeting date, which is mutually agreed upon
3. Meet with parents, teacher, and director to assess changes and perhaps develop an additional/alternative plan (repeat #2 above)
4. If it becomes apparent that change is not forthcoming, and it becomes necessary for enrollment to be terminated, a date of termination of enrollment will be decided upon and termination will take place.
5. Children who continually pose a danger to themselves or other children through their aggressive behavior (including punching, hitting, biting, tackling, etc.) are at risk of having their enrollment terminated and may have to be removed from the school in a more immediate timeframe, prior to the steps outlined above reaching completion.

Termination may occur if **The Child:**

- Is at risk of causing serious injury to another child or self
- Exhibits uncontrollable behaviors including excessive tantrums/outbursts
- Engages in ongoing physical/verbal abuse to children and/or staff
- Engages in excessive biting
- Is unable to successfully navigate the parameters and expectations of the program.

Termination may occur if **The Parent:**

- Threatens physical injury or seeks to intimidate the staff
- Verbally abuses the staff
- Behaves in a manner deemed inappropriate by the director
- Fails to pay or is habitually late with payments
- Fails to complete all forms required by the school
- Is habitually late in picking up their child

Child's name

Parent's/Guardian Signature

Date

In-School “Field Trip”

As a parent of _____, I give permission to escort my child out of the preschool and into and through the corridors of Temple Beth Torah Sha’aray Tzedek to the Library, Social Hall, or Sanctuary, as well as around the grounds of the Synagogue. I also give permission for my child to attend programs, shows, and other in-school “fieldtrips”, and do hereby release TBTST Early Childhood Center and its employees from any and all liability of any kind or nature from injury to my child.

TBTST Pre-School Child Guidance Policy

As set forth by licensing guidelines, childcare facilities must ensure that age-appropriate constructive disciplinary practices are used for children in care.

- Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening.
- Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or toileting.
- Spanking or any form of physical punishment is prohibited.

At TBTST-ECC, we approach off-track behavior as one more learning opportunity in our day. While behavior can be acceptable or unacceptable, a child themselves is always acceptable with all of their feelings. We never respond to children’s behavior in a demeaning way. Instead, we use our skills as educators to teach the child the behaviors that are acceptable and the skills required to perform them. We offer strategies that a child can use to get their needs met in an appropriate way and we allow them to practice those strategies. When big feelings bubble up, we accept and acknowledge them, separating the feeling which is acceptable from the behavior, which is not. When necessary, the child is temporarily removed from the situation and may return when he or she feels ready to cope with the situation in an acceptable manner. We stress the importance of respecting the person and property of all our peers and can enjoy our class to the fullest when we do not hurt anyone physically, emotionally or by taking away other’s property.

I have read the laws concerning disciplinary measures and understand that Temple Beth Torah Sha’aray Tzedek ECC adheres to these rules.

Child’s name

Parent’s/Guardian Signature

Date

Health and Safety

Medication

Our preference would be to have you arrange your child's medication before or after school and to come in to administer medication yourself during the day. However, if it is necessary for us to give a child medication while he/she is at school, you **MUST** fill out a Medication Authorization form. The forms are kept in both the Pre-School office and the Early Bird/Extended Day room. The initial dose must be administered at home and we can administer subsequent dosages after the medication form is filled out.

DO NOT SEND MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH BOX OR CUP!

ALL PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION MUST BE IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTAINER WITH THE CHILD'S NAME AND EXACT DOSE INDICATED ON THE LABEL.

DCF (Department of Children & Family Services) rule states that we can only administer over-the-counter medication given to us in an **UNOPENED CONTAINER**. Please read labels on the over-the-counter medicine carefully. We cannot administer medication that does not list the appropriate dosage for your child's age unless we have written authorization from your child's doctor. Remember to send a "measured spoon".

IF TYLENOL OR SIMILAR PAIN RELIEF PRODUCTS ARE NEEDED, YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO BE AT HOME. THEREFORE, WE WILL NOT ADMINISTER PAIN RELIEF PRODUCTS.

Sick Child Policy:

If your child becomes ill, you will be called, and arrangements must be made to pick up your child immediately. If we send your child home with a fever of 100° or above, vomiting, or diarrhea, he/she may not return to the program until they have been without the concerning symptom, and without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours, and with a full school day in-between the time they got sick and the time they return. If your child has a lower fever but are exhibiting listlessness or other concerning symptoms, we may also insist that you or a trusted person of your choosing, pick up your child from school immediately.

Child's name

Parent's/Guardian Signature

Date

Medical Notes

Every child is required to have a physical examination, and must have a current immunization record on file at all times. DCF forms #680 and #3040 must be completed by your child's physician and be on file in our office **ON OR BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.**

TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF DISEASE, CHILDREN WHO SHOW SIGNS OF ILLNESS SHOULD BE KEPT HOME! Teachers will call parents to pick-up their child if they feel your child's condition can best be treated at home.

The following position on communicable disease will be **strictly enforced...**

Any child who is suspected of having a communicable disease, or who develops a fever or other signs or symptoms, which include but are not limited to any of the following... **DIARRHEA, RASH, PINK EYE, SKIN INFECTION, HEAD LICE, ABDOMINAL PAIN, VOMITING OR GREEN MUCUS COMING OUT OF NOSE...** shall be removed from their classroom and parents will be notified for immediate dismissal. Such children shall not return to the facility until the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease are no longer present for 24 hours. A **WRITTEN STATEMENT** from a physician attesting to the fact that the child has been appropriately treated for the disease must be provided to the Pre-School.

A CHILD WHO STAYS HOME SICK, OR IS SENT HOME, WITH FEVER, VOMITING OR DIARRHEA YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIM/HER TO STAY HOME UNTIL THEY ARE SYMPTOM FREE FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS.

Please schedule well visits for after school or on weekends. This is less disruptive to our school day. Your child may develop a fever or feel less than 100% post routine vaccinations. You can alleviate the likelihood that you will be called to pick them up by scheduling those visits when you can be home with them. When your child doesn't feel well for any reason, or needs pain-relief medications, we expect them to stay home from school.

Child's name	Parent's/Guardian Signature	Date
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Food Facts

LUNCH: Parents provide a lunch for their children each day. Please pack your child's lunch in a lunch box with an ice pack for perishable food. Food that your child prefers to eat warm can be packed in a thermos. We observe a Kashrut policy at Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek. **NO MEAT, POULTRY OR SHELLFISH MAY BE BROUGHT FROM HOME.** Dairy or pareve lunches are to be brought to school for children who stay past noon.

Please note that lunch time is an important time for children to work on independent feeding skills, including as much as possible, opening and packing up their own lunches. This will be a gradual process beginning in small ways and progressing through their time in our program until they are operating almost completely independently by the time they are in our VPK program.

Allergies: Some classrooms may have further restrictions on what can be sent for lunch due to severe allergies. Teachers will provide this information. If your child has an allergy, please make sure it is on your child's medical form AND schedule an appointment to discuss precautions with the director and teachers.

Birthdays

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday during school, you may bring in a special treat for your child's class. **You may not bring in any food that has been prepared in the home.** (Please notify the teacher a few days in advance so she may arrange her schedule.) Please be sure that ANY food you send in is kosher and unopened. You can find kosher desserts at BJ's or Publix. Other kosher ideas are Greenwise mini-muffins with a kosher symbol, Entenmanns, Little Debbie's, and Krispy Kreme. Please also feel free to send in a healthier option like uncut fruit (we will cut it up for you). Food sent in to share should not contain nuts. Please ask your child's teacher if there are any other allergies that need to be taken into account.

These are some kosher symbols:



If you're not sure, feel free to send a photo of the package to the Early Childhood Director on Bright Wheel for confirmation.

If you plan to have an at-home party, or one at a local facility, please do not ask us to distribute invitations unless you have invited all the children in the class and the party doesn't fall on Shabbat (Friday night or Saturday day) or a Jewish Holiday. If your party does not meet these guidelines, you will be asked to mail or email your invitations

Food Permission Form

Throughout the school year we have many festivities that your child may participate in. We have holiday and birthday celebrations as well as cooking projects in the classroom. By signing the form, you are agreeing to have your child participate in our celebrations and be served the foods we provide during these times. If your child has a food allergy, please make sure you note it on the application and notify the school office and your child's teacher. Students will not be served any of the foods provided for the celebration unless this consent form is signed and returned. TBTST is a Kosher facility and we will only serve Kosher foods and follow Kashrut dietary laws.

Thank you for your cooperation.

By signing this form, I am agreeing to allow my child to participate in school celebrations and to be served the foods provided during the celebrations.

Child's name

Parent's/Guardian Signature

Date

Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, acknowledge the receipt of Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek Early Childhood Center Parent Manual. I have read and understand all the information within.

Child's name

Parent's/Guardian Signature

Date