



Dear Parents,

Thank you for choosing the Early Childhood School at B'nai Shalom of Olney as a trusted early childhood education program for your child. The teachers, support staff, and I are dedicated to providing and maintaining a safe and secure environment, filled with love of learning for each child.

At the Early Childhood School, we nurture our children through developmentally appropriate activities and experiences. In our program, we work on the social, emotional, physical, spiritual/religious development, and cognitive skills of each child. We understand that children flourish in a rich environment that provides opportunities for daily self-discovery and hands-on learning and exploration. Our teachers differentiate the learning to meet the needs of all children.

I look forward to a wonderful year together. Please feel free to call, email or stop by with any questions, feedback or thoughts. We are partners in the success of your child!

Warmly,

Rabbi Sarah Meytin  
Director, Early Childhood Education  
Early Childhood School at B'nai Shalom of Olney



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## **PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

The Early Childhood School at B'nai Shalom of Olney is an early childhood educational program for pre-school aged children (two to five years old). The philosophy of the ECS is that children experience learning through meaningful play. The co-constructed, emergent curriculum is designed to be developmentally appropriate for each group of children, with particular emphasis on meeting the individual needs and interests of each child. We strive to create an atmosphere where learning experiences will occur and where children take an active part in the learning process. Our classrooms are arranged to maximize children's play, thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills. It is our desire to provide a warm, loving Jewish environment where each child feels secure and happy and where learning is meaningful and fun. The goals of the curriculum are:

- To help each child make a successful transition from home to school.
- To provide for all areas of the child's development: physical, cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional and spiritual through an integrated approach to learning that is concrete and relevant to each child.
- To provide for both age appropriate and individually appropriate activities based upon teacher observation of each child's special interests and developmental progress.
- To provide an atmosphere that is warm, loving and accepting.
- To prepare the environment for each child to learn through play, active exploration and interactions with adults, other children, and materials. Activities are built upon what the child already knows and to encourage emerging skills.
- To stimulate natural curiosity and encourage creative thinking.
- To help each child to explore, observe, question, and listen.
- To help each child become increasingly responsible and independent.
- To facilitate the development of a positive self-image in each child.
- To enhance the development of each child's understanding, knowledge and love of the culture, traditions, history, symbols and values of Judaism, while acknowledging and appreciating other cultures and practices.
- To provide a non-biased, non-stereotypic, and multi-cultural approach to learning.

## **ACCREDITATION**

We are certified and licenses by the Maryland State Board of Education, and we have a Private Educational Institution License.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Our program is offered to two- through five-year-olds. Two-year-olds must turn two prior to attending our school. The ECS uses the Montgomery County birth date policies as a guideline; however, classroom placement is ultimately

at the discretion of the Early Childhood Education Director. We also have a Parent/Toddler Program for children ages fourteen months to two years.

The ECS does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin in the admission of students, or in the employment of faculty and administrative staff.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

It is expected and greatly appreciated that you follow our arrival and dismissal procedures.

### School Hours

|                           |         |    |         |
|---------------------------|---------|----|---------|
| EARLY ARRIVAL – OPTION I  | 7:00 AM | To | 9:30 AM |
| EARLY ARRIVAL – OPTION II | 8:30AM  | to | 9:30 AM |
| CORE DAY CLASSES          | 9:30 AM | to | 1:00PM  |
| NAP/AFTERNOON ENRICHMENT  | 1:00 PM | to | 3:00 PM |
| LATE STAY                 | 3:00 PM | to | 6:00 PM |

### Arrival

Please follow the direction of our driveway, drive slowly through the parking lot, and park in the designated parking spaces. Cell phone use by drivers is not permitted in the parking lot unless the vehicle is parked. It is required that children be walked to and picked up at their classroom by parents or drivers each school day. While we do not offer a “carpool” option, assistance is happily provided, contingent on available staff for families who have a sleeping or sick sibling in the car. Please call the school office if you require such assistance. Please make every effort to bring your child to school on time. It can be difficult for a young child to join a group already in progress and it can be distracting to the class as well.

### Dismissal

Please arrive at the designated dismissal time to ensure a smooth transition for your child or carpool. Children, especially the two-year-olds, may get distraught if their parent or caregiver is not there when the door is opened at dismissal time. While we do not offer a “carpool” option, assistance is happily provided, contingent on available staff for families who have a sleeping or sick sibling in the car. Please call the school office if you require such assistance. If your child is going home with a friend or being picked up by someone other than the authorized person(s) who normally pick up your child, you must let us know IN WRITING (email is acceptable). Notes must be dated, signed, and include the full name of the person picking up your child as well as their contact phone number. You must call The ECS Office and let us know who is picking up your child if you have not given us a note. For the safety of your child, a photo I.D. may be requested. Please be sure to notify the driver of your carpool for that day. Out of respect for the ECS staff, children picked after their scheduled dismissal time will be charged according to our late pick-up policy. Families that consistently pick up late may be asked to leave the school.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The ECS at B'nai Shalom of Olney views behavior management as a system of guidelines or a framework within which children can operate in safety—one that corrects and teaches, and does not punish. Our positive discipline approach fosters pro-social behavior, self-esteem, and the development of self-control. To accomplish these goals, we use controlled choices, prevention, positive redirection, modeling, limit-setting, and problem solving. Cooperation between parents and our staff is vital in guiding the social and emotional development of the children.

If, in those rare cases, a behavior problem becomes severe, or potentially dangerous, parents may be required to remove the child from school until a plan of action can be decided upon. We will do our best to meet your child's needs, but we recognize our limitations. We work closely with JSSA Licensed Clinical Social Workers as well as county early childhood resources and consult them on classroom management and behavior.

## BIRTHDAYS & PARTIES

**Home Parties** – We will gladly distribute birthday party invitations, provided the entire class is invited. Please be sensitive to the observance of Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday) and holidays when choosing the party date. It is highly suggested that you schedule birthday parties that are not on the Sabbath. In addition, please observe dietary laws/kashrut for food that you are serving or serve dairy only so all families feel comfortable. We have families of different observance levels and want all children and their families to feel welcome.

**School Parties** - Birthday parties are celebrated in school and families are welcome to participate. We attempt to make birthdays focused on the child, and celebrating the child, rather than focused on birthday foods. Each class sets its own class' birthday traditions, so please check with your child's teacher to determine what would be most welcome for your child's birthday celebration. *If food will be a part of your child's celebration, we encourage you to consider a healthy snack, and please be sure to coordinate with the classroom teachers so that you can accommodate any allergies of children in the class. Please also remember that shared food must be certified kosher or prepared on-site at BSO.*

## CLASS PLACEMENT

The ECS follows Montgomery County's age cut off, which requires children to be five years old by September 1 in order to start in Kindergarten. Following this, children are placed in classes according to their age on September 1 (i.e. a child who is two-years-old on September 1 and turns three on October 15 will be in a 2s classroom for the year, along with other children who will turn three during the school year). In making class placements when there is more than one class per age group, we work hard to balance a number of different factors. We take into consideration gender balance, temperaments, individual needs, previous friends and classmates, and parental requests. While we do solicit parent input for in the spring, we do not guarantee to abide by parent requests and will not make changes once placements are complete as we work hard to ensure that we place each child in the best possible placement for that child, and that each class is the best mix of teachers and students we can provide. Class assignments are not announced until teachers send out welcome letters to students in mid-August for the following school year.

## **CUSTODY CONCERNS**

The ECS must have a notarized copy of any court-ordered custody agreement on file, in the case where there are court-restrictions on parental custody. This copy must be kept current should any changes occur. The ECS will comply with all court mandates. However, we are unable to limit access to children of legal custodial guardians.

## **DRESS CODE: WHAT TO BRING/WEAR TO SCHOOL**

Please bring a complete change of clothing for your child's use in the event your child gets wet or dirty during school. It should be in a gallon size zip locked bag that is clearly labeled with your child's name. Make sure that each article of clothing is marked with the child's name, including socks, underwear and all outerwear. Remember to update the clothing with the change of seasons and your child's growth.

Please send your child to school dressed appropriately for the weather, as we play outside year-round. Sunscreen and a hat, when it is hot and sunny, are important. Hats, mittens/gloves and boots are a necessity for the winter months. We encourage you to send snow pants and coats for wintry weather, as classes enjoy playing in the snow as well.

Please help your child to be independent by sending them in clothes that they can manage. Clothes that are particularly challenging for children are overalls, belts, buttons in the back, and snaps. Elastic waistbands in pants and skirts, pullover tops and front buttons help children learn to dress themselves. Also, please dress your child in clothing that can get dirty as they explore their environment – inside and out. We do wear smocks but sometime we still get dirty!

In the interest of safety, please send your child to school in sneakers or closed shoes. Preschoolers need sturdy slip-on shoes or ones with simple velcro closures. This will allow your child to get his/her shoes on and off independently. Crocs, sandals, flip-flops, etc. are not acceptable for playground and classroom activities.

**Halloween and Valentine's Day are not celebrated in our school.** We respectfully request that you do not distribute candy or cards at those times. Children are invited to come in costume for the Jewish holiday of Purim in the spring. Please do not send your child in costume on October 31.

## **GENERAL HEALTH/SAFETY POLICIES**

At the Early Childhood School, your child's health and safety are of utmost importance to us. Our staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. In addition, staff members are also trained to recognize certain signs of illness. In the event of illness or accident, the teacher will offer comfort and provide first aid to the child. Parents will receive an accident report for injuries. If necessary, the parents will be notified immediately.

All children are required to be vaccinated to attend ECS, unless they are medically unable to be. Up-to-date shot records are required for all children enrolled in ECS, including children who participate in Toddler and Me. Any child claiming a medical exemption must provide documentation from a pediatrician of the concern.

All children must have current medical and immunization forms, completed by a physician, on file in the Early Childhood School office before they may attend school.

### **Sick Policy**

If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, you will be asked to take your child home from school, so as not to infect other children. Children will be asked to leave only after the Director has verified the symptoms.

- a. A temperature of 100.0° F or more
- b. Vomiting or diarrhea
- c. Evidence of lice infection
- d. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- e. Colored discharge from nose (not related to allergies) and eyes
- f. Severe coughing

If your child is absent from school, please inform the school office as to the reason for the absence. Children who become ill while at school will be removed from their class and brought to the ECS Office, where they will remain until they are picked up. Your child will never be left alone. For your child's welfare, as well as that of the other children, we request that you please keep your child home if they exhibit any signs of illness.

Your child will be readmitted to school after an illness if

- a. The child is fever/vomit/diarrhea free for a 24 hour period – without the aid of medication
- b. The child no longer has signs of the illness
- c. Discharge from the nose is not green or yellow
- d. In the case of lice infestation, the Montgomery County Health Department requires that a child be nit free in order to return to school. The Early Childhood School office will examine the child before the child will be permitted to return to school.

### **Medications**

The ECS may administer prescribed or over-the-counter medication to a child only upon the written order of a licensed physician. A signed Physician's Medication Order Form must be on file to administer any medication. A record will be kept of all medications dispensed to a child during the day. Please provide a medication spoon or dropper so that the correct amount of medication is given. All medication must be in its original bottle and properly labeled. For safety reasons, children should not carry medicine into the school. All medications will be stored in the ECS office. However, should your child be prescribed an Epi-pen or other life-saving medications, it will be stored in the emergency bag kept with your child's class at all times. A duplicate of such medication may also be kept in the ECS office.

## POLICIES RELATING TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In order to keep the relationship between teacher, child, and family professional, the following guidelines are in place:

- We value the teacher's personal time. In order to be fair to all students, teachers will not attend birthday parties outside of school.
- Many parents and teachers are on Facebook. Teachers are discouraged from adding ECS parents to their "friends" unless the teacher has a Facebook account for school purposes only.
- Should you choose to hire a teacher to babysit for your family, outside of school time, we ask that you keep the same professional relationship with them at your home that you have at school. Babysitting jobs should not be arranged at school. Babysitting is a private transaction between parents and teacher, and the school is in no way liable for any accidents or injuries that may occur during these times.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are fun and exciting learning experiences for children. You will be required to sign a permission slip for each trip in order for your child to participate. You will be notified about each trip and are encouraged to participate as a driver/chaperone. Each driver is responsible for the children in their car and all children must have an appropriate car seat. Field trips outside of the building typically occur for only the Pre-K classroom. We bring in many "in-house" fields trips for all of our children.

## FOOD AT SCHOOL

The Jewish dietary laws are observed at the ECS and BSO. Foods that will be shared (i.e. for parties) must have a kosher certification or be prepared on site at BSO. Fruits and vegetables should come to school whole and be cut for serving on-site with school provided knives. Many Entenmann's and Sara Lee products are kosher. The following stores and bakeries sell kosher baked goods: The Costco in Wheaton (full kosher bakery), Kosher Mart, Shalom's, and the Kosher Pastry Oven. It is also possible to find pre-packaged kosher cakes and cupcakes here in Olney in many of the stores. If you need help or have any questions about the kosher policies, please see Rabbi Sarah.

Please note: home baked goods are not permitted for classroom parties or events in the Early Childhood School. The most common kosher symbols found in this area are the following:



**Lunches** – Lunches should not contain any kind of meat, poultry or shell fish. Lunches should not require heating or refrigeration. Juice boxes or a thermos for juice or milk are appropriate. You may include a cold-pack for dairy



products. Please do not send soda or candy. Some lunch suggestions include veggie nuggets, eggs, yogurt, cheese, cut-up fruits and vegetables, cream cheese, hummus and jelly sandwiches, etc. There are a variety of nut-free butters including Wow Butter and sunflower seed butter that many children like. The ECS has a page of healthy lunch suggestions available by request.

**Snacks** - Each day we provide a snack and drink for your child. Examples of snack food include cereal, crackers, pretzels, fresh fruits or vegetables, hummus, and yogurt. Sometimes the children make their own snacks as part of our cooking program.

**Peanut Butter/Nuts** – Please be advised that we are a **peanut and tree nut free school**. Please do not send your children with any form of nuts (i.e. peanut butter, almonds and cashews) for lunch. Nutella is made from hazelnuts and is a nut hazard as well. Sunflower Seed butter is a healthy alternative and can be purchased at Giant, Whole Foods, Safeway or other food stores. Wow Butter can be purchased on Amazon.com. Check out these links for more information regarding peanut and tree nut allergies: <http://www.foodallergy.org/page/tree-nut-allergy> or <http://www.foodallergy.org/page/peanut-allergy>. *Foods containing a warning that they share equipment with, or are processed in a facility that also processes peanuts or tree nuts should not be sent to school.*

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

The Early Childhood Director and BSO Executive Director reserve the right to make decisions about the weather and closings for the safety of our students and staff. Our goal is to try to open the school even on bad weather days as long as everyone is able to access the roads and building safely. There will be times when we are closed due to inclement weather for the safety of our teachers, children, and families. When MCPS has a one-hour delayed opening, we will strive to open by 8:30am for early arrival. When MCPS has a two hour delayed opening, there will be no early arrival; classes will begin at 9:30am, as scheduled. If weather forecasts predict unsafe driving conditions developing during the school day, we reserve the right to close the school early, as needed.

For all delays, closings, and unscheduled early closings, notification will be emailed and texted via our Remind emergency notification system and through ShulCloud. Local radio and television stations are prompt at reporting information about MCPS snow closings and delayed openings. We will send an email and text message out with closing/delay information by 6:00am as needed.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION**

**PARENT/CHILD ORIENTATION at the Back to School Playdate** - Before school begins, each family will meet the teachers in the child's assigned classroom. This opportunity to meet their teachers and explore their new classroom helps make a more comfortable adjustment on the first day of school.

**BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT** - In the Fall, teachers meet with parents to discuss the goals they are working toward for the school year. Parents will have an opportunity to explore the classrooms and see the types of materials and equipment the children have available for their use.

**CONFERENCES** – Two parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled during the school year. Teachers and parents will share information and observations concerning the child. Discussion will include the child’s cognitive, social and emotional development. There is always an open line of communication between teachers, parents and the Director, so that they may share concerns and milestones as they occur. Conferences may be requested at any time by parent or teacher to address the child’s progress.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE** - Our Early Childhood School Committee (ECSC) is open to all parents who want to participate. The ECSC holds meetings, social gatherings, and is the fundraising arm of the ECS. The ECSC will also work with the Room Parents to coordinate special programming for the children.

**VOLUNTEERING AND VISITING** - We welcome any contribution a parent can make to enrich our program. Our teachers provide many opportunities for you to participate in the classroom. Some of the activities include reading to the children, helping with an art activity, baking, and sharing a special talent or information about your occupation. All visitors and volunteers need to make arrangements in advance with the classroom teacher or the Early Childhood School Director. We have visitor/volunteer sign-in sheets in the ECS office. The quality of our program will be enhanced by parent support and participation.

## **SCREEN TIME POLICY**

At the ECS we know children learn best through moving their bodies and engaging their senses. It is our policy that we do not use screens in the regular course of our work with young children. Content on “screens,” including phones, tablets, and computers, should be used with children under the age of three in our program only on extremely rare occurrences and never for more than five minutes at a time. Older children may occasionally use computers, tablets, or phones in the course of research or to supplement learning in an investigation. They should never be watching a screen for more than 10 minutes at a time (with rare exceptions that must be approved by the director) and not for more than 30 minutes, total, in a week.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Early Childhood School employees are **not allowed** to be “friends” with parents or in any other way engage with parents through any form of social media.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION POLICY**

We accept children with a full range of abilities and needs. We work in partnership with families to find innovative solutions to best meet the individual needs of each child.

- Our classes offer age-appropriate student to teacher ratio.

- Allowance is made for modification in schedule, program, materials, and expectations to meet individual needs.
- Where necessary, the school may provide additional support in the classroom at the parent's expense. Families must also be responsible for outside consultations, evaluations, and professional services.
- Out support provides, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists, are welcome to provide on-site support and services to children in our program. Such services must be coordinated with the director of the ECS.
- Special needs consultants are available through Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Infants/Toddler Program. They provide support and help to parents, conduct classroom observations and give recommendations for professional referrals and training for staff to support children with special needs.
- For children who are currently in other settings, observations may be conducted to see how we can best meet the child's needs.
- We will serve as a resource in finding available services for the children.
- We will try to be flexible in finding the best environment within the school, with the option of changing the environment, if needed.
- We work closely with JSSA Licensed Clinical Social Workers and consult them on classroom management and behavior.

Any relevant information that can be provided to us, including, but not limited to consultations, reports written by other professionals, IEP's, and school reports, is helpful in providing an appropriate program for your child. This information will be held in strictest confidence.

We will do our best to meet your child's needs, but we recognize our limitations. If we cannot meet these needs, we will make every attempt to work with you to find a more suitable alternative placement where your child can thrive.

## **TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS**

The Early Childhood School at B'nai Shalom of Olney relies on the timely collection of tuition payments in order for the school to run smoothly. Our tuition is an annual sum divided into 10 equal payments for children attending the 10-month program and 12 equal payments for those attending the 12-month program. B'nai Shalom of Olney requires all ECS families to either be on our ACH program or pay by check or credit card by the first of the month.

ACH (Automated Clearing House) – ECS tuition payments will be automatically withdrawn from your designated bank account.

Credit Card – Arrangements can be made to automatically charge your credit card monthly. A 2.5% service charge will be charged, as well.

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