

Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education

**1118 West Glendale Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85021**



**(602) 944-2464 – School Office
(602) 944-3359 – Synagogue Office
(602) 944-4584 – Fax**

**Beth El Center for Early Childhood
Education follows the guidelines of the
National Association for the
Education of Young Children**

Welcome to Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education

Our school offers a wide spectrum of activities and opportunities for children to be nurtured physically, academically, emotionally, socially and Jewishly. All of these aspects combine to make our program a dynamic, unique and outstanding one.

The physical component is developed through creative movement, the playground and musical games. Academic skills are nurtured through fine motor activities; games that develop attention span and listening skills, the whole language approach to reading and reading readiness, community awareness, and our Math program of sorting, patterning, graphing and estimating.

Emotion and social growth are developed through feelings circles, role playing, puppets, creative dramatics, housekeeping and supervised group interaction.

Jewishness is integrated into the program daily through our observances of Kashrut, saying the brachot, teaching tzedakah and mitzvot and observance of Shabbat and celebration of holidays.

Your family has joined an outstanding school made up of children, parents, teachers and support staff working together. We thank you for entrusting your children to us; and assure you that they are receiving an appropriate and excellent preschool education. We love all of your children and are grateful that we can be part of their young lives.

PROGRAM

RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY

The Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education is an integral arm of Beth El Congregation, a member of The United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism.

Conservative Judaism acknowledges that we live simultaneously in the world of Tradition and in a Contemporary society. We believe that the Tradition evolves in each generation so as to imbue contemporary life with meaning. Our approach is egalitarian, with girls and boys gaining the same knowledge and skills. Our goal is to let our children – and their parents – see the beauty and meaning that life has to offer them as traditional Jews living in the modern world.

STAFF

We believe the most important asset of our school is the quality of teachers. We have a low child/teacher ratio and a staff comprised of dedicated, loving educators who are carefully selected for their early childhood education backgrounds, teaching experience and sensitivity towards the needs of the children and their families. We have many staff members who have been with the program for 10 years or longer. Strong emphasis is placed on professional development. In order to continually improve the high quality of our program, we keep abreast of the latest research in the field of early childhood education. This includes membership of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Our Student-Teacher Ratios are:

4:1 (2:8)	Infants
6:1, (11:2)	Toddler
7:1	Twos
8:1	Threes
9:1	Pre-Kindergarten

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The educational philosophy of Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education is based on Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). The two components of DAP are Age Appropriateness – things done in the program are based on what children are like at each age and stage of development and Individual Appropriateness – there is a unique pattern and timing of growth for each child. Some of the characteristics of the program are:

- A balance of individual, small group and large group activities.
- Many activities are child-initiated and child-chosen.
- Carefully planned use of a wide range of quality, hands-on materials. Teachers build on and challenge children's play. The curriculum includes art, math, literature, Science, cooking, creative arts, music, and Judaica.
- Teachers engage children in conversation, not interrogation.
- Strategies for the development of social skills are presented.

- Time for sharing experiences with classmates and adults.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

1. School rules of behavior are stated as clearly as possible in a positive way.
2. If a child is displaying unacceptable behavior (i.e. screaming, hitting, kicking, biting, grabbing, verbally abusing another child or teacher), he or she will be spoken to at eye level by the teacher or assistant. We encourage children to “use their words” when trying to work out problems and suggest alternative behavior that is acceptable. We also empower children to find their own solutions and work out problems with each other.
3. After initial talk, staff will help redirect the child if he/she has difficulty making an appropriate choice of activity. Techniques 2 and 3 are the preferred methods of discipline.
4. If unacceptable behavior continues after initial talk and redirection, the child, if older than 3 years old, can be put in a “shalom“ (peace) station which is somewhere in the room. We tell the child he or she may rejoin the group when they feel they can have acceptable behavior. Children are kept apart for no more than 5 minutes.
5. If a cool down time is not successful in changing the unacceptable behavior the child is removed from the room and spends one on one time with the teacher to try to work out the problem or is sent to the director to try to work out a solution.
6. It is sometimes necessary to physically restrain a child if he or she is presenting a potential danger to another child or adult.
7. **AT NO TIME** is corporal punishment used on a child.
8. Parents will be informed and conferred with if a special plan of action regarding discipline is needed.

Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education reserves the right to cancel enrollment of a child who is deemed dangerous to him/herself, other children or staff.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FACILITY OPERATING POLICIES

The facility is open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. However, in respect for Shabbat observance, the facility will close at 4:30 p.m. on Fridays. Our fee schedules are posted in the registration brochure and on the bulletin board next to the office, as well as on our web page. Yearly tuition is divided over ten months, August – May. There is no refund or discount for child's illness or vacation (exceptions may be made on an individual case basis). Holidays and days when school is in recess are posted on your calendar. Holiday Club may provide a program on designated days when school is in recess. Additional fees will be charged for those days. Once you sign up for Holiday Club, a commitment has been made and you will be charged accordingly. We pay staff according to ratios and if you cancel last minute, this could change staffing.

Our summer camp program, Camp Yad B'Yad, will begin in late May or early June. Information about its structure and duration will be available during the school year. There will be some transition days between the ending of school and commencement of the summer program and again before school resumes. There will be no childcare available on those days.

ADMISSIONS

Children ages 6 weeks - 5 are eligible to attend school. The staff will help with toilet training efforts. To enter our toddler program, a child must be one year old by September 1, walking, drinking from a sippy cup, and able to handle finger foods by him/herself. Cut-off dates for all classes are: by September 1, children must be two for two year old classes, three for three year old classes, and four for Pre-Kindergarten classes. We adhere to the same entry cut-off dates as all the public school districts in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Beth El Center is dedicated to meeting the needs of all young Jewish children. Staffing limitations may occasionally prevent us from enrolling children whose learning styles are not able to be met. We work in cooperation with the Council for Jews with Special Needs to develop strategies for working with non-typically developing children.

REGISTRATION

Registration begins mid-February. The order of priority registration is as follows:

1. All Beth El Congregation members.
2. Continuing students of Beth El non-members.
3. Siblings of continuing non-member students.
4. General public.

Registration must be accompanied by non-refundable fee and will be processed in order of receipt in school office.

CLASSES OFFERED

Infants

Full day only 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., 7:00 – 4:30 Fridays, not to exceed 10 hours
6 weeks to 12 months

Toddler

3,5 day option 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 or 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

2, 3 & 4 year Olds

3, 5 day option 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 or 9:00 a.m. -3:30 p.m.

NEED TO ADD HOURS?

If your child needs to come in early or stay late on occasion, and is not signed up for daily am/pm care, then we would appreciate advance notice, so that we can accommodate your child and stay within our teacher/child ratios. Payment is appreciated at the time of sign up; otherwise any individual and extended care charges will be billed at the end of the month.

Charges are \$15.00 for a.m. care and \$18.00 for p.m. care

LATE START

Once a month, on the 1st Thursday of most months, the teachers gather at 8:00-9:30 a.m. for teacher training or workshops. Some months we have evening meetings. If you are not a working parent, we ask that you please bring your child in at 9:30 a.m. Morning care is available to those families who need it. Parent volunteers are requested so that more of the teaching staff can attend the meetings. This is a great way to help out.

ALL SCHOOL SHABBAT/RISE & SHINE T'FILOT

On the first Friday of most months, we have an all-school Shabbat service in the Synagogue. Rabbi Lavinsky or Janette Silverman share in this experience with us. As well, the school meets each Friday for Rise & Shine T'Filot where we all do our prayers together and celebrate Shabbat as a group. Parents are welcome to attend.

EARLY MORNING DROP OFF

Early morning drop-off is a service we provide for working parents between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. every morning. We ask any student who arrives before 8:30 a.m. to go to room 105, and after 8:30 a.m. to your child's classroom. Before leaving, sign in your child in the official attendance book located next to the office. Fees for early morning drop-off are found in the registration packet and posted by the office window. Fees will either be added to your monthly tuition or billed at the end of the month for individual days.

The Breakfast Club – for those children arriving before 8:00 a.m., a breakfast of cereal, milk, and a banana will be offered to the children. Parents may send in other or additional food to supplement this breakfast.

In order to create a quality program, the time before 9:00 a.m. is precious to our teachers. This is the time that they set up their classrooms and prepare materials needed for class. In short, *they are busy*, so please refrain from engaging in lengthy discussions at that time. If you have a concern requiring a conference, please make an appointment with your child's teacher.

SPECIALIST ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Our enrichment program offers a different specialized activity on a recurring designated day in the afternoon. If your child is not enrolled in our full day program, but would like to participate in an enrichment activity, you may sign him/her up for that class. Any child may stay for the afternoon with advance notice. Fill out the form on the office counter. You can pay at that time or be billed at the end of the month. Enrichment classes for the 2009-2010 school year will consist of Ballet & Dance and Soccer.

In addition to the enrichment program, we have regular specialties in the morning, such as Hebrew, music and PE (toddlers do not have PE).

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Beth El Center offers an aftercare program from 3:30 – 4:30 or 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. (*4:30 p.m. on Fridays). Anyone taking advantage of this program on a daily basis can have these fees incorporated into their monthly tuition.

SIGN IN AND OUT

Each day your child must be signed in and out by an adult in the official attendance book located on the table to the right of the office. Please use your full name and last name and the exact time in and out. In accordance with state regulations, the book must be signed at the actual time of drop off and pick up. These records are kept as documents required by Child Care Licensing and are a protection for your child, please inform your carpool and your other drop-off and pick-up designees of this procedure.

GENERAL PICK UP POLICY

Please pick up your child promptly at whatever time they are scheduled to be picked up (1:00, 3:30, 4:30 p.m., etc.). You will be given a 5 minute leeway, and after that, a \$5.00 fee will be charged for every 15 minutes you are late between the originally scheduled pick-up time and the actual pick-up time. This fee will be billed at the end of each month. Scheduled pick-up times are often times that staff and children change rooms. Please be punctual to meet the needs of all of the children. This is not a time to talk to staff as they are watching the other children. Please make an appointment if there is anything you wish to discuss.

We recommend that you call the school office and sign up your child for the afternoon if you are going to be detained for 15 minutes or longer.

Our school closes at **6:00 p.m. M – Th and 4:30 p.m. on Fridays**. Pick-ups beyond these times will be charged **\$5.00 per minute** per child. Payment for this needs to be made within 24 hours so that we can pay our staff for overtime. Please keep in mind that the staff have worked a full day and want to get home to their own families. If payment is not made within 24 hours, the charge will go on your monthly statement.

CELL PHONES

We ask that parents put their cell phones away when entering or exiting the building. There are times when a member of staff wishes to speak with you. As well, the children would appreciate your undivided attention at drop off and pick up times.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Each child that you transport must be walked to the applicable classroom and delivered to the care of the assigned teacher. Please do not bring children to the classroom prior to class time or into a room to “play” either before or after school. We also ask that you do not linger after saying goodbye to your child. Teachers have been instructed that they need to give all their attention to the children as they begin to involve them in the daily activities. Younger siblings and strollers can be a distraction. Please say your good-byes in a timely fashion.

Parents are expected to pick up their children on time (see General Pick Up Policy on previous page). If you are unable to do so, please notify the school immediately so that we can inform your child. Late fees will be assessed at that point for those children who have not been picked up by 1:05 or 3:35 p.m.

If you wish your child to be picked up by someone other than yourself or those authorized on the blue medical card, you must provide written or phone permission. Photo identification is also required. For the safety of all children, we will not release a child to anyone not authorized. Please let us know if you have picked up your child; never pick up without letting the teacher know you’re doing so.

PARKING

Please park your car starting in the first row of spaces when you bring or pick up your child (or carpool). Do not drive up to the front doors. We need to leave a large area in front of the school open so that the school vans and, if necessary, an emergency vehicle, can have access to the school entrance. Please abide by these parking rules to protect the safety of your children. If you have a handicap sign, then you may park in the designated handicap spots. Please be careful of the children.

Beth El’s driveway is one way going in, and one way going out. Please drive slowly and follow the proper directions. Do not exit through the entrance.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Our school tuition is based on a 10 month school year, divided into ten monthly payments. Our teachers are paid from mid-August through end of May and their salaries, along with all operational expenses can only be met if your tuition payments are made in a timely manner. **There will be no refunds or credits on tuition due to vacations or normal illness.**

You will receive a monthly statement reflecting charges, payments and your balance. Members Only: Preschool fees are added to your general Beth El statement. Payment can be made by cash, check, VISA, Mastercard or Discover, and **a payment option plan form must be completed and signed before your child will be able to attend.** Post-dated checks will be required if payment by check has not been made by the 5th of the month. If you have any questions regarding your statement, please contact the school office at 944-2464 or synagogue bookkeeper at 944-3359.

ALL OUTSTANDING SCHOOL TUITION BILLS MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE YOUR CHILD(REN) CAN BE ENROLLED FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR OR SUMMER CAMP UNLESS OTHER ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

There will be a \$7.00 fee for returned checks and a \$10.00 fee for any changes made. There can be no switching back and forth of payment plans. There will be a \$35.00 late charge for any payment made after the 5th of the month.

A family with three children enrolled will receive a 10% discount on the youngest child's tuition amount.

If you need morning care on occasion, the charge will be \$15.00 for the morning. For aftercare, the charge will be \$18.00. This needs advance approval from the director in order that we have proper teacher/child ratios. The director's direct line is 602-944-3359 ext. 129.

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

Beth El Center does not provide transportation for children attending school. However, a school van is sometimes used for field trips.

Parents will be informed at least one week prior to the scheduled date of any field trip. Permission slips must be signed prior to your child going on a trip. You will be told of any fees involved. Car seats are required for children who are younger than 5 years old or weigh less than 40 pounds. All children will wear seat belts. We encourage parents to act as chaperones or as drivers. Parents understand that they accept liability when transporting children in their vehicle.

ATTENDANCE

Please contact the school office prior to 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent from school. You can leave a message on our voice mail when calling before or after office hours.

Due to the premium tuition paid by three day a week students, we are offering **one make up day a month** if your child is out due to illness, vacation or holiday schedule. However, you must schedule the day in advance with the teacher and understand that all days may not be available because of staff/child ratios.

CANCELLATION OF ENROLLMENT

In the event that you need to withdraw your child, the school requires written notice to the director. You will be responsible for all fees. One month's notice is required. If you leave before the month is up, you will be responsible for paying for the remainder of the month. Registration fees are not refundable.

The school reserves the right to cancel enrollment based on failure to pay in a consistent manner or a student demanding excessive amounts of staff energy and time at the expense of other children.

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

If you refer a family to our school, once they've been enrolled for 3 months, you will receive a \$100.00 discount off your tuition. Likewise, if you refer a teacher, and we hire him/or, you will receive \$100 off tuition after they've been employed for 3 months.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

MEDICAL RECORDS AND EMERGENCY CONTACT CARDS

Enrollment is conditional upon receipt by the school office of a **completed** and signed school medical form or a photocopy of your child's immunization booklet, as long as it is stamped or signed by your child's physician. We ask that you please complete these forms thoroughly, listing all inoculations and vaccines and dates they were administered. All students must be immunized against the following: polio, measles, mumps, rubella (German Measles), whooping cough (pertussis), diphtheria, tetanus and Haemophilus influenza Type B (Hib) and Hepatitis A & B.

We are required by the Health Department to have this information on file. The school is also required to maintain the names and phone numbers of two "contact" people other than the child's parents. The Health Department can examine our records at any time and if forms are missing or incomplete, our license can be endangered. Your cooperation in this regard is appreciated.

DISPENSATION OF MEDICINE

The director or some designated teachers are responsible for the storage, record keeping and dispensing of medication. Medicine will only be dispensed with written authorization from the child's physician, parent or guardian. Such written authorization must include the name of the child, the dosage and time of day to be given, date(s) and reason medication is needed. *Medicine must be in the original prescription bottle or over the counter package with child's full name on it. We will confiscate and not administer any medication found in cubbies or a child's lunch box that is not labeled and packaged as aforementioned.* Sunscreen & diaper rash cream require the same procedure as medicine. We ask that you do the initial application at home. Medicines which are no longer administered will be returned to the parent. Medicine dispensing forms are available in the school office and in your packet.

* Antibiotics are now being dispensed twice a day instead of 3 times. This would eliminate the use during school hours. Please ask your doctor.

ILLNESS

The following steps will be taken by the school if a child becomes ill:

1. Child will be isolated from classmates and kept quiet and comfortable.
2. Symptoms will be observed and temperature taken.
3. Parent will be called to pick up child. If parent(s) cannot be reached, emergency contact person(s) will be called. **Health Department requires school to have two emergency contacts.**
4. Symptoms of illnesses that exclude children from participating in activities at Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education are:
 - a) Fever - if 100 degrees or above (99 degrees for infants), child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.
 - b) Vomiting – child may return 24 hours after last incident.
 - c) Unusually frequent urinating or discoloration of urine.
 - d) Yellowish skin or eyes.
 - e) Difficulty breathing (unless chronic condition, i.e. asthma where medication and/or treatment has been made available on campus).
 - f) Severe coughing.
 - g) Red, watery or draining eyes.
 - h) Unusual spots or rashes.
 - i) Infected skin patches.
 - j) Diarrhea – child may return 24 hours after last incident.
 - k) Unusually cranky, crying or listless child.
 - l) Complaining of sore throat.
 - m) Stomach ache or cramping.
 - n) Runny nose. A yellow or green discharge from the nose is often a sign of infection. Clear, watery discharge is often a sign of an allergy.

We will allow a child to remain in our program with any of the above symptoms only if we have a note from the doctor certifying that illness is not contagious, or if a child is on an antibiotic for 24 hours and is free of other symptoms of illness.

Our strict health policy is derived from information learned through Central Arizona College's "Providing a Healthy Environment for Children in an Early Childhood Program". By excluding unhealthy children for a short time, we ensure the long term wellness of the entire school, including staff.

We request that parents notify the school office if a child will be absent, advising us of the reason. If necessary, appropriate notices (chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis, etc.) will be sent home to classmates of an infected child.

SOILED CLOTHES

If your child has a potty accident while in our care, we will change their clothes and place the soiled clothing in a separate container marked “soiled clothes”. This will be left in room 105. The infants and toddlers have their own containers. You will receive a note in the sign in/out book if this happens. If you know that your child has frequent “accidents”, please provide us with extra clothing.

NAPPING

If your child naps, you need to provide us with a fitted sheet that is portable crib size. You still need to bring a sheet even if your child uses a sleeping bag. You may add a pillow, blanket, or stuffed animal if it soothes your child. All items must be labeled with first and last names. We will return your child’s bedding on Fridays to be washed and returned on Monday into the nap room. Items not labeled will be sent to Lost & Found.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education is fully covered by liability insurance as mandated by the Arizona Department of Health Services – Day Care Licensing (AAC R9-5-302).

IN CASE OF ACCIDENT...

The following steps will be taken by the school if an accident occurs on campus:

1. Staff person will remain at the scene of accident to comfort victim until help arrives.
2. Director will be called to assess situation and give further first aid, if needed.
3. Parent or designated emergency contact person will be notified within 30 minutes. Incident will be noted in accident/illness log.
4. If necessary, 911 will be called.
5. An accident report will be filled out in the school office. Parents will receive a copy within 24 hours. Information will be noted in attendance log.

Staff that open and close the school as well as teachers that take children on field trips, have CPR and First Aid training.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

1. Director will call **911**.
2. In case of fire, alarm will sound throughout the building and playground. For other emergencies requiring evacuation, director will manually pull audible fire alarm.
3. Classes will evacuate building according to instructions posted in classrooms. Classes on playground will move to the field.
4. Teachers will take class attendance lists, director or office personnel will carry out loose leaf binder containing emergency health cards for each child.
5. Fire drills will be conducted once a month.
6. Occasional lockdown drills will be conducted.

SECURITY

The door on the east side of the building is the only acceptable entrance and exit to the preschool. The locked door on the west side is an emergency exit for our preschool as well as an entrance and exit for the charter school.

The front entrance is monitored by the secretary and school administration from 8:15 a.m. to at least 4:15 p.m. daily. When front office closes and other times when the office is not staffed, staff in the extended care room will monitor the doors. A 2-way intercom system between the office and the playground has been installed for effective communication. Each classroom has an intercom to communicate with the office. Beth El is **continuously monitoring** the most effective ways to secure the entire campus.

There is a phone in the before and aftercare room (Rm. 105) as well as in the infant room. Please call 944-2464 if you cannot reach someone in the school office.

Visitors entering the school, on being let in, need to sign in and out and wear a visitor's badge.

PLAYGROUND

Our playground provides an opportunity for children to develop large motor skills, socialize and have fun. Our playground includes a large, fenced in grass area good for running, parachute play and creative activities. An area specific to sand and water play is on the playground. A swing and slide area is shaded thanks to our PTO's sponsoring of a huge awning to cover the equipment.

In order to ensure proper supervision of the playground, we have as many adults as necessary assigned to both the field and playground at 3:30 p.m. (our busiest time and when there are children of different ages using the facility). Also, during this time, as well as during regular class time, NAEYC mandated adult to child ratios are met. We recognize that our utmost vigilance is required at playground time.

If, when you pick up your child from the playground, you would like to stay longer, you are welcome to do so, knowing that we have checked them out and they are no longer officially under our care. Please do not ask a staff member to watch a baby in a stroller or a younger sibling not enrolled in our program, as this takes their focus away from our children. Also, please do not let siblings use the swings for a long period of time as this takes time away from those children who are enrolled in the aftercare program.

FOOD POLICIES

SNACK PROGRAM

Our school shares the same rules for observing the dietary standards as our Beth El Congregation. We have designed this part of the program as a learning experience for everyone. First, parents assist in providing snacks for our children. Second, parents have an opportunity to come into the classroom and participate in the discovery process. And, third, you can extend your knowledge concerning Kashrut. It is not as difficult as one might think to keep dietary laws and this gives one the opportunity for experience and discovery!

We are asking families to provide snacks for the morning classes. All other snacks will be provided by school. On Fridays, the school will offer challah. Depending on the size of your child's class, you will be asked to bring snack three or four weeks during the year. We prefer to keep snacks simple and nourishing with two food groups represented. Your child's teacher will discuss with you or put in writing the snacks prior to your scheduled week. **The Arizona Department of Health requires that all food brought from home that is to be shared with other children must come in sealed packages.** Please refer to the sheet in your packet listing healthy snacks and lunch ideas. Your child's snack schedule will be posted outside the classroom door.

In order to accommodate children with nut allergies, we are a nut-free school; we do not allow any items with nut ingredients, including peanut butter, into the school.

KASHRUT INFORMATION

The snack may just be sent in or you may like to come in and prepare some of it with your child's class. It is a nice way to bring us all closer. *Sent in snacks cannot be baked or cut up at home as all prepared foods must be done by a certified food handler.*

All snacks need to be dairy or pareve (neutral) – no meat or poultry. Anything you find marked with a hefture (i.e. K, or U) is Kosher.

All Entemann's products are acceptable. Cheese needs to be Kosher (Walmart keeps Kosher cheese and Frys has Kosher mozzarella). All fruits, fruit juices and vegetables are acceptable. Be sure to check the ingredients of any foods you bring into the school. Beef or animal fat/shortening is not permitted. One hundred per cent vegetable shortening/oil is acceptable.

LUNCH PROGRAM

All children need to bring a dairy lunch or pareve (no meat) lunch. We offer pizza for purchase on Mondays and Fridays. Lunch will be eaten around 12:00 p.m. for all groups, with the exception of the Toddlers who eat between 11:30 and 12:00. On some days, our 2's will eat before noon, if warranted by their special activities.

In our effort to be ecologically responsible, we are promoting the use of lunch boxes and thermal pouches (labeled with child's first and last name), rather than paper bags. Also, try to use a thermos instead of packaged drinks and put food in reusable containers (they will be returned) instead of plastic bags or aluminum foil. Label thermoses so that they can be returned. Include a fork or spoon if needed. We can also heat up **pre-cooked** items like pizza, macaroni and cheese, etc. in our microwave. (Due to time constraints we cannot prepare uncooked food unless it takes less than two minutes). Definite lunch no no's are candy and soda. **The Health Department requires that children bring either milk or 100% fruit juice in their lunches.** Again, remember that lunches must be dairy or pareve.

Through the years, teachers have noticed that children are often overwhelmed by large lunches with too many choices. Many children are not eating anything or wasting a lot by just eating one bite from each item. Please reduce the amount of food you pack if your child's lunch box comes back full each day.

BIRTHDAYS

The school promotes eating healthy foods with birthdays not being an exception. We like to celebrate your child's special day at school and we encourage you to bring a nutritious "treat" to share with classmates. Acceptable foods include: fruits and veggies, 100% pure fruit juice bars, waffles, ice cream bars, frozen yogurt, yogurt and fruit smoothies and fat-free cookies like fig or fruit "Newtons". We can put a candle in anything! Please discuss what you will be bringing in with your child's teacher to ensure a fun and healthy celebration. Please make sure that all snacks are the same. Offering choices can make things difficult if there are not enough of one item or color. Cupcakes and cakes are discouraged.

A word about birthday parties...

As adults, we certainly understand that having 10 or more children celebrating can be both overwhelming and costly. However, very often the birthday child will talk about his or her upcoming party in the class, not understanding that the child who has not been invited gets confused or hurt. We've not come up with a perfect solution, but we want everyone to be aware of and sensitive to the issue. **Also, we ask that your celebration not be on Shabbat or Jewish holidays as that would definitely exclude some of the children. Invitations should not be passed out at school, but mailed or done through phone calls if all students in the class are not included.**

Some families have offered to bring in special programs such as puppet shows, petting zoos, science shows, etc. and have their child's celebration at school. This is acceptable, just run your idea by the director and your child's teacher so that we can set a date and time.

In memory of Karen Ringel who was director of our school for a number of years, we have the Karen Ringel Memorial Birthday Book Club. Members of Karen's family visit once a month and read to each child who has a birthday that month and present them with an age appropriate book as a gift. June birthdays receive theirs in May while July and August birthdays get theirs in September. This is a special token to show each child that we love them and how special they are to us, as well as keep Karen's memory alive in the school.

OUTFITTING FOR SCHOOL

Send your child to school in comfortable play clothes and sturdy rubber soled shoes. Closed toe sandals are fine but please do not send your child to school in high heeled, open toe sandals, flip flops or “Crocks”. We will be running and climbing outside, as well as doing fun and messy things inside! The children should not feel that they have to be protective of their clothing.

Your child will receive a Beth El t-shirt each year. Please have him/her wear their shirt on field trips and All School Shabbat days. New students will receive a Shabbat tote bag. On Fridays, all projects and art work done during the week, as well as important notices will be placed in the bags. **Please review everything in your child’s bag carefully** over the weekend and return the bag to school on Monday. We’d like to be environment-friendly, so please keep these bags here during the week so we do not need to use plastic bags.

All children need at least one complete change of clothes (climate appropriate) to be kept in their cubbies. Please label all items with your child’s name so they can be returned if taken out of storage.

Our Lost and Found is located in the office across from the school office. We will give notices for retrieving misplaced items. Periodically unclaimed clothing will be sent to charitable organizations.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education is under the auspices of **Beth El Congregation. The Vice President of Education** oversees the program and is a liaison to the **Beth El Board of Directors. The Education Committee** is overseen by a chairperson and consists of parents who have the desire to be involved in promoting quality educational programs. Its function is to suggest policy recommendations to the Board of Directors. We meet every few months. If you would like to be involved in the Education Committee, please let the school office know.

The **Director of the Pre-school** is the coordinator of staff, classes, curriculum and events. She is directly responsible to the Board of Directors and the synagogue Education Committee and for keeping the lines of communication open between parents, students and teachers. Current director is **Sari Romberg**.

PTO

The Parent Teacher Organization is the specific helping hand to the pre-school. It is a fund raising body and a hands-on support group to the school. The PTO also serves as a sounding board to the pre-school director, assistant director and teachers. All parents are automatically members of the PTO. Others on the Beth El campus who interact with the children are the Rabbi, the Talmud Torah Director and the school Office Manager.

PARENT SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

OPEN HOUSE/MEET & GREET

This event, held on Sunday, August 16th, gives you an opportunity to meet your child's teachers. Rooms are set up with activity areas defined. A few weeks into school we have our Back to School night where key concepts of curriculum are shared and parents get an opportunity to meet other families.

CLASS NEWSLETTER/DAILY INFORMATION

The teachers prepare a weekly news brief to review significant happenings of the past few days. They share songs and fingerplays, recipes, Hebrew vocabulary, etc., so that you can follow up on the week's learning. They may ask for your classroom participation for a special upcoming event or for you to contribute an item for a group project. **It is important that you read this note over the weekend so that you and your child are prepared for the upcoming week.** These may be sent home in bags or sent by email. This year each classroom will have a white board outside the room highlighting the activities of the day. This way you can make that connection with your child from school to home, and discuss the activities that occur during the morning.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

It is important to advise the teacher when something has happened that might affect your child's behavior or performance at school. We encourage you to write a note, request a meeting or have the teacher call you at home rather than try to discuss it when you drop off or pick up your child. Also, please do not engage a teacher in conversation about a sensitive issue concerning your child in front of him or her. The teachers are more than happy to discuss any matter relating to your family at an appropriate time and place.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Preschool has Parent/Teacher Conferences once a year. We prefer all adults actively involved in raising the child to be at the conference because parenting is a partnership. If we are concerned in any way with your child's development, we will not wait for the parent conferences to tell you. These conferences are not a place for teachers to unload surprises. They are designed to be a sharing time between parents and teacher. We encourage you to call your child's teacher to schedule a conference at any time during the year that you feel extra communication is necessary.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education has many active parent volunteers. We encourage you to participate and appreciate your commitment.

1. **PTO – Parent Teacher Organization:** The PTO is the helping hand of the preschool. Homeroom parents, fund raising and organizing special activities are the functions of this council. Meetings are held regularly and parents are encouraged to attend.
2. **Education Committee:** The Beth El Education Committee is responsible for creating a vision for all educational programs at Beth El. Join the Education Committee and help us plan for the present and the future.
3. **Classroom Assistance:** To assist in your child’s class on a once-a-week or occasional basis. Help is also needed at special times during the year when we operate a Holiday Room (Hanukaand Purim).
4. **At-Home Teacher Assistance:** This special program allows teachers to give parents materials to prepare at home for our classes. This is especially designed for the parent that would like to help out, but is not available during school hours.
5. **Shabbat Guests:** We welcome family and friends to attend our Shabbat services on Friday mornings. Join us for our age-level services that are held in your child’s classroom. Once a month we have an all-school Shabbat service in the Sanctuary in the Synagogue building.
6. **Guest Stars:** You can offer to come into school to talk to the children about your profession, business or hobby. We also could go on a field trip to your place of work.
7. **Field Trips:** Classes with three year olds and older take trips throughout the year. Sometimes the school van is used for transport, and other times we ask for parent drivers. If you drive your own vehicle, please note that you assume liability.
8. **Sharing:** Many classes give children the opportunity to bring in a special toy or item of interest to “share” with the class. Please note that action figures and toy weapons are not appropriate for this activity, nor are they to be brought to school at any time. Tell your child that “school rules” don’t allow certain toys. Help your child select items that are entertaining or educational, perhaps relating to the theme of the week.
9. **Grandpersons Day:** We invite grandparents or other special persons to enjoy exciting activities in conjunction with our all school Hanuka celebration in December.
10. **Papa Bears Pajama Party:** We will be having a pancake breakfast, followed by classroom activities, at school, giving dad (uncle, grandpa or special friend) an opportunity to share a “typical pre-school session” with their child. This is for ages 2 and up.

11. **Contributions and Donations:** We are more than happy to receive contributions and we even have some suggestions as to specific areas that need assistance. You may make donations specifically to our Michael S. Schwartz Scholarship Fund, Camp Yad B'Yad Scholarship or to the pre-school in general. There is a minimum \$9.00 tax deductible donation for the certificate. We also encourage donations of gently used toys, puzzles, books, media items and equipment in good condition.
12. **Late start:** We need parent volunteers to help out on the playground on the mornings that we have our 9:30 a.m. late starts, so that as many staff members as possible can attend our training sessions. Dates for these sessions can be found in the calendar.
13. **Special Days:** Other special days include Bike Rodeo, Fall Festival, Fun Field Day, and Yom Ha'azmaut.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to providing your children with an innovative, high quality program that allows the opportunity for play, exploration, curiosity and to help support their insatiable desire to learn.

With our individualized program, your child will leave us with a high level of confidence, the ability to make their own choices, to work co-operatively with others, and to be better problem solvers. Here, within our walls at the Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education, we are teaching our future leaders.

Our work environment provides professional growth for our staff as they attend professional development days, workshops, and seminars. Many of our staff members attend the NAYEC Conference (National Association for the Education of Young Children) every year.

We provide an opportunity to collaborate between parents, kids and the community, and to integrate our Jewish traditions and beliefs into our daily programming. We strive to make our environment a place of comfort, security, and a family-like atmosphere.

We serve with excellence.

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE

Please sign and date below acknowledgement and return to the school office no later than September.

I have read the Beth El Center for Early Childhood Education Parent Handbook. I agree to support the school's philosophy, policies and procedures.

SIGNATURE

DATE