



## JCC EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM



## Family Introduction/Parent Handbook

2021 Revision

Jewish Community Center: A Division of Shalom Austin

[www.shalomaustin.org/ecp](http://www.shalomaustin.org/ecp)

JCC ECP

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The ECP is fully licensed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and meets strict guidelines for safety, cleanliness, faculty-to-student ratios, and faculty qualifications. We follow various guidelines endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The ECP is also part of the JCCs of North America's *Sheva* Early Childhood Education Initiative.

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## **Early Childhood Program (ECP)**

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EXCELLENCE / JCCs OF NORTH AMERICA'S SHEVA FRAMEWORK**

The ECP is dedicated to excellence — for our children, for our families, for our staff, and as an integral part of our Shalom Austin community — building connections, interlacing values, and respecting individuality. We view children as “Constructivist Learners” who are competent and capable, full of potential, and invested in their own quest for knowledge. As partners with parents, our Early Childhood Educators provide provocations for sensory-rich learning, create classroom environments for inquiry, are professionals knowledgeable in the developmental stages of children, and dedicate themselves to on-going research and training. This is all part of a dynamic continuum of family learning that supports life-long critical thinking skills and serves as the cornerstone for larger social change and personal growth. As a result, our school and staff are committed members of the JCCs of North America’s *Sheva* program, which is the premiere framework for preschools of excellence, as well as models for ethical practices. The *Sheva* framework implements seven core principles that intertwine to form our strong educational foundation as well as seven Jewish lenses that reveal universal values. The seven core principles that form our strong educational foundation are - Children as Constructivist Learners, Early Childhood Directors as Visionaries, Early Childhood Educators as Professionals, Families as Engaged Partners, Environments as Inspiration for Inquiry, Discover CATCH© as Sh’mirat HaGuf (taking care of our bodies), and Israel as the Story of the Jewish People.

### **OUR VALUES-BASED CURRICULUM**

In the ECP, children attain school readiness and academic skills through a play-based, evolving learning environment based on individual interests. We use positive-guidance and redirection to foster cooperative learning and self-control and facilitation to teach questioning strategies and a thirst for knowledge. Daily, children experience Judaic enrichment, hands-on sensory exploration, open-ended connections with trained educators, project-based learning, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities, music, literature, and a focus on the process of art, because we view each child as an individual. Educators document these learning experiences for parents on bulletin boards, during parent/educator conferences, and through annual portfolios. The ECP continuously promotes excellence by including parents and extended families in inter-departmental Jewish events and celebrations and by ensuring children gain:

- self-confidence and a positive self-image;
- enthusiasm for the learning process;
- effective problem-solving strategies;
- complex skills in the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical areas of development;
- a general respect for others and our own bodies;
- a feeling of group belonging and community connectedness both locally and globally; and
- values to use for self-guided direction.

ECP administration, staff, and educators reviewed and subsequently teach the following Jewish values through modeling, the use of books, discussions, and class projects appropriately focused at each age group. From year to year, your child will build upon their prior knowledge with the hope

that all families will join us in adopting and integrating these ethics at home. This focus helps to differentiate us from other Early Childhood programs in Austin.

Overarching Whole School Values:

- Tzedakah—Charity and giving to those in need
- Tikkum Olam—Caring for the world and our environment both locally and globally

Infants:

- Mishpacha—Love of Family
- Shalom—Feeling Peace

Toddlers:

- Shalom Bayit—Peace in the Home and Classroom
- Bal Tashchit—Do Not Destroy Needlessly

Twos:

- Hachnasat Orchim—Welcoming Guests
- Saver Panim Yafot—Cheerfulness

Threes:

- Kibbud Horim u Morim—Honor Parents and Teachers
- Derech Eretz—Common Courtesy and Respect

Pre-K:

- Hiddur P'nay Zakken—Honoring the Elderly
- K'vod Ha'anee—Respecting the Poor

## **OUR SHALOM AUSTIN COMMUNITY**

Our school is an integral part of the larger Shalom Austin community comprised of the Jewish Federation of Greater Austin, the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Service (JFS), Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), and Jewish Life and Learning. Shalom Austin enhances the quality of Jewish life in the greater Austin area and around the world through core Jewish values and charitable, educational, social service, cultural, religious, and recreational endeavors. We connect individuals and families to Israel and the Jewish people, strengthen Jewish identity and commitment, and help community members explore meaningful paths to Jewish living. Shalom Austin provides substantial support to the ECP, including but not limited to facilities and administration, funded in large part by the Annual Campaign. The ECP is located on a gorgeous 40-acre campus, secured with a 24 hour security team.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT / ECP PARENT COMMITTEE / PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Parent involvement is crucial to the success of our program and solidifies open communication with staff and Administration. This foundationally enhances a positive school experience for your children. We encourage parent involvement in a variety of ways including the **ECP Parent Committee (PC)**. The PC is organized to provide parental viewpoints and feedback to Administration on strategic planning and school-wide policies and decisions. Examples of items discussed by the PC

are tuition, Judaic programming, and fundraising. PC events are wonderful ways to connect and establish relationships with other ECP families. We also encourage you to participate by:

- Volunteering in your child's classroom. Your special talents are always a welcome part of

the program (i.e. cooking, reading a story, playing guitar); however, please make arrangements with your child's educator;

- Going on class field trips;
- Attending parent activities and ECP/Shalom Austin-sponsored workshops;
- Participating in parent/educator conferences;
- Attending weekly and special Tot Shabbat programs on Fridays;
- Donating reusable materials (e.g. material scraps, toilet paper roll tubes, yarn) for art projects or gently used toys and books that your child may have outgrown;
- Providing feedback to help make the ECP the best environment for you and your child!

Parents are also requested to participate in one or more of the activities sponsored by the PC committees and as outlined in our on-line registration application. These include such events as Holiday celebrations, our Spring Family Fun Day and/or other fundraisers, Tzedakah projects, Teacher Appreciation, Scholastic Book Fair, and Room Parent duties.

Parents should also receive consistent daily communication from classroom educators via our communication platform, [Preschool2Me](https://www.preschool2me.com). This includes a daily picture, moods and observations, and an individualized comment about each child. Our Curriculum Manager works with educators to ensure this consistency across our classrooms. Due to school size, this is a large task. As a result, ECP Administration always appreciates parent comments regarding daily communication. Parents are encouraged to send e-mails to [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org) OR [Preschool2Me](https://www.preschool2me.com) messages. Educators and administrators can view all [Preschool2Me](https://www.preschool2me.com) messages; however, only administrators can respond to these messages. Parents are always welcome to stop by the ECP Front Office for either scheduled or impromptu meetings, as we keep an "Open Door" policy. We will meet with parents whenever possible. Phone messages are also welcome at (512) 735-8100.

Finally, a common communication question from parents concerns school year placement of children. We would ask parents to trust us to find the best fit for each child (very structured, more flexible, educators with softer demeanors or those who are more animated, etc.), how the child seems to best learn, and some of the child's best friends. These are the most important pieces of information to help us individually place children for each year. We also ask that parents refrain from asking for specific educators as there may be changes from year to year or individual considerations that ECP Administrators use when creating these classrooms.

## **PARENTING CLASSES / ADULT LEARNING**

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERFAITH FAMILIES**

Shalom Austin is another "family" for YOUR family! We provide a variety of individualized opportunities for everyone. For example, many families "don't have family" in Austin – we can be that missing community, that extra hug, that extra support. What do you do when you have a family emergency? Call Shalom Austin and we can put you in touch with Jewish Family Services. Through Shalom Families and our affinity groups, you can make friends, find a cooperative babysitting group, or locate our annual "Hanukkah in the Hood" site in your neighborhood. Perhaps you are part of an interfaith family... welcome! We have lots of wonderful information for you from an individualized question and answer session, to regularly scheduled classes. Embark on a life-long journey through the community, intrigue, mystery, intellectual challenges, spirituality, richness, and continuity of

Jewish life with your partners here at Shalom Austin. If interested in any of these topics or if you have any questions, comments, or ideas about community support through Shalom Austin, please feel free to contact [Rachel.Stern@shalomaustin.org](mailto:Rachel.Stern@shalomaustin.org).

## **GRANDPARENT / GRANDFRIEND CLUB**

The ECP has an active Grandparent/Grandfriend Club that provides members diverse opportunities to participate with their grandchildren and amongst themselves as well as share their unique talents and gifts with the school. The highlighted event is the annual Grandparents' Day Breakfast which boasts participation from Bubbies and Zaydees, aunts and uncles, and neighborhood "pseudo" grandparents from near and far. The event is always hosted in Spring close to our ECP Family Fun Day. Time, talents, and financial gifts are all valued and appreciated as is the underlying message of fostering a blooming community for our grandparents! Grandparents' Club participants are welcome to visit the Grandparents' Club link accessible at [www.shalomaustin.org/grandparentdonation](http://www.shalomaustin.org/grandparentdonation).

## **PROVISION OF SERVICE & CHILD PLACEMENT / LICENSING**

### **PROVISION OF SERVICE AND CHILD PLACEMENT**

The ECP serves children six weeks through Pre-Kindergarten and requires active Family Membership in Shalom Austin. Children are placed in classes according to their birthdays as of September 1st of each academic year. This corresponds with the same birth date used by all the local public-school districts. The ultimate goal of our classroom placements is to create a well-balanced environment in regards to size, gender, and children's individual instructional and social needs.

Educators and administrators prepare placement recommendations based upon all aspects of each child's development (social, emotional, physical, and academic). Prior to placement for each new academic school year, educators and administrators complete vertical alignment (each age group meets with both the age below and the age above the current group – toddlers meet with infant educators and two-year-old educators for example) and discuss the individual needs of each child, as well as review the curricular and developmental goals for each age group. To provide input into this process, parents are welcome to discuss a child's best friends, descriptions of the type of environment conducive to their child's learning style, as well as their social interaction skills during the Spring Parent/Educator conferences. Educators will have this information available during the summer vertical alignment/placement sessions. As a reminder, we ask that you trust us when making placements. Specific requests for classroom educators will not be granted as changes sometimes occur. Parents will be notified of academic year placements in mid-August.

### **LICENSING**

The ECP is fully licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and meets strict guidelines and minimum standards in such areas as safety, cleanliness, faculty-to-student ratios, and staff background checks. The ECP is a part of the JCCs of North America's *Sheva* Early Childhood Education Initiative. We also follow various guidelines endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

## **CURRICULUM PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS BY AGE GROUP (*GROSS MOTOR, FINE MOTOR, LANGUAGE, COGNITIVE, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL*)**

### **INFANTS (SIX WEEKS TO 12 MONTHS)**

We provide a warm, nurturing atmosphere in which educators engage and talk with children as they care for their needs and teach through play. They provide a myriad of sensory experiences as well as help with physical, emotional, and social growth through independent and group provocations. They also care for children in a manner that assists them in developing trust in their surroundings and in their educators. Infants have stable, consistent routines that are based on their own schedules for eating, resting, and playing. Educators foster language development through stories, songs, verbal interactions, and beginning baby sign language. Music, outside time, buggy trips, sensory play, and art discovery activities occur daily and are documented both inside and outside of the classroom through *Preschool2Me* daily reports, bulletin boards, weekly lesson plans, semester assessments, and annual portfolios. Educators continuously check diapers and record all changes, as well as naps and eating times/amounts on our *Preschool2Me* daily reports. We follow the infant safe sleep policies recommended by Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents will also receive photographs of the children in the classroom and individualized memorable moments as a way of sharing and partnering with parents in the growth and discoveries of the children while at school.

#### **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS FOR INFANTS:**

- Develops attachment to educators, is anxious with strangers, self-soothes, seeks attention with noise or gestures
- Gains sense of self (i.e. responds to own name), reacts to mirrored images, enjoys social play
- Acquires language by responding to sounds and some words (i.e. no), babbles with inflection, uses exclamations (i.e. oh-oh, bye-bye), says "dada" and "mama" for specific person
- Uses hand signs for some objects
- Increases large motor skills including rolling over, crawling, standing, walking, and raising hands over head
- Develops fine motor skills including grasping, scribbling, banging, finger feeding, and drinking from a sippy cup
- Understands cause/effect and object permanence
- Sits at a table

### **TODDLERS (12 TO 24 MONTHS)**

- Toddlers are encouraged to develop independence while maintaining a personal and communal sense of security. Planning for this age group includes many sensory, language development, and social, fine, and gross motor skill activities. Educators discover "with" the children to help them expand their individual knowledge base while learning to internalize the skills of observing, gathering information, inquiring, and improving communication.

#### **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS FOR TODDLERS:**

- Self-help skills including seating self in chair, trying to open lunch box/items, using a spoon, removing/putting on some items of clothing (i.e. shoes, socks, hats)

- Makes independent choices regarding play, engages in parallel play, and begins to enjoy peer play
- Develops a sense of confidence and self-worth
- Awareness of others and their feelings
- Expresses emotions appropriately, awareness and beginning control of aggression
- Names familiar objects, expresses physical needs (i.e. thirsty, hungry), uses 2-3-word sentences, sings songs
- Fine motor skills including clapping, stacking, raising lids, stringing, completing 2-3-piece puzzles
- Throws and kicks a ball, runs, rides small riding toys, pulls and pushes toys
- Curious about surrounding world and uses imagination in play
- Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children

## **TWO- AND THREE-YEAR OLD PROGRAMS**

Daily activities for children who are in the two- and three-year old programs are based upon projects and units of study that are interesting and meaningful to those children. A balanced schedule provides experiences in group and individual settings and includes stories, music, language experiences, natural discovery, and inquisitive discussions that include research. Individually, children choose learning center activities in which they can work and play alone, in pairs, or in small groups.

Classrooms are arranged into centers that include educational toys, materials, and games based upon age appropriateness and the interests of the children. These include centers for books, blocks, sensory materials, art, puzzles and manipulatives, math, science, and dramatic play. Children have the opportunity to work and play in these centers individually, with a friend, or in small groups. Choosing centers provides practice in making decisions, following directions, working independently, and learning about the care and use of materials.

Outside time offers opportunities for gross motor development (climbing, running, jumping, pedaling, and building, for example), social interactions, as well as a chance to experience weather and seasons. Children can also experiment with sand and water during these outside periods.

Daily group times provide opportunities for your child to learn in a large group setting. Group lessons include stories, music, gross motor activities, language experiences, and discussions including questioning and research. Additional activities include cooking, growing plants, nature interactions, and having visitors share information about the unit studies. Children will also have opportunities for music, creative movement, tumbling, and other large motor activities. Children learn language, science, and math skills through experiential and integrated play and projects.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS:**

- Self-help skills including manipulation of clothes for the toilet and developing toileting skills when ready
- Asks and answers questions
- Makes independent choices regarding play
- Enjoys peer play, begins to share/cooperate
- Beginning to use words instead of physical aggression when upset
- Names familiar objects and expresses ideas, expresses physical needs (thirsty, hungry, etc.), uses 4-5-word sentences, repeats songs, rhymes, finger plays
- Enjoys books, can turn single pages independently, and is attentive when stories are read

- Large motor skills including climbing, running, jumping, rolling and catching a ball, pedaling a tricycle
- Fine motor skills including grasping with fingers, completing 3-5-piece puzzles, stirring with a spoon, painting with brushes
- Curious about surrounding world
- Uses imagination in pretend play
- Developing ability to solve problems independently

### **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS:**

- Begins to care for personal needs (bathroom skills, dressing self, independently washing hands)
- Shows pride in accomplishments and follows established classroom rules and routines
- Demonstrates appropriate self-control, understands personal space boundaries, and transitions with ease between activities
- Draws a person with 2-4 body parts, draws circles and squares, uses scissors
- Cooperates with others during play
- Begins to offer and accept affection and empathy
- Uses language to express emotion including anger, frustration, and sadness
- Recognizes and can repeat sound patterns, uses language to recall a sequence of events, speaks clearly enough for others to understand
- Begins to understand time-related vocabulary and makes size comparisons between objects using language
- Enjoys books, listens to two stories consecutively
- Climbing, running with coordinated movement, walking backwards, throwing a ball overhand, catching a bounced ball, beginning hopping and standing on one foot
- Fine motor skills including drawing, cutting, 5-20-piece puzzles

### **PRE-K PROGRAM**

- Educators provide a rich learning environment for the children in the Pre-K program including many sensory experiences, hands-on activities, language immersion opportunities, and Kindergarten readiness integration. Children construct their own learning and knowledge from the endless opportunities and the guidance provided by the educators. This special learning environment is a product of our philosophy of the image of each child as competent, capable, and curious.
- Educators also provide children with integrated opportunities to practice learned Jewish ethics and values each day through lessons on the Jewish holidays, books, games, rituals, and customs. Pre-K educators also meet each year with Austin Independent School District (AISD) Kindergarten educators and Austin Jewish Academy (AJA) Kindergarten educators to discuss student expectations and recent educational developments.
- Schedules for each Pre-K class include both large and small group times as well as times for individual choice in centers and on the playground. Children learn to follow directions and transition between activities. These transition times are turned into learning opportunities when educators count in English and other languages, teach about opposites, colors, self-awareness, and much more.
- Children in the Pre-K program also frequently participate in activities through the Austin Jewish Academy. They regularly visit the AJA library for a story-time, have older “buddy” relationships with children in grades K-5, and have a relationship with AJA educators through the annual AJA Science Fair. Some years, the AJA provides space for Pre-K classes to create and exhibit a class project, and all years, Pre-K children are invited to the actual AJA Science Fair. Educators work

with the children to develop and create a class science experiment and presentation using the Scientific Method throughout the year – whether or not they are presenting in the AJA Science Fair.

In support of this program, our educators provide the following for the children:

- A print-rich environment to promote both reading and writing;
- Writing tools, paper of all types, and places and opportunities to create and write. Examples include but are not limited to journals, cards, name tags, documentation of children's thoughts, letter of the week bags, "what if..." prompts, and self-developed stories;
- A variety of stories and texts and associated meaningful discussions;
- Phonological awareness by singing songs, reciting chants, making up rhymes, and learning finger plays;
- Advancement in both small and large motor skills by involving children in the creation of routines, activities, and experiences that build hand-eye coordination, visual perception, auditory perception, and auditory discrimination; and
- Science experiments and discovery using the Scientific Method, as well as cooking projects, and exploration of nature;
- Math experiences and discovery including counting, geometry, grids and coordinates, patterns, and sequencing.

#### **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS:**

- Knows and verbalizes personal information (first name, last name, parent's first and last names, address, and phone number)
- Associates use with common objects (money, food, appliances), groups items by a particular characteristic
- Recognizes letters and their corresponding sounds and recognizes, spells, and writes full name
- Speaks in grammatically correct sentences most of the time and uses complex sentences to express thoughts, feelings, and to answer questions
- Understands past, present, and future
- Asks for help when needed, negotiates solutions verbally to resolve conflicts, enjoys engaging with other children, and is able to both lead and follow the group
- Expresses needs and preferences clearly and appropriately, shows interest in and actively participates in various classroom activities (independently and in groups)
- Demonstrates opposites and their meanings, recites parts of songs, rhymes, stories, and finger play games
- Enjoys books and is also able to retell familiar stories
- Recognizes and selects healthy foods
- Becomes aware of investigative processes using scientific methods
- Sorts and compares objects by size, length, weight, area, and temperature and begins to identify the position of objects in a series
- Kindergarten readiness skills

#### **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS**

- We believe that children flourish in a stimulating environment and have a multitude of leaning "languages" - clay, dancing, inventing, singing, dramatic play, painting, drawing, reading, to

just name a few. As such, we provide them with a host of provocations, opportunities, and “loose parts” to foster their interests and discoveries. Following are some of the subject areas that we incorporate into our weekly lesson plans and classroom environments for the children.

## **JUDAIC ENRICHMENT**

- Our program is sensitive to the fact that there are many different ways to practice Judaism and to celebrate Jewish life, and is, therefore not affiliated with any specific Judaic movement. Our purpose is to foster children’s positive self-images as people and as Jews and to help them gain an understanding of the feelings and needs of others. Throughout the school year, we explore the Jewish celebrations of Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, Tu B’Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Lag B’Omer, Israel’s Independence Day (Yom Ha’Atzmaut), and Shavuot. As the time for each holiday approaches, the ECP sends information to families regarding each holiday, our observation celebrations and traditions, and ways to be involved.

## **PJ LIBRARY – JUDAIC AND LITERACY SUPPORT**

The PJ Library is supported by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation as well as local donors. The program supplies free, age-appropriate Jewish books and music to children in their homes. In addition, the ECP maintains a library for use by educators and children in their classrooms. Shalom Austin administers this program and not only provides an opportunity for Jewish children from the ages of six months through nine years of age to receive books in their homes, but also sponsors fun and engaging community events several times each year. Several Shalom Austin common areas, the ECP lobby, and many local congregations also have displays of PJ Library books available for families to enjoy while visiting. ECP educators use these same books to reinforce values, Judaic lessons, and Jewish holidays with the children.

## **COORDINATED APPROACH TO CHILD HEALTH (CATCH)© – DISCOVER CATCH: EARLY CHILDHOOD (CEC)**

The Discover CATCH: Early Childhood (or CATCH Early Childhood - CEC) is designed to nurture a love of physical activity, provide an introduction to classroom-based nutrition, and encourage healthy eating in preschool-aged children. Modeled after the nationally recognized CATCH Program, the Discover CEC program provides a classroom and school-based environment where physical activity, health education, gardening, and healthy eating behaviors are valued and taught. Children are motivated to walk, run, jump, dance, and move their whole bodies while playing and having fun! The JCC's of North America have adapted this program to coincide with Jewish ethical values and teachings as part of the *Sheva* framework for excellence in early childhood education. Educators incorporate Discover CEC into daily activities and discussions by helping children learn about "whoa" and "go" foods, important nutrients in many types of food, and the benefits of staying active. Educators incorporate games, warm-up and cool-down activities, stretches, and heart-stimulating movements in the classroom and on the playground. They also use specific CATCH equipment, special materials, and age-appropriate lesson plans for these activities.

## **S.T.E.A.M (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART, MATH/MUSIC)**

### **SCIENCE AND NATURE**

Experiences in science encourage children to observe, question, predict, and understand cause and effect. Science activities might include planting seeds, observing weather, making predictions (buoyancy, magnetism, volume, comparisons, etc.), or baking challah. Educators recognize the importance of helping children make connections to nature and also incorporate recycling and composting efforts into their daily activities and routines. Our entire school participates in composting and children learn from the toddler year forward how to differentiate between, compostable items, recyclable items, and landfill or “trash” items.

### **TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING**

Technology is an inherent part of our everyday lives, and we know that toddlers often know how to work their parents’ iPads and cell phones. During their time at school, the ECP provides technology and engineering experiences through research, design, invention, and construction opportunities. From blocks to Legos, and recyclable robots made from “loose parts” to giant building blocks with interchangeable pieces on the playground, children are building, experimenting, and discovering about the physics and physical properties of the world around them.

### **ART**

Art activities such as finger painting, modeling with clay, pasting, cutting, drawing, gluing, incorporating food or objects as art mediums, sewing and lacing, photography, and easel-painting are some examples of ways we encourage experimentation and exploration of materials. The process of working with these materials and participating in these activities offers children avenues for creative expressions of feelings, ideas, and emotions. It is also important to us to provide children with an opportunity to “get messy” while learning. Educators highlight the process of art and make a concerted effort to provide children with an “artistic license” to demonstrate and value that our views of the world are often different. They can then experience pride in their work that may not necessarily look realistic or neat, but that is completely a product of themselves.

### **MATH AND MUSIC**

Children acquire knowledge of math and numbers through a variety of daily activities and routines. For example, setting the table in the dramatic play corner or setting the table for snack provide practice in one-to-one correspondence, as each place is given a plate or bowl, a napkin, and a spoon. Building with blocks provides opportunities for understanding spatial relationships. Measuring ingredients for cooking activities fosters beginning understandings of quantity, measurement, and fractions. Sorting, shape recognition games, and puzzle manipulations can all help with geometric concepts, while simple counting is done routinely when in line, singing songs, reading, and with a variety of other activities.

Singing, listening to recordings, understanding rhythm, and participating in creative movement are some of the music activities in our classrooms. Music is an artistic expression of math. We enjoy incorporating songs and movements into daily classroom routines. A simple tune can turn a chore into a game or help a child learn a prayer. Jewish melodies and Hebrew words are incorporated into rhymes and songs, and children often gather together in larger groups to explore sounds and create their own music. The ECP also provides weekly music lessons provided by a Music Educator/Specialist where children learn preschool songs and traditional/holiday Jewish songs in both English and Hebrew. Friday Tot Shabbat gatherings combine music, dance, and community prayer as an expected routine for educators and children. Educators keep musical instruments in their classrooms for incorporation into center play and use in circle/community times. Music is played during rest periods and during the day as a way for children to explore a variety of age-appropriate genres and as a transitional tool. Additionally, each of our playgrounds incorporate

music into outside play through the presence of instruments located on each of our playgrounds and on the courtyard. There are large animal shaped Tonga drums and spinning rain wheels.

## **WAITING LIST AND INITIAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **INITIAL REGISTRATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Priority Registration is the process by which currently enrolled students, their siblings, and Shalom Austin employees' children enroll for the following school year. Regular Registration for the upcoming school year and Summer Camp will occur during the preceding Spring semester. All pertinent information must be completed on-line AND appropriate forms must be physically returned and signed by stated deadlines in order to maintain priority status for the subsequent school year. **Reminder: Registrations that occur when there are openings during the year, do not ensure children a spot during Summer Camp.** These mid-year registrations occur based upon a family's position on the ECP waiting list. Parents of currently enrolled students (except infants) who are interested in attending Summer Camp must optionally enroll their children on a first come first served basis.

### **WAITING LIST POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Due to the consistent success of the ECP Program and the influx of Jewish families to the Austin area over the last few years, the **ECP Waiting List** is the method of entry for new families. The waiting list is used to fill available spaces after registration and if openings occur during the course of the school year.

### **GETTING ON THE WAITING LIST**

To place a child on the waiting list (including siblings of children already attending the ECP), the ECP requires a one-time \$49 waitlist fee for each application submitted on-line through Camp Minder. This link is available electronically from ECP administrators. In addition, families **must** choose to either become Shalom Austin family members or ECP Affiliates. The child will be placed on the list when the on-line link is completed and the family's Shalom Austin membership or ECP Affiliate membership is confirmed. Please visit our website at [www.shalomaustin.org](http://www.shalomaustin.org) for complete Shalom Austin family membership information and rates. Choose the button marked, "Become A Member." The annual ECP Affiliate fee is \$360 and is payable in one sum at the time of election. This non-transferable and non-refundable membership is valid for one year. Additionally, families on the waiting list must know that, when offered a spot in the ECP, the family **MUST** then become a Shalom Austin member regardless of the starting date of the ECP Affiliate membership.

### **ECP AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP**

There are many programs available for you and your child through the ECP while you are on the ECP Waiting list. **As an ECP Affiliate, you are eligible to participate in any of these ECP sponsored events and programs at Shalom Austin "member" rates.** Some of these include ECP enrichment classes throughout the year, family evening programs and dinners, as well as other ECP special events. You also are welcome to attend weekly Tot Shabbat programming at 9:30am in the Community Hall and the following Shabbat 'N' Play group which lasts from 10:00am-11:30am. To view some of the ECP-sponsored enrichment classes, please visit our website listed above. Once your family is officially offered a spot in the ECP, you **MUST** immediately become Shalom Austin Family Members.

## **SHALOM AUSTIN FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

With a Shalom Austin Family Membership, you are eligible for member rates for all Shalom Austin and ECP sponsored events and programs. Your family additionally has access to the gym, the year-round heated pool, groomed hiking/jogging trails, picnic areas, sporting and theatrical events, and MUCH MORE. ECP families, which includes those on our ECP Waiting List, are also eligible for special perks such as \$50 in additional fitness center babysitting coupons! To join, prospective families simply register online at [shalomaustin.org/membership](http://shalomaustin.org/membership). Each member can manage their account and register for programs from the convenience of their own home or mobile phone. Additionally, members receive parking permits for quick and easy access to the Dell Jewish Community Campus through our 24-hour security. (Please see Addendum 1 for complete information, including hours of operation).

## **ECP WAITLIST PRIORITY POLICY**

Following is a list of criteria used to prioritize waiting list applications submitted for openings at the ECP. All submitted applications will be placed in the appropriate category by date received.

1. Children of Shalom Austin Employees.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students or graduated students who have maintained their Shalom Austin membership.
3. Children from Jewish families who are either ECP Affiliates or Shalom Austin members.
4. Children from non-Jewish families who are ECP Affiliates or Shalom Austin members.

After your application has been electronically accepted onto the waiting list, you will remain on the list until you are either offered a spot in the ECP, you request in writing to be removed, or any of the conditions occur as mentioned below (see When You Are Called). Again, it is important to note that ECP Affiliates MUST become Shalom Austin family members immediately upon acceptance of a spot in the ECP.

## **TOURING THE ECP**

Currently all tours are via zoom. Please schedule a tour by calling (512) 735-8100. Normally, families are encouraged to come for a scheduled site visit of the ECP before placing their child on the ECP waiting list. An exception will be made for out-of-town families who should then schedule a tour within 90 days of moving to Austin and before their child enters the program. Site visits are offered on alternating Wednesdays and Thursdays at 9:00am and should be scheduled by calling (512) 735-8100.

## **CHOOSING START DATE AND DAYS OF THE WEEK FOR ATTENDANCE**

When completing the waiting list application, parents must specify when they would like to have their child start in the program. For example, they may want their child to start during the upcoming Fall or as soon as possible. You will also specify the days of the week you would be willing to accept: M-F, M-W-F, or T-Th as available. The date you select will let us know to start contacting you if an appropriate opening should occur. You may change the starting date or daily scheduling choice at

any time before you are actually called and offered a spot. Once you are called, the conditions below will apply. Changing the starting date or scheduling (day of care) preference at that time will count as a refusal.

### **WHEN YOU ARE CALLED**

Parents have two business days to accept an enrollment opening. If the family is currently an ECP Affiliate member, they must immediately become Shalom Austin family members to accept the offered slot. If the family cannot be reached at the last telephone number given by the parents or does not notify the ECP of their decision, the ECP will consider that a refusal, and begin contacting subsequent families on the waiting list. Furthermore, if the ECP does not hear from parents within 3 weeks, the ECP will remove the child from the waiting list. Letting the ECP know that you are refusing an offered spot but wish to remain on the waiting list will do just that - keep you on it. A second refusal will result in the removal of your child from the waiting list. If you then wish to be considered for a future opening, you must re-apply for the waiting list by contacting the Front Office via e-mail at [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org) for the on-line waiting list link, paying the \$49 fee, and maintaining your Shalom Austin family membership or ECP Affiliate membership.

### **DELAYING A STARTING DATE**

If a space is offered to a family within the time period specified by the family on the waiting list application, and the family is not yet ready to send a child because of age or personal reasons, that family may elect to accept the position and pay tuition to keep the space available until the child is ready to begin attending regularly. At this point, the family must be Shalom Austin Family members and maintain the membership during this time. A space held in this manner may not be used for "drop-in" care or "sublet" to another family. In addition, all extended care options are not available to the child until she/he is attending the core program regularly.

### **REMAINING ON THE WAITING LIST**

Each year children on the current waiting list will remain on the list and will be placed in the next age-appropriate list based on the child's birth date as of September 1 of the current school year. Parents will only be removed from the waiting list if the ECP is notified in writing or via e-mail. The resulting annual waiting list will be used to fill any spaces that remain after registration is completed.

## **ENROLLMENT/ GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **PRE-REGISTRATION**

In order to reserve a space in our program, you must pay a non-refundable and non-transferrable pre-registration fee. This administrative fee is not applied toward tuition. Pre-registration takes place during the Spring semester of each year and is completed entirely on-line. After pre-registration, families must still complete an enrollment packet that includes forms requiring parent signatures as well as a health statement, up-to-date immunization records, allergy and snack information, insurance information, alternate emergency contacts, and copies of both parents' driver's licenses.

Please remember that each child's family **must be current Shalom Austin members to accept a slot and enroll** in the ECP. The child's family may hold an ECP Affiliate membership while waiting for an open slot as mentioned earlier in the section on the ECP Waitlist.

**IMPORTANT: Registration in the academic year does not ensure you a place in summer Camp. Likewise, attendance in summer Camp does not ensure you a spot in the academic school year.**

## **TUITION/BILLING OPTIONS**

All children attend school for 9 1/2 months during the academic school year, with the exception of infants, who attend ECP according to a 12-month schedule. Infant families, however, must also purchase Winter and Holiday packages separately if needed. Camp is open during the summer months for toddlers through children four/five years of age with on-line registration available in January of each year. Because Camp registration is also open to the general public several weeks after opening to currently registered ECP students, it is advisable to register early in order to ensure a spot for the summer. Having a child who currently attends the ECP (except for infants as stated above) does not guarantee your child a spot in Summer Camp.

Our school also offers a Winter Package and a Holiday Package (see the ECP School Calendar for the specific dates). Registration for these dates is generally at a later date than registration for the academic school year. Tuition is calculated automatically during the on-line registration process and will be divided into the appropriate number of payments based upon parental choice. Many parents choose a 10-month payment plan that begins on August 1st of each calendar year; however, parents may also choose to pay the annual tuition in one payment at the time of registration or on August 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.

For questions or information regarding billing, please contact Janet Schreffler at (512) 735-8062 or at [janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org](mailto:janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org). For tuition questions, please contact the ECP Front Office at (512) 735-8100.

**Please note that tuition received or credited to your account after the third of the month is subject to a \$25 late fee that will be added to your tuition balance. After the tenth of the month, an additional \$25 late fee will be applied. Returned checks will result in a charge of \$25 plus any applicable bank fees.**

## **SHALOM AUSTIN MEMBERSHIP BILLING**

You may set-up payments for your Shalom Austin Family Membership through our Daxko software system. To attend the ECP and as soon as you are offered a spot, you must be Shalom Austin Family members. When graduating or if you must leave the ECP and cancel your membership for any reason, please note that you must give a 60-day notice to the Membership Department in writing prior to the next billing date. Also, per Shalom Austin Membership policies, your family membership will be automatically dropped for non-payment if payment lapses for more than 60 days. During this time, families will receive correspondence from the Membership Department regarding payment. As we know Please e-mail [membership@shalomaustin.org](mailto:membership@shalomaustin.org). For more information on billing, please feel free to contact the Membership Operations Coordinator, Miriam Mosher at (512) 735-8026 or [Miriam.Mosher@shalomaustin.org](mailto:Miriam.Mosher@shalomaustin.org).

## **ECP ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

The ECP is currently open Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 5:30pm. **The arrival time for children enrolled in the core program is 8:30am. Educators must ensure that ALL parents sign**

**their child in and out appropriately each day** (see Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedure below). Parents are encouraged to share relevant information with the educator that might affect the child's day at school (i.e. mood, lack of sleep, change in daily routine, etc.). Parents are also encouraged to say good-bye to their child prior to leaving the classroom to help promote a smooth transition for the child. It often helps to create a "good-bye routine" that may include a special ritual (putting away a child's backpack, reading a story together, giving two hugs after looking at the day's table activities, etc.) and special words said to an educator and special words said to an educator in front of your child. For instance, "I trust your educators to love you while I am gone, and I will see you at pick-up!". We also suggest that children arrive between 8:30am and 9:00am to ensure they have the opportunity to participate in all core-day activities to the fullest extent possible. (See the "Attendance" section below.)

Children should be picked up promptly when the program ends. **Departure time for children enrolled in the core day program is 2:30pm.** Parents should also say good-bye to the educator prior to leaving the classroom. This way, the educator can confirm that children are leaving with authorized adults. Parents should allow sufficient time to pick up the child, sign him/her out, and say goodbye to the educator prior to 2:30pm. This allows for a smoother transition for those continuing their day in our extended care program. Children not picked up by 2:45pm will be placed in extended care and a late fee of \$30 plus \$1 per minute will be added to your tuition balance. For families paying the Austin Jewish Academy rate, pick up time is 3:30; there is a 10 minute grace period for unexpected emergencies. For families enrolled until 5:30pm, a late fee of \$30 plus \$1 per minute after 5:30pm will be added to your tuition balance. While emergencies do occur, we ask that you please respect our staff and our ability to close the school on time.

## **ECP SIGN-IN / SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES - PRESCHOOL2ME & KIDS KIOSK SOFTWARE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS**

State Licensing Minimum Standards require that childcare centers maintain sign-in and sign-out logs for each child coming and going from the center through the day. The logs must contain the name of each child, the date, time of arrival, time of departure, and an authorized adult's signature or initials. These logs must be kept in each classroom. Electronic logs fulfill these requirements; so, the ECP uses our Preschool2Me and Kids Kiosk software programs for this purpose. **Each parent** will receive an individualized four-digit PIN to use when both signing-in and signing-out a child. **Educators must ensure that ALL parents sign-in and sign-out through Kids Kiosk appropriately each day.** Additionally, please remember to personally sign-out your child and then sign him/her back-in through Kids Kiosk if you have taken your child during the day for any doctor appointments, dentist appointments, errands, etc.

- **Early Care:**

Currently, there is no early care option. Normally, parents must sign-in their child through our Kids Kiosk software each morning using their four-digit individualized PIN number. ECP staff transporting children to their assigned classrooms at 8:25 am, will electronically transition children through Preschool2Me from the Early Care classroom to the Core Day classroom.

- **Core/Enrichment Pick-Up:**

Educators will make sure that parents and enrichment teachers either transition children or appropriately sign them out through Preschool2Me when they go to enrichment classes and lessons.

- **Extended Care:**

Children will be electronically transitioned to their assigned Extended Care classrooms after the Core Day. Extended care staff will then make sure that parents appropriately sign-out their child using our Kids Kiosk software each afternoon using their four-digit individualized PIN number.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is important for each child's development. When you arrive on time, your child can be an active participant in all fun, learning activities in the classroom and on the playground while building an internal skill associated with promptness. Late arrivals can also be disruptive to the children's routine - both for your own child and that of the others in the classroom. It is hard when you arrive late and your child sees that they have missed an activity, project, or group interaction. If possible, we suggest that you routinely arrive between 8:30am and 9:00am. If you know that your child is going to be absent, please notify your classroom educator or alert the Front Office that day via a Preschool2Me message, an e-mail to [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org), or a phone call to (512) 735-8100. We also understand and support individual family dynamics that may include irregular work hours or regularly scheduled appointments that cause a child to arrive at school after these times. Please know that we understand and are here to help. Finally, there are no tuition credits or refunds for any days missed.

## **CHILD ASSESSMENTS & PARENT CONFERENCES**

Assessments and conferences are scheduled in the Fall and Spring of each year. During these conferences, educators and parents have the opportunity to discuss the child's progress, share concerns, and plan together to meet the child's developmental needs. Parents and educators are encouraged to schedule additional conferences any time the need arises. Educators also maintain documentation/assessments which are shared with parents during both of the conferences. Classroom educators continue to add to this documentation through the end of the school year when information will be sent home with each child via a portfolio. Additionally, parents are welcome to discuss their child's learning style, most comfortable learning environment, and closest friends in the Spring of each year as information for the educators to share prior to class assignments for the following academic school year.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The Director and staff of the ECP want you to feel welcome! If we begin the home/school relationship with an open approach, we can build trust. If issues arise, we can talk about them without hesitation. We are here to listen, talk, and help, and your children's educators are here to listen and respond to your input. You should come to them for answers to questions or to offer support. Please consider scheduling a conference first with your educators and then with administration to discuss significant issues, rather than raising them at busy drop-off and pick-up times.

The Director, Assistant Director, and Outreach Manager also welcome your feedback and maintain an "open door" policy. When you call for an appointment to meet with us, we can continue to work to make positive decisions for your children and your families. If you do not believe that either the educators or the administrative staff of the ECP has successfully resolved your concerns, you may contact the Shalom Austin Chief Learning & Engagement Officer, Rachel Stern, at [Rachel.stern@shalomaustin.org](mailto:Rachel.stern@shalomaustin.org) to seek further resolution.

We also communicate with parents via our monthly electronic newsletter, e-mail, Preschool2Me daily reports and announcements, weekly notes, lesson plans, and documentation on classroom bulletin boards.

## **CALENDAR**

See the link under Early Childhood Program at [www.shalomaustin.org](http://www.shalomaustin.org), ask for a hard copy at the ECP Front Office, or find the current school year calendar attached as an addendum to this Parent Handbook.

## **SCHOOL YEAR**

### **HOURS OF OPERATION /DAILY SCHEDULES**

The school operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. You may choose the “Core Day” program (8:30am-2:30pm) alone or add the Early Care program (7:30am – 8:30am) and/or the afternoon Extended Care program (2:30pm – 5:30pm). There are also a variety of attendance options (2, 3, or 5 days a week) depending upon the child’s specific age group. Children who have schedules on MWF or T Th may only attend the ECP on those days. **Educators do not have the authority to change schedules.** Families wishing to change to a full-time M-F schedule from a current part-time (T/Th or MWF) schedule must first talk to administrators, go on the ECP internal waiting list, and then follow appropriate procedures if an opening occurs and the family is offered this change.

The Core Day program begins at 8:30 am and ends at 2:30 pm, except for the infant program which is from 8:30am-5:30pm. Daily schedules include blocks of time for indoor and outdoor self-selected activities, group activities, snack, lunch, nap/rest time, clean-up, and toileting routines. The classrooms are arranged in activity centers consisting of art, sensory, block/construction, dramatic play, manipulative, science, and library/literacy areas. Children are encouraged to move around the classroom at their own pace and select activities that seem appealing to them. Teachers are observing, recognizing, and listening to children's ideas and interests during this time. With this information, they develop concrete, hands-on activities based upon their observations. Educators challenge and support children in ways to further their learning and understanding through joint research, discovery, and projects.

The Early Care program is currently unavailable. Normally, it is from 7:30am to 8:30am and consists of supervised play in designated classrooms. The afternoon Extended Care program is available from 2:30 pm until 5:30pm. Children must be registered in advance for either the Early Care or Extended Care programs for the same days they are registered for the Core Day program so that the appropriate staffing levels may be maintained.

### **DROP-IN EARLY OR LATE CARE**

Occasionally there is space available in our morning Early Care program or the afternoon Extended Care program on a "drop-in" basis. Please contact the ECP Front Office for availability on any particular day via a Preschool2Me message or by e-mailing [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org). The early morning drop-in fee is \$15 and the afternoon extended day fee is \$30. **Please note: A child may only use “drop-in” morning Early Care or afternoon Extended Care programs if they are enrolled in and are currently attending the Core Day program on the same day a parent is requesting care.**

### **TOT SHABBAT**

Tot shabbat is currently held via Facebook live. Normally, every Friday morning, the educators and children gather together to sing songs, dance, and participate in our Shabbat Celebrations. Please check with your child’s educator for the time of the Shabbat assembly, then come join us! Each

classroom enjoys juice and challah for their Friday snack. One of the highlights of Shabbat is when the children each bake their own challah to take home and enjoy with their families. This wonderful aroma fills the school with an extra element of excitement each week on both Thursdays and Fridays (depending on the day your child's class has scheduled baking time). Additionally, there are scheduled Grandparents' Club Tot Shabbats throughout the school year. ECP administrators and staff welcome parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended "neighborhood grandparents" to our weekly Tot Shabbats at any time, however.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The ECP operates all year through an academic school year and summer J Camps. The ECP academic school year extends from the last week of August thru mid-May/early June (depending upon the year). Summer J Camps operate during portions of June, all of July, and portions of August. As a Jewish school, the ECP observes the major Jewish holidays. As a result, school may be either completely closed, operating on shortened hours, or open only for families previously registered for the Holiday Package, Winter Package, or for individual Holiday and/or Winter Package days. For a complete schedule, please see the ECP annual calendar which is posted as a link under Early Childhood Program at [www.shalomaustin.org](http://www.shalomaustin.org), in hard copy form from the ECP Front Office, or as an addendum to this Parent Handbook.

## **SUMMER CAMP**

Registration for the ECP summer Camp, J Camp, will take place on-line during the Spring semester of each calendar year and includes registration and payment deadlines, optional discounts, and payment types. Summer Camp consists of five-day-a-week themed two-week sessions. Parents have the option to choose to register on-line for either both weeks in a session or a single week as long as space is available. Registering for a single week within a two-week session incurs a slightly higher fee than the full two-week registration. Camp is a fun, **faster-paced day** that includes splash times, enrichment activities, and scheduled adventures (Adventure Room, CATCH, guest appearances, field trips, etc.). Be prepared for lots of fun during motivational and team-building "dress-up" days as well! We welcome parents to also come in costume or "in support" of the team-building theme when dropping-off or picking-up children from summer Camp! In the past these have included Western Day, Decades Day, Crazy Sock and Hat Day, etc.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

If withdrawing your child after you have already registered for the school year, please notify the ECP Front Office in writing via an e-mail sent to [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org) with a cc to the Director and Assistant Director. This written notification to withdraw must be provided to the ECP at least 30 days prior to the next billing date - the first of each month. If written notification is provided to the ECP less than 30 days from the next billing date, tuition expenses will continue to be billed for the next month. (For example, if you give a 30-day written notification on January 15<sup>th</sup> for February 15<sup>th</sup>, you will incur a complete tuition payment for February. **This amount will not be pro-rated.**) Please remember that all payments already rendered, including the August payment, will not be refunded.

**In addition, it is also your responsibility to notify the Shalom Austin Membership Department** at the same time you are withdrawing from the ECP if you are cancelling your Shalom Austin Membership. Your membership must remain active, however, as long as your child is enrolled in the ECP. The Membership Department may be reached by calling: (512) 735-8000 or via e-mail at

membership@shalomaustin.org. **The Membership Department requires a 30-day written withdrawal notice prior to the next billing date – the first of each month.**

## **GRADUATION**

***When graduating from the Pre-K program within the ECP, we would like to remind our families that this is not the end of a journey – it is just the beginning!*** We welcome opportunities to see your children grow as part of our Shalom Austin Community as your family comes to play, volunteer, swim, work-out, garden, or simply meet friends! Your Shalom Austin Annual Membership provides you with continued benefits including member-only pricing for J Camps (Summer Camp), Kids Connection, enrichment programs, Yom Kef care on days that elementary schools may be cancelled for some holidays, and special events. If you are moving from the area after graduation or will not be continuing with your membership, it is your responsibility to notify the Shalom Austin Membership Department with at least a 30-day notice prior to the next billing date. If your child plans on attending J Camps, or Kids Connection, it is important to remember that you must maintain your Shalom Austin Family Membership.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

Many of the ECP's listed policies require the active cooperation of parents. Please take the time to become familiar with our policies and understand that compliance will help us to meet your expectations for an excellent preschool program.

## **FOOD GUIDELINES**

Before meal times, each child is required to wash his/her hands prior to being seated. Children are not allowed to share food due to the possibility of allergies. All foods and beverages brought from home should be labeled with the child's name and the date. Please send cold packs or frozen drinks in your child's lunch box to keep cold items cold until lunch time. To adhere to licensing regulations, only factory sealed foods with ingredients listed or fresh fruits and vegetables may be brought to the ECP to share with the whole class for special occasions such as Potluck meals for holiday celebrations.

## **HAMOTZI BLESSING**

The Hamotzi blessing is recited as a group before meals as listed below:

Hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.

We give thanks to G-d for bread.

Our voices rise in song together.

As our daily prayer is said

Baruch ata Adonoy, (Translation: Blessed are you O G-d)

Eloheinu melech ha-olam, (King of the Universe)

Hamotzi, lechem min ha-aretz. (Who brings forth bread from the earth)

## **LUNCHES**

Children and educators bring their lunch to eat together in the classroom daily. The ECP, in keeping with the laws of **Kashrut** (Jewish Dietary Laws) is a **STRICTLY DAIRY/PAREVE ONLY** facility. This means staff, children, parents, and visitors may not bring any meat products or by-products (i.e. animal fat, chicken broth, pork, beef, turkey or chicken) into this facility or to any functions sponsored by the ECP. While we realize that not everyone who participates in the ECP is Jewish or has a kosher home, this is a Jewish program and **all participants must adhere to and respect the dietary laws followed by this program.**

**We encourage you to pack a nutritious lunch, as this promotes good overall nutrition.** We encourage you to send fresh vegetables and fruit and homemade items in lieu of pre-packaged items. We have wonderful "lunch ideas" available for your perusal on our Lunch Ideas flyer. These include lots of healthy AND easily prepared lunch options. We discourage sending candy, cookies, soft drinks, or high-sugar foods in lunches (Please note that you may want to look at your yogurt to check the sugar content). **Additionally, we offer a healthy catered lunch option from L&L Catering – a company dedicated to offering healthy alternatives for parents who need a viable Monday-Thursday option.** You may choose this through your on-line Camp Minder account as an "option." You may also inquire at the ECP Front Office for further information. The monthly catering menu is available in the ECP's electronic newsletter *Mah Koreh*, and in hardcopy on the bulletin board outside of the ECP Front Office. Catered lunches are available for \$7.00 each. If a child forgets a lunch and you are unable to provide one in a timely fashion, we are happy to provide a nutritious lunch for a charge of \$7.50 which will then be added to your tuition account.

## **SNACK**

We currently are not serving school snacks. Normally, we provide a snack for all of our children every day. Snack is served mid-morning for all students and mid-afternoon for those students who stay for our Extended Care program. Parents of infants are asked to provide a mid-morning snack for their child as well. Depending upon age, children in the infant program also receive some ECP-provided snacks. Snack is light and should not be considered a substitute for breakfast or lunch. Per State Licensing and the American Academy of Pediatrics standards, whole milk will be served to infants over twelve months and toddlers and 1% milk will be served to children two and older. Parents are required to notify your child's educator of any special food or dietary needs for your child. Please remember to note any food allergies on your child's on-line enrollment and paper registration forms. Parents will have access to monthly snack calendars via the ECP's electronic newsletter, in hardcopy on the bulletin board outside of the ECP Front Office, on the ECP kitchen door, or outside of each classroom. (Small substitutions or changes may occur.) Additionally, if you will be providing snack for your child in lieu of the snack provided by the ECP due to allergies, etc., you must sign the State-required forms available through the ECP Front Office.

## **INFANTS/TODDLERS: BOTTLES & BREASTFEEDING**

Educators and parents work together to transition infants and toddlers from bottles to cups. Infants unable to sit are held for bottle feeding. All others sit to be fed or to drink. No bottles are allowed in a crib or are propped at any time.

Mothers may come to breast feed their infants, however, please be mindful of others when feeding in the classroom or the Multipurpose Room (when available). Breast milk is also accepted, stored, dated, and served. New bottles must be provided for each feeding. They must be labeled with the infant's name and date brought to school. Bottles will then be stored in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours or no more than 24 hours if previously frozen. Formula is only accepted in factory sealed containers and prepared to the manufacturer's instructions. Clean bottles must be provided for each

feeding. Bottles can only contain solid foods and thickening agents if accompanied by a doctor's note and medical reason for such practice. Staff will discard any bottles after one hour. No juice is served to infants younger than six months unless a doctor's note is provided. If juice is served to children, it will be 100% juice and limited to no more than four ounces per child per day. No cow's milk may be served to children younger than 12 months.

## **HEALTH**

### **DAILY GENERAL HEALTH REVIEW**

Upon arrival each day, educators will conduct a general health review of each child for wellness, bruises, cuts or scrapes, etc. Parents complete a health check on the Kid Kiosk Parent App.

### **REST TIME**

State Licensing laws require at least one hour of rest time for all children. Children rest on mats in a quiet, darkened room after lunch. Children who do not nap as well as other children who awaken are allowed to participate in quiet activities on their mats (e.g.: reading books, listening quietly to music, completing puzzles, drawing, building with a few Legos, etc.) after this designated hour. Children who fall asleep are allowed to continue napping until they awaken or the time approaches approximately 2:15 pm when they are roused and prepared for departure. Naps may not last longer than three hours. Infants are always placed on their "back to sleep."

### **CLEANLINESS**

Children are required to wash their hands when entering the classroom, prior to eating snacks and lunch, and after using the restroom. Children also wash their hands before water play and after sand play, outdoor play, and contact with animals. Classrooms are professionally cleaned each evening, and toys and furniture are cleaned regularly by the educators. Children are age-appropriately taught how to clean after themselves by putting away toys and classroom materials after play, helping educators wipe tables before and after snack and meals, and cleaning their individual places after snack and lunch using our composting and recycling classroom containers.

### **ALLERGIES**

Per State Licensing regulations, all children's allergies must be posted in each classroom. For the safety, health, and well-being of each of your children, educators and staff work with families who have children with a variety of allergies. Because we see many food allergies, parents may sign a request to provide alternate snacks for their children each day. Parents may also consult the ECP Snack Schedule to help them determine which days may be appropriate to provide these alternate snacks.

### **ILLNESSES**

You know your child better than anyone. If your child has a loss of appetite, shows unusual signs of listlessness, irritability, or fatigue, your child may be coming down with an illness and should be kept home. Many illnesses are infectious. Please keep your child home and do not send them to school or camp if you suspect your child may be getting sick. Please do not bring your child back until the

disease/illness is no longer communicable, and your child is able to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

An ill child must be kept home if one or more of the following exists:

1. An illness prevents your child from participating comfortably in school/camp activities, including outside play during normal weather conditions. Please note that hot weather is considered "normal" in Austin, Texas.

2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.

3. Your child has ANY of the following:

In the past 24 hours, oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater, rectal temperature of 102 degrees or greater, or armpit temperature of 100 degrees or greater. Your child must be fever-free WITHOUT MEDICATION for 24 hours before returning to school.

Two or more vomiting episodes in the past 24 hours.

Two or more episodes of diarrhea or loose, watery stools in the past 24 hours.

Rash with a fever, discharge from the eyes, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior changes, or other unusual symptoms.

The child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease, including, but not limited to: chicken pox, bacterial or viral gastroenteritis, hand/foot/mouth disease, mumps, measles, meningitis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, fifth disease, head lice, conjunctivitis or pink eye, strep throat, impetigo, influenza, whooping cough, etc. Until medical evaluation determines that the disease/illness is no longer communicable and your child is able to participate in ECP activities, please allow your child to recuperate at home. In these cases, please give a doctor's release note to ECP administrators upon your child's return.

If a child exhibits two or more symptoms of illness (e.g.: fever and coughing; fever and multiple episodes of diarrhea or loose, watery stools, etc.) or a more severe sign of illness, the staff will contact a parent to schedule immediate pick-up (**30 minutes to one-hour maximum**). Please arrive as soon as possible because your child is not feeling well and he/she will be waiting for you in the ECP Front Office. It is very important to ensure that you have at least one **local emergency pick-up contact** in the event that we cannot reach a parent when a child is sick. If your child has a doctor-confirmed communicable disease, such as those mentioned above, please notify the ECP Front Office as soon as possible either by phone or in person, so an anonymous illness notice may be posted for the benefit of the other parents with children attending the ECP, as well as for the benefit of our staff.

## **MEDICATIONS**

**Only ECP administrators will dispense medication (prescription and over-the-counter) with written permission of the parent/guardian AND a prescription (including administration instructions) from your child's doctor.** Parents must sign and return a "Request for the Administration of Medication" form. Attached must be the signed doctor's prescription and instructions - including dosage and a dispensing time frame - which should not exceed one year. For instance, if a prescription states that the ECP may use an over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol for teething, it can then be dated for a range of up to one year. The official note must also indicate any dosage amounts and include a signed notation that it may be used as needed.

Per State regulations, parents will be called prior to any over-the-counter medication dosage. If the parent cannot be reached, no medication will be administered except in a life and death situation (e.g.: an allergic reaction.)

Medication will only be stored for the time period marked on the prescription. We will no longer store medicine to be used "as needed" without a specified time period noted on a prescription, and we will administer and store the medicine as the doctor prescribes. If you want to stop the medication before the doctor's prescribed time, please notify the ECP Office in writing.

All medications must be provided by the parent in the original container labeled on the package and the actual container with the child's first and last name and the date delivered to the ECP. The expiration date must be clearly marked and include the manufacturer's instructions with the strength of the medication as well as directions on administration and storage. Sunscreen and non-aerosol bug spray can also be provided and applied by the teachers, with a written permission form.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS AND VISION/HEARING SCREENINGS**

**The ECP, as a private entity, chooses to be a "fully-immunized" program, and as such, will not accept immunization waivers.** Each child must be immunized according to the Texas Department of Health (TDH) regulations. A written statement by authorized personnel that states that the child has been immunized must be on file in the ECP Front Office before the child is admitted to the classroom. In addition, the state of Texas requires vision and hearing screening for all four-year-olds. These will be offered through the ECP and will be charged with the Pre-K tuition during the month that the screening is offered. We also offer optional vision and hearing screening for three-year-olds. These will be offered through the ECP for a fee. The ECP does not require tuberculin testing. Per state licensing regulations, the ECP also maintains a policy that requires staff to provide proof of current TDaP (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis), varicella (chicken pox), negative TB, and annual influenza vaccinations.

A reminder that while the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSH) provides for exemptions from immunizations, **ECP policy requires that children must be current on immunizations as per the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities schedule** (a copy is available for your review in the ECP Front Office). The reason for this policy is that non-immunized children could possibly bring vaccine-controlled illness into the facility which could then be spread to pregnant women, older visitors, and/or under-immunized younger children. The risk associated with a child not being immunized to the health and well-being of the rest of the ECP population is, we feel, unacceptable as well as a possible liability issue. **Therefore, as a non-profit organization, we do not accept non-immunized children or children on a delayed immunization schedule.** On rare occasions, we have granted a family a temporary waiver due to extreme medical conditions. Please contact the ECP Administrative Team if you have any questions about our immunization policy. We appreciate your help in keeping your child's immunizations up-to-date and our files current according to state requirements by bringing copies of any new immunizations to the ECP Front Office or scanning electronic copies to [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org).

## **ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES**

The children are carefully supervised at all times, but despite our best efforts, accidents will occasionally occur. All ECP staff members are trained in Basic CPR and First Aid procedures. If an injury is minor (i.e. bites, scratches and scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc.) and below the shoulders, an ECP staff member will administer appropriate first aid (ice, Band-Aid, etc.), complete an accident report form, and calm the child before taking them back to the classroom or playground. If the minor injury is located on the neck or head (above the shoulders), staff will personally contact a parent. If the injury is major (i.e. laceration requiring stitches, loss of consciousness, broken limb, etc.), the parent will be contacted immediately. The child's educator will complete an Accident Report through

our Preschool2Me electronic communication medium. At the moment, only one electronic report may be completed per day. In the event there is a second accident on the playground or in the classroom, your child's educators will complete a paper copy of an Accident Report and put that in your child's cubby/parent pocket.

In an emergency, when the parent is unavailable, alternate names on the child's registration/emergency contact/health form will be notified. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called to determine appropriate actions. If the emergency requires immediate medical attention, EMS will be called to transport the child to an emergency room.

## **FILES**

All students' files are kept current and updated on a regular basis. For confidentiality, access is limited to staff, parents/guardians, and regulatory authorities upon request.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICIES**

The ECP is located at 7300 Hart Lane, Austin, Texas, 78731. It is owned and managed by the JCC, a division of Shalom Austin. The Shalom Austin campus is secured in many ways including individually issued car stickers and an attendant at the front gate who controls access to the campus property. The current year's Shalom Austin sticker must be placed in your front windshield on the driver side for you to drive freely onto the property. The security attendant will stop cars without current stickers and process drivers as guests. Stickers are available from the ECP Front Office where they are individually assigned to families. There are also multiple locked doors, monitored security cameras, and measures in place to ensure the safety of your children. For more information about the Shalom Austin Security Policy, feel free to check with the ECP Front Office.

1. Please comply with our posted **10 MPH Campus Speed Limit** and **observe all one-way/directional signs**.

2. Please park only in only designated parking spaces - **Do not park in FIRE ZONES** (Red curb Markings) in front of the ECP and in Shalom Austin areas. **Parking in a Fire Zone is against the law.** Keeping these curbside areas clear provides easy access for Fire Trucks in times of emergency, helps to keep our students and other children safe when walking across cross walks, and greatly reduces the possibility of an accident caused when cars block Fire Zones designated at cross walks.

3. **Please do not park, even temporarily, in "Handicap" spaces** - We have many handicapped members, congregants, parents, grandparents, and even some staff, that have a legitimate need AND a legitimate permit for those spaces. We ask that you respect the law and those that have a need for these close spaces.

4. Signs have been installed in front of the ECP drop-off and pick-up areas, designating them as "**Cell-Free Zones**." We have had some dangerous situations occur in these drop-off/pick-up areas involving drivers that were distracted while talking or texting on their phones. For the safety of the children and all others, please join us in creating the safest campus environment possible by complying with these safety measures and helping to set a good example. **Please put your cell phones AWAY when walking or driving in and around the ECP.**

5. During school hours, the front and back doors to the ECP hallways via the front lobby and the AJA lobby are locked. The ECP Administrative staff allow entrance to the school only to

parents/guardians and to the children accompanying these adults. The doors accessing the back-AJA lobby are ONLY accessible with ECP Administrative permission via the back camera/doorbell. Students and ECP staff may enter the back doors ONLY with Shalom Austin Security issued key fobs or with Administrative permission via the back camera/doorbell. During “rush hours,” roughly from 8:30 am - 8:45 am and from 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm ECP Administrative staff and optionally additional Shalom Austin staff stand at the ECP open lobby door to greet parents/guardians and children. During the day, parents/guardians must request access to enter the school from the personnel at the Front Desk in the lobby.

6. During school hours, no part of the ECP may be used for any business other than school-related activities. After school hours, the building is used for Shalom Austin activities and is left unlocked. On Sunday mornings, religious school classes meet in some classrooms during the school year. Only children using the facility for planned activities such as Sunday School classes may use the playground. Visitors will be asked for a valid Texas driver’s license and/or a valid photo identification when greeted at the locked doors in person.

### **CAMPUS EVACUATION**

If the facility must be evacuated, Shalom Austin Security has arranged an alternate location to which we will move the children. If you learn that your child has been evacuated from the ECP on the Shalom Austin campus (7300 Hart Lane), please go immediately to the following location:

Northwest Hills United Methodist Church  
7050 Village Center Dr. (Far West and Hart Lane)  
Phone Number: (512) 345-1743

### **CHILDREN’S SECURITY**

Children are kept together as a class at all times, unless personally accompanied by another administrator or educator from one location to another. Children are not allowed to leave the school without their parent/guardian unless arrangements have been made in advance and **in writing** by the parent/guardian.

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT**

The ECP staff has a policy in place regarding mandatory training of all staff and the mandatory responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. The ECP conducts background checks on all staff prior to hiring and then conducts mandatory fingerprinting for all staff accepting any position – both part-time and full-time. Our daily health checks are also a preventive measure that supports these issues. All staff complete Reporting Abuse and Neglect training provided by the State of Texas, Department of Family and Protective Services and these certificates of training completion are maintained in the ECP Front Office. Staff are familiar with strategies for preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. These include but are not limited to positive redirection and guidance as outlined in this handbook, providing parents with resources through Jewish Family Services or those listed on the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website (contact information below), and/or anonymously reporting suspected abuse or neglect directly to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to ECP administrators who can then make official reports.

Parents may also report suspected abuse or neglect of a child and may find information regarding mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care on the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website

located on-line at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org), by calling the local number (512) 834-3426 or by using the 24 hour hotline 1-800-252-5400. Reports are confidential and are not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law also provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as the report is made in good faith. Identities are kept confidential. If you have reason to suspect abuse or if you have doubts about whether or not it is abuse, please call the hotline as they can advise you on whether the signs you may have observed are abuse.

## **AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

**Children will be released ONLY to parents/guardians or those persons authorized by the parents/guardians on each child's enrollment record.** Please list at least two persons on the form in the event that you are unable to pick up your own child. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the child's educator and the ECP office with a phone call, a written note, and/or an e-mail of any change or emergency in usual carpooling arrangements. Authorized persons must show a picture ID at the ECP Office before initially picking up the children. **Children WILL NOT be released to anyone under the age of 16. Parents who are legally separated or divorced must notify the Director, in writing, and provide copies of any court ordered custody arrangements and describe how these will involve the child's life as it relates to the ECP.**

We recognize that there will be times when neither you nor your authorized persons will be able to pick-up your child. In this case, to ensure that your child is released to an adult authorized by you, we ask that you follow this procedure:

1. E-mail the ECP Front Office at [ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org](mailto:ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org) as soon as you know who will be picking-up your child and include the person's name, full address, phone number (cell if possible) and driver's license state and number.
2. When that person arrives, we will ask that person for a driver's license or another form of photo ID, which we will then photocopy and retain for our records. Please be sure that your pick-up person knows of this requirement and brings appropriate identification. If you would like to add this person permanently to your pick-up list, please remember to either personally stop at the ECP Front Office to update your records or appropriately let a member of the ECP Administrative Team know.

## **VISITOR POLICY**

We encourage parents to visit your children's classrooms if it is not disruptive to your child or the class. Please contact your child's educator to let them know of your visit in advance, if possible.

## **FIRE/SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY**

The ECP regularly practices fire evacuation and severe weather drills. The educators are trained to react to the alarms using strict procedures. If you are in the ECP building, out Front, or on the playground when one of these drills occurs or in an actual emergency, please follow the instructions of your child's educator. This will result in a smoother, safer procedure for all.

## **PLAYGROUND USE**

Playground safety is extremely important. Because it is the responsibility of the educators to monitor the children's safety while they are on the playground, please limit conversations with them at this time. Between the hours of 7:00am and 6:00pm on school days, the playground is for use by ECP

students supervised by ECP staff only. During other hours and on weekends, there is also no ECP playground access, without prior permission, due to insurance restrictions and severe allergy considerations. Due to these allergies, only water is permitted on any ECP playgrounds or on the ECP Courtyard. No food or other drinks are permitted at any time. There are other playgrounds located on the Shalom Austin campus open to families with children at all times and that permit food and drinks.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSURES**

In case of inclement weather, the ECP generally follows the closing or delayed start decisions of the Austin Independent School District (AISD) and will notify parents of its decisions via an announcement from its electronic communication system, Preschool2Me. Most local school closings will be displayed on Austin Television Channels 7 (Fox), 8 (YNN Austin), 24 (ABC), 36 (NBC) and/or 42 (CBS). These stations will also broadcast late start times for delayed openings. Please watch these stations for related information. You may also get the ECP's latest closing information by calling (512) 735-8100 (the ECP Front Desk) where messages are updated as conditions change. Generally, if inclement weather occurs during the school day, the ECP will follow the AISD early release or early closing schedule. Again, parents will be notified via an announcement from Preschool2Me. When the weather reaches or goes beyond 100 degrees or below 40 degrees, ECP staff will alert educators to limit outdoor play to 20-minute segments. When there are heat or cold alerts, the administration will decide if children should go outdoors at all.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Children in the three's and Pre-K classes will periodically take field trips away from school. Parents will be asked to sign/authorize a transportation release located directly on your enrollment form so that your child can participate in these trips. The ECP provides a Shalom Austin bus for transportation, and all field trips will be announced in advance by your child's educator. Parent help on field trips is always appreciated, but not required. **Parents or ECP siblings, however, are not permitted to ride on the JCC buses.**

## **BIRTHDAYS/INDIVIDUAL CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS**

Families choose to celebrate their children's birthdays in different ways including some that do not celebrate birthdays at all. We recognize and respect these differences and are also aware that a little bit of excitement goes a long way in groups of young children. Therefore, the ECP intentionally keeps birthday observances "low-key." **Each class will celebrate birthdays in a special way, specific to their room, and age appropriately.**

In the formative years of the ECP, parents made a decision to refrain from bringing sweets and trinkets to school. Please **do not** provide any cakes or sweets, balloons, entertainment, or party favors on your child's birthday. Often educators suggest fruit that you may dip in melted chocolate as a classroom treat. As mentioned, each class appropriately celebrates birthdays. If you wish to distribute party invitations at school, please invite ALL children in your child's class. Over the years, we have seen too many children and parents with hurt feelings when some, but not all, of the children from a classroom are invited to a child's birthday party.

## **CLOTHING**

Your child's clothing should be comfortable, washable, and suitable for a daily routine, which includes both messy and active projects. Occasionally, toilet accidents and spills occur during the day, so we ask that your child bring at least one complete change of clothing (suitable to the season) to keep at school. These may also be used if your child gets messy from outdoor play in mud or puddles. Outdoor activities are an integral part of the children's daily routine. Outside time may be limited if the weather is below 40°, above 100° and at least 50% humidity, or stormy (including thunder and lightning). Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for each season. Appropriate dress includes cool, light clothing during our hotter months, and jackets, mittens, hats and leg coverings during our colder months. Sturdy footwear such as sneakers and shoes with non-slip soles are requested rather than sandals or flip-flops. **All clothing, including outer garments and foot wear, should be labeled with your child's name.**

We also ask that you do not send necklaces of any kind with your child as they present choking hazards during play and nap.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Children should not bring toys from home to school. A comfort item for napping is permissible for toddlers through Pre-K classrooms. (Infants may not have "lovies" while napping due to licensing regulations but may bring them for other times of the day.) Toys for Show-and-Tell will stay in children's cubbies except during the show-and-tell portion of classroom group times. Napping items will also stay in their cubbies except at naptime. **All weapon-like toys must stay at home. If brought to school, they will be held by the educator.**

### **ANIMALS**

Due to licensing requirements, ECP only incorporates fish into daily classroom experiences. When animals will be incorporated into the programmatic experience for children, parents will be notified of the fact in advance. An example may be a visit from a petting zoo.

### **INCLUSION**

Our goal is to promote the success of each and every child. The more you tell us about your child, the more we can work to ensure your child, and all of our children, have positive experiences in school. We place children in classrooms carefully, intentionally, and with a great deal of thought and collaboration between educators and administrators. Because of this, we strongly recommend that parents give us as much information about a child as possible. Please make sure to complete the "Getting to Know You" section of the annual enrollment packet and include any additional information that you feel is pertinent. If your child has any special needs (dietary restrictions, a medical or physical condition, specific social needs, etc.) ECP administrators may ask for a meeting prior to the start of school.

### **POSITIVE GUIDANCE APPROACH**

Young children are in the process of learning what acceptable behavior is. Conflict resolution involves helping children to talk about and find solutions to their disagreements, with the assistance of an adult when needed. Many of the behaviors that children exhibit are common for the age or developmental stage of the child.

The teachers/staff role is "guiding" children towards appropriate behavior – the response is to assist the child instead of being punitive. Redirection, positive acknowledgment and problem solving are

methods used in the classroom. Time-out is NOT used at the JCC East Bay. If the child is hurting materials, themselves, or others, there may be a need for the child to leave the group, sit with a teacher, or do an activity to help calm them down. This is a method used instead of giving a “time-out”. All children are given the opportunity to express their feelings and emotions, and know that it is OK to be angry, sad, or frustrated. Our goal is to teach them ways in which to express these emotions and needs pro-socially. We work to instill empathy in all of the children using a guiding process, a three step check in, and modeling the appropriate response. We acknowledge the feelings of the child who is hurt or upset and we use the language, “Are you OK” “Do you need anything?” and “I will try not to do that/ be more careful”. We strive to teach the children that their actions have an impact on the environment around them, and we use positive guidance to help them understand their own feelings and emotions.

In the event that a child enrolled in the preschool is continuously disruptive to the program and the well-being of other children, the Director and/or teachers will meet with their parents to discuss strategies and a plan of action for home and school to diminish the problem. It is important that we work as a team to provide a consistent plan for home and school. The continuity will support the child with a clear and uniform message from all caregivers. If the strategies agreed upon for home and school do not appear to be working, the Director or teachers will propose consulting with a child development expert outside of the JCC team. Once agreed upon the consultant will be contacted to observe and give suggestions on how to move forward. The results of this evaluation may require the child to have a 1:1 shadow to support positive behavior. The family would be responsible for covering the cost of the shadow. The team of parents, staff and the consultant will meet to discuss all options to help best support the child. If the parents chose not to move forward with an observation and assessment, we will support the family in finding a program that will best serve their child, which may result in withdrawal from the program.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

The ECP asks students to leave the program in extreme cases when we feel that we cannot provide the least restrictive environment for a child to learn and grow, or when administrators feel that the safety and security of other children or staff in the program are in jeopardy. Prior to this point, ECP administrators ensure that parents and educators work together to provide the best environment to support the individual learning styles of each child.

To ensure the success of our children, the following must occur prior to expulsion:

- Daily Preschool2Me reports addressing a concern about the child’s behaviors if disruptive to his/her own learning and/or the learning of other children in the class.
- A scheduled meeting between the class educator(s) and the parents discussing the disruptive behaviors and a scheduled follow-up meeting to discuss the child’s progress. (Two meetings with the classroom educator(s).)
- A scheduled meeting between the parents, class educator(s), and the ECP Inclusion Specialist to discuss and develop a behavior intervention plan that includes specific implementation strategies and/or activities to address the noted behaviors in the classroom. This should also address specifics for parents to support school efforts and should be agreed upon by ECP administrators and staff. Suggested partner activities for home implementation may also be addressed as part of a behavior implementation plan.
- A follow-up meeting either in person or via phone to discuss the success of any/all of the implemented strategies. At this time, additions, deletions, or changes to the plan may be discussed

and may include the possibility of a classroom change if the option is available and if ECP administration agrees.

- A request for a parent-provided individual aide/therapist to work with the child during the child's attendance. After all of these avenues have been met, and if ECP administrators still feel that we are not providing either the least restrictive environment for a child to progress or if the safety and security of the child, the other children in the classroom, or the staff are in jeopardy, ECP administrators may ask a family to leave the program.

## **LICENSING POLICIES AND MINIMUM STANDARDS**

Parents always have the right to review all licensing and minimum standard policies and procedures, as well as the most recent standard inspection form, in the ECP Office and/or by contacting the State of Texas, Department of Family and Protective Services by calling the local number (512) 834-3426 or by going on-line at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org).

## **STATE OF TEXAS PARENT RESOURCES**

Following are Parent Resources related to child-care as listed in the State of Texas Minimum Standards for Licensed Childcare Facilities:

### ***Healthy Child Care Texas***

Office of Program Coordination for Children and Youth

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Internet website: <http://www.healthychildcaretexas.org/index.htm>

### ***Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs***

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Internet website: <http://www.naeyc.org/>

### ***Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care, Second Edition***

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2002).

Internet website: <http://nrckids.org/>

### ***American Academy of Pediatrics***

Internet website: <http://www.aap.org/>

### ***Handbook for Public Playground Safety***

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

Internet website: <http://cpsc.gov/>

### ***National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)***

School of Health, Physical Education & Leisure (HPELS), WRC 205

University of Northern Iowa

Internet website: <http://www.uni.edu/playground>

### ***The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood***

Contributing authors Marilyn Goldhammer and Laura J. Colker

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***Texas Child Care***

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**SHALOM AUSTIN**

The organizations comprising Shalom Austin support an innovative community where Jewish living and learning can thrive. Located primarily on the 40-acre Dell Jewish Community Campus in Northwest Austin, Shalom Austin provides a vast array of services and programs, from enrichment opportunities for all ages to support services for families, from health and wellness-oriented programming to global philanthropy.

An umbrella organization, Shalom Austin includes four main divisions: Jewish Federation for Greater Austin, the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Foundation, and Jewish Family Service. These branches work together to comprehensively address the needs of Austin’s Jewish community in collaboration with area congregations, schools, and community organizations.

Every day, Shalom Austin offers its members many opportunities for growth – as people, as families, as a community. We are a gathering place for the Austin Jewish community and for the community as a whole. We are a center for Jewish living and learning. We are a shoulder to lean on for those in need and in times of trial. We are a warm embrace in times of joy. Together, We are Shalom Austin, and as we have proudly announced since our inception: YOU belong here!

Thank you for reviewing our Parent Handbook. Our doors are always open for comments, ideas, etc.!

*Shereen Ben-Moshe,*  
ECP Director

*Iris Koeller,*  
ECP Outreach/Judaics Manager

*Brenda Thurman*  
Office Coordinator