



SHALOM AUSTIN 
Zeifman Family
Early Childhood Program



Family Handbook

2024 Revision

Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program
Shalom Austin, Dell Jewish Community Center

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ZEIFMAN FAMILY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

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Communication Guide

Campminder – Enrollment and billing

Brightwheel - Communication with Teachers, view daily activities and uploading all school documents

Email – ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org – Please use this email for any communication with the administration team including: Reporting an illness, billing questions, enrollment questions or changes. *Please don't use Brightwheel messages for these purposes.

The ECP is fully licensed by Texas Child Care Licensing, a division of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission and meets strict guidelines for safety, cleanliness, faculty-to-student ratios, and faculty qualifications. We follow best practices as 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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Letter from ECP Leadership

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing the Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program. On behalf of the faculty and staff, I'd like to welcome our new families and our returning families. We are excited about the coming 2024-2025 school year. We know it is going to be a terrific year!

Our aim is to help your children have an enriching and successful early education experience and to partner with your family. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the information you need to give your children a great start in their educational journey. Each family who enters the ECP becomes part of our family. We are committed to supporting your family in raising healthy, happy, resilient, and secure children who will be successful in school and in life.

It is important to understand that early childhood education is so much more than learning colors, shapes, numbers and letters. It's about developing social skills, emotional intelligence, and physical coordination. We provide a safe and nurturing environment where your children can explore, play, learn, and develop according to their own way.

Our Family Handbook outlines our program, curriculum, and policies. Should you have any questions, you are always welcome to contact us at (512) 735-8101 or ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children. We look forward to a wonderful year working together and watching your child blossom.

L'Shalom,

Dana Baruch

ECP Senior Director

ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org

About Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program (ECP)

The ECP is dedicated to providing an outstanding early childhood program which emphasizes Jewish life and values in a caring, developmentally appropriate, and stimulating environment. In partnering with our families, our goal is to provide a strong educational foundation that encourages a life-long love of learning.

We believe:

- In educating the whole child by nurturing a child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.
- In fostering independence and creativity and appreciating each child's individual needs and talents.
- Preschool is a time for children and their families to learn and strengthen their connection to Judaism and its traditions.
- Preschool is a time for children and their families to form friendships that last a lifetime.

Our Philosophy

Philosophy of Excellence

Preschool is:

- Taking first steps, saying first words, holding a spoon...
- Making first friends...
- Plunging fingers into sticky clay...
- Learning to share trikes, balls and blocks...
- Enjoying carefree time on the playground...
- Listening to a favorite story or singing a familiar song...
- Discovering that water disappears from a pan when placed in the sun...
- Creating designs using paints, cotton, or clay...
- Learning how to line up and taking turns washing hands...
- Planting lima beans and anxiously awaiting the first sprouts...
- Playing new and active games outdoors...
- Checking in on the chickens to see how they move...
- Tumbling on mats and learning to toss a ball to a friend...
- And most important of all, it's developing self-confidence and an "I can do it" attitude.

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 ongoing 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.

JCCs of North America’s Sheva Framework

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.

Family/Guardian Rights & Responsibilities

You have the RIGHT to...

- Visit the ECP during our operating hours.
- Request a conference with your child's teacher(s), a supervisor, or the director.
- Know that your child is being physically, mentally, and emotionally nurtured and cared for.

You are RESPONSIBLE for...

- Bringing your child well-rested, and appropriately dressed for the weather conditions daily.
- Using Brightwheel to sign your child in upon arrival and out upon pick-up.
- Keeping all information in Brightwheel current, including family contact information, pick-up and emergency contact lists, allergies, and health records.
- Picking up your child in a timely manner when notified of illness or injury.
- Paying all tuition payments and fees, in a timely manner and in accordance with our payment policies.
- Observing all policies and procedures set forth in this Family Handbook.

Curriculum, Child Development & Programs

Our Values-Based Curriculum

The Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program (ECP) is designed to meet the whole child's needs, including social-emotional, creative expression, communication, cognitive, physical, and language development. The curriculum emphasizes developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences. The environment is carefully planned to stimulate children's learning and high-quality care. The daily schedule is organized to meet the children's needs for active and quiet play, large and small group interactions, and indoor and outdoor activities. Our program recognizes and celebrates the uniqueness of each child and their family.

The ECP 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
- values to use for self-guided direction

We use positive guidance and redirection to foster cooperative learning, self-regulation, and resiliency. We integrate in daily activities and interactions in accordance with Jewish values through modeling, the use of books, discussions, and class projects that are developmentally appropriate for 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 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
- *Mishpacha* - Love of Family
- *Shalom* - Feeling Peace

- *Shalom Bayit* - Peace in the Home and Classroom
- *Bal Tashchit* - Do Not Destroy Needlessly
- *Hachnasat Orchim* - Welcoming Guests
- *Saver Panim Yafot* - Cheerfulness
- *Kibbud Horim u Morim* - Honor Parents and Teachers
- *Derech Eretz* - Common Courtesy and Respect
- *Hiddur P'nay Zakken* - Honoring the Elderly

Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is a developmentally appropriate approach to plan for children's learning in early childhood settings. Through this approach, teachers gain greater understanding of each child's individual needs, allowing for thoughtful and individualized programming. Rooted in the work of noted early childhood theorists like Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, emergent curriculum is defined as a process where teachers plan activities and projects based on the specific group of children they are working with, taking into account their skills, needs, and interests. Teachers at the ECP thoughtfully plan the environment, offering many visible choices, based on the children's skills and needs. They conduct observations, utilize developmental checklists, and plan based on their observations of the children in their class. They also utilize reflective practice, taking time to reflect and act on their observations of children. Teachers collaborate and plan with other educators according to age group objectives, including school readiness skills such as letter and number concepts.

In ECP classrooms, parents will often see ongoing projects. Projects allow children to study a topic in more depth over a period of days or weeks and can involve a small group or the whole class. Projects in an emergent curriculum classroom often focus on answering children's questions such as "Where does water go when you water plants?" or "Why are things different colors?" or "What kinds of homes do animals have? And what about people's homes?" Attentive teachers take note of children's questions (for example, while helping to water the flowers) and where appropriate, build project work to help answer those questions.

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 many sensory experiences and help with physical, emotional, and social growth through independent and group provocations. They also care for children in a way that helps them develop trust in their surroundings and educators. Infants have stable, consistent routines. 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 Brightwheel 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 Brightwheel app. 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.

We follow the infant safe sleep policies recommended by Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers.

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, social, and 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 Olds

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 the 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 on age appropriateness and the children's interests. These include centers for books, blocks, sensory materials, art, puzzles and manipulatives, math, science, and dramatic play. Children can 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 interaction, and 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, completing 5- to 20-piece puzzles

Pre-K

Educators provide a rich learning environment for the children in the Pre-K program including 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 that each child is competent, capable, and curious. Educators also provide children with integrated opportunities to practice 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 large and small group activities and opportunities for individual choice in learning centers and on the playground. Children learn to follow directions and to 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. These activities may include visiting the AJA library for a story-time, meeting with an older “buddy”, children in grades K-5, participating in Shabbat, Purim, Passover, and science fair activities

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

- A print-rich environment to promote 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
- 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 can 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 learning “languages” - clay, dancing, inventing, singing, dramatic play, painting, drawing, reading, and more. As such, we provide them with a host of provocations, opportunities, and “loose parts” to foster their interests and discoveries. Educators observe the children daily; these observations along with formal and informal assessments help guide curriculum planning. Educators are given time to plan and collaborate with others on their age-level team. Teams meet regularly with their supervisor or faculty mentor to plan interesting themes and for holidays. Lesson plans are uploaded to Brightwheel weekly. Supervisors provide ongoing coaching and assistance. The ECP is fortunate to have a wealth of shared resources, and supervisors ensure each classroom has the materials and supplies needed. **Multiple times a year, our teachers receive continuing education on curriculum planning and how to best monitor the children’s progress.** The following are some subject areas 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 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-image 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 and 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.

Physical Fitness & Nutrition

Outdoor and indoor play is scheduled daily for all classes. Infant and toddler classrooms enjoy 20-30 minutes of outdoor play in the morning and afternoons. Twos, threes, and PK classes enjoy 30-45 minutes in the morning and afternoon. The ECP is fortunate to have four age-appropriate playgrounds. There are also a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces on the JCC campus. Children are encouraged to walk, run, jump, dance, and move their whole bodies while playing and having fun! They participate in age-appropriate movement activities that help

strengthen their gross motor skills. Music and movement activities help children develop body awareness, rhythm, and tempo. Children have fun hopping, balancing, catching, throwing, skipping, and dancing. The development of readiness skills such as listening, spatial awareness, rhythm, creative expression, and problem-solving have been linked to physical education. Children aged 18 months and older may be enrolled in a variety of enrichment programs including ballet, soccer, swimming, gymnastics and more. Nutrition talks are also part of daily conversations. Children who learn about nutrition at an early age are more likely to choose good nutrition and

fitness choices as they grow.

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 connect to nature and incorporate recycling and composting efforts into their daily activities and routines. Our entire school participates in composting and children of all ages learn 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 toddlers often know how to work on 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 the world's physics and physical properties.

Screen Time

Classrooms with children under two years do not have any screen time. In older classes, screen time is limited and is only used when related to planned activities that meet educational goals. They are not used during meal or rest times.

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 boat, 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 in larger groups to explore sounds and create their own music. Friday Tot Shabbat gatherings combine ¹⁵music,

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.

Licensing and Affiliations

Licensing

The ECP is fully licensed by the Texas Child Care Licensing, Division of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and meets strict guidelines and minimum standards in such areas as safety, cleanliness, faculty-to-student ratios, and staff background checks. The ECP is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. 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). Our school is state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards.

Affiliation



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.



The ECP participates in the Texas Rising Star program. TRS is a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for childcare programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Child Care Services program. Texas Rising Star certification is available to licensed centers and licensed and registered childcare home facilities that meet the certification criteria.

Numerous research studies have shown that children who attend higher-quality early learning programs are more prepared for school entry than children who do not attend high-quality programs. Childcare and early learning programs that achieve Texas Rising Star certification, offering quality care that exceeds the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Child Care Regulation (CCR) minimum standards, are in a better position to positively affect the physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development of children. As programs advance through the levels of Texas Rising Star certification, they are increasingly able to positively affect the development of the children they serve daily.



The ECP is proud to partner with Austin Community College in offering a Child Development Associate National Credential Program on the Dell Jewish Community Center Campus. These college courses in early childhood development are taught by our faculty mentor and adjunct ACC professor, Dana Baruch. They are funded through the generosity of Shalom Austin and TXAEYC.



The Council for Professional Recognition promotes improvement performance and recognition of professionals in the early childhood education of children ages birth to 5 years old. The Council works to ensure that all professional early childhood educators and caregivers meet the developmental, emotional, and educational needs of our nation's youngest children.

Admission & Enrollment

Initial Registration Information

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 will occur during the preceding Spring semester. All pertinent information must be completed online AND appropriate forms must be signed by stated deadlines to maintain priority status for the subsequent school year.

Waitlist 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 Waitlist** is the method of entry for new families. The waitlist is used to fill available spaces after registration and if openings occur during the school year.

Getting On the Waitlist

To place a child on the waitlist (including siblings of children already attending the ECP), the ECP requires a one-time \$49 waitlist fee for each application submitted online through Camp Minder. This link is available electronically from ECP administrators. In addition, families **must** choose to either become Shalom Austin JCC family members or ECP Affiliates. The child will be placed on the list when the online link is completed and the family's Shalom Austin membership or ECP Affiliate membership is confirmed. Additionally, families on the waitlist 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 Waitlist. **As an ECP Affiliate Member, you can attend many of these ECP sponsored events and programs at Shalom Austin "member" rates.** These include ECP enrichment classes throughout the year, family evening programs and dinners, and other ECP special events. You are also welcome to attend weekly Tot Shabbat programming and monthly Shabbat N Play programming. 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. Details will be shared in a monthly "In the Loop" newsletter that is written for families on the Waitlist. To view some of the ECP-sponsored enrichment classes, please visit our website. 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 JCC Family Membership, \$150 per month, you are eligible for member rates for all Shalom Austin and ECP-sponsored events and programs. Your family has access to the gym, the year-round heated pool, groomed hiking/jogging trails, picnic areas, sporting and theatrical events, and MUCH MORE. To join, prospective families register online at shalomaustin.org/membership. Each member can manage their account and register for programs from the convenience of their own home or mobile phone. Members receive parking permits for quick and easy access to the Dell Jewish Community Campus (Please see Addendum 1 for complete information, including hours of operation). You are also welcome to attend weekly Tot Shabbat programming and monthly Shabbat N Play programming. Details will be shared in a monthly "In the Loop" newsletter that is written for

families on the Waitlist. If you have a JCC membership from another JCC, you do not have to join Shalom Austin JCC until the start of the new school year or when your child starts at the ECP.

ECP Waitlist Priority Policy

The following is a list of criteria used to prioritize waitlist applications submitted for openings at the ECP. All submitted applications will be placed in the appropriate category by the date received. The following priorities are listed from highest to lowest priority.

1. Children of Shalom Austin Employees.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled 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 waitlist, 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.

“In The Loop” - Waitlist E-Newsletter

We want to keep in touch with families on our waitlist. Once your child is on the ECP waitlist, you will receive our “In the Loop” newsletter. We will keep you informed of all Shalom Families, PJ Library activities and more! You are also welcome to attend weekly Tot Shabbat programming and the monthly Shabbat N Play program. All dates, times and locations will be shared so you will be in the loop! We also encourage you to join Shalom Families. For more details: <https://shalomaustin.org/shalomfamilies/>

Touring the ECP

All families are asked to tour the ECP before joining the waitlist. Please schedule a tour by calling (512) 735-8101 or send an email to ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org. Tours occur every Wednesday at 10:00 AM. Space is limited and a reservation is required.

Choosing Start Date and Days of The Week For Attendance

When completing the waitlist 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 at the beginning of the next school year or as soon as possible. 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 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 24 hours to accept an enrollment opening. If the family is contacted, they will have until the next school day to respond. If the family is 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 the ECP will consider that a refusal and begin contacting subsequent families on the waitlist. Furthermore, if the ECP does not hear from parents within three weeks, the ECP will remove the child from the waitlist. Letting the ECP know that you are refusing an offered spot but wish to remain on the waitlist will do just that - keep you on it. A second refusal will result in the removal of your child from the waitlist. If you then wish to be considered for a future opening, you must re-apply for the waitlist by contacting the Front Office via email at ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org for the online waitlist link, paying the \$49 waitlist 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 period specified by the family on the waitlist application, and the family is not yet ready to send a child, 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 have a Shalom Austin family membership and maintain that 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 they are attending the core program regularly.

Remaining on the Waitlist

Each year, children on the current waitlist 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 waitlist if the ECP is notified in writing or via email. The resulting annual waitlist will be used to fill any spaces that remain after registration is completed.

Enrollment/Generation Information

Pre-Registration

To reserve a space in our program, you must pay a non-refundable and non-transferrable pre-registration fee. This administrative fee does not apply toward tuition. Pre-registration occurs during the Spring semester of each year and is completed online utilizing the Camp Minder system. After pre-registration, families must complete an enrollment packet that includes forms requiring parent signatures and a health statement, up-to-date immunization records, allergy and snack information, insurance information, and alternate emergency contacts, added to or uploaded to Brightwheel. 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.

Tuition/Billing Options

The ECP is a year-round program for all children in the infant – threes program. Children enrolled in the Pre-K program attend through the end of May when they graduate.

Tuition is calculated automatically during the online registration process and will be divided into the appropriate number of payments based upon parental choice. Many parents choose a 12-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 1st of each calendar year. Monthly tuition will be charged to the card on file on the first day of each month, if this day lands on a weekend or holiday, the charge will be applied on the last business day of the month.

Monthly payments:

Infants – Threes: August 1 – July 1

Pre-K: August 1 – May 1

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



SHALOM AUSTIN
Zeifman Family
Early Childhood Program

2024-2025 YEAR-ROUND PRICING

AGE	DAYS	MONTHLY RATE	
		Core Day Program 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM	MONTHLY RATE Core Day + Extended Care Program 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM
INFANTS* (6 wks. – 12 mos. as of 9/1)	M-F	-	\$2,089
TODDLERS* (1 as of 9/1)	M-F	\$1,238	\$1,737
	MWF	\$870	\$1,194
	T/TH	\$610	\$885
TWOS* (2 as of 9/1)	M-F	\$1,150	\$1,648
	MWF	\$777	\$1,101
	T/TH	\$574	\$847
THREES* (3 as of 9/1)	M-F	\$1,117	\$1,563
PK 4** (4 as of 9/1)	M-F	\$1,075 Aug. 21, 2023-May 24, 2024 (10 payments)	\$1,520

Early Care for All Ages

7:30 - 8:30 AM

Monday-Friday
\$235 per month

Part-Time
(MWF or T/TH)
\$176 per month

AJA Sibling Care for All Ages

7:30-8:30 AM | 2:30-3:30 PM

Monday-Friday
\$415 per month

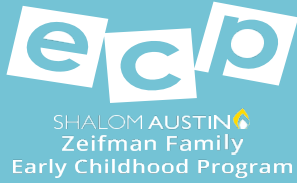
**This option is for families who have a child enrolled in the Austin Jewish Academy. You may drop-off-pick-up your ECP child on the AJA schedule. If your ECP child is an infant, the charge will be \$200 per month since Extended Day is part of your program.*

Enrollment Fees

\$350 Registration, \$54 Parent Committee, and for students that have **not** been enrolled at ECP before, an additional \$150 New Student Fee. All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

*Infant – 3 year old is a year-round program, 12 months: tuition changed monthly 8/1/24 - 7/1/25.

**PK program is a 10-months: August 19, 2024 – May 24, 2025; tuition changed monthly 8/1/24 - 5/1/25. During the summer of 2025 your child will be eligible to register for the incoming Kindergarten JCamps program!



CAMP MINDER REGISTRATION PACKAGES

1-Click Options	Tuition	Parent Committee \$54	Holiday Package Days	Pizza \$398	Challah \$315	T-Shirt \$18	Grandparents Club \$54	Library Book Donation \$18
ALL-IN tuition + fundraiser + holidays	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
THE FUNDRAISER tuition + fundraiser	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A LA CARTE tuition + you choose	✓	✓	?	?	?	?	?	?

All-In: 1-Click to choose your program, fundraisers and holiday package days. These will be added at enrollment.

The Fundraiser: 1-Click to choose your program and includes all fundraisers

A La Carte: Choose your program, fundraisers, and holiday package dates separately

Holiday Package Days

Non-school days that happen on or around holidays. If you do not enroll in the **All-In Package**, these may be purchased in addition to the **The Fundraiser** or **A La Carte** options in CampMinder.

Holiday Package Dates

Fall: October 18, 24 - 25 & November 25 - 26

Winter: December 23 - 24 & January 2-3, 13

Spring: March 17 - 21

Summer: June 3

Daily Pricing

Core Day: \$96

Core + Extended: \$144

Billing & Financial Assistance

For your convenience, the ECP offers debit or credit card payments.

Pay Monthly: You will automatically be charged on the first business day of each month. The first tuition payment will be charged on August 1, 2024. Any additional payments made online will go towards reducing the balance on the account; your annual

tuition will be divided into 10 (for PreK) or 12 (Infants-3's) equal payments.

Pay in Full: Due on August 1. Please email janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org to make payment.

To change your debit/credit card in Camp Minder, login to your account and click Financial Management on the home screen. **NOTE:** If paying by credit card, a 3% credit card processing fee will be added to your total per transaction. **Fundraisers and donations are charged with registration fees, at the time of enrollment. Tuesday/Thursday All-In Programs DO NOT include Pizza or Challah Fundraisers. Infant All-In Programs DO NOT include Pizza Fundraiser.**

ECP Billing Inquiries and Financial Aid: Contact Janet Schreffler at janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org. The deadline for submitting your financial aid application is May 24, 2024. In addition, Hebrew Free Loan of Austin provides interest-free loans up to \$7,500. hebrewfreeloanofaustin.org or (512) 677-4352.

Holiday Packages

Our school also offers Holiday Packages (see the ECP School Calendar for the specific dates). These special days are open to children who are registered for "Holiday Package" (HP) dates. Children not registered for these special days will not have school on these days. All children whose family chose to register for the "All-In Package" will automatically be registered for all HP days. Families who register a-la-carte may register for these dates later in the year, if spots are still available.

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. Once you are offered a spot, you must have a Shalom Austin JCC Family membership to attend the ECP. When graduating or if you must leave the ECP and cancel your membership for any reason, please note that you must give 30-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. Please email any questions regarding membership to membership@shalomaustin.org.

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 goal of our classroom placements is to create a well-balanced environment regarding 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 (where 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 may fill out the **Parent Input Form**. This online form is sent to parents in the registration confirmation letter. *This is an optional form and must be completed by June 1.* We do not accept emails and phone calls. The form helps keep all data organized and easily accessible. The ECP team 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 are notified of academic year placements the week before school starts.

Withdrawal Policy and Procedure

If withdrawing your child after you have already registered for the school year, please notify the ECP Front Office via email sent to 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 15th for February 15th, 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. 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 email 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.**

Administrative Policies

Getting Ready for School

Each year prior to the first day of school, parents and children are invited to a “meet and greet” time with teachers in their classrooms. This time is intended to help both parents and children become comfortable with their new environment and to get to know their teachers. After a few weeks into the school year, all parents are invited to a “back-to-school” evening to meet with the classroom teachers to learn more about the program, including curriculum, developmental milestones, what happens when challenging behaviors occur and the best ways to address them, etc.

Child’s First Day

Preparing for the first day of school can be exciting, but it can also be an overwhelming and anxious time – we understand! We will work with you to make your child’s first day the best it can be. Don’t hesitate to share any concerns you have before that first drop-off. Be sure to communicate daily with your child’s educators during the transition phase. A consistent daily schedule (arrival and departure routines) also helps children adjust to a new routine and environment. You’re always welcome to call any time to see how your child’s adjusting. On the Brightwheel app you can see live updates from your child’s class in the form of pictures or written observations. Educators are busy and their first priority is the children, so

they may not see your message and be able to respond until later in the day. Our office staff will be happy to check in and let you know how your child is doing. Please call our office at (512) 735-8101.

On the first day, we ask that you send in the items listed on your child's age-level supply list. Please make sure to label each item with your child's name. The supply list can be viewed [here](#).

Calendars

We have several calendars to help keep you well informed.

- ECP Annual Calendar: [2024-2025](#)
- Brightwheel Calendar: School events and closures can be found in your Brightwheel app. We update this calendar as new events are added. Simply click on the Calendar link in your app.
- [Shalom Austin Community Calendar](#)

Hours of Operation

The school operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Families may choose:

- Core Day program: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Extended Day program: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Early Care: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
- AJA Sibling Care: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- JCamps Sibling Care (during summer): 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Infant Program: 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday year-round; early care may be added

Toddler & Twos Programs: Core Day and Extended Day program, early care may be added. There are also a variety of attendance options (2, 3, or 5 days a week). Children who have schedules on M/W/F 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 M/W/F) schedule must first talk to administrators to request a change. If there is not an opening, your family may go on the ECP internal waitlist, and you will be contacted if a spot opens.

Threes & Pre-K Programs: Core Day and Extended Day program, early care may be added. All classes at these ages are full-time, Monday – Friday classes.

Daily Schedules

Parents will be given a class schedule by their child's teachers.

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, manipulatives, 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 observe, recognize, and listen 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 from 7:30am to 8:30am and consists of supervised play in designated classrooms.

The AJA Sibling program mirrors the AJA schedule. Parents may park in the ECP parking lot, enter through the lobby, drop their ECP child off in their early care classroom, then exit the rear entrance into the AJA lobby to drop off their older child. There is an intercom and camera at the door. You may push the buzzer, and we will allow you to enter to walk through the ECP to your car. This is only allowed during morning drop-off (7:30-8:45am). If you arrive late, you must drop your ECP child off at our office and then drive to the AJA parking lot and enter through their main entrance. This is a safety matter, as we do not want people walking through the ECP once morning drop-off is over.

ECP Arrival and Departure

The ECP is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am until 5:30pm. **The arrival time for children enrolled in the core or extended day 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). We suggest that children arrive between 8:30am - 9:00am to ensure they can fully participate in all the day's activities. (See the "Attendance" section below.)

Morning Routine: 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 goodbye to their child before leaving the classroom to help promote a smooth transition for the child. It often helps to create a "goodbye routine" that may include a special ritual (saying good morning, putting away a child's backpack, washing hands, giving two hugs after looking at the day's table activities, etc.) followed by saying 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!"

End of Day & Late Fees: Children should be picked up promptly when the program ends. **Departure time for children enrolled in the core day program is 2:30 pm, children enrolled in the extended day program may be picked up anytime during the afternoon, and all children must be picked up by 5:30 pm.** Parents should also say goodbye to the educator before leaving the classroom. This allows the educator to confirm that children are leaving with authorized adults. Parents should allow sufficient time to pick up the child, sign them out, and say goodbye to the educator before 2:30 pm, and it allows a smoother transition for those continuing their day in our extended care program. Children not picked up by 2:45 pm will be placed in an extended care classroom, 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, the pick-up time is 3:30 pm. For families enrolled in the extended day program, children not picked up by 5:30 pm, a late fee of \$30 plus \$1 per minute after 5:30pm will be added to your tuition balance. While we acknowledge that emergencies occur, please respect our staff and our ability to close the school on time.

Brightwheel



The ECP uses a childcare management tool called Brightwheel to communicate with parents via messages, daily activities, and photos. This is also used for attendance and is where we maintain all our school documents needed for the school year.

Account Set Up

After your enrollment has been processed you will receive either an email or text message with a link to set up your Brightwheel account. This account will be linked to your child(ren).

Updating Child's Profile

Please update your child's profile in Brightwheel at the start of the year and whenever any changes happen during the school year. This includes address, allergies (these must also be communicated to the front office via email), emergency contacts, and approved pick-up list. Tap on the word profile in the right-hand corner of your app to make any necessary updates.

Viewing Lesson Plans and Calendar in Brightwheel

To view your child(ren)'s lesson plans tap the Learning or Lightbulb Icon and to see what the teachers have planned for each day. To view the calendar, tap the calendar icon.

ECP Sign-In / Sign-Out Procedures

State Licensing Minimum Standards require that childcare centers maintain sign-in and sign-out logs for each child coming and going from the center throughout the day. The ECP uses the Brightwheel App for this purpose. Each parent will receive an individualized four-digit PIN to use when signing in and signing out their child each day. **Parents will be responsible for this each day your child(ren) attends school.** Additionally, please remember to personally sign out your child and then sign them back in through Brightwheel if you pick up and your child and return later in the day.

Early Care 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Early care starts at 7:30 am and is only offered to those families who have signed up for this additional care. Please do not drop your child off before 8:30 am if you have NOT signed up for early morning care. Parents will be responsible for signing their child in each morning through Brightwheel. ECP staff will transport all early morning children to their assigned classrooms at 8:15 am and electronically transition them through Brightwheel from the Early Care classroom to their regular classroom.

Core Day and Enrichment Pick-Up 8:30AM – 2:30PM

Parents are responsible for picking up their child(ren) no later than 2:45 pm each day. If your child is enrolled in any enrichment classes, educators will transfer them to their appropriate enrichment class and ensure children are appropriately signed in and out through Brightwheel. Parents of children who are not enrolled in the extended care program will pick up their child from the enrichment classroom.

Extended Care 8:30AM – 5:30PM

If your child is in the extended care program, when possible, they will be placed in an extended care classroom and remain in that classroom through the end of the day. If your child is enrolled in an enrichment program, staff will get them to and from that program. Parents are responsible for picking up their child(ren) by 5:30 pm each day.

Non-Member Pick-up Pass

If someone, not a Shalom Austin Member will pick up your child(ren) regularly (nannies, grandparents, etc.), please email ECPadmin@shalomaustin.org to request a *Non-Member Pass* for their car. This pass allows them to come to campus to pick up or drop off your child(ren) from school or enrichment activities and does not allow them to use the Dell JCC facilities.

Family vs. Approved Pick-Ups vs. Emergency Contacts

We ask that you add and edit family members, approved pickups, and emergency contacts on your child's Brightwheel profile. When adding contacts, you are given four options: Parent, family, approved pickup, and emergency contact. Each one has slightly different functions and privileges, as listed in the chart. We do not recommend listing anyone as an emergency contact, as emergency contacts do NOT have pick-up privileges. Only parents, family, and approved pickups may check a child out. For more information on how to add contacts to your child's profile, [click here](#).

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 be disruptive to the children's routine - both for your own child and that of the others in the classroom. If possible, we suggest that you routinely arrive between 8:30 am - 9:00 am. 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 Brightwheel message, or an email to ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org. 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-Teacher Conferences

The ECP uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) assessment tool and developmental checklists for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos to assess and track each child's development, and teachers use the data to help guide their curriculum planning. The ASQ[®]-3 is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between one month to 5 ½ years. Its success lies in its parent-centric approach and inherent ease of use—a combination that has made it the most widely used developmental screener globally. Evidence shows that the earlier development is assessed—the greater the chance a child has to reach their fullest potential. **The Threes and Pre-K teachers use a skills-based assessment that tracks developmental milestones, as well as knowledge and pre-kindergarten skills. Should any developmental red flags or concerns come up as a result of formal or informal assessments and/or observations, parents will meet with teachers and an administrator to discuss and address the concerns. If the concerns are such that specialized assessment and/or intervention is called for, this will be discussed at the meeting, and a plan for follow-up communications will be created.**

Early Intervention Support Options: Should concerns about your child's development arise, we recommend seeing your pediatrician or a developmental pediatrician, and/or our JFS child therapist for further assessment. We will work with you to determine the most appropriate outside services (speech therapist, occupational therapist, etc.) to best support your child.

Parent-Teacher conferences and assessments are scheduled twice a year in the Fall and Spring of each year. The ECP will be closed on these days so both teachers can meet with parents. All parents will be invited to sign up for a conference time.

During these conferences, educators and parents will discuss the child's progress, share concerns, and discuss plans to meet the child's developmental needs. Parents and educators are encouraged to schedule additional conferences whenever needed. Educators maintain documentation/assessments shared with parents during both conferences. Classroom educators continue to add to this documentation through the end of the school year, when each child's information will be sent home 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 before class assignments for the following academic school year.

Files

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

Communication

We maintain a strong belief in the value of good and open communication. You will receive daily messages and photos via Brightwheel. We also communicate with parents via the monthly “*Mah Koreh*” (What’s Happening) e-newsletter, lesson plans, and documentation on classroom bulletin boards.

Choose Brightwheel First for Parent-Teacher Communications: We encourage parents to use Brightwheel as the primary means of communicating with their child’s teachers. Please know that a teacher’s priority is to work with the children. In most cases, the teachers may not see your message or respond immediately. If you have a time-sensitive message for the teachers, please call the office and we will make sure your child’s teacher gets it as quickly as possible.

You will also find a list of email addresses for all administrators on the first page of this handbook. Teachers also have an email address. All email addresses are: firstname.lastname@shalomaustin.org.

We encourage families to ask questions and share concerns with their teachers. These dedicated professionals spend most of their time with your child and will be able to answer most of your questions.

Email or Call our Office for Additional Help: If you need additional help, we suggest you email your age-level manager. If you have a question related to office or school policies, please email ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org. Our office manager will forward your message to the administrator who can best answer your question.

Please consider scheduling a conference first with your educators and then with the administration to discuss significant issues, rather than raising them at busy drop-off and pick-up times.

The director, assistant director, and supervisors also welcome your feedback and maintain an “open door” policy. 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 to seek further resolution.

Tot Shabbat

Tot Shabbat is a special weekly celebration. Every Friday morning, the educators and children gather to sing songs, dance, say blessings and participate in our Shabbat celebrations. Each class enjoys challah for their Friday snack. One of the highlights of Shabbat is when the children 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 Thursdays and Fridays (depending on the day your child’s class has scheduled baking time). Additionally, there are scheduled Family Shabbat Celebrations, Holiday Celebrations, and Grandparents' Club Tot Shabbat throughout the school year. ECP administrators and staff welcome parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended "neighborhood grandparents".

Holidays

Holidays are a special time at the ECP. Walking through the halls, you will see Jewish holiday-inspired artwork, hear festive singing, and smell the delicious aroma of traditional holiday foods. The ECP observes the major Jewish holidays. Check the yearly calendar for all holiday closures and observations. A reminder will be sent. On holidays, the ECP may be either closed, operating on shortened hours, or open only to families previously registered for the Holiday Package days. For a complete schedule, please see the ECP annual calendar posted as a link under Early Childhood Program at www.shalomaustin.org, in hard copy form from the ECP Front Office, or as an addendum to this Parent Handbook.

Summer at ECP

Because our program is year-round, children in the Infant-Threes programs will stay with their class and enjoy extra summer activities. Summer at the ECP is a fun, **faster-paced day** with splash times, enrichment activities, and scheduled adventures. Be prepared for lots of fun during dress-up days! We welcome parents to also come in costume in support of the team-building theme when dropping off or picking-up children from the ECP! In the past, these have included Western Day, Decades Day, Crazy Sock, and Hat Day.

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 JCamps (Summer Camp), Kids Connection (afterschool program), enrichment programs, 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 continue with your membership, you must notify the Shalom Austin Membership Department with at least 30 days' notice before the next billing date. If your child plans to attend JCamps, or Kids Connection, it is important to remember that you must maintain your Shalom Austin Family Membership.

Food Policies

Food Guidelines

For information about birthday celebration food please see Birthday Policies under Additional Policies and Information.

Before mealtimes, each child must wash their hands before 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 items cold until lunch time. When sending warm foods, please send them in a container such as a thermos that will keep the food warm.

Food to be Shared: During class celebrations, cooking, and potluck meals, only factory-sealed foods with ingredients listed or fresh fruits and vegetables may be brought to the ECP. If the class has a student with an allergy, teachers take precautions so that shared food does not contain this allergen. Parents will be informed of any food restrictions.

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 the classrooms. 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 health. We encourage you to send fresh vegetables, fruit, and nutrient-dense meals. We have wonderful vegetarian lunch ideas available on our "Lunch Ideas" flyer. We discourage sending foods high in added sugar in lunches. **Additionally, we offer a catered lunch option from L&L Catering – a company dedicated to offering healthy alternatives for parents needing a viable Monday-Thursday option.** You may choose this through your online Camp Minder account as an option. The monthly catering menu is available on the ECP website. Catered lunches are available for an additional charge. You may inquire at the ECP Front Office for further information.

In the event that a child who is not signed up for catered meals is sent to school without a lunch, their family will be called. If a meal cannot be dropped off for the child before lunchtime, then the ECP will provide a nutritious lunch.

Liquids and foods hotter than 110 degrees are kept out of the reach of children.

For more information about nutrition, visit www.myplate.org.

Snack

Parents must send in a nutritious snack for the morning, and if your child attends the extended day program, another snack for the afternoon. Parents of infants are asked to provide a mid-morning snack for their child. **Please remember to note any food allergies on your child's online enrollment and in Brightwheel.**

Infants/Toddlers: Bottles & Breastfeeding

Educators and parents work together to transition infants from bottles to cups. Infants unable to hold their own bottle are held by caregivers for bottle feeding. No bottles are allowed in a crib or are propped at any time.

Parents may come to breastfeed their infants in the classroom, in a nearby seating area, or an empty administration office (upon request). Breastmilk 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. Once a bottle is offered to a child, staff must discard any leftover milk 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 Policies

Daily Health Checks

Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events.

Allergies

Per State Licensing regulations, all children's allergies must be posted in each classroom. Educators and staff work with families who have children with a variety of allergies. Staff are trained bi-annually in allergy management, CPR, first-aid, and anaphylaxis. We practice with Epi-pens and Auvi-q during these trainings.

Illness Policy

The ECP has established guidelines in accordance with state childcare law and other best practices concerning sick children. In case of a communicable disease or condition, the ECP will send out a notice to the classroom affected, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

If Your Child Becomes Ill While at School

If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children, but with a familiar caregiver. If a child exhibits becomes too ill to be at school, staff will contact a parent to schedule immediate pick-up (**30 minutes maximum**). Please see the list in the "ILLNESSES" section below for the symptoms we look for before sending a child home.

Please arrive as soon as possible because your child is not feeling well. It is important to ensure that you have at least one local emergency pick-up contact if 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, by email, or in person. An anonymous illness notice will be posted for the benefit of the other parents with children attending the ECP, as well as for the benefit of our staff.

Illnesses

You know your child better than anyone. If your child has a loss of appetite, or shows unusual signs of listlessness, irritability, or fatigue, your child may have come down with an illness and should be kept at home. Many illnesses are contagious. Please keep your child at home and do not send them to school 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 can participate in 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 99.4 degrees or greater, rectal temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, or armpit temperature of 99.4 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 illness or disease, including, but not limited to: chicken pox, bacterial or viral gastroenteritis, hand/foot/mouth disease, mumps, measles, meningitis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, fifth disease, 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 can participate in ECP activities, please allow them to recuperate at home.
 - **The child must be in antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school if they have been diagnosed with a communicable illness or disease.**

In these cases, please give a doctor's release note to ECP administrators upon your child's return.

The next few pages contain a chart relaying more information on these communicable illnesses.

Communicable

Illnesses

This chart is not an exhaustive list of the communicable diseases and policies for exclusion from childcare. For more information, please contact a member of the ECP Administration team.

Illness	Contagious?	Symptoms	When to return to childcare or school
Chickenpox	Yes – spread by direct contact with fluid inside blisters or with droplets from mouth or nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Red, itchy rash on body – changes from bumps to blisters to scabs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician and plan treatment. • Tell the school and playmate's parents if your is diagnosed. • Provide a doctor's note upon return to school. • Children who have not yet had chickenpox should receive a shot (vaccine) to protect them from the disease.
Colds	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny nose • Scratchy throat • Cough <p>NOTE: These symptoms may also be caused by allergies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child may go to childcare with minor cold symptoms. • If symptoms are worse than you might expect with a common cold, schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician. • Call right away if your child is not acting normally, has a fever or has any trouble breathing.
Fever	Depends on cause	Temperature over 100.3F	Keep your child home until there is no fever without using medicines for 24 hours.
Flu	Yes – spread by contact with droplets from eyes, mouth or nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Chills • Cold symptoms • Body aches • Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician for diagnosis. • Keep your child home until there is no fever without using medicines for 24 hours and symptoms subside. This is usually for 5 to 7 days. • Provide a doctor's note upon return. • NOTE: Children with chronic health problems should have a flu shot each year.
Impetigo	Yes – spread by direct contact or by droplets from mouth or nose	Red, oozing, blister-like rash on body or face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician. • Keep your child home until their doctor says it is OK to return to school. Provide a doctor's note upon return.
Middle ear infections	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear pain • Fever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your child's pediatrician. • Start medication if necessary. Your child may attend school if comfort level allows.

Illness	Contagious?	• Symptoms	• When to return to childcare or school
MRSA	Yes – spread from person to person by hand contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling • Drainage • Fever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give antibiotics if advised by your child's doctor. • Provide a doctor's note upon return. • For open sores, keep covered until no more drainage. • No close contact sports until all sites are healed.
Pinkeye	Yes – spread by bacteria or virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery eyes • Itchy eyes • Redness in whites of eyes • Puffy eyelids • Drainage from eyes <p>• NOTE: These symptoms may also be caused by allergies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat your child's pinkeye as advised by his doctor. This may include antibiotics. • Provide a doctor's note upon return.
Respiratory Viruses including COVID-19	Yes – spread by contact with droplets from eyes, mouth or nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cold symptoms • Body aches <p>Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician for diagnosis. • Keep your child home until there is no fever without using medicines for 24 hours and symptoms subside. This is usually for 5 to 7 days. • Provide a doctor's note upon return.
Ringworm	<p>Yes – spread by direct contact.</p> <p>Ringworm can affect the skin or scalp.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin – pink, raised patches and mild itching • Scalp – flaky or crusty patches, and hair loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat your child's skin or scalp as advised by his doctor. • For skin - keep patches covered with a bandage. • For scalp - teach your child not to share hats, brushes, combs, clothing or linens. • Provide a doctor's note upon return to school.

Illness	Contagious?	• Symptoms	• When to return to childcare or school
Scabies and lice	Yes – spread by direct contact. Scabies affects the skin; lice affect the scalp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching Scratching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat your child’s skin or scalp right away as advised by his doctor. • For scabies - keep your child home until treatment is started. Return with a note from the doctor. • For lice - keep your child home until all live lice are gone. Check your child’s head for lice for 7 to 10 days. Re-treat, as needed. Return with a note from the doctor. <p>Teach your child not to share hats, brushes, combs, clothing or linens.</p>
Strep throat or scarlet fever	Yes – spread by contact with droplets from mouth or nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat • Fever • Headache • Stomachache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your child to the doctor if he has these symptoms. • Keep your child home until he is free of fever and on antibiotics for 24 hours. Return with a note from the doctor.
Vomiting or diarrhea	Depends on cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomits more than once • Loose, runny stools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your child home until there is no fever without using medicines for 24 hours and symptoms subside. • For vomiting – also, keep your child home until they has not vomited for at least 24 hours. • For diarrhea – also, keep your child home until they has not had diarrhea for at least 24 hours. This includes children who wear diapers. • If diarrhea or vomiting occur often or occur with a fever, rash or general weakness, call your child’s doctor.

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. We must follow the dosage on the package for over-the-counter medications.
- If the package states that dosage must be prescribed by a doctor, we will need a doctor’s note to administer. If applicable, attach a 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.)
- If you want to stop the medication before the doctor's prescribed time, please notify the ECP Office by email.
- 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 medication's strength and 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

Prior to Starting School

Each year a new Health Record form and Immunization Record must be uploaded into your child's Brightwheel account prior to your child starting school. Please contact the office if you have an upcoming well-check appointment and need a short extension.

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. All Pre-K children will need to provide these results to the ECP via Brightwheel.

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 unacceptable and 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. See <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/> for the current national immunization schedule.

Chronic Health Conditions

For any child with health care needs such as allergies, asthma, or other chronic conditions (ex: seizures, G-Tube, etc.) that require specialized health services, a medical action plan must be completed. **The medical action plan must be updated annually and when changes to the plan are made by the child's parent or health care professional.** Blank medical action plans may be found by contacting the ECP at ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org. The medical action plan shall be signed by both the parent and the child's health care professional and must include the following:

1. A list of the child's diagnosis or diagnoses, including dietary, environmental, and applicable activity considerations
2. Contact information for the child's health care professional(s)

3. Medications to be administered on a scheduled basis; and
4. Medications to be administered on an emergency basis with symptoms, and instructions

Topical Creams and Sunscreen

Parents and guardians may give a the ECP a standing authorization for up to 12 months to apply over-the-counter topical ointments, topical teething ointment or gel, lotions, creams, and powders, such as sunscreen diapering creams, baby lotion, to their child, when needed.

Parents must sign the online form provided in Brightwheel must be completed before we can administer these medications.

Please apply sunscreen to your child 30 minutes before arriving at the center and dress them in hats/visors and tightly woven clothing to help prevent sunburn during outdoor play. ECP staff can reapply sunscreen in the afternoon before going outside if we have an up-to-date Sunscreen Permission Form on file.

Cleaning & Sanitation

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at the ECP. Each classroom has a “yucky bucket” for toys that have been contaminated with bodily fluids. Contaminated toys are washed, sanitized, and air-dried. Classrooms are professionally cleaned each evening, and toys and furniture are cleaned and sanitized regularly by educators. Children are taught how to clean after themselves in a developmentally appropriate manner. This may include putting away toys and classroom materials after play, helping educators wipe tables before and after meals, and disposing of trash and food scraps.

Hand Washing

Handwashing has long been established as one of the most important things to prevent the spread of illness.

In our school, hand washing requirements for staff are as follows:

1. Upon arrival at school
2. Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption
3. Before and after helping students use the bathroom
4. After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes
5. After handling an ill child
6. After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e., nose-wiping) and eating
7. After contact with animals

In our school, hand-washing requirements for children are as follows:

1. Upon arrival in the morning
2. After using the bathroom
3. Before and after eating food
4. Before and after sensory play
5. After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has handled soiled items
6. After blowing/wiping their nose
7. After contact with animals

The required method for handwashing is as follows:

1. Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap.
2. Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.
3. Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.
4. Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

Universal Precautions

The ECP follows universal precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV, hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to infection control measures that all health care workers and childcare providers follow to protect themselves and the children in their care from disease-producing microorganisms. The concept requires workers to treat all blood and various other bodily fluids as infected with HIV, hepatitis B virus, and other bloodborne pathogens. ECP staff follow the following universal precautions when encountering blood or bodily fluids:

1. Gloves are worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, open wounds, and handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Only approved latex or vinyl gloves are worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.
2. Hands and other skin areas are washed thoroughly if they contact blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
3. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV. Still, it is a body fluid, and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.
4. Staff must review information and procedures about universal precautions, HIV/HBV infections/transmissions, and handling of infectious waste annually.

Rest Time

All ages need time to rest their bodies during the day and are given a nap 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 wake up or are still awake after an hour of rest are allowed to participate in quiet activities on their mats (e.g.: reading books, listening quietly to music, completing puzzles, drawing, etc.). Children who fall asleep can continue napping until they awaken or the time approaches 2:15pm 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.”

Nap items: All bedding will be sent home on Fridays or as needed and parents must wash and return them on the next school day. All plastic mats are cleaned and disinfected by teachers.

Toilet Learning

High collaboration between you, your child, and your child’s educators makes for more successful toilet learning. Children learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them.

When your child shows an interest, you and your child’s teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning. We’re committed to working with your child consistently so that toilet learning

can be accomplished in a developmentally appropriate manner with minimum stress for you and your child.

Every child begins toilet learning at a different age and progresses at a different rate. We're always available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's progress. Several complete changes of clothes and two pairs of shoes should be kept at the center during toilet learning.

Food for Birthdays

Please see "Additional Policies and Info" section below.

Safety & Security Policies

Supervision

ECP staff assume responsibility for enrolled children when they enter the classroom or are escorted by a staff member onto the ECP property. All classrooms monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. "Name to Face" headcounts occur throughout the day, particularly when moving about the center at every threshold.

Accidents And Emergencies

The children are carefully supervised, 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, scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc.) and below the shoulders, an ECP staff member will administer appropriate first aid (ice, Band-Aid, etc.), and calm the child before taking them back to the classroom or playground. Known minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents via Brightwheel as an Incident. Parents are asked to respond to the Incident Report so that the ECP knows the report was seen. If there are any questions or concerns, please respond in Brightwheel and we will respond or call you.

If the minor injury is located above the shoulders, administrative staff will call 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 Incident Report through our Brightwheel app.

In an emergency, when the parent is unavailable, the child's emergency contact will be called. 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.

Emergency Procedures

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergencies. The ECP has an emergency response plan for fire, inclement weather, or if a lockdown becomes necessary. This plan is updated with the oversight of the Shalom Austin Security Director, Andy Dooher. These plans are reviewed annually with the staff. Additional precautions we take in the event of an emergency are:

1. Emergency phone numbers are posted by all phones.

2. The ECP keeps an emergency "go bag" in the main office with first aid supplies and emergency contact information for all students and staff.
3. Fire drills are practiced once each month, and shelter-in-place drills every three months to prepare children in the case of an emergency.
4. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.
5. Annual inspections by the Austin fire inspector and health department. If an emergency requires evacuation, we'll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

Safety and Security Policies

The ECP is at 7300 Hart Lane, Austin, Texas, 78731. It is owned and managed by the Dell 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. The current year's Shalom Austin sticker must be placed in your front windshield on the driver's 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, 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, please email andy.dooher@shalomaustin.org.

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

Park only in 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.

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

Signs have been installed in front of the ECP drop-off and pick-up areas, designating them as **"Phone-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.**

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, individuals approved for pick-up, and the children accompanying these adults. The doors accessing the 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 8:15 am - 8:45 am and from 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm ECP Administrative staff or other Shalom Austin staff may 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.

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 always kept together as a class unless accompanied by another administrator or educator. 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 – part-time, full-time, and volunteers.

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 online at 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 if the report is made in good faith. Identities are kept confidential. If you have reason to suspect abuse or doubts about whether 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 alternative people 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 email 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 18. 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.

Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

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. Email the ECP Front Office at 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 want to add this person permanently to your pick-up list, remember to either stop at the ECP Front Office to update your records or appropriately tell a member of the ECP Administrative Team.

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.

Volunteer/Ozrim Program

The ECP has created a volunteer program or *Ozrim* (Helpers) program, for anyone who would like to come and volunteer their time to the ECP. Members of the community, parents, or grandparents are all welcome. All volunteers will need to go through a background check before entering the classroom. For more information, please contact our Assistant Director, Sarah Panzer at sarah.panzer@shalomaustin.org.

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 7:30am and 5:30pm 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, Brightwheel. 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. 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 Brightwheel. 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.

Additional Policies & Information

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 in Brightwheel and 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.

Please **do not** provide any cakes or sweets, balloons, or party favors on your child's birthday. Options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, fresh fruit, fruit popsicles, or yogurt are always a great choice. Please be sure to provide enough for everyone in your child's classroom and check in with your child's teacher before the special day so they can share any tips and plan accordingly.

Allergy Alert:

Please be cognizant of classroom allergies before you bring food in, as **we cannot serve food that contains a current allergen in the classroom**. If you are uncertain of what foods are prohibited in your child's class, please speak with the teachers, you will also find a list inside each classroom.

- Any food sent in for a birthday, cooking, or shared food experience must be in a sealed container and store-bought so that the teacher can check all ingredients or must be a whole fruit or vegetable.
- Homemade food may not be sent in.
- The teacher may not serve any food sent in for a birthday, potluck, or other shared food experience unless ALL children in the class can participate.

Party Invitations: If you wish to distribute party invitations at school, please invite ALL the children in your child's class. We recognize that it is your family's choice, but we suggest that you not schedule your party on a Shabbat.

Clothing – A Messy Day Is A Great Day!

Your child's clothing should be comfortable, washable, and suitable for a daily routine, which includes both messy and active projects. Toilet accidents, spills, or messy play may occur during the day, so we ask that your child bring at least two complete changes of clothing, suitable to the season, to keep at school. 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 close-toed sneakers and shoes with non-slip soles are requested rather than sandals or flip-flops. **All clothing, including outer garments and footwear, 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 in cribs 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 until pick-up.**

Animals

Due to licensing requirements, ECP only incorporates fish into daily classroom experiences. When animals are 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.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

The ECP strives to make the transition from one classroom to another as smooth as possible. Children are assigned a class at the start of the new school year or when they enter the ECP. They will remain with that group of children and educators for the entire school year. Each class becomes a small family and the children benefit from the routines and continuity. At the end of the school year in early August, teachers will work together to help prepare the children for the upcoming change by visiting the older class, possibly going for a storytime or activity. Families are sent an email from the ECP and a welcome letter from their child's new teachers the third week of August and are invited to attend a Meet & Greet the day before the first day of school. We anticipate that some children may find the early days in their new class a bit difficult and may be more clingy to their parents at drop-off. Our teachers are very talented and will help parents and children transition. Quickly, all children will feel happy in their new class and begin bonding with their new teachers and friends.

Class Placement Process

Creating classes is a challenging task that takes a great deal of time and that we take very seriously each summer. The ECP collects data from parents, educators and supervisors. We utilize information gathered from the parents, teachers, and our faculty mentor. We look at your child's developmental and maturation levels. The first step is to divide children into age groups and program chosen, either core or extended day.

Inclusion

ECP supports families and children to the best of our ability, who may need additional accommodations to include home language, support special needs or differing abilities, or incorporate culture backgrounds. We partner with the child psychologists at Jewish Family Services (JFS) and will work with families to provide space and time for children to meet with their therapist (Speech, Occupational, Behavioral and Physical therapists) inside the classroom or in appropriate.

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

The ECP uses positive guidance methods in order to help children learn self-control and self-direction without loss of self-esteem. Educators encourage children to use words to solve problems with others. A balanced schedule of activities suited to your child's development, and a positive environment promotes cooperation. The ECP uses a variety of methods to encourage children's cooperation, including the clear statement of limits in positive terms, redirection, choices between acceptable behaviors, and positive reinforcement through praise and encouragement of good behavior. Teachers work closely with parents to understand each child and to determine which methods work best for them.

Discipline is based on an understanding of each child's individual needs and level of development. When correcting a child's behavior, the caregiver's response is individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. When a child repeats a challenging behavior, the ECP uses a variety of methods for encouraging cooperation. These include the positive methods described above, or conferencing with other staff, parents, or center administration. The ECP makes every effort to understand children's needs and modify classroom practices, so each child is successful. Staff members anticipate problems and plan to prevent them by maintaining an appropriate learning environment.

As stated in the DPRS licensing standards, there must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment. As such, the Child Development Center's guidelines entail the following:

1. Corporal punishment (see Compliant Procedures) or threats of corporal punishment is prohibited.
2. Children must not be shaken, bitten, hit, or have anything put in or on their mouth as punishment.

3. Children must not be humiliated, yelled at, or rejected.
4. Children must not be subjected to abusive or profane language.
5. Punishment must not be associated with food, naps, or toilet-training.
6. Bed-wetters must not be shamed or punished.
7. Staff may use brief, supervised separation from the group, if necessary, but staff must not place children in a locked room or in a dark room with the door closed.
8. Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out that is consistent with other childcare regulation requirements for methods of discipline and guidance.
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

Children with Challenging Behaviors

It is our goal to provide a safe, loving experience for all children in our care. We ask that families partner with ECP teachers and share any significant changes in family circumstances that might be challenging for their child. **Our goal is to always have ongoing and open collaboration with parents and ECP staff to share concerns and discuss strategies to help the children.** Our staff maintains the following research-based practices that have been shown to help mitigate challenging behaviors that affect the classroom and can hurt children and staff:

- **Quality relationships:** ECP staff develop nurturing relationships with the children and get to know each child and family individually. Staff members are provided with many opportunities for professional development to help learn ways to build quality relationships with the children.
- **Environmental influences on child's behaviors:** Children are given opportunities to work individually in both small and large groups. There are a variety of engaging activities available and appropriate behaviors are modeled by the teachers. The classroom and outdoor environments are set up to provide enriching, safe spaces that include places for a struggling child to have a calm space to go to. Staff are trained to be very aware of and willing to help when a child is feeling overwhelmed.
- **Targeted social-emotional supports:** Children have a daily routine that they follow which allows for freedom and the opportunity to meet their individual needs. Children learn early how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress. Adults discuss emotions/feelings through books and other work and teach strategies such as yoga to help children learn to calm themselves.

If an enrolled child exhibits behavior that compromise the safety and health of children and/or staff or disrupts the program to the extent that it fundamentally changes the nature of the program and expected services to children and families, the ECP will coordinate a meeting and follow-up meetings to encourage collaboration between the family and ECP staff. **The conversations in these meetings will focus on the program's objective of ensuring the health and safety of all children and teachers at the ECP.**

Example of behavior that might result in such a meeting being called include:

- Established pattern of physical behavior that hurts others, such as hitting, biting (older children), kicking, and/or throwing classroom furniture, equipment or materials.
- Established pattern of running, screaming or yelling in the classroom
- Established pattern of destroying program equipment and or materials

- Established pattern that prevents the teaching staff from implementing curriculum
- Established pattern of running away despite efforts of prevention

The purpose of the meeting will be for teachers and/or administrators to meet with parents and others involved in the care of or providing services to the child to share information and develop a plan to address the concerns. There will be ongoing conversations between the staff and the family, encouraging collaboration on strategies to address challenging behaviors and providing information about your child's progress in these areas.

Plans may include:

- Creating a behavior modification plan framed around the objectives of the class program and helping the child thrive at the ECP
- Recommending an observation by JFS psychologist with follow-up meetings for teachers and parents
- Recommending an evaluation
- Implementing recommendations from an evaluation or therapist
- Ongoing meetings between parents, school staff to provide updated feedback, strategies and support
- Moving to a different class or age group
- Modifying the classroom environment
- Specialized training for the teaching staff

Biting & Other Harmful Behaviors Policy

Children's behavior is complex, and emotions can be intense. Behavior is a form of communication and a way for children to get their needs met. Their social skills are evolving, and they are learning problem-solving, coping and self-control skills every day. They rely on parents, teachers, and other caregivers to help them learn how to express themselves in socially acceptable ways. They may not be able to control their actions associated with strong feelings or needs, so they may bite, hit, scratch, pull hair, throw things, push or have a tantrum. These are all common behaviors that are hurtful to others.

When a child hurts another person, it is best to stay calm, study the situation objectively, problem solve, and model appropriate behavior. Teachers and families working together is the best approach. Teachers are always monitoring and helping children learn how to play with others. Sometimes these incidents between children occur quickly and if the child doesn't call out, the incident may not be seen. The teacher will notify the parent of less serious injuries when the parent picks up the child. Harmful behaviors that increase in severity or frequency will be reported to the parents of the child that is hurting others and to the parents of the child who was hurt. The following biting policy will also inform how teachers and families work together to address other harmful behaviors.

Biting Policy for Toddlers and Twos Classes

Biting is a very common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Children biting other children is one of the most difficult behaviors to manage within group care settings. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and, understandably, provokes strong emotional responses in the child who bites, the child who is bitten, the rest of the children in the class, and the families and caregivers involved.

For most toddlers, biting behavior is a passing phase. Some toddlers may bite as a form of communication. They are in the process of learning appropriate social behavior. For other children, biting

can become a persistent and chronic behavior. This and other challenging behaviors may occur for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, developing language skills, stress or change in their environments, a need for emotional release, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If biting continues, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten.

When Biting Occurs:

Although biting is a fairly common behavior in children under the age of three, it is not socially acceptable behavior. Our role at the ECP is to keep children safe and help children who bite learn more appropriate behaviors. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt or frighten children.

When a biting incident occurs in which skin is broken or a significant bruise or mark occurs:

For the child that was bitten:

1. A staff member will immediately attend to the child who was bitten comforting them and applying first aid as needed. The bite will be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a band aid if needed.
2. Parents will be notified.
3. An incident report will be filled out on Brightwheel.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will calmly remove the child from the area, using simple words such as "biting hurts."
2. The teacher will talk with the child on a level which they can understand. "I can see that you want that truck, but I can't let you hurt your friend. Biting hurts."
3. A staff member will monitor the child carefully to prevent other attempts at biting or any other harmful behavior.
4. The child will be shadowed by a staff member who will monitor, supervise, and observe this child to determine possible causes of the behavior. Notes will be taken and filed in the behavior log.
5. **If the child bites twice in a day (where skin is broken or leaves a significant mark or bruise), the child's parents will be called to take their child home for the rest of the day.**

If Biting Continues:

Classroom staff will report all incidents to the administrative team on the day of the incident to review the context of the biting incident, whether adequate supervision was present, determine the cause and discuss preventative measures to be implemented immediately.

1. A conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how to partner so that the behavior may be modified.
2. A written action plan will be signed by the ECP staff and parents and will be shared with everyone providing care for the children involved (this may include support educators, babysitters, nannies, etc.), ensuring children are receiving consistent responses to their behaviors.
3. **If biting occurs three times in any week (5 school days), the child will need to take a break from school for two days.**
4. If the child continues to bite after returning to school, the child will need to take a break from school until a "shadow" can be provided by the school to stay with the child while they are at school. *This will be for a maximum of one month and will be at the expense of the parents.* During this period, parents will be asked to have their child evaluated by a licensed

developmental therapist (speech therapist, occupational therapist, child psychologist, etc.) to determine appropriate support for the child both at home and at school. Any reports from these evaluations should be shared with the school, in order to provide consistent supportive care for the child.

5. If the child continues to bite, and all parties are unable to come up with the needed support and solution for the problem, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the ECP.

Biting Policy for Threes and Pre-K classes:

Biting in the Preschool ages (Threes & Pre-K classrooms) is neither considered developmentally appropriate nor socially acceptable behavior.

When a biting incident occurs in which skin is broken or a significant bruise or mark occurs, the following steps are taken:

1. The child who bites will be calmly removed from the area, using simple language, such as “biting is never ok,” and taken under direct supervision by a staff member.
2. Caring attention will be focused on the child who was bitten, and first aid applied as needed.
3. The parents of both children will be contacted, an incident report will be filled out for the child who was bitten, and a behavior report for the child who bit in Brightwheel.
4. A conference may be scheduled with the parents to discuss the child’s behavior, offer resources and come up with a behavior plan to be enacted at home and at school.
5. **If the child bites again within the week, the child will need to take a break from school for two days.**
6. If when the child returns to school they continue to bite, they will need to take a break from school until they are formally evaluated by a licensed child therapist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, etc. All reports will be shared with the ECP staff.
7. In order for the child to be welcomed back to school, the ECP will, if possible, provide a person to “shadow” at the expense of the parents for a maximum of a month.
8. If the child continues to bite, and all parties are unable to come up with the needed support and solution for the problem, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the ECP.

***** Biting Confidentiality:** *In compliance with confidentiality guidelines, staff will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or bit another child.*

Excluding Children from Care

Every effort is made to mitigate issues of safety and disruption to the program for each and every child. If a child, despite efforts, continues to pose a direct safety or health risk to children or adults, or causes disruptions that would require regular one-to-one care for periods of time during care, the child in question may be excluded from care. If a child requires one-to-one care to participate in the program on an ongoing basis, parents may provide a personal assistant approved by the ECP, at their expense or arrange a personal assistant through a government program.

Exclusion from care may include:

- Being removed from the class for short amounts of time if a teacher or administrator is available. This may include the child taking a walk around the school, spending time in the office or hallway with an alternative activity.
- Being sent home for the remainder of the day if displayed behaviors are not manageable
- Withdrawing enrollment temporarily until a solution to mitigate risk and/or disruption can be

- implemented
- Withdrawing enrollment permanently

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 ECP. There may be times when a child may need 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 to express these emotions and needs pro-socially. We work to instill empathy in all 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 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.

The ECP partners with child psychologists from Jewish Family Services (JFS). These professionals observe in classrooms and offer strategies for teachers and parents. They may suggest further observations or evaluations. They have a referral list that will be shared with families.

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 choose 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 Brightwheel 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.
- A scheduled observation from a JFS Therapist may be requested for further observation. Then a

follow-up meeting with the parents, class educator(s), and the JFS therapist 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.

Family Involvement

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

Parents are viewed as partners in the educational process and are encouraged to actively participate in decisions affecting the care and education of the child. We 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)
- Going on class field trips
- Attending parent activities and ECP/Shalom Austin-sponsored workshops
- Participating in parent/educator conferences
- Attending Tot Shabbat and family programs
- 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 welcome visitors in our program. We ask parents to please contact the classroom teachers for optimal times to visit your child's classroom. Be aware that long visits may be difficult for your child when you leave.

ECP Parent Committee

The ECP supports an active Parent Committee (PC). All parents are invited to attend PC monthly meetings. We encourage parents to volunteer and take on leadership roles in the PC. Volunteer parents are actively involved in efforts which directly benefit the children. These include helping plan and facilitate Holiday celebrations, Family Fun Day and other fundraisers, Tzedakah projects, Teacher Appreciation, Scholastic Book Fair, and Room Parent duties. We encourage you to contribute your skills and talents to enrich our program and your child's school experience. PC events are wonderful ways to connect and establish relationships with other ECP families.

Parent Communication

The ECP encourages two-way communications. We utilize the **Brightwheel** App to communicate daily. Classroom teachers send a weekly lesson plan and a daily picture, communicate moods and observations, and an individualized comment about each child. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and check the App daily. Teachers are busy working with the children during the day, so there may be a delay in their response. If you have a time-sensitive question or message, the office will be happy to make sure the teacher gets the message. Please call us at (512) 735-8101 or send an email to ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org.

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.

Grandparent / Grandfriend Club

The ECP has an active Grandparent/Grandfriend Club that provides members diverse opportunities to participate with their grandchildren and amongst themselves and 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!

Family Resources

2024-2025 ECP Calendar

https://shalomaustin.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ECP_Calendars_2024-25-2.pdf

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 online at 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
<http://www.healthychildcaretexas.org/index.htm>

Snap Food Benefits

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps people buy the food they need for good health. People also can buy garden seeds with SNAP benefits.

<https://yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC, is a nutrition program for pregnant, breastfeeding women and families with children younger than 5.

<https://texaswic.org/about-wic>

Texas Child Care

Published by the Texas Workforce Commission

<http://www.childcarequarterly.com/>

Health Benefit:

<https://www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/benefits>

Additional Parent Resources

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) <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).

<http://nrckids.org/>

American Academy of Pediatrics

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

Handbook for Public Playground Safety

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) <http://cpsc.gov/>

National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)

School of Health, Physical Education & Leisure (HPELS), WRC 205 University of Northern Iowa
<http://www.uni.edu/playground>

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

Nutrition Education

<https://www.freshbaby.com/wp-content/uploads/2022-Pack-A-MyPlate-Lunch.pdf>

<https://www.superkidsnutrition.com/recipes-kids-meal-plans/meal-plans-by-age/>

https://www.marybridge.org/file_viewer.php?id=602&title=Feeding+Toddlers+and+Preschoolers

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/kids-healthy-eating-plate/>

Screen Time

<https://learningworksforkids.com/play-diet/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx

Oral Health

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/oral-health/article/oral-health-resources-families>

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/oral-health/oral-health-resources-for-families/>

Breastfeeding:

Local Support resource: <https://www.texasll.org/group-austin/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm>

<https://www.babylist.com/hello-baby/best-online-breastfeeding-resources>

<https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-life-stage/breastfeeding>

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning-breastfeed/finding-breastfeeding-support-and-information>

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 branches: Jewish Federation, Dell 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 Family Handbook. Our doors are always open!