



SHALOM AUSTIN 
Zeifman Family
Early Childhood Program



Family Handbook

Revised August, 2025

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

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The ECP, located on the beautiful 40-acre Dell Jewish Community Campus, is part of the vibrant Shalom Austin community. Shalom Austin, an umbrella organization, includes four branches: Jewish Federation, Jewish Community Center-JCC, Jewish Family Services, and the Jewish Foundation. Together, Shalom Austin supports families through education, wellness, culture, and connection—guided by core Jewish values: Kehillah (Community), Limmud (Learning and Jewish Culture), Tikkun Olam (Improving our World), Tzedakah (Pursuing justice through philanthropic giving), and K'lal Yisrael (Unity of the Jewish People).

Letter from Shalom Austin Zeifman Family ECP Senior Director

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing the Shalom Austin Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program (ECP). On behalf of the entire ECP faculty and staff, I'd like to welcome our new and returning families. We are excited about the 2025-2026 school year. We know it is going to be a terrific year!

Early childhood education is so much more than learning colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. It is also about developing social skills, emotional intelligence, physical coordination, and so much more. The ECP works intentionally to provide a safe and nurturing environment where your children can explore, play, learn, and develop in their own way.

We are incredibly proud that earlier this year we were awarded a 4-Star rating by the [Texas Rising Star program](#). This top score indicates that the ECP is a safe, dynamic, nurturing, well-run, quality early childhood educational program, and we work diligently every day to maintain this 4-Star status. In addition, the ECP is fully licensed by [Texas Child Care Licensing](#), a division of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. This licensure ensures that the ECP meets strict guidelines for safety, cleanliness, educator-to-student ratios, and staff qualifications.

Our aim is to partner with you to ensure your children have an enriching, safe, and successful early educational experience. Each family that enters the ECP becomes part of our family. We are committed to supporting you in raising healthy, happy, resilient, and secure children who will be successful in school and in life.

This Family Handbook outlines our program, curriculum, and policies. There is a lot of important information to consider. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate 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 of working together and watching your children blossom.

L'Shalom (in Peace),

Dana Baruch

Shalom Austin Zeifman Family ECP Senior Director

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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.



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Letter from Shalom Austin Zeifman Family ECP Senior Director</i> | 2 |
| About Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program (ECP) | 6 |
| <i>Our Philosophy</i> | 6 |
| <i>Core ECP Values</i> | 6 |
| <i>Curriculum</i> | 6 |
| <i>Holidays at the ECP</i> | 7 |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Summer at ECP</i> | 7 |
| ECP Age-Level Programs | 8 |
| Infant Program..... | 8 |
| Toddler Program | 9 |
| Two-Year-Old Program | 10 |
| Pre-Kindergarten Program | 12 |
| Licensing and Affiliations | 13 |
| <i>Licensing</i> | 13 |
| <i>Affiliation</i> | 13 |
| Enrollment Information | 14 |
| <i>Initial Registration Information</i> | 14 |
| <i>Pre-Registration</i> | 14 |
| <i>Tuition/Billing Options</i> | 14 |
| <i>AJASiblingCareforAllAges</i> | 15 |
| <i>Enrollment Fees</i> | 15 |
| Holiday Package Days | 16 |
| <i>Shalom Austin Billing Information</i> | 17 |
| <i>Billing & Financial Assistance</i> | 17 |
| Payment Options..... | 17 |
| Managing Your Account..... | 17 |
| Financial Assistance | 17 |
| <i>Late Fees & Returned Payments</i> | 17 |
| <i>Withdrawal Policy</i> | 17 |
| Administrative Policies..... | 19 |
| <i>Classroom Placement Process</i> | 19 |
| <i>Sign-In / Sign-Out Procedures</i> | 20 |
| <i>Non-Member Pick-Up Passes</i> | 21 |
| <i>Arrival & Departure</i> | 21 |
| <i>Attendance</i> | 21 |
| <i>Child Assessments & Parent-Teacher Conferences</i> | 22 |
| <i>Communication to/from the school</i> | 22 |
| <i>Food Policy</i> | 23 |
| General Guidelines | 23 |
| Shared Food | 23 |
| Hamotzi Blessing | 23 |
| Lunches..... | 23 |
| Snacks: | 23 |
| Infants & Toddlers:..... | 24 |
| <i>Health Policies</i> | 24 |
| Daily Health Checks..... | 24 |
| Allergies | 24 |
| Illness Policy | 24 |

| | |
|--|----|
| When to Keep Your Child Home | 25 |
| <i>Medications</i> | 25 |
| <i>Immunizations & Screenings</i> | 26 |
| <i>Chronic Health Conditions</i> | 26 |
| <i>Cleaning & Sanitation</i> | 26 |
| <i>Handwashing</i> | 26 |
| <i>Universal Precautions</i> | 27 |
| <i>Rest Time</i> | 27 |
| <i>Safety & Security Policies</i> | 31 |
| Supervision | 31 |
| Accidents & Emergencies | 31 |
| Emergency Preparedness | 31 |
| Campus Safety..... | 32 |
| Parking & Drop-Off Safety | 32 |
| Children’s Security | 32 |
| Reporting Abuse or Neglect..... | 32 |
| <i>Visitor Policy</i> | 33 |
| <i>Volunteer Program (Ozrim)</i> | 33 |
| <i>Fire & Severe Weather Safety</i> | 33 |
| <i>Playground Use</i> | 33 |
| <i>Inclement Weather & Closures</i> | 33 |
| <i>Field Trips</i> | 34 |
| <i>Birthday Celebrations</i> | 34 |
| <i>Clothing – A Messy Day Is A Great Day!</i> | 34 |
| <i>Toys from Home</i> | 34 |
| <i>Animals</i> | 35 |
| <i>Transitioning to a New Classroom</i> | 35 |
| <i>Inclusion</i> | 35 |
| <i>Positive Guidance Approach</i> | 36 |
| <i>Challenging Behaviors</i> | 36 |
| Our Approach Includes: | 36 |
| Behaviors That May Prompt a Meeting: | 37 |
| Support Plans May Include: | 37 |
| <i>Biting & Other Harmful Behaviors</i> | 37 |
| When Harmful Behavior Occurs: | 37 |
| Biting Policy (Toddlers & Twos) | 37 |
| If Biting Continues: | 38 |
| Biting Policy (Threes & Pre-K): | 38 |
| <i>Excluding Children from Care</i> | 39 |
| <i>Guidance & Behavior Support</i> | 39 |
| Our Approach:..... | 39 |
| <i>Collaboration with Families</i> | 39 |
| <i>Suspension & Expulsion Policy</i> | 40 |
| <i>Family Involvement</i> | 40 |
| ECP Parent Organization: | 41 |
| Parent Communication | 41 |
| Parenting Support & Adult Learning | 41 |
| Grandparent / Grand-Friend Club | 42 |
| <i>Family/Guardian Rights & Responsibilities</i> | 42 |
| Family Resources..... | 43 |
| <i>2025-2026 ECP Calendar</i> | 43 |
| <i>Licensing Policies and Minimum Standards</i> | 43 |
| <i>State of Texas Parent Resources</i> | 43 |
| <i>Additional Parent Resources</i> | 43 |

About Zeifman Family Early Childhood Program (ECP)

The ECP provides an outstanding early childhood educational experience that emphasizes Jewish life and values in a caring, developmentally appropriate, and stimulating environment. In partnership with our families, our goal is to maintain a strong educational foundation that encourages a lifelong love of learning.

Our Philosophy

We believe children are capable, curious learners who thrive in environments that encourage exploration, creativity, and connection. Play is their work. Our educators create dynamic, sensory-rich classrooms that support:

- Social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development
- Independence, creativity, and individual strengths
- Learning through play—children’s natural way of understanding the world
- A meaningful connection to Judaism and its traditions
- Lifelong friendships and community building

Educators are committed to ongoing professional development and collaboration with families to ensure a meaningful experience for every child.

Core ECP Values

- **Tzedakah** – Giving to those in need
 - **Tikkun Olam** – Caring for the world
 - **Mishpacha** – Love of family
 - **Shalom** – Peace
 - **Shalom Bayit** – Peace in the home and classroom
 - **Bal Tashchit** – Protecting resources
 - **Hachnasat Orchim** – Welcoming guests
 - **Sever Panim Yafot** – Cheerfulness
 - **Kibbud Horim u Morim** – Honoring parents and teachers
 - **Derech Eretz** – Courtesy and respect
-

Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to support the whole child through:

- Play-based, hands-on learning
- Daily schedules that balance active and quiet time, group and individual activities
- Observations and assessments that guide planning
- Planning time for educators to collaborate on weekly lesson plans (shared via Brightwheel)
- Weekly lesson plans shared via Brightwheel
- Ongoing coaching and training for educators related to child development, planning and monitoring progress
- Positive guidance and redirection to build self-regulation and resilience

Jewish values are woven into daily activities through stories, discussions, and projects. Families are encouraged to extend these teachings at home.

Emergent Curriculum

ECP embraces an Emergent Curriculum—an approach rooted in child development theory that tailors learning to each classroom’s unique group of children and their interests. In an emergent curriculum learning environment, activities often evolve from children's questions and curiosity. These deeper dives into child-centered interests encourage the development of problem-solving, teamwork, and understanding of the "real world".

Teachers observe interests, assess developmental milestones, plan activities, and supply materials accordingly. The learning environments are thoughtfully designed to pique the children’s engagement, make meaningful choices and collaborate with one another. Research suggests when children engage in learning rooted in *their* interests, they are more likely to focus and develop essential executive functioning skills—key to school readiness and success. Technology is limited to age-appropriate usage and only supports intentional learning goals. Screen time is only used for curriculum-specific purposes, such as sharing videos of animals in the wild.

Judaic Curriculum

We celebrate Jewish life in a way that is inclusive and joyful for all families, including those who are not Jewish. We delight in sharing meaningful and joyful Jewish teachings and experiences throughout the year to inspire learning for the whole family, as well as our ECP staff. We explore the Jewish celebrations of Shabbat and other holidays and festivals. We welcome parents, grandparents, and extended family to be part of these joyful gatherings.

Holidays at the ECP

As a Jewish school, our holiday celebrations are limited to Jewish holidays and are celebrated with music, art, stories, and traditional foods.

- Check the **ECP Annual Calendar** for closures and special hours
- Holiday Package days are available for registered families for some of the days we are closed for holidays
- Calendars are available online, in print, and as an addendum to this handbook

Summer at ECP

Children enrolled in Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes programs enjoy a fun-filled summer with:

- Activity Pool (Twos)
- Activity Pool and Swim Skillz (Twos and Threes)
- Splash days (Infants and Toddlers)
- Enrichment activities

ECP Age-Level Programs

Infant Program

Nurturing Attachment and Early Exploration

Our Philosophy

Infants thrive through responsive care, sensory experiences, and secure relationships. At ECP, we:

- Prioritize warm, consistent interactions with caregivers
- Encourage sensory and motor development
- Foster curiosity and emotional security

Learning & Development

Infants explore their environment through movement, touch, sound, and social connection.

Developmental Goals:

- *Physical Development:* Rolling, crawling, sitting with support, grasping objects, beginning to stand
- *Language:* Responds to sounds and voices, babbles, begins to use simple words
- *Cognitive:* Explores with hands and mouth, tracks objects, notices cause and effect
- *Social-Emotional:* Forms bonds with caregivers, expresses needs through sounds and gestures
- *Sensory:* Reacts to textures, sounds, lights, and movement through active exploration

Learning Centers & Outdoor Play

- Age-appropriate toys and soft surfaces invite exploration
- Outdoor experiences promote fresh air, nature sounds, and sensory engagement
- Infants take buggy rides and spend time outside on our newly designed, age-appropriate playgrounds.
- Infants spend a minimum of 40 – 60 minutes daily engaged in outdoor activities.
- Judaic content includes weekly participation in Tot Shabbat and visits from our Judaic specialists who share songs and stories related to Jewish holidays and Israel

Group Time Learning: Becoming a community

- Gentle music, finger plays, and story time routines
- Daily tummy time, rhythm activities, and one-on-one interaction

Communication with Families

- **Brightwheel Updates:** Real-time logs of sleep patterns, feeding times and amounts, and diaper changes
- **Daily Summary:** Each family receives a snapshot of their child's activities, mood, and developmental highlights
- **Ongoing Access:** Families can message teachers directly and view photos through the Brightwheel app
- **Conferences & Check-ins:** Opportunities to connect and discuss developmental milestones and caregiving routines

Toddler Program

Supporting Mobility, Language, and Social Connection

Our Philosophy

Toddlers are energetic and eager to assert independence. At ECP, we:

- Encourage expressive language and emerging self-help skills
- Support emotional understanding through routine and play
- Provide diverse sensory and social experiences

Learning & Development:

Toddlers engage in movement-based learning, imaginative play, and exploratory activities.

Developmental Goals:

- *Self-Help:* Feeding with utensils, removing socks/shoes, helping with dressing
- *Health and Wellness:* Initial learning about healthy eating and staying well, including hand-washing
- *Language:* Uses simple phrases, follows basic instructions, begins to name emotions
- *Social-Emotional:* Seeks comfort, begins to share, expresses preferences
- *Cognitive:* Solves simple problems, recognizes objects, imitates actions
- *Motor Skills:* Walks, climbs, stacks blocks, turns pages, scribbles with crayons

Learning Centers & Outdoor Play

- Rotating centers include building, pretend play, music, and tactile materials.
- Outdoor play supports coordination, balance, and gross motor confidence.
- Toddlers spend a minimum of 60–90 minutes daily engaged in outdoor activities.
- Judaic content includes weekly participation in Tot Shabbat, baking challah, and visits from our Judaic specialists who share songs and stories related to Jewish holidays and Israel.

Group Time Learning

- Daily storytelling, movement songs, and circle games
- Opportunities for group snack, art, and play sensory play

Communication with Families

- Brightwheel daily written notes and photos about activities, naps, and social milestones.
- Semi-annual developmental assessment shared at parent-teacher conferences.
- Informal daily check-ins at drop-off and pick-up.

Two-Year-Old Program

Fostering Independence and Foundational Growth

Our Philosophy

Two-year-olds are rapidly developing autonomy and emerging social skills. At ECP, we guide this growth by:

- Encouraging independent choices and exploration
- Supporting self-help development in a secure, nurturing environment
- Building early communication through play, reading, and interaction

Learning & Development

Children engage in a balanced schedule of group and individual activities including stories, music, sensory experiences, and nature discovery.

Developmental Goals:

- *Self-Help*: Manipulating clothing, beginning toilet training, self-feeding.
- *Health and Wellness*: Learning about making healthy choices in eating, resting and hand-washing.
- *Language*: Asking/answering questions, 4–5-word sentences, expressing needs, repeating songs and rhymes
- *Social Skills*: Peer play, early sharing and cooperation, replacing physical behavior with words
- *Cognitive*: Pretend play, problem solving, object identification
- *Literacy*: Interest in books, turning pages, attention to stories
- *Fine Motor*: Grasping, puzzles (3–5 pieces), painting, stirring
- *Gross Motor*: Climbing, running, jumping, pedaling tricycles, catching/rolling balls

Learning Centers & Outdoor Play

- Sensory bins, art materials, natural items, dramatic play stations
- Outdoor time encourages running, pedaling, climbing, and exploring nature
- Two-year olds spend a minimum of 60–90 minutes daily engaged in outdoor activities.
- Judaic content includes weekly participation in Tot Shabbat, creating ritual objects, baking challah and other holiday-inspired foods, and visits from our Judaic specialists who share songs and stories related to Jewish holidays and Israel.

Group Time Learning

- Songs, stories, thematic discussions, large motor group games
- Cooking, gardening, and guest visits build community

Communication with Families

- Brightwheel daily written notes and photos about activities, naps, toilet learning
- Semi-annual developmental assessment shared at parent-teacher conferences
- Informal daily check-ins at drop-off and pick-up

Three-Year-Old Program

Building Confidence, Connection, and Readiness

Our Philosophy

Three-year-olds are becoming more socially aware and capable of self-expression and cooperation. At ECP, we:

- Promote independence with routines and responsibilities
- Foster emotional intelligence and peer relationships
- Support kindergarten readiness through creative learning

Learning & Development

Educators provide opportunities for storytelling, movement, group work, and expressive activities.

Developmental Goals:

- *Self-Help*: Bathroom independence, dressing, handwashing
- *Health and Wellness*: Talking about and making healthy choices in eating, resting and staying well.
- *Social-Emotional*: Empathy, cooperation, self-control, pride in accomplishments
- *Language*: Expressing emotions, recalling stories, describing events
- *Literacy*: Attention to stories, sound patterns, clear speech
- *Cognitive*: Time and size vocabulary, comparisons
- *Fine Motor*: Drawing shapes and people, cutting, puzzles (5–20 pieces)
- *Gross Motor*: Coordinated running, catching bounced balls, hopping, balance.

Learning Centers & Outdoor Play

- Centers encourage imagination, fine motor skills, and social play.
- Outdoor play supports whole-body movement and group dynamics.
- Three-year olds spend a minimum of 60–90 minutes daily engaged in outdoor activities.
- Judaic content includes weekly participation in Tot Shabbat, creating ritual objects, baking challah and other holiday-inspired foods, and visits from our Judaic specialists who share songs and stories related to Jewish holidays and Israel.

Group Time & Enrichment

- Cooking, gardening, collaborative art, and science exploration
- Themed activities and discussions deepen understanding.

Communication with Families

- Daily and Weekly Brightwheel updates with classroom happenings, developmental goals, and photos
- Regular check-ins to discuss transitions and emotional growth.
- Collaborative goal setting during parent-teacher conferences

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Preparing Curious Learners for the Next Big Step

Our Philosophy

Pre-K learners are ready for increased responsibility, academic challenge, and self-awareness. At ECP, we:

- Provide inquiry-rich experiences and emergent curriculum.
- Promote critical thinking and early academic foundations.
- Support emotional resilience and teamwork.

Learning & Development

Children engage their literacy, math, science, and social-emotional skills through guided projects and structured play.

Developmental Goals:

- *Self-Help*: Manages belongings, transitions with minimal help
- *Health and Wellness*: Discussing and making healthy choices regarding food, rest, and staying well.
- *Social-Emotional*: Friendship, perseverance, conflict resolution
- *Language & Literacy*: Letter recognition, storytelling, categorization, listening skills.
- *Mathematics*: Numbers, counting, patterns, measurements
- *Science & Inquiry*: Prediction, observation, nature exploration
- *Fine Motor*: Drawing with detail, writing name, tool use.
- *Gross Motor*: Hopping, skipping, throwing with aim, balance.

Learning Centers & Outdoor Play

- Writing, STEM, dramatic play, and math stations
- Outdoor activities support teamwork, coordination, and discovery.
- Pre-K children spend a minimum of 60–90 minutes daily engaged in outdoor activities.
- Judaic content includes weekly participation in Tot Shabbat, creating ritual objects, baking challah and other holiday-inspired foods, and visits from our Judaic specialists who share songs and stories related to Jewish holidays and Israel.

Group Time & Enrichment

- Calendar, storytelling, music, community visits, and field trips
- Themed projects and social interaction build school readiness.

Graduation & Beyond

Pre-K children graduate at the end of our Spring Semester. Unless they are repeating Pre-K, they will not spend the summer at the ECP. They are, however, eligible to attend the summer at Shalom Austin's highly acclaimed JCamps! We love seeing them around the campus and stopping for hugs and high fives.

Graduating from Pre-K is just the beginning! We love seeing your family stay connected through Shalom Austin programs like: JCamps (Summer Camp), Kids Connection (Afterschool), Enrichment classes, Special events

To continue participating, your **Shalom Austin Family Membership** must remain active. If you plan to cancel, please notify the Membership Department at least **30 days before the next billing date**.

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. ECP is incredibly proud to have received a 4-Star (top) certification by Texas Rising Star in March 2025.

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 Sr. Director and adjunct ACC professor, Dana Baruch. They are funded through the generosity of Shalom Austin and ACC. To date, we have had three cohorts, approximately 30 ECP teachers, complete their CDA through this program.



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.

Enrollment Information

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.

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 using 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.

Tuition/Billing Options

The ECP is a year-round program for all children in Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes programs. Children enrolled in the Pre-K program attend school until they graduate toward the end of May.

Tuition is calculated automatically during the online registration process and is 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 tuition and billing, please contact ECP Front Office at (512) 735-8100 ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org

For questions or information regarding financial assistance, please contact financialaid@shalomaustin.org.



SHALOM AUSTIN
Zeifman Family
Early Childhood Program

2025-2026 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 | - | \$2,152 |
| TODDLERS* (1 as of 9/1) | M-F | \$1,275 | \$1,789 |
| | MWF | \$896 | - |
| | T/TH | \$628 | - |
| TWOS* (2 as of 9/1) | M-F | \$1,185 | \$1,697 |
| THREES* (3 as of 9/1) | M-F | \$1,151 | \$1,610 |
| PK 4** (4 as of 9/1) | M-F | \$1,107 Aug. 21, 2025-May 24, 2026 (10 payments) | \$1,566 |

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 progra*

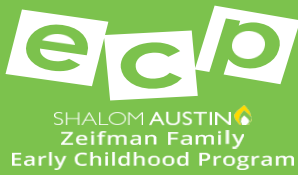
***Friday care is till 3:00pm matching the AJA Friday Schedule.**

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 8/1/25 - 7/1/26.

**PK program is a 10-months: August 21, 2025 – May 21, 2026; tuition changed monthly 8/1/25 - 5/1/26. During the summer of 2025 your child will be eligible to register for the incoming Kindergarten JCamp program



CAMP MINDER REGISTRATION PACKAGES and Billing Information

| 1-Click Options | Tuition | Parent Committee \$54 | Holiday Package Days | Pizza \$398 | Challah \$315 | T-Shirt \$18 | Hanukkah Candles* \$20 | Grandparents Club \$54 | Library Book Donation \$18 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ALL-IN tuition + fundraiser + holidays | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| THE FUNDRAISER tuition + fundraiser | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A LA CARTE tuition + you choose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |

* 1 dripless and 1 regular candle package

- **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 8, 14-15 & November 24 - 25

Winter: December 22 - 24 & January 19

Spring: March 16 - 20 & April 8 - 9

Daily Pricing

Core Day: \$96

Core + Extended: \$144

Holiday Package Enrollment Deadlines

October Package - Register by Sept 12th

November Package - Register by October 26th

December Package - Register by November 7th

January Package - Register by Dec 22nd

March Package - Register by Feb 11th

April Package - Register by March 11th

A \$25 fee will be added to each student that enrolls for Holiday Package days after the Deadlines listed above.


- **All-In Package** families are automatically enrolled.
- **A-la-carte and The Fundraiser** families may register later in CampMinder, if space allows.
- **Children not registered for HP days will not attend school on those dates.**
- **There is NO EARLY CARE during Holiday Package Day**

Shalom Austin Billing Information

Billing & Financial Assistance

Payment Options

- **Monthly Payments:** Automatically charged on the 1st business day of each month.
 - **Start Date:** August 1, 2025
 - **Schedule:** 10 payments for Pre-K, 12 payments for Infants–3's
- **Pay in Full:** Due August 1. Email janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org to arrange.

 **Note:** A 3% processing fee applies to credit card payments. Additional online payments reduce your balance.

Managing Your Account

- To update your card: Log in to Camp Minder → **Financial Management**
- Fundraisers and donations are charged at enrollment.
- **Pizza/Challah Fundraisers** are not included in:
 - Tuesday/Thursday All-In Programs
 - Infant All-In Programs

Financial Assistance

- **Questions or help:** Contact Janet Schreffler at janet.schreffler@shalomaustin.org
- **Financial Aid Deadline:** May 24, 2025
- **Additional Support: Hebrew Free Loan of Austin** offers interest-free loans up to \$10,000 hebrewfreeloanofaustin.org | (512) 677-4352

Late Fees & Returned Payments

- **After the 3rd** of the month: \$25 late fee
- **After the 10th:** Additional \$25 late fee

Shalom Austin Membership

- Membership is required for ECP enrollment.
- Set up payments via **Daxko**.
- To cancel, provide **30 days' written notice** before the next billing date.
- Memberships lapse after **60 days of non-payment** and will be canceled.

 Questions? Email membership@shalomaustin.org

Withdrawal Policy

- To withdraw, email **ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org**
- **30 days' written notice** is required prior to the next billing date.
- If notice is given less than 30 days in advance, the next month's tuition will be charged.
- **All payments, including August, are non-refundable.**

Membership Cancellation

- Membership must remain active while your child is enrolled.
- If you are withdrawing your child and choose to also cancel your Shalom Austin membership, you must contact the Membership department: Contact: (512) 735-8000 membership@shalomaustin.org

Hours of Operation

Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Program options include:

- **Core Day:** 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **Extended Day:** 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- **Early Care:** 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. (*you must pre-register; Early Care is not a drop-in option*)
- **AJA Sibling Care** (children with siblings attending AJA): 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. *Families may walk through the ECP to AJA 7:30–8:45 a.m. After 8:45 a.m. access is through the AJA main entrance.*
- **JCamps Sibling Care** (children with older siblings attending summer JCamps): 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Infants: Extended Day, year-round

Toddlers: Core or Extended Day, 2/3/5-day options

Twos, Threes & Pre-K: Core or Extended Day, Monday–Friday

Schedule changes must be approved by administration and are based on availability.

Arrival & Departure

- **Arrival:** 8:30–9:00 a.m.
 - Sign in daily
 - Share any updates about your child’s mood or routine.
 - Create a consistent goodbye routine to ease transitions.
- **Departure:**
 - **Core Day:** Pick up by 2:30 p.m.
 - **Extended Day:** Pick up by 5:30 p.m.
 - *Please say goodbye to the educator before leaving with your child*

Late Pick-Up Fees:

- After 2:45 p.m. (Core Day): \$35 + \$1/min
 - After 5:30 p.m. (Extended Day): \$35 + \$1/min
- We understand emergencies happen—thank you for helping us close on time.
-

Administrative Policies

Classroom Placement Process

Carefully creating intentionally curated classes each summer for the following year is one of the most challenging and important administrative tasks of the year.

- Children are assigned to classroom by age as of **September 1**.
- Placement considerations:
 - Program selected (Core, Extended Day)
 - Age (for Infants and Toddlers)
 - Class size and gender balance
 - Social, emotional, physical, and academic needs
- Educators and administrators collaborate across age groups to ensure thoughtful placement.

Parent Input

- Optional **Parent Input Form** is included in your registration confirmation.
- Deadline: **June 1**
- We do not accept placement requests via email or phone.
- While we value your input, **requests for specific teachers cannot be honored**.

📌 Placement notifications are sent the week before school begins

Getting Ready for School

Meet and Greet Wednesday August 20, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.: Before the school year begins, families are invited to a classroom **Meet & Greet** with teachers. This helps children and parents feel comfortable in their new environment.

Parent Back-To-School Night: A few weeks into the year, we host a **parent Back-to-School Night** where parents are invited to the first **Parent Organization gathering** and then to visit with teachers to learn more about the curriculum, developmental milestones, and how we support children through challenges.

First Day of School: Thursday August 21

We know the first day can bring big feelings—for children and parents! We're here to support a smooth transition:

- Share any concerns with us ahead of time.
- Keep a consistent drop-off and pick-up routine.
- Communicate daily with your child's educators.
- Use the **Brightwheel app** for updates, photos, and messages. Educators may respond later in the day as their focus is on the children.
- Call the office anytime for a check-in: **(512) 735-8101**

📄 Please bring all items listed on your child's **age-level supply list**, labeled with their name.



We use the Brightwheel App for:

- Messaging and communication
- Daily updates and photos
- Attendance and sign-in/out
- Accessing lesson plans and calendars
- Managing school documents

Account Setup

After enrollment, you will receive a link via email or text to create your Brightwheel account.

Updating Your Child's Profile

Please keep your child's profile current: Tap "Profile" in the app to make updates

- Address
- Allergies (also email the front office),
- Emergency contacts and approved pick-ups
- All students' files are kept current and updated regularly. For confidentiality, access is limited to staff, parents/guardians, and regulatory authorities upon request

Family vs. Approved Pick-Ups vs. Emergency Contacts

When adding **contacts**, you are given four options: **Parent**, **Family**, **Approved Pickup**, and **Emergency Contact**. Each one has slightly different functions and privileges. *An emergency contacts must also be listed as an **Approved Pickup** if you want them to pick up your child.* 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](#).

Viewing Lesson Plans & Calendar

- Tap the **Lightbulb icon** for lesson plans
- Tap the **Calendar icon** for events and closures

Sign-In / Sign-Out Procedures

State Licensing requires daily sign-in/out logs.

- Use your **4-digit Brightwheel PIN** to sign your child in and out.
- If your child leaves and returns the same day, sign them out and back in again.

Non-Member Pick-Up Passes

If a non-member (e.g., nanny, grandparent, friend) regularly picks up your child:

- Email ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org to request a **Non-Member Pass**
- This pass allows campus access for pick-up/drop-off only (not JCC facility use)

Arrival & Departure

Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Arrival Time: 8:30–9:00 a.m. (Core & Extended Day Programs)

- Please sign your child in and out daily using the **Brightwheel app**.
- Arriving by 9:00 a.m. helps your child fully participate in the day’s activities.
- Share any updates (e.g., sleep, mood, routine changes) with your child’s educator at drop-off.
- Create a consistent goodbye routine to support a smooth transition.

Pick-Up Times:

- **Core Day:** Pick up by 2:45 p.m.
- **Extended Day:** Pick up by 5:30 p.m.
- **Late Pick-Up Fees:** \$35 + \$1/min after designated times

If your child attends **enrichment classes**, an educator or enrichment program staff member will escort them and ensure proper sign-in/out. If you are picking up your child from enrichment, you must check them out in Brightwheel.

Attendance

Consistent attendance supports your child’s development and routine.

- Please aim to arrive between 8:30–9:00 a.m. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the children’s routine - both for your own child and that of the others in the classroom.
- Notify your educator or the front office via Brightwheel or email if your child will be absent: ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org
- While we understand families take time off for a variety of reasons, there are no tuition credits or refunds for any days missed.

Child Assessments & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Twice a year (Fall and Spring) we use a variety of assessment tools to track each child's growth and guide curriculum planning:

- **Infants–Twos:** Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) and developmental checklists
- **Threes & Pre-K:** Skills-based assessments focused on milestones and kindergarten readiness.

If concerns arise, teachers and administrators will meet with parents to discuss next steps. We may recommend outside support such as speech or occupational therapy, or consultation with a pediatrician or our JFS child therapist. Parents will receive the assessments to provide to the referral.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Held twice a year: **Fall & Spring**
- ECP is closed on these days, so teachers can meet with parents. Conferences are for adults, only.
- Additional conferences may be scheduled anytime.
- All students' files are kept current and updated regularly. For confidentiality, access is limited to staff, parents/guardians, and regulatory authorities upon request.

Communication to/from the school

We value and welcome open communication with families. Please reach out with any questions or concerns. Any significant or complex issues should be discussed in a scheduled conference, rather than at drop-off or pick-up times. There is a list of email addresses for all administrators on the first page of this handbook.

Daily/Weekly/Monthly Updates

- **Brightwheel:** Photos, messages, and activity logs
- **Mah Koreh Newsletter:** Monthly updates
- **Classroom Bulletin Boards:** Lesson plans and documentation

Contacting Teachers

- Use **Brightwheel** for non-urgent messages
- For time-sensitive matters, call the office: **(512) 735-8101**

Email Contacts

- **For Classroom Issues or questions**, contact teachers: firstname.lastname@shalomaustin.org
- **For school policies or administrative questions**, contact: ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org. Our office manager will forward your message to the administrator who can best answer your question.
- **The Senior Director, Assistant Director and supervisors** are also available to receive feedback and help resolve issues as they arise. For unresolved concerns, contact Rachel Stern, Shalom

Austin Executive Vice President and Chief Learning & Engagement Officer:

rachel.stern@shalomaustin.org

Food Policy

General Guidelines

- All children and staff must wash hands before meals.
- No food sharing is allowed due to allergy risks.
- All food and drinks from home should be labeled with your child's name and the date.
- Use cold packs or frozen drinks to keep lunches cool; use thermoses for warm foods. We do not have refrigerators or microwaves in the classrooms.

Shared Food

For class celebrations, cooking, or potlucks:

- Only factory-sealed items with ingredient labels or fresh fruits/vegetables are allowed.
- Teachers will inform families of any allergy-related restrictions.

Hamotzi Blessing

Before snack and lunch times, children recite the **Hamotzi** blessing together:

Hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.

We give thanks to G-d for bread. Our voices rise in song together, as our joyful prayer is said.

Baruch ata Adonoy, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz. Amen. B'tei Avon.

בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Lunches

- ECP is a **strictly dairy/pareve** facility. No meat or meat by-products are allowed.
- Please pack nutritious, balanced meals with fruits and vegetables.
- Please avoid foods high in added sugar.
- **Catered lunch** is available Monday–Thursday through Congregation Agudas Achim. Sign up via Camp Minder. Menus are posted on the ECP website.
- If a child arrives without lunch and no meal can be dropped off, ECP will provide a nutritious meal.

🔗 For healthy lunch ideas, see our [Parent Resources](#) page on our website

<https://shalomaustin.org/ecpparentresources/>

🔗 For nutrition tips, visit www.myplate.org

Snacks: Growing children require small, nutritious snacks between meals to keep them going.

- Please send a **morning snack** daily.

- If your child stays for extended care, send an **afternoon snack**, as well.
- Infant families should also send a **mid-morning snack**.
- Please update allergy information in Brightwheel.

Infants & Toddlers: Bottles & Breastfeeding

- Bottles are held by caregivers—never propped or placed in cribs.
- Parents may breastfeed in the classroom, nearby seating, or an office (upon request).
- Breastmilk must be labeled with name and date; stored up to 48 hours (24 if previously frozen).
- Formula must be factory-sealed and prepared per instructions.
- Bottles must be clean and labeled for each feeding.
- Solid foods or thickeners require a doctor's note.
- Leftover milk is discarded after one hour.
- No juice for infants under 6 months unless prescribed.
- Juice (100%) is limited to 4 oz/day.
- No cow's milk for children under 12 months.

Health Policies

Daily Health Checks

Each morning, educators conduct a quick health check to observe your child's:

- Mood and behavior
- Breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth

Please let us know about anything unusual (e.g., sleep, appetite, mood, or behavior changes) that may affect your child's day.

Allergies

- All allergies are posted in classrooms per state regulations.
- Staff are trained twice a year in allergy management, CPR, first aid, and anaphylaxis response.
- EpiPen and Auvi-Q practice is included in training.

Illness Policy

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. To protect all children and staff, please keep your child home if they are sick or showing signs of illness. If a communicable illness is reported, we will notify affected classrooms.

If Your Child Becomes Ill at School:

- We will make your child comfortable and contact you for immediate pick-up (within 30 minutes).
- Please ensure we have a local emergency, approved pick-up contacts in case you are unavailable.

- If your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness, notify the front office as soon as possible. We will send out an anonymous illness notice to the families in your child's class.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Keep your child home if they:

- Cannot comfortably participate in daily activities (including outdoor play)
- Require more care than staff can provide without compromising others' safety
- Show any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever: 99.4°F (oral/armpit) or 100.4°F (rectal) in the past 24 hours
 - Vomiting: 2+ episodes in 24 hours
 - Diarrhea: 2+ loose stools in 24 hours
 - Rash with fever, eye discharge, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, or unusual behavior
 - Diagnosed with a communicable illness (e.g., chickenpox, flu, Covid, strep, conjunctivitis, hand-foot-mouth, etc.)

Children must be symptom-free **without fever-reducing medication (Motrin or Acetaminophen)** for 24 hours before returning.

If antibiotics are prescribed, your child must be on them for **at least 24 hours** before returning to school.

A doctor's note may be required to return to school.

Medications

Only ECP administrators may administer medication and require:

- A signed **Medication Request Form**
- A doctor's prescription with dosage and instructions

Important Notes:

- Over-the-counter medications require a doctor's note if dosage is not listed by age.
- Parents will be contacted before any non-emergency medication is given.
- All medications must be in original packaging, labeled with your child's full name and date.
- Expiration date and manufacturer's instructions must be visible.
- Notify the office if you wish to stop a medication early.

Topical creams, sunscreen, and bug spray may be applied with a signed permission form.

Please apply sunscreen before arrival; staff will reapply in the afternoon if permission is on file.

Immunizations & Screenings

- All children must be **fully immunized** per Texas Department of Health guidelines.
- ECP does not accept immunization waivers or delayed schedules.
- Vision and hearing screenings are required for all Pre-K children.
- 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.

Upload updated health and immunization records to **Brightwheel** before the school year begins.

Contact the office if you need a short extension due to a scheduled well-check.

Chronic Health Conditions

Children with chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, allergies, seizures) must have a **Medical Action Plan** on file. This plan must be:

- Signed by a parent and healthcare provider.
- Updated annually or when changes occur.
- Include diagnosis, contact info, medications, and emergency instructions.

Request a blank form by emailing ecpadmin@shalomaustin.org.

Cleaning & Sanitation

- Toys contaminated with bodily fluids are placed in a “yucky bucket,” then sanitized and air-dried.
- Classrooms are professionally cleaned nightly.
- Educators regularly sanitize toys and furniture.
- Children help clean up in age-appropriate ways (e.g., wiping tables, putting away toys)

Handwashing

Handwashing is essential to prevent illness. Staff wash hands:

- Upon arrival
- Before/after handling food
- Before/after bathroom assistance
- After contact with bodily fluids or illness
- After personal care and eating
- After contact with animals

Universal Precautions

To protect children and staff from the spread of illness, ECP follows universal precautions as recommended by the CDC. These include:

- Wearing gloves when handling blood, bodily fluids, or soiled items
- Washing hands immediately after glove removal or contact with bodily fluids
- Using mouth-to-mask devices for resuscitation (available on-site)
- Annual staff training on infection control and safe handling of infectious waste

Rest Time

All children have a daily rest period after lunch. State Licensing regulations state:

- Children rest on mats in a quiet, darkened room for at least one hour.
- Those who don't sleep may engage in quiet activities on their mats.
- Naps may not exceed three hours and typically end by 2:15 p.m.
- Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- Please do not drop off or pick your child between 12pm – 2pm

Nap Items:

- Bedding is sent home on Fridays (or as needed) for washing.
- Mats are cleaned and disinfected regularly by classroom teachers.

Toilet Learning Best Practices

Toilet learning is an important milestone for all children to master. The age of readiness varies from child to child. Some children are very motivated and learn to use the toilet quickly, while others take more time. While a few children may be ready to begin toilet learning during their Toddler classroom year, toilet learning is one of the primary focus areas of the Twos program. Our goal is for every child to be well on their way to being comfortable using the toilet prior to moving into a Threes classroom.

Signs of Readiness:

- Your child is able to recognize their body's signal that they need to "go".
- Your child is able to communicate the need to use the bathroom.
- Your child is able to pull their pants/underpants up and down by themselves.
- Your child seems interested in using the toilet.
- Your child keeps their diaper dry for an extended time, e.g. wakes up dry from nap

Once your child is ready to start toilet learning, we ask that they start this process *first at home*, and then work together with the teachers to develop a plan for incorporating this process at school. Some children might display signs of readiness at home but might not yet at school. Please discuss the plan and mutually agree upon how to consistently address toilet learning at home and at school. *Make sure to maintain ongoing and open communication throughout this process.* While most Toddler classrooms do not start the toilet learning process until May, some might, depending on the readiness and/or interest of the children. Toilet learning is one of the primary areas of learning that will take place during the Two's year.

Toilet Learning Procedure

Most children will be at least 2 years of age when they show signs of readiness to begin the toilet learning process. During this early stage, it is important for children to feel the difference between diapers and underwear. Once you and your child's teachers have agreed "it's time", spend a weekend having your child experience being in underpants and using the toilet *very often* throughout the day. Diapers or pull-ups will still be used at sleep times. *If it goes well over the weekend and your child seems to be aware of their body's signals and is able to make it to the toilet on time*, then send them to school in underpants. Please do not send your child in underpants until you have had a prior conversation with your child's teachers. You will need to provide several changes of clothing (lots of underwear, pants/dresses, shirts, socks, shoes) for the inevitable accidents, along with diapers/pull-ups for nap. Keep in mind the activity level at school can distract children from responding to their body's urge to use the toilet, more so than at home. If it becomes clear that your child is not yet ready at school (i.e. having many accidents, particularly with bowel movements), the teachers may recommend giving the child a bit more time in diapers/pull-ups at school. We want children to feel successful, and the gift of additional time might be what's needed. Again, communication between parents and teachers is so important during this early stage of toilet learning. Unless there is a medical problem, almost all children will enter kindergarten confidently able to manage their toileting needs!

Proper Clothing

During toilet learning, please make sure to send plenty of clean "user friendly" clothes—at least three of each item:

- It is a requirement that underwear **must always** be worn under pants, shorts, or a skirt/dress. Bring lots of underwear at this stage!
- Soft, loose pants with an elastic waistband. This will help your child develop the necessary self-help skills and sense of independence they will need to successfully navigate this process.
- Remember to bring extra socks and an extra pair of shoes to be kept in the classroom in case they are needed. Waterproof/washable shoes like Crocs are recommended.

Required Supplies

The following items are to be left at the ECP and replaced as needed:

- 3-4 changes of clothing, including underwear and socks, and an extra pair of shoes
- Pull-ups or diapers—you will be notified when the supply is running low.

- 1 pack of extra wipes

During toilet learning, please avoid the following:

- Tight clothing
- Shirts that snap in the crotch
- Pants with snaps & zippers
- Overalls or bib type clothing
- Onesies, blue jeans, or overalls, etc.

**These suggestions will help your child navigate the necessary steps to make it to the bathroom, pull down their pull-ups/pants/underpants, and successfully use the toilet “on time.”

Please note that it is not permissible for teachers to wash out soiled clothing, per regulations set by the Center for Disease Control. They must put soiled clothing in a plastic bag for you to take home to wash at the end of the day.

***If your child has a significant accident in the classroom and the teachers are not able to adequately clean your child, we may ask that they be picked up and taken home for a bath. Your child may return to school once they are cleaned. This is a possibility during the toilet learning transition period, and we ask that you understand it is for the health and safety of the classroom and the other children in group care. For this reason, pull-ups or underwear must always be worn between bare skin and clothing.

Toilet Learning Schedule

Each day:

- Have your child sit on the toilet or potty first thing in the morning. If they do not urinate in the toilet, that is okay. What is important is the consistency of placing them on the toilet throughout the day. Let your child's teacher know when your child last used the toilet when you drop off in the morning.
- Look at the BrightWheel feed for detailed information on when and how frequently your child used the toilet at school.
- Teachers will share with you the times your child uses the bathroom at school. It will be helpful to use the same schedule at home.

For the first week, your child will be scheduled to use the toilet at consistent times throughout the day, whether they indicate the need to go to the bathroom. This schedule will be tailored to each child's needs. Each morning, please let the teacher know verbally and/or on BrightWheel if and at what time your child successfully urinated in the toilet.

***Accidents are bound to happen during the first few weeks of toilet learning, so make sure your child is prepared to cope with accidents. “Accidents happen. We’ll just clean up!”

Body Safety:

While all staff members are background checked through State of Texas Health and Human Services before working with our children, we also employ practices to ensure transparency for

the teachers and the protection of children in their care. We do our best to ensure children are not left alone with a teacher during toileting time. When children need to use the bathroom, the bathroom door will always remain open, and there will be at least one additional teacher in the classroom. If a child needs to use the bathroom during outside time, one of the teachers will bring a small group of children together inside to use the bathroom. This helps the class stay within proper and safe ratios, and it also ensures no child is left alone with only one adult. To help all children feel at ease, we will do our best to have both male and female teachers or administrative staff available to assist children with toileting.

Toilet learning is the perfect time to begin talking with your child about keeping their bodies safe. [Here](#) are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics to support you during around this delicate but important topic.

Finally, you might find [this article](#) helpful as you, your child, and their teachers navigate toilet learning together. Dr. Noah Schwartz of the Cleveland Clinic discusses how to assess why your child might be experiencing frequent accidents and/or regressions. Some of the reasons discussed include psychological factors, medical reasons, and developmental readiness. Dr. Schwartz also offers several strategies to help get your toilet learning child back on track.

Helpful Toilet Learning Readiness Checklist

Verbal Stages of Readiness

- Basic verbal skills: The child can speak in three-to-four-word sentences
- Stage 1 The child tells you they have a wet diaper and recognizes when they are wet.
- Stage 2 The child tells you they are wet and recognizes the sensation of being wet.
- Stage 3 The child tells you they need to go to use the toilet.

Physical and Psychological signs of readiness

- Stays dry for an extended period (the child can “hold” their urine and bowel movements)
- Can recognize when diaper is wet or soiled
- Has bowel movement at regular times (child chooses when to move its bowels)
- Adult can recognize when child is deliberately moving their bowels
- Can undress and pull up own pants (important self-help skill for child to master)
- Initiates interest in using the toilet and asks to wear underwear
- Wants to be independent, which is especially important for the learning process
- Is emotionally ready, cooperative, and open to learning
- Can follow three and four step instructions (go to bathroom, wipe, dress, wash hands)
- Can use consistent words or gestures to communicate.
- Can physically get to the potty and sit on it with some assistance
- Shows willingness to sit on the potty and understand its function

Toilet learning is a collaborative process between families and educators. We support each child’s readiness with:

- Consistent, positive encouragement
- Developmentally appropriate routines
- Open communication with families

Every child progresses at their own pace. We're here to support you and answer questions along the way.

Please keep several full changes of clothes and two pairs of shoes at school during this time.

Safety & Security Policies

Supervision

- Children are supervised from the moment they enter the classroom or are escorted onto ECP property.
- Attendance is monitored throughout the day using "Name-to-Face" headcounts, especially during transitions.

Accidents & Emergencies

- All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.
- Minor injuries (e.g., scrapes, bumps) are treated and reported via Brightwheel.
- For head injuries or more serious incidents, parents are contacted immediately.
- In emergencies, if parents cannot be reached, we will contact emergency contacts or the child's physician. EMS will be called if needed.

Emergency Preparedness

ECP follows a comprehensive emergency response plan, reviewed annually with staff and overseen by Shalom Austin Security.

Key procedures include:

- Emergency contact information posted by all phones
- Emergency "go bag" with first aid supplies
- Monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place drills
- Evacuation plans posted in each room
- Annual inspections by fire and health departments

If evacuation is necessary, children will be relocated to:

Northwest Hills United Methodist Church

7050 Village Center Dr., Austin, TX 78731
(512) 345-1743

Parent meet up point:

HEB Parking Lot

7015 Village Center Dr,
Austin, TX 78731

Campus Safety

- The ECP is located at 7300 Hart Lane and is part of the secured Shalom Austin campus.
- Entry is controlled by security guards and cameras.
- Families must display a current Shalom Austin sticker on their windshield.
- Doors remain locked during school hours; access is granted only to approved individuals.
- Staff use key fobs or request access via the back camera/doorbell.

Parking & Drop-Off Safety

- Drive slowly: **10 MPH speed limit**
- Park only in designated spaces—**no parking in fire zones or accessible parking spots without a permit**
- Drop-off/pick-up are **Phone-Free Times** to prevent distractions and ensure safety.

Children's Security

- Children stay with their class unless accompanied by staff.
- Children may only leave with a parent/guardian or someone authorized in writing.
- 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.
- In the event that neither you nor your authorized persons will be able to pick up your child:
 - 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.
 - 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 add them onto your Brightwheel profile.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect

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.

- All staff are mandated reporters, and as such, they are trained to recognize and report suspected abuse or neglect.
- Background checks and fingerprinting are required for all staff and volunteers.
- Daily health checks help identify and prevent concerns early.

Visitor Policy

We welcome parent visits to the classroom when they are not disruptive to the children's routine. Please contact your child's educator in advance to coordinate your visit.

Volunteer Program (Ozrim)

Parents, grandparents, and community members are invited to volunteer through our **Ozrim (Helpers)** program. All ozrim must pass a background check prior to entering the classrooms. For more information, please contact our Assistant Director, Sarah Panzer at sarah.panzer@shalomaustin.org.

Fire & Severe Weather Safety

- Fire drills are practiced monthly; shelter-in-place drills every three months.
- Educators follow strict procedures during drills and emergencies.
- If you are on campus during a drill, please follow staff instructions for safety.

Playground Use

- ECP playgrounds are for ECP students only during school hours (7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.).
- No food or drinks (except water) are allowed due to allergy concerns.
- Please avoid engaging educators in conversation while they supervise children.
- Other Shalom Austin playgrounds are open to families and allow food and drinks.

Inclement Weather & Closures

- ECP generally follows **AISD** for weather-related closures or delays.
- Notifications are sent via **Brightwheel** and posted on local news stations.
- Outdoor play is limited or cancelled when temperatures exceed 100°F, drop below 40°F, or during weather alerts.

Field Trips

- Threes and Pre-K classes may take field trips using the Shalom Austin bus.
 - Parents must sign a transportation release via **Brightwheel**.
-


Birthday Celebrations

We like to keep birthday celebrations simple and inclusive.

Allergy Alert:

Please be cognizant of classroom allergies. **We cannot serve food that contains a current allergen in the 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.
- No cakes, sweets, balloons, or party favors
- Healthy options like fruit, veggies, or whole-grain snacks are encouraged

 If you distribute party invitations at school, please invite all classmates.

We recommend avoiding parties on **Shabbat**.

Clothing – A Messy Day Is A Great Day!

Children should wear:

- Comfortable, washable clothes suitable for active, messy play and outdoor activities
- Weather-appropriate layers (e.g., jackets, hats, mittens)
- Sturdy, closed-toe shoes (no sandals or flip-flops)

Please send **two full changes of clothes** and label all items with your child's first and last names.

Avoid sending necklaces, which pose a choking hazard.

Toys from Home

- Toys should stay at home unless part of **Show-and-Share!** or used as a **comfort item** during nap time.
- Infants may not have comfort items in cribs per licensing rules.

- Weapon-like toys are not allowed and will be held by staff until pick-up.

Animals

Due to Licensing regulations, only **fish** are permitted in classrooms for daily interaction. Other animals (e.g., petting zoo visits) require advance notice to families.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

We work thoughtfully to ensure smooth transitions between classrooms:

- Children remain with the same group and teachers throughout the school year.
- In early August, children visit their new classroom for storytime or activities.
- Families receive a welcome email and letter from the new teachers in mid-August.
- A **Meet & Greet** is held the day before school starts.

We understand that transitions can be emotional. Our experienced educators are here to support both children and parents during this time. Most children adjust quickly and begin forming strong bonds with their new teachers and classmates.

Inclusion

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that supports:

- Home languages
- Cultural backgrounds
- Special needs and differing abilities

We partner with Jewish Family Services (JFS) and welcome therapists (e.g., speech, occupational, behavioral) to work with children on-site when appropriate.

To help us best support your child:

- Complete the “Getting to Know You” document from your teacher.
- Share any relevant information (e.g., allergies, medical needs, social/emotional considerations).
- Meet with ECP administrators if your child has specific needs.

Our goal is to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and successful.

Positive Guidance Approach

We use positive guidance to help children build self-control, confidence, and problem-solving skills. Our approach includes:

- Clear, age-appropriate expectations
- Redirection and offering choices
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Collaborative problem-solving with children

Educators work closely with families to understand each child's needs and tailor strategies accordingly.

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

- Corporal punishment (see Compliant Procedures) or threats of corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Children must not be shaken, bitten, hit, or have anything put in or on their mouth as punishment.
- Children must not be humiliated, yelled at, or rejected.
- Children must not be subjected to abusive or profane language.
- Punishment must not be associated with food, naps, or toilet-training.
- Bed-wetters must not be shamed or punished.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Discipline is always respectful, consistent, and focused on teaching—not punishing. Our goal is to guide children toward positive behavior while preserving their dignity and self-esteem.

Challenging Behaviors

At ECP, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment for all children. We value open communication and ask families to share any significant changes at home that may affect their child's behavior. Together, we can support your child's success.

Our Approach Includes:

- **Strong relationships:** Educators build trusting, individualized connections with each child and family.
- **Supportive environments:** Classrooms are designed with engaging activities and calm spaces for children who need a break.

- **Social-emotional learning:** Children follow consistent routines, learn to express emotions, and practice calming strategies like yoga and breathing.

If a child's behavior compromises the safety of others or significantly disrupts the classroom, we will schedule a meeting with the family to collaborate on a plan of support.

Behaviors That May Prompt a Meeting:

- Repeated physical aggression (e.g., hitting, biting, kicking)
- Throwing objects or furniture
- Persistent screaming or running away
- Destruction of classroom materials
- Disrupting the learning environment

Support Plans May Include:

- Teachers and managers have ongoing conversations with the family to discuss the particular challenge or concern of the child.
- We will collaborate with the family on strategies to address the challenging behaviors. Our discussions will be framed around the objective of health and safety.
- Observations by a JFS psychologist
- Referrals for evaluation or therapy
- Implementation of professional recommendations
- Classroom modifications or staff training
- Possible classroom or schedule adjustments
- During the process parents will be informed of their child's progress

Our goal is always to help each child thrive while maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all.

Biting & Other Harmful Behaviors

Young children are still learning how to express emotions and solve problems. Sometimes, this results in behaviors like biting, hitting, or throwing. These are common but hurtful behaviors, and we address them with calm, consistent guidance.

When Harmful Behavior Occurs:

- Teachers comfort the child who was hurt and apply first aid if needed.
- Parents of both children are notified.
- An incident report is completed in **Brightwheel**.
- Teachers observe patterns and work with families to understand triggers and support the child.

Biting Policy (Toddlers & Twos)

Biting is common in children under three and may be caused by:

- Teething, frustration, or boredom
- Stress or changes in routine
- A need for attention or emotional release

Our response includes:

We do not use punishment or shaming. Instead, we focus on teaching appropriate behavior and supporting emotional development.

For the child who was bitten:

1. Comfort and first aid are provided immediately.
2. Parents are notified.
3. An incident report is completed in Brightwheel.

For the child who bit:

1. Calm removal from the area with simple language (“Biting hurts.”)
2. Gentle conversation to help the child understand the impact.
3. Close monitoring and observation to identify triggers.
4. Behavior notes are recorded.
5. If biting occurs twice in one day (with broken skin or bruising), the child will be sent home.

If Biting Continues:

- Staff and administration review incidents and supervision.
- A family conference is held to create a written action plan.
- If biting occurs three times in one week, the child will take a two-day break from school.
- Continued biting may require a temporary shadow (at parent’s expense) and a formal evaluation.
- If biting persists and no solution is found, the child may be asked to withdraw.

Biting Policy (Threes & Pre-K):

Biting is not considered developmentally appropriate at this age.

Steps Taken:

1. The child is calmly removed and supervised.
2. First aid is provided to the child who was bitten.
3. Parents of both children are notified; reports are filed in Brightwheel.
4. A behavior plan may be created in collaboration with the family.
5. If biting occurs again within the week, the child will take a two-day break.
6. Continued biting requires formal evaluation and may include a temporary shadow.
7. If biting persists, withdrawal may be necessary.

 **Confidentiality:** Staff will maintain confidentiality for all children involved in biting incidents.

Excluding Children from Care

We make every effort to support children with challenging behaviors. However, if a child poses a consistent safety risk or requires ongoing one-on-one care, exclusion from care may be necessary.

Exclusion May Include:

- Temporary removal from class for calming
- Being sent home for the day
- Temporary withdrawal until a support plan is in place
- Permanent withdrawal if no solution can be found

Parents may provide a personal assistant (approved by ECP) or arrange support through a government program if ongoing one-on-one care is needed.

Guidance & Behavior Support

At ECP, we understand that young children are still learning how to manage emotions, solve problems, and interact with others. Our goal is to guide children toward positive behavior through empathy, consistency, and developmentally appropriate strategies.

Our Approach:

- **Redirection** and **positive reinforcement**
- **Problem-solving** and **modeling appropriate behavior**
- **No time-outs** — instead, children may take a break with a teacher or engage in a calming activity
- **Emotional literacy** — children are encouraged to express feelings and learn how their actions affect others

We use a three-step check-in process to help children build empathy:

1. Acknowledge the hurt or upset child
2. Ask, “Are you OK?” or “Do you need anything?”
3. Model a caring response: “I’ll try to be more careful.”

Collaboration with Families

We partner with Jewish Family Services (JFS) child psychologists to:

- Observe children in the classroom
- Offer strategies to teachers and families
- Recommend further evaluation or support if needed

If a child's behavior is consistently disruptive, we will:

1. Meet with parents to create a home-school support plan
2. If needed, consult with outside professionals for additional guidance
3. If recommended, request a 1:1 aide (at the family's expense) to support the child
4. If a family chooses not to pursue evaluation or support, we may assist in finding a more suitable program

Suspension & Expulsion Policy

We make every effort to support each child's success. However, in very rare cases, a child may be asked to leave the program if:

- The child's behavior poses a safety risk to others
- The child requires ongoing 1:1 support that cannot be provided within the classroom setting

Before Expulsion, the Following Steps Will Occur:

- Daily documentation of behavior concerns in Brightwheel
- Family meetings to discuss concerns and progress
- Observation by a JFS therapist (if needed)
- A written behavior plan with strategies for home and school
- Follow-up meetings to assess progress and adjust the plan
- Request for a parent-provided aide or therapist (if needed)


If, after all interventions, the child's needs cannot be met safely and effectively within the program, ECP administrators may recommend withdrawal.

Family Involvement

Parents are valued partners in their child's learning journey. We encourage you to get involved by:

- Volunteering in the classroom (reading, projects, music, etc.)
- Attending parent workshops and events
- Participating in conferences and Tot Shabbat
- Donating reusable materials or gently used books and toys

- Sharing feedback to help us grow

 Please coordinate with your child's teacher for the best time to visit. Keep in mind that long visits may be hard for some children when it's time to say goodbye.

ECP Parent Organization: 2025-2026 Co-Chairs are Shea Satterfield and Jessica Blumenthal

The Parent Organization is a great way to connect with other families and support the school. All parents are welcome to attend monthly meetings and volunteer for events like:

- Join any number of committees
- Holiday celebrations
- Family Fun Day (Annual Fundraiser)
- Teacher Appreciation Week in the Spring
- Fall Book Fair
- Spring Scholastic Book Fair
- Room Parent roles

Your time, talents, treasure and ideas are always welcome and very much appreciated! For more information, email Shea or Jessica at ecpchair.atx@gmail.com

Parent Communication

We believe in open, two-way communication.

We use the **Brightwheel app** to share:

- Daily updates and photos
- Weekly lesson plans
- Individualized notes and observations

Please check Brightwheel regularly. Teachers may not respond immediately during the day, but the office is always available for time-sensitive messages:

 (512) 735-8101 |  ECPAdmin@shalomaustin.org

Parenting Support & Adult Learning

Shalom Austin is here for your whole family. Whether you're new to Austin or looking to deepen your connection, we offer:

- Parent Life Educator: Rabbi Dan Ain (ple@shalomaustin.org)
- Family and Community Connector: Allison Granet (Allison.Granet@shalomaustin.org)
- Parenting classes and workshops

- Support for interfaith families
- Referrals through Jewish Family Services (JFS)
- Community events and affinity groups

💬 Questions or ideas? Contact ECP Sr. Director, Dana.Baruch@shalomaustin.org

Grandparent / Grand-Friend Club

Our Grandparent & Grand-Friend Club offers meaningful ways for extended family to get involved. Highlights include:

- Invited to Family Tot Shabbat and Breakfasts
- Classroom visits and storytelling
- Opportunities to share talents and traditions

We welcome Bubbies, Zaydes, aunts, uncles, and neighborhood “grand-friends” to be part of our ECP family.

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 of the Sr. Director
- Know that while at school, your child is 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 in your child 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, etc.
- 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.

Thank you for reviewing our Family Handbook. Our doors are always open!

Family Resources

2025-2026 ECP Calendar

<https://shalomaustin.org/ecp/#calendar>

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/>

Recall Information: 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>

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

<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.texaslll.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>