



Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center

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Hello!

We wish you a warm welcome to Temple Etz Chaim's Early Childhood Education and Infant Care Center. We offer one of Conejo Valley's largest, loveliest, and liveliest child care facilities. We like to think of Temple Etz Chaim as a place that children and adults consider their second home...a place where they are accepted and loved...a place where laughter and play are cherished...a place where children's rhythms are caught and given warm response.

We hold special pride in the center's professional, award-winning staff. Selected for their knowledge of child development as well as their strong interpersonal skills, they are the strength of our program. When visiting Temple Etz Chaim, please take time to listen, to watch, and to learn from this unique group. You will be enriched.

It is the role of all staff members to not only facilitate the learning of children, parents, and one another, but also to work as enablers to the important work of the parents at our outstanding Temple and early childhood education center. We are pleased to embrace these roles.

Debbie Blumenthal, ECE Director

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Philosophically Speaking

Childhood is a time like no other. It's a time for exploring... for creating... for discovering about oneself... for meeting the world... for learning how to learn... for being accepted "just the way I am". It's a time for blossoming and being cherished... a time for being allowed the time to be a child.

Our child care center administrator and teachers are committed to the belief that children "learn by doing". Play is highly valued as a learning medium because it is the work and language of your children. Since each child learns at his or her own pace, our staff will look to each child individually to determine the next stage of development. This "can do" approach is the basis of our philosophy. This viewpoint allows the children we serve to become confident and to enjoy successes in an atmosphere of respect, warmth and love.

A major emphasis is placed on instilling a positive Jewish identity in our children. We achieve this through a reinforcement of family values, music, holiday celebrations and traditions, and weekly Shabbat observance.

Time and again, research shows us that the main component of sound, quality child care is the trained, sensitive adult who is the caregiver. We carefully select staff trained in early childhood development who value, respect, and sensitively respond to the unique needs of children. We feel that children learn best with highly trained staff. The time that they are away from Mommy and Daddy must be a blossoming time. We respect parents as the most significant providers of care and nurturing. We are pleased to serve as extended family members. As such, we encourage parents and children to use our first names.

Some Background

Child care centers are special places. Centers become even more special when created to serve a unique population. So it is at Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center. Our Preschool Program provides services to families within our community who want to give their children a quality Jewish education and foundation that will enrich their lives. We offer half or full day schedules to meet the needs of our families. Our Infant Program, while not religious, provides child care services to those who want quality, nurturing care for their infants.

We are licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, and affiliated with the Bureau of Jewish Education. Our licenses is posted outside the school office and on the following page.

Our services stretch beyond child care to support the whole family. Families using the center receive daily written communications on their child's day, prompt attention to any concerns, and parent-teacher conferences at least once a year. Families gather during the year for social events and Jewish celebrations. Parent Support Teams and Room Parents are an important resource to the center. Each classroom prepares a newsletter monthly, providing an overview of the center activities, classroom activities and policy changes.

The center does not discriminate in the enrollment of children or selection of staff or volunteers upon the basis of race, color, creed, age, religion, sex, national origin, varying ability or status as a veteran.

No child may be in the program until the parent has submitted a completed registration packet, including health forms. Upon enrollment, parents must arrange an orientation with the director.

Families are encouraged to visit the center frequently before the day of admission, as the center staff and families begin building a collaborative relationship early.

Our Facility

The early childhood education center has been designed and built to meet the needs of children. The State of California Community Care Licensing monitors the safety of our children, families and staff members. Telephones are located for emergency contacts in areas in which children play and adults work. The center is cleaned by a maintenance service during the evening hours.

The large outdoor play spaces include a separate area for infants, toddlers and 2 year olds. Preschool and Geshet children enjoy three different play yards with contemporary play equipment, bike riding, and sand play. Indoors, there are ten classrooms, a lovely rotunda, full-service kitchen, laundry area and the school offices. Staff planning and work rooms are also available.

Temple Etz Chaim is specially designed to provide safe, stimulating and inviting play spaces. Some of the special areas are the Temple library, Art Room, Music room, and a large multi-purpose room. The four play yards provide sand, water, climbing, and tricycle riding experiences. The 10 classrooms are spacious, have individual thermostats, telephones, and natural light. Security personnel monitor the front of the school as well as the entire Temple. The full-service kitchen and staff workroom complete this center. Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center is licensed to care for 171 children at a time. In addition, Temple Etz Chaim Infant Center is licensed to care for 50 infants each day.

Preschool License Facility #561708073

Infant License Facility #566215054



Our Disciplinary Approach

Children at our center will not receive physical punishment. Children who have conflicts or problems with others while at our center will be encouraged to verbalize their feelings and concerns. Even toddlers without verbal skills will hear their teachers describing problems, solutions, and logical consequences. The role of the adult at this school is to be a helper to positive problem solving. Our staff members view discipline as guidance, not punishment.

We want children to value cooperation and teamwork. We help them to learn peaceful approaches as ways to get along.

Our spaces are set up with preventative measures in mind. Multiples of toys are provided. Verbalizing feelings, redirection and explaining to children what they may do are some of the techniques we use.

Children whose behavior endangers others will be supervised away from other children. The child will then process the problem with a staff member and any other concerned parties. Staff rarely use "time out" unless a child is emotionally out of control and needs private time to regain composure. Verbal processing is our preferred approach.

Discipline and guidance, will always be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is inappropriate. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal or physical abuse by an employee or by parents or any other person on the premises or during field trips. The outline below illustrates how we handle conflict resolution:

Step 1: TEACHER STOPS THE ACTION

Step 2: CHILDREN EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS AND PROBLEM(S)

Step 3: TEACHER CLARIFIES AND VALIDATES CHILDREN'S FEELINGS AND PROBLEM(S)

Step 4: CHILDREN MAKE A PLAN USING THEIR OWN LEVEL OF REASONING SKILLS (what to do in order to avoid the problem next time)

Step 5: TEACHER SUMMARIZES THE PLAN

Every employee of Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center understands and follows our disciplinary approach as well as the standards on guidance and management set forth by the State of California.

Separation from the Parent

The process of separation from the parent is one of the most crucial learning experiences of the school year. Knowing that each child will have a different time of adjustment depending on his/her age, previous experience with separation and individual reaction change, our separation policy will provide the opportunity for our students to become confident, competent and self-assured.

Establishing **TRUST** with the teachers enables children to become comfortable with the separation from their parents. We generally encourage parents to drop their child(ren) off and leave the classroom and yard. Our staff works with parents to formulate a strategy for a happy drop-off and the teachers comfort a child who is having difficulty in separating from the parents. Parents and teachers work

as partners. We allow parents to stay longer than 15 minutes for those children who need guidance during the morning transition.

It is important to let your child know that you are leaving and returning back to school. The staff will reassure the child that either Mom or Dad will return soon. Parents may bring a favorite toy or special item that is appropriate for the school environment. It will bring a bit of home to school and serve as a link. A picture of the family placed in a child's new lunch box or cubby will be helpful in making the separation process less difficult.

Generally speaking, most children pass through this phase quickly and become comfortable with being at school and separate happily from parents. With your help, your children are acquiring the skills they will use in many different separation experiences all through their lives.

Our Staff

We employ people who are mature, warm and nurturing, who understand child development, who can apply their knowledge in the classroom, and who respect each child as an individual. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents, colleagues, and volunteers.

We select our staff carefully in order to provide the best possible care and education for the children. The director has a degree in child development and a master's degree in psychology. She supervises the teaching staff and is available to parents by appointment. All staff must have a high school diploma and most have graduated from vocational school programs or universities with degrees or masters in early childhood. Each staff person has on file three references as well as Department of Justice record check, proof of a physical examination, vaccinations, and education transcripts.

Continuing education is an important part of working at Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center. Each staff person attends training in first aid, CPR, recognizing and preventing child abuse, child development and teaching methods and Jewish early childhood education.

Parent Involvement

We welcome parents to share their interests, talents, and occupations with the classes. Each classroom will survey parents to arrange time for exploring and sharing those talents and occupations.

Teachers meet with individual parents to review each child's progress throughout the year. Conferences may be scheduled at any time. Parents of our children receive daily written information about the day's activities.

Parents may serve as Room Parents or as part of the Center's Parent Support Team to help guarantee a setting designed to reflect the needs of today's families. Each month parents can meet with the Director to focus on programs, policies, staff appreciation, and fundraising.

Rosters of names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of parents attending the Center are available in the school office. The rosters will not include the name and telephone numbers of any parent or guardian who requests not to be included.

Social and educational events are held throughout the year to encourage interactions between staff and families.

If parents have concerns or need assistance with problems related to the early childhood center, they may discuss the issue, if applicable, with the staff involved. If they are not satisfied, they may discuss their concerns with the program director.

Parent surveys are completed at the end of each school year in order to measure satisfaction and to gain ideas for improvements.

Preschool Hours

Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays as noted on the preschool calendar. Note the calendar is flexible and subject to change.

Children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Time will be determined by the preschool clock. Late Fees will apply after 6:00 p.m. Late fees are charged \$1.00 per minute.

If no prior arrangements have been made, and if we have not heard from you by 6:00 p.m., we will call other personnel you have authorized to come and pick up your child.

Typical Daytime Schedule

Parents must always deliver the child directly to the teacher and sign in. At departure, the parent must inform staff that the child is leaving for the day and sign out.

Each child at Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center must be signed in and out by his/her parents on each day of attendance. California Administrative Code Title 22, Section 31233 states that: "The record shall include...names of persons authorized to take the child from the center" and "There is readily available a record of the daily attendance of each child enrolled showing the person who signed the child in and out". WE MUST COMPLY WITH THE MANDATE.

The daily schedule in each classroom may vary. The activities will alternate between quiet and active, free play, and total group experiences. Daily lesson plans are kept for each classroom. An example for a preschool classroom daily schedule is:

Opening (7:30 a.m.) to 8:45 a.m. - Arrival, warm greeting, free play with children and staff.

8:50 - 9:00 a.m. Arrival in regular classroom, warm greeting by teachers, free play at learning centers.

9:30 - 9:50 a.m. - Language, literacy, and music activities at group time with whole group

9:50- 10:00 a.m. - Use restroom, change diapers, wash hands, transition to snack time.

10:00- 10:10 a.m. - Snack Time

10:15- 10:45 a.m. - Outdoor play

10:45 - 11:20 a.m. - Free choice learning centers

11:20 - 11:30 a.m. - Use restroom, wash hands to prepare for lunch

11:30 - 12:00 p.m. - Lunch in classrooms

12:30 p.m. - Half Day Dismissal for Toddlers, Beginners, Intermediate and Geshar children on Half Day Schedule Option

3:00 Dismissal for School Day Option

12:00 -3:00 - Nap Room is open, soft music, back rubs, naptime

12:30 - 3:00 p.m. Afternoon Classes - Themed learning centers and activities. Includes afternoon snack time. Some departures at 3:00 p.m.

3:00 p.m. -6:00 p.m. - Includes outdoor play, free choice activities inside classroom and late afternoon snack time.

****Note: We charge \$1.00 per minute for late pick-ups after we close at 6:00 p.m.**

****Cost is \$15.00 per hour to "drop-in" for additional time between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.**

PRESCHOOL RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES

We are authorized to serve a licensed capacity of a total of **171** children in the Preschool and **50** in the Infant Center. This total includes:

Infants (Room M) - 12 max., Infants (Room L) -12 max., Older Infant Classrooms (Room K and N) - 14 max. each room.

Toddlers (18 mos. to 24 mos.) - 36

Preschoolers (24 mos. to 5 years old) - 135

We strive to maintain these child/adult ratios and class sizes:

Infants/Toddlers: 4:1 group size no larger than 12

2 year olds: 6:1 group size no larger than 14

3 year olds: 8:1 group size no larger than 20

4 year olds: 8:1 group size no larger than 22

Preschool Dress Code:

Clothes worn by preschool students often get dirty; mainly due to various activities they participate in during the school day. All interactions with things and people are considered part of the children's learning process; it is important for them to be able to flow from one activity to another, concentrating not on whether they get dirty but rather on what they discover during these various activities. We do encourage paint smocks during some activities however; paint

still manages to get on the clothing. All paint used at TEC preschool is water based and washable.

Furthermore, for the safety of all children, open-toed shoes such as sandals or flip-flops are not permitted at TEC preschool. This rule is in effect for the safety of the children.

The following items should be kept in your child's cubby at all times. Be sure to label all clothing and belongings. This is a minimal list – your child's teachers may have additional, specific requests. Not only are these items necessary, but having a well-stocked cubby adds to your child's sense of well-being by bridging home and school in a nurturing way:

- ✓ 2 pairs of underwear
- ✓ 2 pairs of pants
- ✓ 2 t-shirts
- ✓ 1 long sleeved shirt
- ✓ 2 pairs of socks
- ✓ 1 blanket if napping
- ✓ 1 bag of wipes if not toilet trained
- ✓ 1 full package of diapers if not toilet trained

Nut Sensitive Zone

Peanut butter and any other food containing nuts of any kind are not permitted in the preschool. We request children not bring anything in their lunches or snacks that contains peanuts, peanut butter, any peanut products, or products containing peanut oil, or any other nuts. We ask that parents adhere to this policy when bringing in treats for special occasions such as birthdays and class parties. Please check all labels to make sure the product has not been prepared in a facility that all processes nut or nut oils. If you aren't sure, please refrain from bringing any doubtful product to school. We also ask you to share this policy with the babysitters, housekeepers and other family and friends who may be sending food to school with the child or dropping them off/picking them up. We have been made aware of the tremendous risk children and adults who are highly allergic to nuts can face from even the smallest taste or smell of peanut butter. We ask you to understand how serious the child's reaction can be. Some children who are allergic to nuts

suffer only a slight rash, but others can go into anaphylactic shock, which can cause death in minutes. We have identified those students with severe allergies and have been trained to inject EpiPen if one comes into contact with peanuts. You will be notified if there are any other severe allergies that need to be taken into consideration at the beginning of the school year.

Gates

Gates are used as Emergency Exits only. Teachers and parents must enter through Wolfson doors.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important to us. We will never release any information about your child to unauthorized people. Children at this age are still learning to regulate their bodies, feelings, and impulses. Therefore, it is very normal for children at this age to hit, grab, push, and even bite. Please be aware that we will not release the names of children who have caused a scratch, bite, or any other physical or emotional harm. Volunteers are welcome in all the classrooms, but please be sensitive to the needs of the students and do not share any observations or opinions with others outside of the classroom.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Preschool is often the first place where a child spends concentrated time in a group of peers with a larger adult to child ratio than at home or in day care. It is also the time when the entire child's developmental milestones (for example: social, emotional, cognitive, motor, speech/language) are observed and considered on a daily basis. The staff at Temple Etz Chaim are well aware of the different developmental milestones for children at each age level, as well as understanding that there is a normal range of development.

Our goal at Temple Etz Chaim is to do everything in our power to make each child's preschool experience a success. This is achieved through a concerted effort of teachers working closely with parents.

As all children are unique, with their own individual resources, the majority of children become typically developing 2 to 5 year olds, moving successfully through their developmental milestones.

Occasionally however, there are those children who fall “outside the box” in one or more developmental areas. We believe that the greatest contributor to success is open communication between the school and parents. With this in mind, the following is our approach should any issue arise:

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED!

1. It is very important for us to collect all information about your child in order for them to access the curriculum. Fortunately, there are many accommodations and early intervention services that will assist the child to function and succeed to the best of their ability. If the parent is already aware of developmental delays, behavioral or medical concerns about their child, they must let us know. Feelings of protectiveness sometimes lead parents to say nothing, hoping that everything will be fine and that their child will avoid being “labeled”. This approach fails because children cannot conceal any aspect of themselves, and their teachers (as well as other parents) will quickly notice. Time is of the essence, so the sooner any issues come to our attention, the sooner we can begin to work together. If you have concerns regarding confidentiality issues, your information and wishes will be respected. We must be able to communicate with all professionals involved with your child in order to work as a team in your child’s interest.
2. After allowing for the child’s adjustment to their new classroom routines (usually approximately 30 days, sooner if potentially dangerous behavior is exhibited), the teachers will approach the Administration to discuss any child that they

have questions or concerns about. Teachers will be asked to document the specific behavior.

3. At this time, as part of ongoing communication with the parents, a meeting will be held with parents, administration and teachers. The goals are to share observations, obtain a clear picture of the behaviors of concerns and elicit parent insight. Your input is critical as you are experts regarding your child. We want your tips for what works and does not work at home. We will also give you ideas including things such as specific checklists for teachers to quantify as well as describe behavior. We hope that you will work with us to alleviate the issues. This might mean working with your child at home as well. A follow up meeting (usually within three weeks) will be planned.
4. At the follow-up meeting, progress will be discussed. If significant progress is observed, we will “fine tune” and plan another follow-up meeting. If progress is minimal, the school will provide referrals to the parents so that additional help can be accessed. Many options exist, including outside observation or evaluation by a trained therapist or developmental pediatrician; counseling and perhaps in-class support (1:1 companion or shadow) which will be paid for by the parents or by an outside entity. If the plan involves consultation with outside professionals, we must have you sign a consent form allowing the preschool to collaborate with them. This is necessary so that everyone is working together towards the specific goals for the child’s success. A follow-up meeting (usually within two weeks) will be scheduled.
5. At this meeting, parents and school staff will share progress and plan for the child’s ongoing success at school. If parents decide not to proceed, we will work with you to try to obtain a more appropriate school setting for your child (referral to other schools/placement for your child).

It is our goal to maintain open and ongoing communication with parents about their child's progress. Remember that we care about you and your child, and we want to help in any way possible. Every child walks his/her own individual path in life, and we want you to know that we show each child the utmost respect, patience and love, while maintaining the integrity and stability of our program for everyone.

The Infant Care Center

The Infant Care Center is a full-time Infant and Toddler Care program serving children between the ages of six weeks to 2 years old. The Infant Center offers high-quality, respectful Infant and Toddler care within a Jewish community. The staff will love and nurture your child while providing a carefully designed environment for your child to grow and develop. With our educated and trained teaching staff, primary caregivers, developmentally appropriate curriculum and our secure facility, it is our hope that you and your child will feel at home here at Temple Etz Chaim.

Primary Caregiving: Once your child enters our Infant Care Center, he or she will be matched with a primary caregiver. This caregiver will meet your child's individual daily needs (diapering, feeding, napping, etc.) They will complete your child's daily chart and maintain open communication with the family. In the event that your primary caregiver is not there, a secondary caregiver is assigned. Working in small groups helps children and adults to build trust and security.

Daily Charts: Daily Charts are provided for each child which helps maintain family-caregiver communication regarding diapering, feeding, nap schedule, and daily experiences. Parents will be required to fill our

sections of their child's daily chart at the time of drop-off. Copies can be made by request or fill free to take a picture.

Infant Needs and Services Plan: This is a license requirement and needs to be updated every three months or as needed.

Safe Sleep: We are required to follow the safe sleep regulations.

- Infants will not be able to be swaddled while in our care
- Infants head must not be covered while sleeping
- Infants that fall asleep before being placed in a crib, we must move the infant to a crib
- Infant must be placed on their backs while sleeping
- No loose articles and soft objects in the crib including blankets
- Pacifiers may not be attached to anything

Infant Feeding (Bottles and Food): Infants in Room M and Room L will eat according to their own schedule, to maintain consistency from home. As the infant develops and is developmentally ready for Room N or Room K they will have two snack times and a lunch. Parents will provide all food, sippy cups and bottles. All items need to be labeled with their infant's first and last name and bottles need to include the current date.

Bottles:

- Bottles with formula must be premade at home.
- After formula bottles has been introduced to the infant any leftover will be discarded after two hours. (Unless requested on the Needs and Services Plan)
- After breast/mother's milk bottles has been introduced to the infant any leftover will be discarded after one hour. (Unless requested on Needs and Services Plan)

Infant Daily Supplies: Parents will provide diapers, a box of wipes, a blanket, bottles (if needed), food and dishes, and two changes of clothes. You may bring any transitional items with your child. Temple Etz Chaim will provide all bedding, which will be washed daily.

LICENSING REQUIRES THAT ALL ITEMS BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME. PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING—CLOTHING, BOTTLES, FOOD...

Infant/Toddler Staff: Staff working with infants have specific training and experience in infant care and will continue to keep abreast of this ever changing field of infant development.

The Preschool Toddler Program (18 mos.)

In providing a program for toddlers (Children 18mos - 24mos), our teachers understand that these children learn with their whole bodies. They learn more by doing than by being told. Toddlers discover their world on a physical level, so it is expected that they will prefer walking, climbing, carrying objects, dumping, or dropping objects over sitting, picking up toys, or playing only in a designated space. These large muscle activities are the legitimate activity of toddlerhood.

In planning for toddlers, our educators are prepared to be flexible and spontaneous. Because they are active explorers, toddlers are eager to try new things and use materials in different ways. Our understanding teachers will go with the cues of the child and view that as learning-extending it even if it isn't part of the day's planned curriculum.

Toddlers are working on becoming autonomous. The educated teacher

respects this and allows opportunities for the child to be responsible and to make choices. This teacher also understands why certain behaviors must be limited, and sets limits that are fair and consistent. Expectations for behaviors are developmentally appropriate and allow the child to be challenged yet to feel support from the teacher. Consequently, frustration is kept to a minimum and the child's dignity and self-concept remain intact.

Our teachers, with patience, warmth and respect, redirect toddlers to help guide them toward controlling their impulses and behaviors. The teacher draws more attention to a child's appropriate behavior than to the inappropriate because she understands that toddlers will act in the way that draws the most attention. Constant testing and expressions of opposition are viewed as the child's development of a healthy sense of self. The teacher accepts this and offers positively worded directions to avoid getting into power struggles. The teacher views herself as a model for how she wants the children to develop. She does this in her verbal interactions because she understands that toddlers lack the skills to cope with frustrating situations and might act out in a physical way without her guidance.

The teacher recognizes that routine times are important moments to help children learn about themselves and others. An early childhood educator views play as valuable and facilitates this so that children stay interested and move from simple to more complex aspects of their play. The classroom includes materials for children to engage in imaginative play, appropriate art experiences for creative exploration, various skills, as well as building blocks, music, and books. The environment allows for the children to choose activities. The teacher

respects the child's need for ample time to use and reuse activities because repeated experiences foster competence. The setting is stimulating and inviting. It offers comfortable spaces for privacy and for interacting in small groups. Children's art is displayed proudly and respected for what it is. The little ones are encouraged by a knowing adult to care for the belongings and the environment in ways they can handle. The teacher creates and adapts the environment and activities to meet the children's changing needs from day to day.

Gesher Program

The *Gesher* program is a Pre-kindergarten class. Acting as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten, *Gesher* provides our students with a year to develop and prepare before beginning the challenging academic programs within our public schools.

Gesher is designed to be a full-day program; the class meets from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Half day program ending at 12:30 is also an option). This full day allows for plenty of time to expose the children to hundreds of wonderful experiences. One major goal of the *Gesher* program is to create an environment that not only focuses on academic skills, but on the "whole child". This is a developmentally appropriate program that will support each child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Children at this age have more of an ability to think, reason, communicate, and take initiative. They will benefit from being challenged.

The classroom environment consists primarily of learning centers. Each learning center will have a different learning experience relating to a specific unit, holiday, or skill that the children are working on that week. Centers revolve around a variety of areas, including art, science, drama, literature, math, writing, music, and social studies. Some centers are ongoing the entire year, and others vary depending on the subject being taught and the interests of the children.

This program is taught by a highly qualified team of teachers, including a Judaic specialist. Each teacher is trained and educated in early childhood development and education.

Our *Gesher* Curriculum

Reading Readiness

Gesher children engage in a rich array of language experiences that develop the essential prerequisites for reading and writing. We have both structured and unstructured activities and use flannel boards, puppets, dramatic play, and literature to develop comprehension skills, visual and auditory discrimination skills, the use of the written word, and foster a love of reading. Our *Gesher* staff teaches how to form and fluently write the letters of the alphabet. We also provide age-appropriate drawing and writing activities to encourage emergent writing success. Drawing is a powerful tool for early writers. Drawing journals are part of the *Gesher* morning routine. This offers a way to express their feelings, thoughts, and creativity as they are getting ready for formal writing. A child's experiences make for good writing ideas. The teachers will talk with them about their day and encourage the children to express their thoughts on paper in a creative way. By the end of the year, most will be able to start adding some words to their work.

- Listen to a wide variety of literature and talk about personal experiences
- Discuss the main ideas of a selection; sequence events in a story
- Demonstrate comprehension by retelling
- Follow a set of verbal directions to complete a task
- Use pre-writing strategies such as drawing pictures, dictating stories
- Develop vocabulary, use appropriate language, and ask questions for information
- Chime in with rhyming pairs and repeated/predictable phrases
- Recite poems, songs, chants
- Names the letters of the alphabet both upper and lower case
- Learns the sounds of the letters of the alphabet

- Understands how print is organized and read (reading top to bottom, left to right, sweeping back for the next line)

Math

In our *Gesher* program, manipulative skills are used to develop mathematical thinking, including counting, number and numeral recognition, and one-to-one correspondence. We use number and geometric patterning activities such as graphing and charting, games, and collections to reinforce number skills. Students develop problem-solving abilities by engaging in real life mathematical situations, such as sorting and classifying objects in the classroom.

- Count orally from one to thirty; identify and write numerals zero to ten in and out of sequence
- Use language such as "before" or "after" on a number line, next to, right and left, above and below
- Compare two or more sets and identify which is equal to, more than, or less than the other
- Recognize and continue numerical and geometric patterns
- Sort and classify objects according to selected characteristics, such as by size or ordinal position (first, second, third...)
- Describe concepts of time (morning, evening, yesterday, tomorrow), temperature (hot or cold), and weight (heavier or lighter)
- Demonstrate the ability to solve a pictorial representation of simple addition and subtraction problems

Social Studies

- *Gesher* students learn about their immediate community, develop a respect for the natural environment, and become contributing members of a diverse classroom community. Children focus on themselves, their families, and the school community, neighborhood and synagogue.

Science

- Awareness and appreciation of science are developed through a focus of hands-on investigations. Students observe, predict, sequence, analyze, and apply knowledge they have learned. Units such as oceans, the solar system, seasons, insects, frogs, pandas, and sinking and floating are integrated with language arts and mathematics.

Music

- Each student has the opportunity to develop a strong sense of musical self-worth. Activities include listening, singing, and physical response to the rhythm of music. Children may also learn basic concepts through their musical experience.

Art

We use a wide variety of media such as clay, paint and collage to encourage children to explore and develop an appreciation and enjoyment for artistic expression. Emphasis is placed on exploration and creativity rather than the end product.

Physical Education

Students develop gross motor coordination through a variety of movement activities. They develop listening skills, an awareness of space and how to move in it, and they learn to work together.

- Kicking, throwing, and catching
- Running, skipping, hopping, and jumping
- Age-appropriate games

Hebrew and Judaica

Gesher begin to develop an understanding of the Hebrew language, vocabulary, and songs. By singing and telling stories, they learn about the Jewish people, Israel, and traditions. Gesher children will enjoy tasting Jewish foods, Israeli dancing, and playing games to strengthen their Jewish identity.

The Preschool Program (3 year olds)

Our curriculum is customized to meet each child's individual needs: socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. Our daily practices hold consistency as a fundamental tenant. It incorporates a curriculum which stimulates each child's unique interests, curiosity and sense of discovery. When a child appears ready, a more formal approach to education is introduced. At approximately the age of four, our children begin learning the basics of math, reading and writing. No student is forced to participate in academic lessons but we find that many are eager and excited to do so.

The preschool curriculum emphasizes the development of essential cognitive foundations within a context of meaningful hands-on activities and a positive, supportive environment. Our goal is to create and nurture independent thinkers and problem solvers. Development of essential foundations assures that the children in our care will be ready to meet the intellectual demands associated with formal schooling. Below are the areas in which foundations of learning are developed Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center:

Two Year Old Program - Beginners

- **Aesthetic Expression** is enjoyed through various forms of dramatic play, music, and dance. A variety of art media, such as markers, crayon, and paint is available for creative expressions and representation of ideas and feelings.
- **Cognitive Skills** are the foundations of learning and knowledge. At age two, children's cognitive skills are expanding quickly. Children are exposed to a variety of activities and learn to distinguish between textures, to identify shapes and colors, and to begin rote counting.
- **Fine-Motor Skills** are developed through play activities such as constructive sets, puzzles, and beads to string, drawing, painting, cutting, and other similar activities. Opportunities are provided throughout the day for students to pour their own snack beverages and to dress themselves.

- **Gross Motor Skills** are learned through indoor and outdoor activities incorporating jumping, running, climbing and other vigorous movements to help develop the large muscles of each child.
- **Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Health Skills** are learned through activities that teach children to seek solutions to concrete problems; constructing with blocks, measuring solids and liquids; classifying objects; use of art media; music, movement and other modes of physical expression to represent what they see, understand, and feel; learning and practicing routines for healthy living.
- **Self-help skills** are developed through meals, personal hygiene, dressing, clean up and toilet training.
- **Social and Emotional Skills** are essential in the second year of life. Toddlers express their emotions in different ways. Children learn to express emotions in healthy and safe ways and will be encouraged to express feelings, needs, and ideas in words.

Three Year Old Program – Intermediate Level

Reading Readiness

- Increasing verbal and vocabulary skills
- Expressing ideas clearly
- Gaining a love of literature
- Recalling sequence of events
- Listening and following directions
- Exploring creativity and imagination
- Recognizing letters, numbers and colors
- Enjoying songs, stories and experimental projects

Math Concepts

- Putting things in order, sorting and sequencing
- Matching and classifying shapes and sizes
- Creating and noticing patterns
- Comparing, recognizing and counting numbers
- Building and developing spatial concepts
- Describing and extending rhythmic, verbal and visual patterns

Science

- Exploring and experimenting with sensory materials
- Observing animals, objects, and environment
- Discovering sound, tastes and smell
- Playing with sand, water, rice and corn meal
- Taking things apart
- Growing flowers and vegetables
- Developing an awareness of the world
- Asking questions and fostering curiosity

Writing

- Developing left to right sweep movement
- Painting and pouring
- Using scissors
- Building with blocks and puzzles
- Drawing horizontal and vertical lines
- Scribbling to express ideas
- Pre-writing activities using sand, play dough, paint, crayons, letters shapes and sizes

Social Studies

- Developing self-esteem
- Learning social behaviors and an understanding of social mores
- Participating in conflict resolution skills
- Making choices

- Problem Solving
- Making friends
- Embracing an appreciation for themselves and others

Physical Education

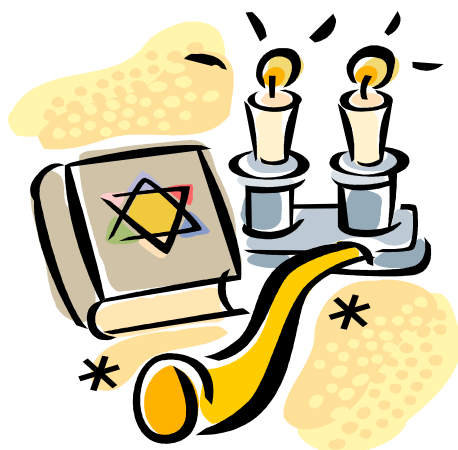
- Strengthening the large muscles of the body, as well as fine motor skills (small fingers and hand muscles)
- Problem solving
- Following instructions and directions
- Gaining self-awareness
- Strengthening hand-eye coordination

Creative Movement

- Learning body awareness
- Developing coordination and rhythm
- Following instructions
- Working with others in the group
- Learning early dance movements

FIELD TRIPS- Trips are taken approximately three times a year to nearby places such as the Thousand Oaks Civic Art Center, Underwood Farms, Thousand Oaks Library, Whole Foods Market, and/or a local Fire Station. Our desire is to have all children participate in trips. Parents will receive information and a permission slip to sign prior to each trip. Parent carpools will be arranged for transportation on field trips.

VISITORS- Classroom visitors might describe a career or hobby. They could include zoo representatives with animals, or oceanographers with tide pool tanks. Visiting parents describe hobbies, occupations, or cultural practices.



JUDAICA YEAR LONG GOALS-

By offering Jewish education we have an opportunity to share in the life-affirming, vibrant traditions of the Jewish people. At Temple Etz Chaim, we feel this responsibility profoundly and we work lovingly to create the finest religious school experience. The preschool staff will model the values that they wish children to learn. We believe that certain values are essential for all children such as mitzvot (doing things to value and respect our traditions, God, ourselves, and others), behaving in a sensitive and careful manner so that we do not hurt others' feelings, reaching out to the sick, extending hospitality, doing good deeds for others, and caring for the environment.

SHABBAT- The children will learn that Shabbat comes every week and this is a different kind of day. We will light Shabbat candles, and say blessings for the candles, wine and challah. We celebrate Shabbat in our Sanctuary each Friday morning with Hazzan Pablo with songs and prayers. We share Shabbat with others through Tzedakah. The school will provide a hot Shabbat lunch for every child in our program as part of our Friday Shabbat morning.

JEWISH HOLIDAYS- The major Jewish Holidays are incorporated into the preschool curriculum. The vocabulary, blessings and symbols of each holiday will be introduced, as well as: Hebrew words for the family, counting, days of the week,

songs, foods, and simple prayers. Appreciations for Torah, simple Hebrew language, stories, poems, dancing, and crafts enhance their Jewish experience.



Health

Our center operates for well children and staff only. Children who are mildly ill (e.g. minor cold symptoms) may remain at the center only with the director's approval. Children should be fully able to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Parents should provide appropriate changes of clothing so children do not become either chilled or overheated. Light sweaters or jackets should be made available, as well. "Jellies", "flip-flops", and sandals are not appropriate for wear at school. Sun screens or diaper lotions may be applied by staff with the written permission of the parent on a center-supplied form.

Children with symptoms of communicable disease remain with a staff member until the parent or designated family representative arrives for the child. We take temperatures two times to assure accuracy. We make every effort, including cell phones and email, to reach the parents when a child is ill, but after 30 minutes, we will attempt to reach the emergency contacts indicated by the parents.

We will not serve children with:

- Vomiting two or more times within a 24-hour period
- Vomiting one time with another symptom
- A fever of 100 degrees F or higher
- Unusual spots, skin rashes or untreated, infected skin patches
- Diarrhea three or more times in a day
- Evidence of head lice, scabies, or other parasites
- Severe coughing causing red or blue coloration on face
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of eye with obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching of the eye
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Excessive fatigue

Children who show these signs are separated from other children, supervised, provided a cot and made comfortable until their parent or family representative arrives to take them home.

Children may be readmitted:

- With a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable disease and that returning poses no risk to the child or others.

OR

- If visibly free from communicable disease, fever-free without benefit of fever reducing medications for 24 hours while on normal diet.

The center retains the right to continue to exclude a child despite a physician's statement if that statement contradicts the center's policies or does not seem to be in the child's best interest. When any child in a classroom has a communicable disease, parents are informed in writing within 24 hours.

It is our policy that staff with symptoms of illness remain away from the center.

Our staff members have training in recognizing communicable diseases. We follow strict universal health precautions. This includes health practices that protect children from illness and also protects adults from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. Personal protective equipment is provided to the staff as well. We follow strict hand washing and disinfection procedures also.

Note that smoking is prohibited in all areas of the childcare center.

Medication is given only if parents sign a center-supplied permission form. Prescription medication must have a prescription label with the child's name and date on it. Medical samples and over-the-counter oral medicines **MUST** have a written note from the doctor as well as a parent-signed form. Permission forms must be renewed every year. Medication is administered by the director or a lead teacher. Such

administering is documented. Medications are kept in locked cabinets or the office refrigerator.

Required Health Forms

As part of each child's registration packet, two health forms are required.

1. **Physician's Report-** By California law, each child enrolled in a childcare center must have a physical completed by a physician stating the child is healthy and free from communicable diseases. TB clearance is required. These forms must be received within two weeks of your child's admittance.
2. **Immunizations** - Current immunizations must be on file in the Child Development office using the blue California School Immunization Record. We request that you update this record as your child gets additional immunizations. Parents may request exemption of their child from the immunization requirement if all or some immunizations are contrary to the family's beliefs, but the parent must sign the waver on the back of the California School Immunization Record. If parents request an exemption, they must understand that in case of an outbreak of any one of these diseases (polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella and/or HIB meningitis), the child may be temporarily excluded from attending the center for his/her own protection.

Daily Checks

Our staff administers an informal health check to children each day. If a child is showing signs of illness (temperature, swollen glands, rashes, or sore throat, etc.) a more formal evaluation must be completed. According to the center's policy, children may be excluded from the program if the following symptoms are evident:

- Rashes of unknown origin
- High Temperature (100 or higher)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Children may also be excluded if they are not well enough to fully participate in the day's activity program.

If it is decided that a child is ill, the parent is called and asked to remove the child from the center as soon as possible. Alternate arrangements must be made for these emergencies prior to enrollment. It is also critical that all emergency phone numbers listed in the child's file are current and up-to-date.

First Aid If your child sustains an injury while at the center, the center will:

- Provide emergency first aid
- Notify parents or other persons designated on the emergency card
- If parents or other persons listed cannot be reached, and the center decides emergency care is required, the center will see

that your child receives emergency medical treatment as indicated in the Emergency Medical Authorization Consent Form.

- Give a written/ emailed Accident Report to parents describing any injury that occurs while the child is at school

Dispensing Medication and Incidental Medical Service (IMS) Plan

Dispensing medication to children is one of the services provided to parents. It is our goal to be as inclusive as possible, including integrating children with various on-going medical conditions into our daily routine. The following **Incidental Medical Service Plan** will outline the three conditions we currently accommodate:

1. We can accommodate children with anaphylaxis (severe, potentially life threatening allergies), asthma (chronic lung disease that impairs breathing), and diabetes (abnormal blood glucose levels).
2. Personal plan of care procedures will be kept for each child with one of the above conditions provided by doctor or parent.
3. Epi-pens, inhalers, nebulizers, and diabetes related equipment and medications will be kept in locked cabinet in the preschool office.
4. All of our staff is certified in pediatric first aid. This training includes use of the Epi-pen. In addition, the permission for the inhaler/nebulizer use is specific to certain trained staff who are trained in their use.
5. Parents/authorized guardians will sign a written consent to administer inhaler/nebulizer treatments in addition to the permission to administer other medications.
6. We ensure that proper safety precautions are met including the wearing of gloves in potential exposure to bodily fluids, proper

hand washing following glove removal, safe disposal of all relevant materials.

7. In case of a disaster that requires us to vacate the facility, we will bring the medical supplies with us. For class trips, the teachers will carry in their packs any needed medical supplies.
8. Following an IMS occurrence, treatment will be logged in the medical record book and parents will be notified by telephone.
9. Serious incidents and any change in this plan will be reported to our Community Care Licensing Office (805) 562-0400 and an Unusual Incident Report (LIC624B) will be filed.

Change of Address or Telephone Numbers

Parents or guardians must provide written notice to the Preschool Director as soon as there is a change in a parent's residence or work, mailing address, or telephone number(s). It is crucial that we are able to locate you at all times in case of an emergency.

Tuition and Refunds

Current tuition is published on a separate sheet which is available in the School Office. Temple Etz Chaim bills our annual tuition in advance, starting in August and ending in May. These monthly installments are based on 1/10th of the total annual tuition fee. Our bookkeeper will mail the preschool tuition statements on the first day of each month and the payment is due by the tenth of the month. Payments not received by the tenth of the month shall be subject to a late fee of \$100.00 per occurrence.

In some instances holidays may cause the preschool to be closed on a day when your child would normally attend preschool. Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center does not allow make-up days for holidays or your child's illness unless approved by the Preschool Director. No preschool fees or costs will be prorated based on the child's absence due to personal reasons including but not limited to the child's illness or family vacations.

REFUNDS: The family must give Temple Etz Chaim one month written notice in advance if preschool services are no longer needed. If this notice is given, a refund will be made for any overpayment of services.

Summer Preschool Camp

We offer a ten week Summer Smash Preschool Camp during June, July and August for children between the ages of 18 months through 5 years, 11 months of age. We have designed this program with ten different weekly themes. The children will enhance their skills through games, songs, art, music, and movement with daily activities such as art/science/water play day, library story time, etc. Flexible scheduling is offered allowing parents the flexibility to register for as many weeks as you need and whatever days per week desired.

Registration for Summer Camp typically begins in the spring.

Nutrition

We provide nutritionally balanced kosher dairy snacks, meals, and cooking activities. Menus are posted in each classroom and copies are made available to parents at the beginning of each month. Just like any other habit, healthy eating starts from a young age. Therefore, certain items are not allowed in lunches or snacks. We want all our children to eat healthy, well balanced

meals. In addition, some foods are not allowed for safety reasons. Sugary foods are allowed only for birthdays and special holiday celebrations. Special holidays will be determined by the Preschool Director. Temple Etz Chaim Early Childhood Education Center is a “nut-safe” environment and never serves nuts or their by-products.

The center supplies 2% milk for children 24 months and younger. Children 25 months of age and older are served 1% milk. Adults eat seated with the children. Meal times are relaxed times, rich with conversation and companionship.

Temple policy requires that all foods served in our school should be dairy (no meats), and any foods served by the school with be marked with one of the approved Kosher symbols. For more information about the specific requirements of Kosher food, please ask the school office.

Foods that are not allowed at preschool are:

- Candy
- Gum
- Popcorn
- Food from fast food restaurants
- Foods that require special attention (heating, cooling, cutting up)
- Round foods (olives, hot dogs, grapes, melon balls) that have not been cut in half, or lengthwise to prevent choking
- Doughnuts
- Chips

Safety

We ask that parents closely supervise their children in parking lots, front lawns, and elsewhere on the premises. It is recommended that as children exit from cars, they be offered a hand to hold. Sticking together seems to be a reasonable safety request. When going to the

classroom, the family is asked to stay together. So much could happen in a moment or two, and we request your cooperation.

NO child is ever left alone or unsupervised. At arrival, parents are expected to help the child settle into play, which may require ten minutes or so per child. Parents are permitted to access to all parts of the center at all times.

Inside and Outside Rules

- Children may not climb on fences or gates.
- Children may not open the gates themselves.
- Children may not throw sand.
- Children may not take toys up on the play structures.
- Crashing tricycles and other ride-on toys is not allowed.
- Children may only play in areas where teachers are supervising.
- Children must sit down when eating.
- No running in the classrooms.
- Balls and other throwing toys are to be used outdoors only.
- Hurting one another is not allowed.
- Emotional safety is as important as physical safety - children may not insult, tease, or frighten one another.

Incident or injury reports are completed whenever first aid is given. In addition, if there is a severe bite or a blow to the head, parents will always be contacted. Parents will be notified if 911 is contacted or any unexpected event has occurred which jeopardizes the safety of others. There is always immediate access to a phone at the center. Telephones are located in the front office, kitchen, teacher's lounge and all classrooms.

Aerosol sprays are not used when children are present. Smoking is not permitted in the building, playgrounds, or near the synagogue.

All center employees are required to report any suspicion of child abuse or child neglect. All teaching staff have training to recognize signs of neglect and abuse. We will report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

The Department of Social Services has a right to interview children and staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. The Department of Social Services has the authority to observe the physical condition of the child or children, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional examine a child.

Disaster Preparedness Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center has an Emergency Procedure Guide which highlights how we will continue to provide our children with the highest quality care available in the event of an earthquake, fire, or other natural disaster. A major component of this process is planning and preparation by staff members and parents for the eventuality of a disaster.

Fire Drills, Active Shooter and Earthquake Evacuation Drills are conducted at Temple Etz Chaim ECE Center. The entire campus, including the preschool and Infant Center, are required to participate in these drills.

In the event of an emergency on our premises or in the Conejo Valley area, TEC students will remain on campus in a supervised and safe environment until picked up by a parent or adult authorized on the Student's Information Card.

Please refer to the Emergency Procedure guide for the specifics of the program and other emergency guidelines.

Keep in mind that signing children in and out each day is a valuable component to our identification system. It is equally critical to keep emergency information up-to-date.

Closing Statement

We hope that visitors and TEC families will sense that we have created a home away from home for our children. We appreciate feedback from any visitor or family member. We are pleased to elaborate on any facets of our program. Tours are available by prior arrangement to families or small groups or persons wishing to see quality programming for children.

Thank you for your continuing interest in quality child care in our community.

Debbie Blumenthal

ECE Director

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