



Chabad Early Learning Center

Handbook of School Policies

PARENT EDITION
2009-2010

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Chabad Early Learning Center

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Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Chabad Early Learning Center Family! We are delighted that you have selected our program for your child.

As you are aware, Chabad Early Learning Center is an intimate Jewish preschool. Our goal is to provide your child with a warm and nurturing environment where he/she will be introduced to Jewish values and traditions, discover the joys of learning, and become gently acquainted with formal education preparing them for the transition into elementary school.

We see each child as a unique and precious gift entrusted into our care. This concept is what governs our school's educational approach. We place a special emphasis on each individual child and on encouraging and supporting their innate inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge. We are devoted to helping your child learn socialization skills, build self confidence, and teach the preliminary skills to independently explore and experience the world around them.

At Chabad Early Learning Center, your child will be offered a comprehensive secular curriculum including reading readiness, number concepts, science, and social studies. In addition, he/she will be exposed to a rich and meaningful program consisting of Jewish holidays, traditions, and the Hebrew alphabet and language. All of the above is taught through experiences, music, art, and creative play.

We employ highly qualified and experienced teachers who are trained in early childhood education. Our teachers participate in a continuous program of staff development education for professional growth in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and to the findings of current research.

Again, welcome to our family! Our school is a place where parents and the entire family play an integral role in the educational process. Through holiday celebrations, social activities, and educational discoveries, your family will become a significant part of the Jewish community.

Looking forward to a wonderful year,

Dina Blesofsky

Rebecca Hillman

Shoshana Redner

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EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

“Educate the child according to his way (ability)” King Solomon Proverbs

Chabad Early Learning Center believes that every child has the potential to be a powerful learner and a great citizen. Each child is an individual who has strengths, abilities and potentials which must be recognized and supported in a respectful and caring manner. In keeping with this belief, we accept that children learn differently and have varied interests. We view this “diversity” as an integral part of each individual. The self confidence as well as respect for others that children achieve in this environment is important for all their future growth and development. In order to support children realizing their potential, we create learning environments in which children experience and explore with adults who are interested in the whole child and his/her unique development.

Chabad Early Learning Center is committed to ongoing study and exploration of educational methods in general and in the Reggio Emilia approach in particular. The role of the teacher is one that consists of many components. The components consist of the teacher being seen as an observer, facilitator, collaborator, partner, researcher and documenter. All of the components work together to enable the teacher to be supportive of the children, extend learning, and promote growth and development. The teacher’s growth continues as the role of a researcher who analyzes and interprets documentation of children’s work to share their thinking and acquisition of knowledge. The parent too is a fellow protagonist and above all is the first and most important teacher of the child. The partnerships formed between the teacher and the parents are very important for their children’s learning experience. In addition to the formal educator and parents, we view the environment as the “third” teacher. The classroom is a resource to be used by the children; a safe, well-planned setting in which constructive work and creative dramatic play can take place. Our teachers carefully choose meaningful materials for developing responsibility and age-appropriate work standards in our classrooms as well as in the outdoor area and Art Studio.

As educators we are committed to study, research and expand our knowledge of education, to broaden our educational approach, benefit our children’s future growth and development. Ongoing study and research ultimately affect the greater Jewish community.

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ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Drop-Off:

School begins at 9 a.m. There is an Early Drop-off Program which begins at 8 a.m. Early Drop-off is available for a nominal fee and only by pre-registration with the Director. Please do not bring your child to school before his/her class starting time. Teachers arrive early to prepare class materials and projects. If you do arrive early, please remain outside the classroom with your child until class begins.

***Please Note: No child should be dropped off at the front door on their own. Please walk your child to his/her classroom.*

Late Arrival:

We urge you to be prompt and arrive on time. It is disruptive to the class and to the teachers if you come late in the morning. In addition, your child will adjust better if he/she begins the day together with the rest of the class.

Pick-Up:

It is very important to your child that you arrive on time. Young children get nervous very easily if there is an unexpected change in their daily routine. If you know you are going to be detained, please notify the school immediately so that we can notify your child's teacher and reassure your child. Late Pick-up (2:30-3:30 p.m.) is available for a nominal fee and only by pre-registration with the Director.

***Please Note: The school's staff is not available to watch children after regular school hours.*

Late Pick-Up:

Children who are not picked up within 10 minutes after the time of their dismissal will be taken to the Office. We will attempt to reach the emergency contact numbers indicated on the Emergency Form. A late pick-up fee will be added to your invoice (please "Late Pick-Up Fee" below).

Late Pick-Up Fee:

It is extremely important to pick up your child on time. For every five minutes that you are late, you will be charged an additional \$5 on your monthly invoice.

Dismissal Policy:

At no time and under no circumstance will a child be release to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up that child. It is your responsibility to list on the Emergency Form all the people who are authorized to pick up your child from school. If you plan on having your child picked up by someone who is not listed

on the Emergency Form, you must give us written consent at the beginning of the day and notify both the Director and one of your child's teachers. Any permanent changes to this list must be indicated on the Change of Authorization Form available in the Office.

Friday Hours:

When Daylight Savings Time ends in early November, "Winter" Friday hours will begin. During the "Winter" months, school will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m. on Fridays. Following Passover Recess, regular Friday hours will resume. School will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m.

The Late Pick-Up Program is not available on Fridays. For those enrolled in our Daycare Program (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.), daycare is available on Fridays until an hour and a half before Shabbos. A list of Friday closing times will be given to those enrolled in our Daycare Program.

Car Pools:

We are happy to help parents find others parents to form a car pool with. Please inquire with the Office if you are interested in our assistance.

Unscheduled School Closings:

Inclement weather or an unforeseen emergency may cause the school to close. This decision will be made only as a last resort with the health and safety of students and staff as the primary consideration. This decision will be communicated to parents via the school's voice mail at 718-279-1457 ext. 13.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS & SCHOOL

Open communication between the school's Director, teachers, and parents is an integral component of Chabad Early Learning Center. During the orientation process, please give us your impressions of your child: personality, his/her likes, dislikes, pertinent health information, etc. Throughout the school year, please communicate to the school any changes in your child's attitude towards school. In turn, the staff will share with you the experiences they have with your child during the day. Newsletters will be sent home weekly to share with you what your child has been doing during the school day.

Communication Notebook:

We encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher on a daily basis. If your child is enrolled in the Early Drop-Off Program, Late Pick-Up Program, or the Daycare Program, we ask that you send a communication notebook in your child's backpack. This will allow you to share with your child's teacher anything

pertinent for the day. Your child's teacher will also be able to share with you the day's activities, meals, and any other important information.

Changes in Environment:

It is very important that we know of any changes taking place in your child's environment. The birth of a baby, change of babysitter, or family crisis can greatly affect your child's behavior in school. The more informed that we are, the more we can do to offer extra support and understanding to your child during unusually stressful times.

Contacting Teachers:

If you feel the need to talk to your child's teachers at any time, please call the school and leave a message for her. She will return your call at her earliest convenience. The Director is also always available to speak with you.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

We have two Parent-Teacher Conferences during the year, one in November and one in March. These conferences, which both mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend, are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child as well as to receive an in-depth view of child's progress.

FOOD & BIRTHDAYS

School Lunch:

Nutrition plays an integral role in the development of your child. Our school provides a daily wholesome lunch incorporating whole grains and non-processed foods into your child's diet. You will receive a lunch menu in advance. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks are also served, typically consisting of crackers or fruit. Please do not send any food to school with your child.

Fruit Basket:

To involve the children in selecting healthy snacks while increasing their awareness, we ask that each child bring in a fruit/vegetable of their choice on Mondays to be served at snack time during the week. In addition, the school will provide a variety of fruits and vegetables. A basket will be in each classroom for collection.

Special Diets:

If your child has any special dietary needs, please consult with the Director. She will be happy to work with you to make sure your child is served appropriate foods.

School Birthday Parties:

Children love to celebrate their birthdays at school and we recommend that you make a party in class. All birthday parties are held during snack. You may choose to bring a special snack for the occasion: fruit, cake, cupcakes, or ice cream work best.

Any food brought into the school must be certified Kosher. Please check with the school's Director before purchasing any refreshments. **Absolutely no food will be permitted into the school without pre-approval of the Director.**

Loot bags and party favors are not allowed. Your child's teacher will add stories, songs, and games to make this a special day for your child. Please contact your child's teacher at least one week in advance so that a mutually convenient time and date may be arranged.

Class Gift:

We ask that loot bags and party favors not be given out at school birthday parties. If you would like to give a gift to the class on the occasion of your child's birthday, we suggest asking the teacher. Each class has it's own "Wish List" of additional toys, games, books, supplies, etc. that the class would enjoy. Selecting something from the Wish List will guarantee your contribution appropriate.

Private Birthday Parties:

If you plan on hosting a private birthday celebration for your child outside of school, please be sensitive to your child's classmates. If it is within your means, we recommend that you invite all of your child's classmates or all of your child's classmates of the same gender to his/her party.

Children are sensitive to being excluded, even those as young as three years old. Including some children from your child's class and not others can create hurt feelings. Also, please be sensitive to the dietary and religious observances of your child's classmates. No birthday parties should be held on Saturday or other Yom Tov (Holidays) and all food served at the party should be Kosher.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Medical Forms:

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. **No child will be permitted to begin school without a completed New York City Department of Health Medical Record that is signed by a physician.** It is your responsibility to make sure that your child has received tuberculin clearance and the requisite immunizations commensurate with his/her age. Please check with your personal physician or Director if you have any questions.

In addition, no child will be permitted to start school without a signed Emergency Form, allowing the Director to make any decisions pertaining to the emergency care of your child in your absence.

Illness at School:

If symptoms of illness appear during the day, your child will be taken to the Office and you will be immediately contacted to pick up your child.

Illness at Home:

We count on you to recognize the symptoms of ill health. Please do not bring your child to school if there is any indication of the following: fever, vomiting, any unusual discharge from the eyes or nose, skin rashes or open sores, colds, fatigue, or listlessness.

****Please Note: Your child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** Children returning to school before 24 hours following a fever run the risk of infecting other children.

Medication:

In accordance with New York State Law, no one at school is allowed to administer medication to children.

Communicable Diseases:

Please notify us immediately (within 24 hours) if your child or any member of your immediate family is diagnosed with any communicable or contagious illness such as Conjunctivitis, Chicken Pox, Diarrhea, Diphtheria, Food Poisoning, Hepatitis, Hemophilus, Influenza Type B Infection, Impetigo, Measles, Meningitis, Meningococcal Disease, Mumps, Pertussis, Poliomyelitis, Rubella, Salmonella, Streptococcal Disease, Scarlet Fever, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, etc. We will then contact the other parents so that they may take any necessary precautions.

Medical Emergency:

In case of a medical emergency, G-d forbid, we will immediately attempt to contact you. If we cannot reach you, we will call your child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. Until your arrival, the Director or Teacher will be in charge and make all decisions about your child's care, under the advice of your child's physician or the paramedics. Resultant costs not covered by the school's insurance policy will be your responsibility.

Minor Injury:

If your child receives a minor injury or bruise at school, appropriate first aid will be administered. You will receive an *Ouch Report* completed by your child's teacher and signed by the Director indicating details about the injury.

Emergency Numbers:

It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency contacts, and other pertinent information. Please make sure the school knows the most direct means of contacting you during school hours.

Liability Insurance:

The school maintains a liability insurance policy which may be examined upon request in the Office.

HOLIDAYS, FAMILY VACATIONS & EARLY WITHDRAWAL

School Holidays

All school holidays are noted on the school calendar. When school is closed, there is no one in the building to receive your child. For his or her safety, the school calendar should be retained and referred to concerning all activities.

Credits for Illness or Family Vacations:

Every child is enrolled for the entire ten month school year. Since most of the school's costs are fixed and do not vary based on daily attendance, the school cannot issue refunds or credits for illness, holidays, or family vacations.

Make-Up Days:

Make-up days are not available.

Early Withdrawal:

In the event of early withdrawal after the start of school, tuition fees shall be paid to the end of the month during which removal takes place. Additionally, you will be charged a \$100 service fee.

In the event the applicant moves outside of the convenient transportation area during the school year up to March 31, 2009, and the child is withdrawn as a result thereof, the applicant shall give 30 days written notice of such intention to withdraw. Tuition fees to the end of the month during which removal takes place and a \$100 service fee shall be paid.

In the event the child is unable to adjust to the school program within a reasonable time (such inability to adjust is to be determined by the Director), the child shall be withdrawn and the tuition fees and a \$100 service fee shall be paid to the end of the month during which withdrawal takes place.

***Please Note: The Registration fee of \$500 is non-refundable.*

PARKING

There is ample parking available on the side street surrounding the school building. Please do not park in the designated "No Parking" areas. Also, *please be respectful of our neighbors and their driveways*. For the safety of everyone, please do not double park. Remember to drive slowly at all times near the school and watch out for children and parents crossing.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Parent Association:

Parents are an important part of the Chabad community. The partnership between families and the School is vital to the healthy growth of children. All parents can be members of our Parents' Association which sponsors and supports projects, social functions and fundraising events.

Annual Dinner:

The philanthropic generosity of our community enables us to provide essential financial support for our School and its programs. The Annual Dinner is the most commonly used mechanism to raise funds to subsidize tuition payments. Revenues raised by tuition do not cover the costs of operating any private school. We strongly encourage your active involvement in coordinating and attending this special event.

Field Trips:

Field trips are an exciting and educational part of your child's school experience. You must complete the Trip Permission Form you received with your Registration Packet in order for your child to participate in field trips.

***Please Note: No child will be permitted on a trip unless a signed form is on file in the Office.*

Field Trip Chaperones:

The role of a chaperone is to assist teachers on trips. If you can volunteer to join us as a chaperone, please let your child's teacher know in advance. We ask that chaperones not bring other children along with them on the trip. Teachers rely on your complete attentiveness to the children under their care. Not only is another child a distraction, the school's liability insurance only covers those children registered at school.

Mitzvah Notes:

Every classroom has an area for Mitzvah Notes. This is a note that tells something special that your child has done. Mitzvah Notes are read aloud during

your child's Circle Time. This is an excellent tool for positive reinforcement and builds their confidence.

Art Instruction:

A professional Studio Art teacher works with the children in art instruction on a weekly basis. Through this experience, the children are developing and honing their creativity and art skills. Parents are invited to join these special classes on many occasions.

Shabbos Parties:

Fridays are a special day at Chabad Early Learning Center! We organize a Shabbat party and challah baking for the children. Each week a different boy and girl are selected to be the Ima (Mommy) and Aba (Daddy). The parents of these children are invited to join us for this special program and take pictures of these precious moments. Every family is encouraged to sign up for a date that is convenient for them to attend this special event.

Tzedakah:

Part of your child's program at our school is to develop an awareness and commitment to share with others who are less fortunate. We encourage you to send in a small amount of change with your child each day to put in the Tzedakah (charity) box.

Visitors:

We welcome interesting visitors (i.e. doctors, musicians, artists, etc.) to our Program who will talk with the children about their professions, interests, or hobbies. Please inform us of any such people you know and would like to recommend as their participation will be greatly enjoyed by the children.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Parents are asked not to make requests for their children to be placed with specific teachers. At the end of each school year, class placement for the coming year is determined through collective input from the current classroom teachers and any other staff member who knows the child well. Our goal is to create heterogeneous classes that are well balanced in terms of gender and learning styles. Parents are asked to trust the school's ability to place each student judiciously.

WHAT TO SEND WITH YOUR CHILD

Attire:

When selecting your child's school clothes, please keep in mind that easy, comfortable, and washable clothing is best. Choose simple and practical clothing that is free of complicated fastenings and easy to handle in the bathroom. Even though we use washable paints, art projects and materials can be very messy, even for those children who wear smocks. Outdoor play can also be tough on clothing so please choose attire that is sturdy. Finally, kindly label all of your children's clothes with his/her name.

Change of Clothes:

Please send with your child a full range of clothes marked with your child's name. The clothes will be kept in your child's cubby for use as needed. When the change of clothing is used, please send in a new set on the following day.

Nap Time Necessities:

There is a rest period for the children enrolled in the Full Day Program. Please send a rest mat. The Health Department requires that each child use a standard rest mat, 1 in. or 2 in. thick, 24 in. wide, and 48 in. long. We can provide you with a mat for a fee of \$20.

Toilet Training:

Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend Chabad Early Learning Center. We will change diapers as long as needed. If your child is not toilet trained, please send in a package of diapers or pull-ups along with baby wipes on a regular basis. These should be marked with your child's name and will be kept in a cabinet.

Toys from Home:

Except for toys that are needed in the very opening days of school to help ease your child's transition from home to school, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home. Children become disappointed when they lose personal objects. If you have a book or music CD that may be of interest to all the children, please feel free to bring them to class. We also appreciate special games/artifacts/manipulatives for curriculum enrichment. Please consult with your child's teacher.