

**Center for Early Education**  
**Parent Handbook 2022**



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# THE CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION



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## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

The Shirat Hayam Center for Early Education believes that children learn best through play. It is our goal to create a developmentally appropriate environment which fosters an appreciation for enrichment and discovery. It is our belief that nurturing the “whole” child through hands-on early learning experiences will create a lifelong love for learning. Inclusion, family connections, and a commitment to developmentally appropriate learning are fundamental aspects which enkindle our diverse Shirat Hayam Family.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

The Center for Early Education at Congregation Shirat Hayam does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families based on race, sexual preference, religion, cultural heritage, political belief, marital status, national origin, or disability.

## **LICENSING AGENCY**

The CEE program is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, located at 360 Merrimack Street, Building #9, Lawrence, MA, 01843. They can be reached at 978-681-9684. The CEE upholds all the regulations set forth by the state for Early Education. A copy of the regulations is maintained in our office and can also be obtained on-line.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Our center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

[CEE 2022-2023 Calendar](#)

[Incident Weather Policy](#)

The CEE will make the determination to close or delay the opening of the center due to weather conditions based on the severity of a storm and/or State-of-Emergency. School closings and/or delays are made to assure the safety of our children and our staff. The Director will send a school-wide message to all families to keep you informed of the decisions. Our school closure often aligns with the decision made by the Swampscott Public School System.

## PROGRAMS

[INFANT PROGRAM](#)

Our infant program offers care for children from three (3) months to fourteen (14) months of age. We pride ourselves in offering the highest quality of care for our infants in a clean, calming, appropriately equipped classroom with experienced and knowledgeable staff. The infant ratio is seven infants to two teachers. We enrich our infant program with music, art activities, tummy time, and multiple walks throughout the day. Weather permitting; we take our infants out to walk the grounds or spend time in our Infant/Toddler outdoor classroom. This year in addition to using the [ASQ](#) for developmental screening we are also utilizing [Teaching Strategies Gold](#) for assessment and curriculum.

[Check out one of our Infant Spaces<3](#)

[TODDLER PROGRAM](#)

Our toddler program is for children from fifteen (15) months to thirty-three (33) months of age.

A toddler morning consists of exploratory play in the classroom, group time, open ended art activities, and gross motor activities. Snack brought from home is served mid-morning.

After lunch, all toddlers nap on mats with sheets and blankets brought from home. Rooms are darkened, quiet music is played, and all backs are rubbed. Afternoon snack, stories, movement, and gross motor activities fill the afternoon hours. This year in addition to using the [ASQ](#) for developmental screening we are also utilizing [Teaching Strategies Gold](#) for assessment and curriculum. [Peek inside Toddlerville!](#)

### PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Preschool children engage in hands-on educational activities and learning adventures! The classrooms offer child led experiences in addition to teacher supported investigations. Our child centered curriculum offers the essential components to support growth in the four domains: Social, Emotional, Physical, and Cognitive. Additionally, we incorporate learning materials that promote language and literacy throughout the classroom. In the open-ended art centers children create and explore a variety of materials that stimulate the mind and the senses as they design their unique works of art.

Classroom sizes can range from 10-18 children depending on the size of the classroom. Children are divided into small learning cohorts of 10 children as we are able. Throughout the day children participate in targeted activities to further their growth and development in specific areas. In addition to using the [ASQ](#) for developmental screening we are also utilizing [Teaching Strategies Gold](#) for assessment and curriculum. Through everyday observation and formative assessment, we acquire the information needed to scaffold and individualize the curriculum to meet the needs of each child.

### Gross Motor Gains

Our outdoor playgrounds are updated as of 2018 and provide an abundance of space for both toddlers and preschoolers alike to participate in gross motor play. We have 6 separate play spaces to accommodate multiple classrooms simultaneously. This allows for extended outdoor access each day.

We have two indoor gross motor rooms equipped to meet the needs of both toddlers and preschool age children. Classrooms have multiple opportunities each day to partake in gross motor activities. The gross motor rooms provide space for the children to exercise their muscles during the long winter months and provide a cool space for relaxing after a fun day in the summer sun.

## Outdoor Classroom

At Shirat Hayam we strive to provide our children with exceptional learning experiences both indoors and out. Our outdoor classroom is a family funded natural learning space which provides our children with the opportunity to explore the world around them. Through generous donations and DIY materials our families have designed and implemented a spectacular learning environment. The focus of the outdoor classroom is to encourage exploration and discovery while utilizing the natural elements around us. This amazing space is dedicated in honor of Cheryl Schwartz. Cheryl has been an integral part of our learning community both as an educator and a former CEE Director. We are infinitely grateful for the loving care and support she has provided for the Shirat Hayam Center for Early Education. We thank Cheryl for the decades of learning experiences which have fostered a love for learning, and we appreciate her longstanding commitment to the field of Early Childhood Education.

### **Pick-up/Drop-Off FAQ**

#### ***Where do I drop my child off and pick them up?***

The CEE entrance is in the rear of the building. Please drive around to the back parking lot and you will find the CEE door located between the fenced in playgrounds. We are a locked facility. Only parents and guardians with pick-up approval have the code to the center door. This code is changed at least once a year or as needed. **At this time only children and staff are permitted to enter the building.**

**We are utilizing the Chapel (double wooden doors) in the front of the building for infant drop off. Preschool drop off is in the rear of the building to the left side of playground in the gross motor room. Toddler drop off is in the rear of the building to the right side of the playgrounds. Please enter the gate and walk down the path to the gray door.**

Children who arrive for early drop off between 7:30-8:15 am are combined by program. The early drop-off location is dependent on the number of children signed up for early care. Specific instructions will be provided by Team Admin or the classroom teacher via ProCare regarding the pick-up and drop off location for your child.

Children join their specific classroom cohort by 8:45 am. and participate in their daily activities with that cohort for much of the day. As children are dismissed and numbers lessen, the cohorts combine and maintain ratios.

#### ***How can I learn about my child's day?***

You will receive updates regarding our child via ProCare. Please be sure you downloaded the ProCare app! ProCare is not updated in real time. You will receive updated information as teachers are able to post. Our primary concern is for the care and wellbeing of the children.

**Please continue to reach out to the teachers via [Procare Messages](#) for absences or to share additional information about your child.**

## FAQ

### ***What should my child bring to school?***

**Program wide-** Please be sure to send a plethora of healthy snacks for your child. Anything that is unopened during the day will be returned. We have filtered water available for your child throughout the day.

Sheet and blanket- All rest linens will remain in your child's cubby when not in use. Rest linens will be sent home at the end of your child's school week.

Several changes of clothes- Your child will need to change if any bodily fluids happen upon their clothing.

**Infant-** Each day your infant will require several bottles (empty or already prepared), formula or breast milk, all food needed for the day (or two), bibs, 2 crib sheets, pacifiers, sleep sack, diapers, diaper cream, at least 2 extra outfits, outerwear appropriate for the weather. Refrigeration is available for all infant food and milk. **Safe sleep practices prohibit the use of blankets in cribs. We also cannot permit a binky with a stuffed animal attached at the CEE.**

**Toddler-** Each day your toddler will require snacks, lunch, bottles and sippy cup, diapers, extra clothes, a crib sheet (for the nap mats), and any loveys or blankets that they need for comfort at nap time.

**Preschool-** Rest sheet and blanket if your child naps- Extra clothes- Outerwear as applicable

### ***Will staff and children be required to wear masks and social distance?***

All staff members and children are required to wear masks if they deemed a close contact and participate in the test and stay program. Individuals over the age of two will mask if they are not feeling 100% while at the CEE. We remind friends to "give space" and provide 3-6 feet between cohorts to the best of our ability.

### ***How will you monitor the health of the staff/children?***

Educators who ill are encouraged to remain at home. Children are monitored closely, and a parent is called if a child is not well. Please see illness policy for specifics.

### ***Will staff be tested?***

All staff are PCR tested weekly. We also utilize symptomatic rapid testing as needed in the center. Ill staff members must be tested before returning to work.

### ***Will children be moved to different classrooms to comply with ratios?***

To the best of our ability, children will remain with the same group of peers every day. Teachers typically stay with their class and do not mix with other groups of children unless necessary. Children have individualized sleep mats, and cubbies that are all separate. Children are now

allowed to share learning materials in a group setting. Individual materials are no longer required.

***Will classrooms be staffed with the same teachers every day?***

Classrooms will be staffed with the same teachers every day to the best of our ability. If a teacher must call out, an in-house sub/floater will be placed in that classroom for the entire day or cohorts will combine.

***What will happen if a staff member or child tests positive for Covid-19?***

If a staff member or a child test positive for Covid-19 we will follow the protocols put in place by the state of Massachusetts. All families impacted will be notified that someone within the program has tested positive. The identity and classroom of the COVID positive person will remain confidential. We will adhere to all guidance provided by EEC and the Board of Health in addition to any other precautionary measures we deem necessary. Each case is handled on an individual basis and the situation will dictate what actions must be taken.

***What are the cleaning procedures?***

We follow the Massachusetts Department of Early Education's requirements for health and safety guidelines for cleaning procedures. We use EPA approved [Force of Nature](#) cleaner to clean and disinfect surfaces while children are present. Only single use paper towels are used to wipe down surfaces before they are sprayed and left to air dry to be sanitized. If a toy has been mouthed, once the child is done using the toy the teacher takes the toy and places it in a dirty toy bin. The toys are cleaned and sanitized before returning into circulation. In addition to the teachers regularly cleaning the surfaces within the classroom, we also have a staff member cleaning all the high touch surfaces (doorknobs, sinks, toilets, etc.) in all the common areas daily. Every evening a professional cleaning crew thoroughly cleans and disinfects the CEE.

***What are the hygiene procedures?***

Upon entering the building, teachers and children wash their hands immediately. Children and staff will wash their hands before and after meals, after using the bathroom, and between each activity. Preschool age children may use hand sanitizer with parent approval.

***Can we pay to hold a spot for our child if we plan to send him/her in the future, but will not be sending him/her immediately?***

**If you choose to defer your enrollment, we require that 25% of your tuition is paid each month until your child's start date. This is non-refundable and non-negotiable as child tuition pays the salaries of our amazing educators.**

## ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTS

Parents are required to complete an online registration prior to the child's start at the center. Per EEC regulations, this paperwork is valid for one year only. Our center requests updated paperwork in during our reenrollment period. In addition, a current physical and immunization form must be on file. **This must be completed online via the document section ProCare, our online portal.**

Included in the reenrollment packet:

- [Parent/Child contact information](#)
- [Developmental history and background information](#)
- [Emergency contact information](#)- Update in ProCare
- [Individual health plan](#) (for allergy and/or medical conditions) Please [email](#)
- Immunization and physical forms- Upload to ProCare Document Section
- [Medication Consent Form](#) as needed for prescription and over the counter medication
- Fee schedule and consent- Please [email](#)

### Re-enrollment Documents

**To complete enrollment at the CEE you must update your child's [permission forms](#),** parent portal information, and developmental history each year. Families are also required to maintain current immunization and physical forms in ProCare. When your child(ren) visits the doctor for their yearly physical please upload the physical and immunization form to ProCare in the document section. If your child has an IHCP or requires medication, we will need updated forms each year. Team Admin will reach out to you in advance of your form expiration date to ensure our records remain current.

## FOOD

### Breakfast

May be brought from home. We will provide a sanitary place for children to eat breakfast between 7:30-8:30 each day.

### Snacks

Please provide a water bottle, labeled with his/her name, and a morning/afternoon snack each day.

## Healthy Lunches

Please send your child's lunch in a labeled insulated lunchbox, with an icepack. Reusable containers are allowed however we ask that you **please refrain from sending in glass containers** of any kind. **We request all food to be NUT FREE. Kindly do not send in any peanut butter or nut product of any type. Any food allergies must be reported to the staff and clearly written on your child's forms.** Water bottles are refilled with filtered water, and used all day long, including lunch and all snack times.

Because we are housed in a conservative synagogue, we ask that you **refrain from sending** in any **pork** or **shellfish** products. Some snack and lunch suggestions:

- ✓ Pretzels
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Mini bagels
- ✓ Graham crackers
- ✓ Rice cakes
- ✓ Mini muffins
- ✓ Fruits of all kinds (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- ✓ Vegetables of all kinds
- ✓ Cheese sticks or cubes
- ✓ Tuna fish
- ✓ Boiled eggs
- ✓ Chicken/Turkey
- ✓ Beef
- ✓ Pasta
- ✓ Yogurt
- ✓ Egg salad
- ✓ Soups
- ✓ Macaroni and cheese
- ✓ Cottage cheese
- ✓ Pizza
- ✓ Salads
- ✓ Quiche
- ✓ Soy nuggets
- ✓ Hummus
- ✓ Spinach patties

We love to celebrate birthdays! When sending in classroom birthday treats, please provide individually packaged popsicles. **A consult with the classroom teacher prior to sending any food items for the class is required to consider allergy restrictions. We cannot allow baked goods from home for distribution in the classroom.**

## INFANT-TODDLER POLICIES

In accordance with the EEC regulations, and to protect the health and welfare of the children, **every infant 15 months and younger in our care, must be placed on his/her back for sleeping.** In addition, **no child shall be napped in a crib, bassinet, port-a-crib, or playpen containing pillows, comforters, blankets, stuffed animals, binky with a stuffy attached or beaded attachment, or other soft-padded materials. Due to licensing restrictions, we are not able to swaddle our infants. Please send in a sleep sack for naps.**

**Daily Infant Supplies Needed:** Several bottles, formula or breast milk, all food that is needed for the day (or two), bibs, 2 crib sheets, pacifiers, sleep sack, diapers, diaper cream, at least 2 extra outfits, outerwear appropriate for the weather. Refrigeration is available for all infant food and milk. We have filtered water available to prepare bottles daily.

**All families who have children in diapers are required to pay a wipe fee of \$11.00 per month.**

We will follow your child's schedule (naps, feeding) to the best of our ability.

**Daily Toddler Supplies Needed:** Toddlers need snacks, lunches in an insulated lunch box bottles/and sippy cup, diapers, extra clothes, a crib sheet (for the nap mats), and any loveys or blankets that they need for comfort at nap time.

**ALL personal items must be labeled including food containers/breast milk.**

### Diapering for infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers have diaper checks every two hours or more often if needed. Children will not remain in soiled or wet diapers. The following guidelines are utilized during diapering:

- Staff member washes hands before and after diaper changes
- Child washes hands after diaper change
- Staff member wears vinyl, latex free gloves that are changed between each child.
- Changing mat is covered with protective paper and is wiped with disinfectant after each use.
- Soiled diapers, along with gloves and protective paper are placed in a plastic lined, covered container specifically for diapers.

All infant and toddler families will be provided with information throughout the day. This information includes, but is not limited to, information regarding diaper changes, naps and foods eaten. The information may be received electronically app/email or in paper form. ProCare is not updated in real time. You will receive updated information as teachers are able to post. Our primary concern is for the care and wellbeing of the children.

## PRESCHOOL POLICIES

### Toys from home

We ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in the car. **Loveys needed for comfort or transitions are always welcome!**

### Backpacks

We ask that each child have a backpack or tote bag large enough for lunch boxes, artwork, soiled clothes, water bottles, notices, etc. **Please do not leave any sunblock, diaper creams, or medications in your child's backpack or cubby. All medications and creams must be handed directly to a teacher to be placed out of reach.**

### Outdoor Time

Students at the CEE play outdoors daily. We ask that all children come in rubber-soled shoes (sneakers are best) and to always have appropriate outerwear in their cubbies. When the weather is inclement, Team Admin will make the final decision on outdoor play by using the [Child Care Weather Watch](#). Please send in appropriate attire daily or leave weather gear in school so your child can participate in all activities.

### Naps and Rest-time

All infants nap as per their individual schedule in individual cribs. Once an infant is 12 months old they may rest on a mat. All toddlers nap after lunch on rest mats for approximately 2 hours. Preschoolers are given a rest period, and they often will take a short nap. No child will be forced to sleep or be expected to rest for an inappropriate amount of time. Children who are awake during rest time will have quiet activities to choose from.

### Communication

Please use the ProCare app to communicate with your child's teacher. Parents are welcome to schedule a Zoom call with Team Admin or the CEE Educators at any time. Please email [andrea@shirathayam.org](mailto:andrea@shirathayam.org) to request a meeting.

### Transitioning infants and toddlers

All children are placed in developmentally/age-appropriate classroom groupings. The CEE staff goes through a very thoughtful process for each child's placement. Some of the factors that go into forming transition groups are chronological and developmental ages, recommendations from current staff, and friendships. We care about each child and work to establish successful transitions for all.

Infant transitions occur when they reach 10-15 months of age, and toddlers, when and **ONLY IF** they need to move to an older group. Parents will be notified prior to a transition, and we will maintain continuous communication with families to insure a smooth transition between classrooms. Transitioning will be done on a gradual basis. The children will spend time in their new classroom for a short time each day, and they will be accompanied by one of their current teachers for comfort as they adjust. When your child is approaching their transition time, we will provide you with detailed information about the transition process.

## **CEE Healthcare Policy**

**Flu shots are highly recommended for all children over 6 months of age who are enrolled in childcare**

Upon arrival each child must undergo a visual health check. Please do not send your child to the CEE if they are not well. We will send children home if they present with the symptoms listed in the health care policy.

### *Illness*

The CEE has four concerns regarding an ill child: the health of that child, the health of the children in the group, the health of the teachers, and the parents' needs.

There are illnesses for which children need to be excluded from the program due to the health risk they pose for other children and staff. **IF** the child has had a diagnosed contagious illness (that is treatable such as strep throat), he/she may return to childcare after 24 hours on an antibiotic if they are symptom free. If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the teachers can provide, we will contact you to take them home to rest.

**A child will be excluded from coming to the center when any of the following symptoms/infectious diseases present:**

- **Extreme fatigue, headache, runny nose, congestion, or any other sign of illness (Combined with one or more of the symptoms below)**
- **Feverish/chills**
- **Sore throat**
- **Cough**

- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Conjunctivitis (discharge, redness, watery eyes)
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- **COVID-19 symptoms, positive/presumptive positive test results**
  - Please see our COVID-19 Policy for additional information
- Flu like symptoms
- Positive flu test (Mandatory 3-5 days at home even if symptom free)
- Head lice/nits
- Undiagnosed Skin rash
- Pinworms

**In accordance with Massachusetts EEC licensing, if a child has any of the above symptoms or is sent home after becoming ill at the center, they must remain home for AT LEAST 24 HOURS OR LONGER until they are symptom free and fever free without the aid of a fever reducer such as Tylenol or Motrin. We ask all families to respect the health of the children and educators in our center by adhering to this policy.**

#### Medication Policy

**All medication must be brought into the program in the original container/box, clearly stating the physician's name, the child's name, a current date, the dosage, and the precise directions for its administration.** A [parental consent form](#) must be signed by the doctor and parent or guardian. **Non-prescription medicine, such as Tylenol, Benadryl, etc. must have a signed parental consent form which includes a signature from the physician.**

We are not allowed to administer any medication, prescription or otherwise, for more than two weeks, unless it is accompanied by a supplemental note from the child's physician. **We require the first dose of any medication to be given at home.**

The person designated as responsible for the child must fill out an authorization form and along with the medication give it to the child's teacher. At the end of each day, it is the responsibility of the designated caregiver for the child to claim the medication. **Medicine will not be placed in a child's backpack, lunch bag or basket.**

**Medication at our center must be stored in their original containers (box included please) and labeled with the child's name, the name of the drug and the directions for its administration**

**and storage.** All medications, including epi-pens and inhalers are secured out of reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, and security in the classroom backpacks. All expired medicine will be returned to parents to be disposed of properly.

**\*\*\*If your child has a health condition or an allergy which requires us to keep medication on the premises, additional paperwork is required. Please provide the following documents to your healthcare provider for completion. The forms also require a parent signature.**

**[IHCP Medication Consent](#)**

## TUITION

### **2022-2023 Tuition Rates**

Our operating budget is based on tuition. For us to pay our bills and salaries, it is essential that we are strict about keeping up with monthly payments. If problems occur that make it difficult to keep this schedule, arrangements should be made with the Director. Monthly tuition is based on pre-registered contracted fees. Refunds/credits are **NOT** given for: days when the program must remain closed due to a pandemic, weather, natural disasters, or emergencies, (or must close early to ensure the safety of the staff and children). Additionally, we do not offer refunds when the program is closed to celebrate a legal holiday (i.e., Memorial Day) and your child would normally be scheduled to attend that day; or when your child will be absent from the program due to illness or family vacation.

We request that you notify the center office any day that your child does not/cannot attend the program due to illness or vacation. We may contact you out of concern should we not hear from you. **The center requires 30 days' notice for a change in your child's schedule. We allow one complementary schedule change per year. Additional schedule changes will incur a \$75 schedule change fee.**

The CEE program is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Families are expected to pick up their child by the designated time stated on their specific contract to maintain compliance with EEC licensing and to respect the schedules of our staff and the welfare of the children placed in our care. If a parent or person responsible for picking up a child arrives after their designated time, the staff member in charge of staying with your child will verify and document the time of your arrival. **You will be charged the extra hour's rate which will be posted to your bill. Those parents arriving after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$1.00/minute for the first 15 minutes, and then \$2.00/minute after 6:15 p.m.**

**No refunds or credits will be given for withdrawal from the program unless it is for medical reasons that are verified by a physician's certificate, or a family needs to relocate.**

## **Add-on Days**

We do our best to accommodate our children and families in need of care. Children can attend the CEE on days they are not scheduled, as space is available. Effective 4/1/22 the add on day pricing per child, per day, for all programs will be:

\$75- 8:30-12:30 PM

\$150 – 8:30-3:30 PM

\$175- 8:30-4:30 PM

\$200- 8:30-6:00 PM

Early Drop off requests are \$15/per child- per day

## **CURRICULUM**

Our experienced, certified educators use a variety of resources to develop programs for our children, including the Massachusetts guidelines for Common Core Curriculum and the QRIS standards distributed by the Department of Early Education and Care. Teachers work in teams (Infants, toddlers, preschool) to prepare curriculum. Our curriculum is inspired by the [Reggio Emilia Approach](#). Our Educators are supported by colleagues here and at other early childhood centers, the CEE director, teacher-training workshops, and conferences. We offer environments that are caring and encourage social interaction. Children are introduced to language arts, science, math, social studies, music, and creative movement. Specialists for Hebrew, Spanish, Yoga, Mindfulness and Music were regular additions to our program during pre-COVID times. It is our goal to reinstate and maintain a full enrichment program as soon as possible. Currently, we offer Music, Mindfulness, and Shabbat!

At 12:30 p.m. a rest period is offered. Quiet music is played, the rooms are darkened, and children have quiet activities to use at tables or on their mats. After rest time, snack is served, and developmentally appropriate activities are available. Outdoor time or gross motor room activities are a favorite part of the afternoon.

When ratios permit at 5:00p.m. all toddlers and preschool-age children combine into separate program spaces within the gross motor room.

## COMMUNICATION

The CEE is fortunate to have the ProCare to communicate with parents. Pictures and notes are sent home on a regular basis to keep parents up to date on classroom happenings. Important information from the Team Admin is posted in this app. We also may provide information via email or in hard copy. CEE Snippets, our newsletter is sent out via email through the ProCare software.

Infant and toddler families will receive daily updates which provide a glimpse into their child's day. ProCare is not updated in real time. You will receive updated information as teachers are able to post. Our primary concern is for the care and wellbeing of the children. Once children are of preschool age, we do not record food intake. All uneaten items are sent home. We invite you to look at the pictures and posts and ask your child open-ended questions about their day. We are happy to provide you with examples of what to ask your child.

*What was your favorite part of the day? What made you laugh today? Tell me about the story you heard in school! Who did you play with today? How were you a good friend today? What made you smile today? What did you notice outside at school? I see that you..... tell me about it!*

**\*All educators can be reached via ProCare message. Please note that your messages are not private and are visible to all staff members.**

## ASSESSMENTS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Progress reports for toddlers and preschool age children are conducted twice a year; in January and May/June. This is a digital report, of which one copy is sent to the parents and one copy placed in the child's school file in the Director's office. We require a signature to acknowledge that you received a progress report for your child. **You can request/schedule a meeting with your child's teacher any time during the school year.** Written reports are done every 3 months for those children under 15 months of age. All reports are kept confidential and are in the child's file in the Director's office.

If, at any time, you have special concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher- - send a note, speak with her briefly at drop-off or pick-up to arrange a time, or leave a message at the CEE office. If you have a message for a teacher during school hours, please call or email the office. **Teachers cannot use their cell phones for calls or texting during school hours.**

Parents and teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have about their child. Parents will be provided with a digital report summarizing any observations related to the concern and will be briefed on staff efforts that have been made to accommodate the child's needs. If it is determined at the parent/staff meeting that among the group we do not have the

resources to provide the child with the services he may need, parents and staff shall work together to secure services from available community resources.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our professional teachers use positive techniques of guidance, redirection, and proactive elimination of potential issues rather than competition, comparison, or criticism. Consistent, clear rules are developed in conjunction with the children and are discussed on a regular basis to help the children understand what is expected. Intentional praise for positive choices is encouraged center wide.

Guidance techniques are non-punitive and are accompanied by rational explanations of expectations. Limits are set for children, but the environment is arranged so that a minimal number of “no’s” are necessary.

Sometimes, despite educator interventions, a pattern of behavior is noted which threatens the emotional or physical safety of a child or his classmates. In that case, staff will address the concern with parents and create a proactive plan to help the child. This may consist of a reduction of hours or alternative room placement. If the behavior concern continues after implementation of the plan, a child may be asked to leave the program for a short period of time (1-5 days). If the problem is not resolved, the child may be removed from the program. It is our intent to work together with families to promote a positive experience for their child. However, we do realize that there may be circumstances that keep a child from being capable of fully participating in a certain group and recognize that the program may not be equipped to deal with all circumstances underlying certain behavioral issues. If needed, we will assist parents in pursuing referrals to outside supportive services such as Early Intervention, a town’s public-school services, or counseling services, as well as the child’s pediatrician.

**IF, despite every effort of accommodation and individualization for the child, concerns for the safety or education of that child or others in the program continue, the parents and/or the center director may conclude that the CEE program is not an appropriate setting for the child. In that situation, staff will help the parents find an appropriate placement.**

The Shirat Hayam Center for Early Education shall prohibit spanking or other corporal punishment of children; verbal or physical abuse; neglect or abusive treatment, depriving children of meals or snacks; force feeding children; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing; disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

### **ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The Shirat Hayam Center for Early Education shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in our care. All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse and shall report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of children and Families.

### **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

All staff members have undergone Massachusetts Background Record checks, statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification, and are all certified by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. All staff has taken the required [Strong Start](#) trainings. All staff members are current in CPR and First Aid.

#### **Babysitting**

Often our teachers are asked to babysit outside of the CEE in the child's home. This is done on a private basis, and the CEE assumes no responsibility for this. Babysitting must not interfere with the educator's work schedule at the CEE.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Center for Early Education encourages parents to become involved in the school. Teachers regularly include parents in special celebrations and welcome parents and extended family to share special talents with the children. Parents are encouraged to read a story, assist as classroom helpers, or just spend some time in the classroom. **(At this time, we offer limited volunteer opportunities indoors. We will restore in-person volunteer opportunities soon!)** Parents are invited to join our Va'ad Horim, the CEE parent committee. We welcome your input-on CEE events, family programming, enrichment development and fundraising. Please reach out to [andrea@shirathayam.org](mailto:andrea@shirathayam.org) for details!

### **EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLAN**

Fire/Emergency Evacuation Plans are posted in each classroom and throughout the building. Fire drills are done monthly.

If the synagogue needs to evacuate for any reason, and the children cannot stay on the premises, the children, with police escort, will be walked to a safe point away from the building. At that point, all parents will be notified by text message and/or phone call from a CEE staff member as to where to pick up the children.

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR INFORMATION UP TO DATE VIA THE PROCARE PARENT PORTAL THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.** Staff will always remain with the children.

Complete emergency contingency plans are available in the CEE office.



Congregation Shirat Hayam  
Center for Early Education  
55 Atlantic Ave. Swampscott, MA 01907  
(781)598-3311

## **Vaccination Policy and Waiver**

At this time, the vast majority of our CEE employees have been vaccinated; While we encourage all our employees to be vaccinated, we are not requiring our current and future staff to be vaccinated. We are maintaining the suggested Massachusetts Early Education Commission and the CDC health and safety protocols that have served us well throughout this time, including limiting outside visitors to the CEE wing, masking for all unvaccinated individuals (children and staff), hand sanitizer upon entry, frequent handwashing throughout the day, and increased outdoor activities. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to [andrea@shirathayam.org](mailto:andrea@shirathayam.org)

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### WAIVER

I/we \_\_\_\_\_ are aware the Center for Early Education (CEE) has staff who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19. I/we acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19. I acknowledge that the CEE and Congregation Shirat Hayam have put in place preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to the best of their abilities.

I/we further acknowledge that CEE and Congregation Shirat Hayam cannot guarantee that my child will not become infected with COVID-19. I/we understand that the risk of my child becoming exposed to and/or infected by the COVID-19 virus may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, but not limited to CEE and Congregation Shirat Hayam staff and families.

I/we agree to hold Congregation Shirat Hayam and the Center for Early Education harmless if my CEE child/children contract COVID-19 as a result of transmission through the CEE.

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## **The Shirat Hayam Center for Early Education COVID-19 Policy**

### **If individual is Symptomatic while in our care**

- We remove the child from the classroom and have them wait in the designated isolation room
- They are provided with an N95 mask if they are age 2 or older
- A parent or guardian is notified to arrange for the child to go home, or we will obtain permission to administer a rapid test if child is over age 2.
- The individual will test with a COVID-19 test (antigen or PCR)
- Families can also contact their child's healthcare provider for further evaluation
- If programs or families have access to an at-home, rapid antigen COVID-19 test, testing can be administered by the program and/or family
- The areas that the ill staff/child occupied cleaned, disinfected, and ventilated.
- If tested negative, the staff member/child can stay in childcare if symptoms are mild or return to childcare once they have been fever free for 24 hours and symptoms improved. If Negative, we will not close classroom(s), and there is no exclusion/quarantine recommended for exposed cohort.

### **If an Individual Tests Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)**

- Individual will stay home for 5 days, returning on day 6
- After 5 days
- If they can mask: can go back to care on day 6 with one negative home test

If the individual cannot mask:

- If individual can test on day 5 or later:
- When test negative and asymptomatic or symptoms are subsiding, can go back to care the day after negative test (rapid test for ages 2 and over), returning to care no later than day 11
- When test positive, continue isolating until negative test and asymptomatic or symptoms subside through day 10, returning to care no later than day 11
- If individual cannot test: stay home for a total of 10 days, returning to care on day 11

### **If an Individual Was Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)**

- Individual (staff or student) ages 2 and older may remain in care if they test each day for 5 consecutive days as part of the Rapid Cohort Testing option. If an individual is positive one of those days, they should follow isolation guidance above.
- Otherwise, the individual should stay home for 5 days, and
  - After 5 days
    - If they can mask: can go back to care on day 6 (with a negative test)
    - If the individual cannot mask (including ages birth-2):
      - If individual can test on day 5:
        - When test negative and remain asymptomatic: can go back to care the day after a negative test (rapid test for ages 2 and over), returning to care no later than day 11
        - When test positive, follow isolation guidance above
      - If individual cannot test: stay home for total of ten days, returning to care on day 11

The health and safety of our Shirat Hayam family takes precedence above all else! We continue to follow our initial reopening procedures regarding health and safety in addition to quick implementation of newly available programs!

- Handwashing/sanitizing- upon entering the building, before and after eating, after bathroom/diaper change, as needed throughout the day
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high touch points and bathrooms
- Electrostatic cleaning after a positive case of COVID-19
- Windows open and extended outdoor activities (weather permitting)
- Small cohorts- group sizes remain at 10 in our preschool classrooms
- Pooled Testing
- Daily rapid testing of eligible educators (children as needed)
- KN-95 masks and PPE available
- Rapid Test and Stay Program

**Please note this policy is subject to change at any time.**

If you are unable to locate a COVID-19 test to return for care, please reach out to [andrea@shirathayam.org](mailto:andrea@shirathayam.org) and we will assist you in locating a test.

March 4, 2022

### **CEE Mask Policy Update**

At this time, we feel confident in adjusting our mask policy to align with the recent guidance provided by our licensing agency, The Department of Early Education and Care.

Effective March 7, 2022, the CEE will transition to a Mask- Optional policy for adults and children.

The following stipulations will apply:

- Symptomatic individuals ages 2 and older must wear a mask at the CEE until symptoms subside
- Individuals who have been deemed a close contact must remain masked throughout the test and stay period

We will continue with our current COVID-19 mitigation practices which include:

- Cohorts of 7-10 children (to the best of our ability)
- Increased cleaning and sanitation procedures
- Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer
- Daily health checks
- Weekly PCR testing
- Rapid test and stay for close contacts
- Upcoming HEPA filter installation

The health and wellbeing of our Shirat Hayam Family is of utmost importance. When developing our policy, we take many factors into consideration including EEC licensing mandates, Board of Health requirements, Swampscott Public School protocols, and CEE specific conditions. Developing policies that meet the needs of our Shirat Hayam families and educators is not a task that we take lightly. Our goal is to provide a happy, healthy, hands-on place where your children will thrive.

**Please note this policy is subject to change at any time**