



Temple Rodef Shalom Early Childhood Center

# Parent Handbook

- Revised September 2022 -

2100 Westmoreland Street

Falls Church, VA 22043

703.532.2227 | [trsecc.org](http://trsecc.org)

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## Our Mission and Values

Temple Rodef Shalom Early Childhood Center (ECC) provides a joyful and nurturing learning environment that fosters in each child the confidence and competence to become a productive, caring member of their family and society. Our families are active partners in creating the welcoming and supportive community at ECC.

We emphasize learning through intentional play experiences that promote cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. These experiences are designed to inspire a love of school and life-long learning. Our faculty is committed to studying and incorporating the best practices of early childhood and Jewish education. We celebrate Reform Jewish life, honoring traditions while finding relevance in today's world.

## Introduction to ECC

Since 1970, children of all faiths have enjoyed their earliest school experience at TRSECC. Our program promotes each child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. The development of spiritual and moral values and the joyful celebration of the Jewish holidays are important components of our curriculum.

**Social and Emotional Development:** Children learn important lessons when given the opportunity to be part of a group. Children acquire the skills to:

- Play cooperatively
- Develop friendships
- Manage emotions
- Problem solve
- Be independent and self-directed

**Physical Development:** Children need command of their bodies and strong muscles to thrive. We support gross and fine motor development as our children:

- Run, climb, jump, balance, throw and catch a ball
- Build, draw, paint, cut, pour, scribble, and write

**Intellectual Development:** Thinking, problem-solving, and language processes begin at birth. We foster these skills in the preschool years through:

- Conversation, rhymes, storytelling, vocabulary, listening and following directions, and appreciation of literature (*language arts*)
- Counting, classifying, comparing, creating patterns, and using math manipulatives (*mathematics*)
- Hypothesizing, discussion, demonstration, observation, and experimentation (*science*)
- Singing, rhythm, movement, and playing musical instruments (*music*)

Jewish traditions and values guide us in creating a respectful and welcoming community for our students and families. Shabbat is welcomed weekly with blessings and a special snack of challah and grape juice. The children celebrate each holiday with food, music, and experiential learning. Each classroom practices giving tzedakah



(righteous giving) and learn to appreciate the importance of mitzvot (commandments/good deeds).

We take pride in the joyful, loving, nurturing environment our center provides. We look forward to welcoming your family to our ECC community!

## General Information

### Admission Procedures

Priority enrollment starts in early January for classes that begin the following September. Priority is given first to current students and their siblings, then to Temple members and legacies. An application fee is required with each application. If your child is new to our program, their **original** birth certificate or passport must be brought to our office. Returning students are not required to resubmit a birth certificate or passport. Letters of acceptance are mailed in late January for the upcoming school year.

### Hours of Operation

Center hours are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (extended day and enrichment programs), or 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for Kindergarten, Monday through Friday. Children in the Three-Year-Old and Pre-K programs that end at 12:00 p.m. (who are toilet-independent) have the option of enrolling for enrichment classes that end at 2:00 p.m. All class offerings are dependent upon enrollment.

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

The center's drop-off and pick-up procedures were designed by the Fairfax County Police Department to ensure the safety of our children. Detailed instructions for these procedures will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Children **must** be transported to and from the center in a safe and secure car seat and remain buckled when moving through the car line. We ask that engines and cell phones be turned off when unloading or loading a child out of or into a car.

Children get upset when they are not picked up on time. Our morning program dismisses at 12:00 p.m. and our extended day and enrichment programs dismiss at 2:00 p.m. Kindergarten classes will dismiss at 3:00 p.m. If you are going to be late, please notify the office so that we can get word to your child's teacher. The charge for a late pick-up (after dismissal has ended) is \$30 for each additional 15 minutes or fraction thereof. You will be considered late if you arrive after 12:15 p.m. for our first dismissal and after 2:15 p.m. for extended day and enrichment dismissal.

If you are parking in our lot, please do not park in the accessible (unless you have a placard) or reserved (e.g., Temple President, Rabbi Emeritus, etc.) parking spaces. Never leave your car parked or unattended in the fire lanes.



## Organization

The average class has 12 to 16 children with one teacher and two assistants. All faculty meet the program leader qualifications under Virginia State Licensing. The following programs are offered:

### Stepping Stones

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

- Child must turn two between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 of the current school year.
- 2 days per week (Tuesday and Thursday)
- Children will be accompanied by a parent or consistent caregiver until the first week of February.

### Two-year-olds

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

- Child must turn two by Sept. 30 of the current school year.
- 2 days per week  
Tues and Thurs
- 3 days per week  
Mon/Wed/Fri
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri

### Three-year-olds

- Child must turn three by Sept. 30 of the current school year.
- 3 days per week  
Mon, Wed, Fri - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 4 days per week  
Tues-Fri - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

## Pre-K

- Child must turn four by Sept. 30 of the current school year.
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## Kindergarten

- Child must turn five by Sept. 30 of the current school year
- 5 days per week  
Mon-Fri - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## Extending the Day Programs

Early Morning Drop Off 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Afternoon Extension 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Parents whose children attend TRSECC have the option to register for programs extending their day. Registration is for the full school year, beginning on the child's first full day of attendance. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is limited.

## Sample Day

Schedules vary by classroom, but generally a day proceeds as follows:

- Arrival
- Free choice - art, puzzles, blocks, books, dramatic play, etc.
- Morning Meeting - stories, sharing, etc.
- Bathroom and snack
- Outdoor play - Playground/Bunny's Place/Meditation Garden
- Music/Playroom/STEAM Lab/Art Studio
- Dismissal



## Tuition Payments

Your first payment is due to the ECC office with your signed contract. The annual tuition is paid in full or in 10 monthly installments. Tuition payment is required via Automated Clearing House (ACH) or credit card. **All tuition payments are non-refundable.** Late payments (received after the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month) or returned checks will incur a \$35.00 fee. Temple members receive a tuition discount. Qualification for a Temple member discount is correlated between dues commitment level and selected program. The Temple member tuition rate is effective for payments submitted after you join the Temple.

A limited scholarship fund is available to assist Temple members. Scholarship applications must be submitted by the date noted on the current application. Scholarship award decisions are made in January for the next school year. For further information, please contact the ECC director.

## Center Calendar, Holidays, Staff Professional Days

ECC closes for most Jewish and federal holidays as well as winter and spring break. The center also closes for several staff professional training days and parent-teacher conference days. The ECC-approved center calendar(s) are available on our website at [trsecc.org](http://trsecc.org)

*Please note: ECC does not celebrate Halloween or Valentine's Day.*

## Parent Observation and Participation

Parents are welcome to observe their child in the classroom. We ask that arrangements with the center be made ahead of time, in case there is a special event, or another observation scheduled on that day.

ECC has an active Parent Committee. This committee offers opportunities for parents to become involved in various aspects of the center. A volunteer form is distributed prior to the start of the school year and information is included in the school *Horizons* e-newsletter.

## Parent and Teacher Communication

Communication is a priority at the Early Childhood Center. Questions, comments, and suggestions from parents are always welcome.

We encourage parents to communicate with the teacher and administration about events taking place in the home that may affect their child.

Parent-teacher conferences give parents and staff a chance to share information face to face. Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring. The center is closed on conference days.

Our teachers send out weekly narratives describing classroom activities along with photos, allowing parents to see and understand what is taking place in their child's classroom.

The center calendar, forms, and other important information is available on the center website ([trsecc.org](http://trsecc.org)).



Parents receive a hard copy of the student directory, as well as access to the directory online. The ECC office sends a monthly *Horizons* e-newsletter that let parents know about what is happening in our community.

## Consulting Specialist

ECC employs a child development specialist who consults with the teaching staff and, at times, with parents. The specialist, with prior parental permission and referral by the classroom teacher, can observe children who are experiencing challenges in the classroom. This service is available at no charge to parents. If ongoing or supplemental services are needed, the specialist can help refer parents to an appropriate provider in the community. The specialist also provides support to the staff. If you wish to have your child observed concerning an issue related to his/her functioning at the center, please contact the ECC director.

## Speech and Language Services

For an additional fee, the center offers speech and language services that can be integrated into a child's classroom setting and activities. Information and the fee structure are available by contacting the ECC office.

## Recommendations and Evaluations

Upon request, teachers will write up to three recommendations for children applying to other schools, given at least **two weeks' notice** to prepare the

forms. **If you require more than three, or cannot give two weeks' notice, there will be a charge of \$30.00 per recommendation.** Forms can also be prepared for those children being professionally evaluated. All forms will be sent directly to the school or professional requesting the information. Please provide us with a stamped and addressed envelope, an email address, or a fax number for each form.

## Special Events

We love to celebrate birthdays at ECC. We are happy to serve a homemade nut-free treat (or one packaged that is labeled "**processed in a nut-free facility**") that you provide to the children in the class. We ask that you save hats, goody bags, or decorations for your home party. Please see Nut Policy on Page 9.

## Dress Code

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes with sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes, preferably with a closed toe. Clothing, including outerwear, should be appropriate for the season. The children should be prepared for outdoor activities every day. Please label all clothing. Loose strings, such as hood strings, should never be worn on children's clothing. Strangulation can occur if loose strings get caught on playground equipment.

## Supplies

Each child should have a backpack without wheels that is large enough to carry their artwork and other supplies.



Please provide an extra change of clothes to be kept in the classroom. Please label all items with your child's name. If your child is in diapers, please send in two **disposable diapers** each school day. Please note we only use disposable diapers.

[Please see Page 11 for additional emergency supplies.](#)

## Center Policies

### Forms

ECC is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and complies with the department's licensing standards and regulations.

In accordance with licensing, ECC requires the following forms for each child enrolled in our programs to be on file *before* the start of the school.

**Children are unable to attend school without the following completed forms:**

- Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form ([Please see our Immunization policy on page 8](#))
- Child's Master Information Form

### Withdrawal Policy

It is understood that enrollment is for the entire school year and all tuition payments are non-refundable. If you need to withdraw your child, please advise the center in writing. ECC is funded by tuition and depends on payments made as scheduled.

ECC reserves the right to remove a child if their continuation in the program is not in the best interest of the center and/or child. ([Please see Behavioral Issues on page 10.](#))

### Photos and Videos

Throughout the year, photos and videos are taken by our staff. Some may appear in our center and Temple newsletters, website, Facebook page, in promotional materials and center emails. These images document the exciting learning that takes place daily in our center. Children's full names and/or personal information are *NEVER* included with any of the images without prior authorization. **Your permission to use your child's image is assumed unless you notify the ECC office in writing otherwise.**

### Parent Communication via Text

ECC has an emergency messaging system through MOZEO. Text messages will be sent for emergency situations. All ECC families are required to sign up to receive emergency texts, [please text "TRSECC" to 703-454-8905](#). You will receive a confirmation message. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office.

### Parent Contact Information

To make communications between families easier, ECC will provide a hard-copy and online directory of parent information. An email will be sent out in the fall detailing how to



review and confirm the contact information that you wish to have included. Parents may opt-out of appearing in the directory at the beginning of the year.

During the year, if your information or that of your emergency contacts (address, phone number, email address, etc.) changes, please let the ECC office know so your student's records can be updated.

## Permission Notes

If a child is leaving ECC with someone other than an individual on their "authorized list", we require an email, phone call or office visit from a custodial parent ahead of time with instructions. Likewise, we must receive an email or phone call with permission from each child's parent for all children having an afterschool playdate acknowledging the arrangement.

If your child will be carpooling regularly with another child, a carpool authorization form must be completed. Forms are available on [trsecc.org](http://trsecc.org).

## Inclement Weather Days

ECC follows Arlington Public Schools (APS) as a guideline for decisions about center closings during inclement weather and other emergencies. The ECC office will communicate with families via MOZEO. **Please note: There are no refunds or makeup classes due to inclement weather.**

## Use of Non-Playground Outdoor Areas

Groups of children, accompanied by staff, may sometimes visit the outdoor areas that surround the Temple. This includes the wooded area on the perimeter of the parking lot.

## Toilet Independent

- Children in all Pre-K Programs should be toilet independent
- Children in the 3s Programs are expected to be working on toilet independence
- Children in the 2s Program or Stepping Stones are not yet expected to be toilet independent
- Children enrolled in the Enrichment Classes must be toilet independent

## Health

The Fairfax County Health Department requires all children to have a current health form on file at the center. The form must be filled out completely and signed by the child's doctor; dated within **12 months prior** to the starting date of school. **Without exception, each child must have a current health form on file to start school.**

Children must be up to date on their vaccinations. Any student being vaccinated on an alternate plan must submit either a Medical Exemption or a Conditional Enrollment, authorized by a Medical Provider or Health Department Official. The authorization information section on page 3 of the **Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form** must be completed.



## Immunization Policy

The Virginia Department of Health oversees the requirements for immunization. Families with children enrolled at ECC must comply with the Virginia Department of Health school requirements.

All age-eligible students must begin the COVID-19 vaccine series prior to the first day of school and complete the main series in a timely manner. Students must also receive any booster doses for which they are eligible. Copies of COVID-19 vaccine cards must be on file in the ECC office and be updated as appropriate.

**School and Day Care Minimum Immunization Requirements**  
[vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/)

## Conditional Enrollment

Consistent with the Virginia Code, if your child has begun the required immunization schedule, and has a plan to complete immunizations within the next 90 calendar days as evidenced by your health provider's certification on the appropriate form, then your child may be granted conditional enrollment. Please see the ECC Office for the appropriate form. Any student admitted conditionally and who fails to comply with their schedule for the completion of the required immunizations shall be excluded from school until their immunizations are resumed.

## Emergency Medications

ECC staff only administers emergency medication (see below) and first aid as defined in the American Red Cross First Aid Manual. ECC personnel will not give any other medication or treatment. ECC staff members **do not** apply sunscreen, Chap Stick, diaper cream or ointment, or insect spray to children. If desired, these products can be applied by the parent before the child arrives at the center. As required by licensing and for your child's safety, medication cannot be stored in your child's backpack or lunchbox.

Any student who requires emergency medication (e.g., an EpiPen or an inhaler), must have the medication and the completed paperwork at ECC prior to attending. Each medication requires a Medication Authorization Form and an Emergency Action Plan to be completed and signed by both a parent and the child's physician. These forms are valid for the school year only. **New forms must be completed each school year.**

Medication must:

- Be kept at the center at all times.
- Stay in the original packaging and prescription medications must have the prescription label attached.
- Have an expiration date past the last day of school and be good for the entire school year.

Emergency medication will be administered by staff who have completed Medication Administration Training (MAT), as required by the



Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Licensing.

## Illness and Absences

The Department of Social Services requires there be written agreement between parents and ECC regarding reportable communicable disease. Your signature on your child's letter of acceptance indicates that you have read and agree to the following requirement:

Parents will inform the office personnel of ECC, at 703-532-2227, within 24 hours or the next business day after their child or any member of their immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately. The identity of a child or family/household member with a communicable disease will be kept confidential. Diseases covered by HIPAA, which protects the privacy of health information, need not be reported.

**If your child is too sick to participate in all class activities, the staff will call you and ask that you take your child home.**

**The staff will immediately notify parents of a medical emergency.** It is imperative, therefore, that parents advise the office of any changes of addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses and that the Child's Master Form is current.

If a child has a contagious condition, please let the center know. We are required to inform the parents of classmates that their child has been exposed.

If your child has been ill, your child may return to the center when they:

- have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours (if prescribed);
- are fever-free (98.6 or below) without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours;
- have had no diarrhea for 24 hours;
- have had no vomiting for 24 hours; and,
- can participate in all class activities.

## Food Restrictions: No Nuts, Shellfish or Pork

ECC is a nut-free, shellfish-free, and pork-free facility. Due to the severity of a potential allergic reaction, we do not allow nut products of any kind in the center (peanuts, peanut butter, tree nuts, granola bars, items containing peanut oil, Reese's peanut butter cups, nut milks, or any items containing other nuts or nut products). Restricted foods include any products with peanuts and/or tree nuts as an ingredient or with a cautionary label warning such as "may contain nuts," "manufactured on equipment that also processes nuts," or "produced in a facility that processes nuts." Products containing nuts may not be brought to any outdoor play areas or be stored in lunchboxes or backpacks. With the increasing number of children who have



this serious allergy, we believe this is a prudent measure to ensure a safe environment for our students. While we do not purchase snack items for the center that have been manufactured in a facility where nut products are processed, we cannot guarantee that this is the case for snacks, birthday treats, and lunches brought to center by individual children.

The challah served to the children to celebrate Shabbat is purchased from a kosher bakery that advertises it is a nut-free facility. If you would like to speak to them about ingredients, please contact the ECC office for the phone number.

## Discipline Policy

Licensing standards require early childhood centers to define in written policy the center's method of discipline. This allows parents and staff members to have a clear statement of the techniques allowed in classroom management and which are not.

## Constructive Methods of Discipline

The minimum standards require that "discipline shall be constructive in nature." These methods should include:

- Fair and consistent limits.
- Positively worded directions.
- Reasons for limits.
- Redirection and modeling of acceptable behaviors.

- Assistance with verbal expression of feelings and frustrations.
- If separation is used, it shall be brief, and the child will be with a staff member.

If the above methods are unsuccessful, ECC may request that a child be taken home before the end of the school day.

## Prohibited Methods of Discipline

- Physical punishment such as, but not limited to, the following actions are prohibited:
  - spanking
  - shaking a child
  - forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position
  - using exercise as punishment
  - withholding food
  - punishment for a toileting accident
  - verbal abuse of a child or the child's family, including belittling remarks

## Behavioral or Other Issues

The staff of ECC looks forward to partnering with you in your child's preschool experience and working together to create a foundation for future learning. To ensure every child has an opportunity to learn and grow in a safe and productive environment, ECC reserves the right to remove a child from the program if their continued presence is not in the best interest of the center and/or child. This is at the sole discretion of ECC.



## Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The Department of Social Services requires the ECC to report all forms of suspected child abuse and to make parents aware of this policy.

## Crisis and Emergency Management Plan

### Where to Get Information

In the event of any emergency, ECC uses Arlington County Public Schools (APS) as a guideline for response. If communication systems are operating, our intent is to notify families via our emergency text system called MOZEO. If communications are down (e.g., cell towers), please listen to local television and radio stations for the APS response to, or information about, an emergency or crisis situation.

### ECC Emergency Responses

Dependent on the nature of the emergency, ECC will determine the appropriate response based on information provided by local/state/federal officials. Below is a description of possible responses:

- In an emergency, we will contact you by email and text, if possible.
- In the event of a building evacuation, if possible, we will move to our designated site at Haycock Elementary School (6616 Haycock Road, which is located next to TRS), where students will be held until they are picked up by a parent or authorized adult.

- If students need to be kept inside our facility for their own safety, we will go into our building “lock-down” mode and will proceed to our designated “shelter-in-place” location, if necessary. No one will be allowed to enter or leave the center building until it is declared safe by public safety officials. Food, water, and additional clothing are kept at the center.
- If there is a regional crisis that prevents parents from reaching ECC in time to pick up their children, the center will keep children until a parent or authorized adult arrives. Food, water, and clothing are kept at the center in case students must stay beyond regular hours.

### Emergency Supply List

Parents are asked to provide the following:

- A change of clothing and extra disposable diapers in a labeled zip-lock bag for our “shelter-in-place.” This is in addition to the change of clothing and disposable diapers kept in the classroom.
- A small blanket.

### Chain of Command in the absence of the ECC Director

1. TRS Executive Director
2. ECC Office Staff

### Donations

There are six special funds that benefit our center and programs for children here at Temple Rodef Shalom.



1. [Early Childhood Center Fund](#) to support special ECC projects.
2. [Alexis Agin Memorial Fund](#) to perpetuate a love of reading in children.
3. [Bunny's Place Endowment Fund](#) for the maintenance and upkeep of the ECC's outdoor play space.
4. [Karen Simpson Teacher Development Fund](#) to support staff continuing education.
5. [Caren Pomeroy Nursery School Endowment Fund](#) to support scholarships for ECC students.
6. [Early Childhood Speech and Language Endowment Fund](#) for professional intervention regarding speech issues.

Your tax-deductible gifts to these funds are greatly appreciated and help to strengthen our ECC community.

## ECC Family Participation at Temple Events

All ECC families are welcome and encouraged to participate in Temple events. Please visit the TRS website for the calendar of activities.

## Licensing Information for Parents About Child Day Programs

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the

supervision, protection, and wellbeing of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, the ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced, and unannounced, visits to the program by licensing staff within the Virginia State Department of Education. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to



comply with the standards. Operating without a license (when required) constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months, or both, for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs, or would like to register a complaint, please contact [earlychildhood@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@doe.virginia.gov).

