

Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation



Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook

Shalom and welcome to the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation's Early Childhood Center. We are happy to have you and your child with us. In these pages you will find helpful facts about our school program. We hope that you will read through them thoroughly and keep this as a reference throughout the year. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact the Early Childhood office. We look forward to a tremendous year of exciting challenges and continued growth.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ECC Office phone - 317-254-2186

ECC Fax – 317-254-2187

Taryn Fartouh, Director– tarynf@ihcindy.org

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IHC PHILOSOPHY

The IHC Early Childhood Center is committed to giving toddlers through kindergarteners varied and rich opportunities for growth and development. We believe in providing a loving atmosphere for learning and play which is greatly enhanced by our Jewish values.

REGISTRATION

Registration for current students and siblings begins in mid -January. Registration is opened to the public in early March. Re-registration is required each year. A non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is required each year to hold a place for each child.

SCHEDULES AND SCHOOL CALENDAR

The School is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 5:45 p.m. We are closed each year for certain religious and secular holidays. The school calendar (part of your parent packet) contains the school closings and other important information.

The following programs are offered:

- 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. - pre-school
- 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. - pre-school plus
- 7:00 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. - extended day



Set program hours must be the same for each day of attendance; minimum of 2 days a week for 2's and younger and 3 days for 3's and older. Kindergarten requires enrollment at least 4 days a week.

SCHEDULE CHANGES AND ADDITIONAL TIME

Arrangements must be made in advance with the Director before making any schedule changes. The following fees will apply to permanent changes of program hours within an academic school year or summer camp:

- 1st change- \$50: requires 2 week notice**
- 2nd change-\$150: requires 2 week notice**
- 3rd change-\$500: requires 2 week notice**

Additional time in addition to set schedule:

- \$20 for additional care before 8:45am**
- \$20 for additional care 12:30-3pm**
- \$20 for additional care between 3pm- 5:45pm**

Fees related to a set schedule when only before or aftercare is needed:

- \$13.50 for care before 8:45am**
- \$13.50 for care after 3pm**

When your child is going to be absent from school, please notify the office as soon as possible. Our program and state licensing status require us to engage staff based on the number of children enrolled. We cannot pro-rate fees or “make up days” due to absences.

A 9 week summer camp program is available for all children 1 year to 6 years old. The weeks between the school year and camp are called “transition weeks” and occur twice per year. The school is open for any child who would like to attend extended care during the transition weeks.

TUITION PAYMENT POLICY

The calendar year is divided into 3 sessions, for a total of 52 weeks per year (see below). There is a tuition charge for each session of the calendar program. Tuition is charged only for those programs used by the parent. Members of IHC will receive 10% off tuition rates.

1. Academic school year – 40 weeks
Academic school year tuition- due the 5th of months August through April
2. Summer camp tuition – 9 weeks
Summer camp tuition- First 4 weeks paid on May 15th; remaining weeks due June 15th
3. Transition weeks- 3 weeks (may pick 1-3 weeks at the extended care rate)- *No new enrollment during these weeks*
First transition week (end of academic year) payment is due on or before May 5th.
The second and third week (end of summer camp) payment is due on or before July 5th

There are a variety of tuition payment options available to parents. Payment is to be determined before enrollment. Please see payment forms in enrollment packet. A \$30 fee will be applied for any failed payments

Families whose fees are two months in arrears will be notified in writing. Families will have 10 days from receipt of arrears notice to pay the past due tuition or make alternative arrangements with the Director. Failure to do so will result in the child's dis-enrollment from the program.

FORMS

All children enrolled in the program are required to have the necessary enrollment forms completed. They include an application, health examination form including proof of physical along with shot records, medical consent form, statement of day care ministry, CACFP form, emergency contact card, and payment policy agreement.

Indiana code requires that we maintain documentation of a current annual exam provided by the physician of each child in our care. Your physician must complete a new health examination form each year that your child is enrolled in the program. All physicals must be current within one year of the exam date.

In the event we need to contact you during the school day, we ask that you keep your child's emergency contact card current at all times. Parents are responsible for keeping these cards up to date. Changes to the cards must be made in person at the ECC office.

WEATHER CLOSINGS

ECC is open during inclement weather at the discretion of the ECC Director and the IHC Executive Director. You can check your email and channel 13 for more information. We typically follow what Washington Township decides. We attempt to get any closing information to the media as soon as possible (by 6:15am). The ECC Director will also communicate any closing information via email. The ECC is not obligated to make up or reimburse for any closings due to weather.

* IHC ECC on two hour delay= Building will open to parents and students at 9am. If you available before 9am, please wait in your car

If severe weather should occur during the school day, the ECC has a tornado safety plan in place.

COMMUNICATION

The ECC uses email as our primary form of communication for up to date school information. Please make sure your email address is correct with the office and if you are not receiving at least 1 email every 2 weeks from the ECC then please contact the ECC office immediately. Each classroom communicates thru a weekly emailed newsletter, or classroom app (ClassDojo or SeeSaw), and parent bulletin boards outside their room. The ECC office will also post signs on the front school doors for any upcoming events or important information.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Car drop off is at the South Entrance (Early Childhood entrance) from 8:50 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. for pre-school, pre-school plus and kindergarten children.

Car pick up is available for Preschool and Preschool Plus students. The pickup times are as follows:

12:25 – 12:35 pm – Preschool pick up

2:50 – 3:00 pm – Preschool Plus pick up

Safety is our first concern and we want to make sure that you hold your child's hand in the parking lot and that parents or children are not crossing between the cars in the carpool line.

When you enter the parking lot, drive slowly to the rear of the line, which forms along the building's southern sidewalk. A teacher will come to the car to get your child, opening the car door on the passenger side. It is helpful if those children in car seats are accessible from the passenger side of the car. The student will be escorted into the lobby, where they are met by other teachers and escorted to their rooms. At dismissal the children are escorted to the lobby.

They wait in the lobby under teacher supervision and are escorted to your car by a teacher or assistant. No child is allowed to leave the building without teacher or parent supervision during this time. *All drivers are to remain in their car.* If you wish to greet your child you must park your vehicle and come into the building prior to pick up.

Please park only in designated parking spaces. For the safety of all our children, **do not** park your car along the curb at any time, it is our designated fire lane.

Only those persons listed on the emergency card “approved pick-up list” will be allowed to pick up your child. Anyone other than a custodial parent or legal guardian will be asked to show a photo ID.

CAR POOL ARRANGEMENTS

Many parents find car pools very convenient and helpful. We do all we can to assist any parents wanting to make such arrangements. A car pool parent must provide the names of any person who will be picking up a child on the “approved pick-up list” on the back of your child’s emergency card. We will not release a child to anyone not on the “approved pick up list”. Please inform these people that the staff will request photo identification and that they must come into the building to pick up your child.

MEALS

Breakfast is available from 7:30- 8:00 a.m. for those extended day children who arrive early. Breakfast is provided by our kitchen staff and usually consists of such items as cereal, scrambled eggs, waffles, toast, fruit, and milk. We ask that parents do not send any breakfast items to school.

Our kitchen staff, in accordance with USDA guidelines, provides lunch and two healthy snacks per day. We adhere to USDA standards on portion sizes. Each daily menu provides a proper balance of nutrients. The lunch menu is distributed to parents. A sample menu is shown below.

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Egg Salad on Pita	Mini Turkey Dogs	Whole Wheat Pasta	Fish Shapes	Baked Chicken
Chicken & Rice Soup	Sweet Potato Fries	Alfredo	Scalloped Potatoes	Cooked Carrots
Cucumber Slices	Lima Beans	Broccoli/Garlic Toast	Mixed Vegetables	Rice Pilaf
Apple Sauce	Orange Slices	Boiled Egg	Banana	Cornbread
Milk	Milk	Peaches	Milk	Milk
		Milk		

We do our very best to accommodate specific dietary needs. We will also honor religious restrictions upon request. We ask that parents not send food to school unless specific medical conditions make this a requirement.

ALLERGIES

Please let us know at the time of enrollment if your child has allergies to any food or medications. We post an allergy list in each classroom, as well as a label with their name and allergy posted on a cabinet door in the classroom.

MEDICATIONS

No medication will be administered at school without a written order from a physician. Prescription medication brought to school in the original pharmacy bottle and prescribed for the child will be administered as directed after the physician note is received. Any over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, Desitin, or Robitussin will also need written directions from a physician. You can have a standing order for over the counter medications written by your physician (to be given “as needed”) added to your child’s file. You must fill out the medication chart in the office each time your child is to be administered medication.

ILLNESS

As much as we love your child, if he/she has a fever or shows signs of illness, vomiting, or diarrhea, **please keep the child at home**. We require that the child be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. Children with thick, green nasal discharge should be kept home from school.

Should your child become ill at school, develop a fever, have two bouts of diarrhea in a short period of time, or develop a rash, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child as quickly as possible. We will do all we can to keep your child as comfortable as possible until you arrive.

Please notify us immediately if your child comes down with a communicable disease. We will need to determine if the exposure period occurred at school, and if other parents will need to be notified.



INJURIES

Although we do our best to prevent accidents before they occur, occasionally a child will be injured at school. When a minor injury occurs, we will apply the appropriate first aid and notify the parent. In the case of major injury, the parent will be notified at once, and the child will be transported (by ambulance if necessary) to St. Vincent Hospital. It will be necessary for parents or legal guardians of all children enrolled to assume financial responsibility either through their own health insurance or direct payment for any medical treatment which may be necessary. Each child must have a signed medical consent form on file.

CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for seasonal weather and activities. We request rubber sole shoes be worn to prevent injury during play time. Crocs and flip flops should never be worn due to the risk of accidents and injury.

Each child will need to have a complete change of clothing at school (for summer and winter, including extra socks, underwear and shoes). Those parents sending a backpack to school each day may keep them in the bag. Many parents choose to keep an extra set in their child’s classroom. Please send them to the teacher in a **labeled**, clean Ziploc type bag. **Please label the clothing!** The clothing will be returned to your child at the end of the school year.

If your child wears diapers, please send only *disposable* diapers to school. You can make arrangements with the teacher to bring a weekly or monthly supply. They will be labeled and kept in your child's cubby. If your child is potty training then we request you have 2-3 changes of clothes available each day, to include shoes.

NAPTIME

Those children who stay for nap are encouraged to bring a labeled crib sheet and only one other item for naptime. At the end of each week the items will be sent home for the parent to launder. We will send the items home more often if necessary. We encourage you to purchase duplicates of any essential sleep items (i.e. security blankets or stuffed animals) that your child needs for sleep. Each child has his/her own labeled nap cot for naptime. Naptime is between the hours of 12:45 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

DISCIPLINE

As a parent, it is important that you know the method of disciplinary guidance used to promote harmony and cooperation. The need for discipline can usually be avoided with proper instruction before a situation occurs; however there may be times when disciplinary action is required. Redirection is the method we use. If unacceptable behavior patterns continue it is sometimes necessary to bring a child to the office to regroup and collect their emotions. Often times it only takes a few minutes away from the classroom for a child to calm down and restore their emotions and we return the child back into the group as quickly as possible.

BITING

This requires a different approach to discipline. If a child bites, they are removed from the classroom immediately and the bitten child receives positive attention. Parents will be notified that their child was bitten. If a child continues to bite over a period of several days, the parent will be called and more rigorous actions may be taken.

CUBBIES

Each child has a cubby or hook in the classroom. Please check this whenever you are in the building. The teacher will send the papers from the cubby home each school day. Each child should bring a backpack or school bag each day for important papers and art projects! **Please check your child's backpack daily.**

LOST AND FOUND

Lost items are kept in a bin in the coat closet labeled lost and found. Please report any missing items to your child's teacher or the office as soon as possible. We will do our best to find the items for you. Please try to label items you send to school in permanent black marker. We will periodically put all lost and found items on a table in the lobby for parents to claim. About twice per year we donate all lost and found items to Goodwill.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The children enjoy a full morning of activities during the preschool portion of the day at the ECC. A typical morning schedule may be as follows:

9:00 – 9:20	Circle Time
9:20 – 9:30	Restroom/Snack
9:30 – 9:45	Center Exploration
9:45 – 10:15	Art
10:15 – 10:35	Outside Play
10:35 -11:00	Specials
11:00 – 11:10	Restroom
11:10 – 11:30	Story Time
11:30 – 11:50	Lunch
11:50 – 12:10	Closing Circle
12:15 – 12:30	Dismissal/Quiet Room Prep



In addition, several “specials” are offered each week.

Havdalah, Yoga, Library, CrossFit
Hebrew, Cooking, Journey’s with Jana, Music,
Our Jewish World and Shabbat



FIELD TRIPS

Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten enjoy several scheduled field trips throughout the year. Parents are required to sign a “Field Trip Permission Slip” each time your child goes on a field trip. You have the option of not allowing your child to participate and if that is the case, provisions will be made for your child to stay at school. We rely on parent volunteers to transport and chaperone the children and we encourage parents to take the opportunity to experience this special opportunity with your child. We also ask that you be respectful of other parents by driving on only one field trip for each school year. Before a parent may drive on a field trip, we require you have a criminal history report on file in the Directors office.

CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice per year for children 3 years through kindergarten. These 15 or 20 minute meetings will be scheduled in the fall and spring. If there is ever a time when you would like to schedule an appointment, do not hesitate to call the office or send your child’s teacher a note. It is important to remember that when teachers arrive in the morning they are preparing for the day, and once class starts their attention needs to be focused on the children. We understand your needs and will make every attempt to communicate and meet in appropriate ways.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

IHC has an effective policy in place for mediating differences that may arise between parents and teachers. If the teacher and parent cannot resolve an issue, it should be brought to the Director's attention immediately so a resolution can be reached. The Early Childhood Committee is kept advised of the need for any policy changes. The Congregation's Clergy is available as needed for discussion as well. We believe in prompt and open communication with parents.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE/PARENT PROGRAMS

All parents have the opportunity to serve on the Early Childhood Parent Committee. The Committee meets about five times per year to help plan various programming throughout the year, as well as make certain fund-raising, curriculum, policy and calendar decisions. We encourage you to join at any time by contacting the Education Office at 254-2186.

Informal parent programs may be presented on an occasional basis during the year. Parents are encouraged to make recommendations for programs they would like to see. Let us know if you would like to coordinate or help with a program.

FUNDRAISING/DONATIONS

The Early Childhood Center sponsors two big fundraisers each year: the Walk-A-Thon in the fall and the Art Fair in the spring. All funds are used for scholarships, teacher appreciation, enrichment projects, field trips, and special programs.

You can make donations to the Early Childhood program at any time. The school does have a "wish list" for those parents wanting to purchase a specific item or piece of equipment. We will also gratefully accept good quality used toys and books to the program at any time. Please contact the Director.

The Birthday Book Club also accepts donations in honor of your child's birthday, or at any time. All donations are used to purchase books and videotapes for classroom use. Each child gets to select his own birthday book from our selection of new books. A bookplate is added to the book listing the donor and occasion.

BAGEL SALES

For years, the ECC parents have sold bagels on Sunday mornings during Religious School. We have come to rely on this fundraiser and ask that all parents volunteer on time each year. The time commitment is from approximately 7:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Two people are needed each Sunday. A "Bagels for Dummies" book with complete instructions is available to parents about one week before their scheduled shift.

CHALLAH

The Early Childhood Center sells challah every Friday for \$5.00. You may pre-order by Tuesday morning for Friday delivery, or you may find it helpful to have a standing order. It is a wonderful way to bring Shabbat to your home each week! Special round Challahs are ordered for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur each year.

TOT SHABBAT & SHABBAT PLAYDATE

Tot Shabbat and Shabbat Playdate are programs designed for families with young children. They are held 6-8 times per year on the 4th Friday (Tot Shabbat) and the 1st Saturday mornings (Shabbat Playdate). Both programs include music, crafts, activities, and age appropriate worship. It is a wonderful way for families to enjoy Shabbat together, and to meet other families with young children. Please call the Education office for program dates.

HOLIDAYS & CELEBRATIONS

The ECC has many special celebrations for the children and families throughout the year. Here is a helpful list of the celebrations we do celebrate and you will certainly not want to miss!!

Birthdays – We are delighted to celebrate your child’s birthday at school. Our experience has taught us that small children enjoy simplicity. Please make arrangements with your child’s teacher. Any food items sent for the celebration must be purchased from a store and arrive in the original packaging.

Back to School Night – An opportunity for teachers to meet the parents and address curriculum, daily schedule and parent involvement for their specific classrooms. This parent only event occurs early in September and lasts about an hour and a half.

Chanukah Play – Our traditional Chanukah program in which your children are the stars! This standing room only event is open to all family, friends and neighbors. The date and time are listed on the school calendar, but usually occurs around 3:00 in the afternoon. School closes immediately after the end of the program.

Grandparents’ Day – This special event is a chance for the ECC to honor the grandparents or a special older adult in your child’s life. This event is not for parents and we ask that parents plan ahead to avoid last minute stress. The date and time are listed on the school calendar.

Art Fair – the Art Fair is an annual event held in the spring. The ECC transforms into a beautiful art gallery, showcasing each child’s hard work and talents. Each piece of art is available for “sale” and all contributions made that day are used to purchase equipment for the classrooms. This is a special event that you won’t want to miss!

Mothers’ Day/ Fathers’ Day – The ECC honors the wonderful gift of parenthood with a special breakfast. The date and time are listed on the school calendar.

ECC observes and celebrates many Jewish holidays throughout the year. Here is a helpful guide to the Jewish Holidays.

Shabbat The Sabbath (Shabbat in Hebrew) is the only holiday that is celebrated every week. In the Torah we learn that God created the world in six days. The seventh day, Shabbat, was the day of rest. One of our favorite weekly activities in the Early Childhood Center is Friday mornings when we gather together on the Bimah with Rabbi or Cantor and celebrate Shabbat. It's a wonderful time for us to gather and celebrate by singing songs, experience the ritual of lighting the candles and enjoying Challah together.

Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the Jewish New Year and celebrates the birthday of the world! We dip apples in honey for a good and sweet year. A traditional greeting is "La Shana Tovah Tikvatenu", may God inscribe you for a good year in the "Book of Life".

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement; we ask God to forgive us for all the times we have made mistakes. It marks the 10 days of repentance begun on Rosh Hashanah. We learn to blow the Shofar (rams horn) and hear the story of Jonah and the Whale.

Sukkot is the festival of booths commemorating the Biblical period of wandering in the desert, and is commemorated by building a temporary shelter called a sukkah, (rhymes with "book a"). The symbols of Sukkot are the Lulav (palm branch, willow palm and myrtle) and the Etrog. This harvest festival is celebrated for 8 days.

Simchat Torah Is the celebration of the Torah. We remember the first words of the Torah –Bereshit- in the beginning. It is the day we finish reading the Torah and the day we start again. We rejoice in the festive holiday with parades and dancing.

Chanukah we remember the Maccabees. When the Greeks said that families of Israel were no longer allowed to worship, the Maccabees fought back and won their freedom. They made the temple clean and pure and the small amount of oil they found burned for 8 nights. The ECC puts on an annual Chanukah program where the children are the stars!

Tu Bishvat is the day we celebrate the trees that God created. We sample the fruits of many trees, especially those indigenous to Israel.

Purim is the day we remember brave Esther saving the Jewish people from wicked Haman. ECC has an annual Purim Carnival and a costume parade for our children. We craft Shalach Manot baskets to give to those in need.

Passover (Pesach) is the time we recall leaving Egypt. This holiday of freedom and renewal has many traditions that the children embrace; the eating of Matzah, the making of grape juice, the cleaning of the house, just to name a few. ECC has an annual Passover Seder for the children.

Shavuot is when we remember we stood at Mount Sinai and heard God's voice; it is the celebration of the day when God gave us the Torah (the 5 books of Moses).

The ECC does not observe Halloween or Valentine's Day, and we ask that you *do not* send in Halloween candy or Valentine themed treats.

